



## 7 Trauma endures of South Korea's Gwangju Uprising



## 16 Obama: Leaders 'aren't even pretending to be in charge'

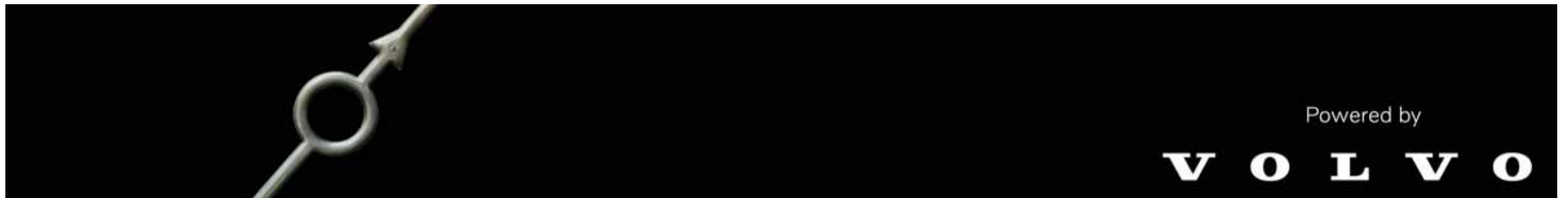


## 18 Jordan memorabilia soars in value over 'Last Dance'



### Ramadan KAREEM

Fajr	03:24
Dhuhr	11:44
Asr	15:20
Maghrib	18:35
Isha	20:01



# MPs call to replace all expats after Municipality decision

## Health ministry launches random drive-through testing

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** MPs yesterday welcomed a decision by the Municipality to stop hiring expatriates and accelerate procedures to dismiss them from jobs, and proposed legislation to replace all foreigners in the government sector by citizens. Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Waleed Al-Jassem ordered in a decision to impose a blanket ban on employing expats in municipal jobs and start procedures immediately to sack all foreign employees.

The decision calls to halt accepting employment applications by expats, cancelling appointments under process and stopping the renewal of contracts of existing employees. To compensate for foreign employees, the minister called for boosting the use of automation and technology, besides appointing more Kuwaitis.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari welcomed the decision and said he will submit a draft law calling on all

government bodies to replace their foreign employees within one year and open the door for the appointment of Kuwaitis. Kandari said the legislation comes because many decisions and regulations were issued in the past to reduce the appointment of expats in government jobs, but these remained on paper without implementation.

He said that despite those measures, expats still make up 26 percent of government workers and must be replaced with Kuwaitis. The legislation, which must be reviewed and approved by the National Assembly and accepted by the government, gives all government agencies a period of one year to terminate all their foreign employees.

The proposed law calls on government agencies to announce their replacement plans within three months of enacting the law and show the number of jobs available for Kuwaitis. If no Kuwaitis apply for a certain job, government agencies can appoint expats on a temporary basis for one year only,

which can be renewed if needed.

The implementation of such an ambitious legislation appears to be extremely difficult because the 100,000 expats in government jobs are either highly-skilled and experienced consultants or low-paid employees in menial jobs. In either case, the possibility of finding a Kuwaiti replacement is very remote. MP Salah Khorshed said he will submit a proposal to ban the appointment of foreign legal consultants in government jobs. MP Safa Al-Hashem welcomed the Municipality decision, saying she will closely monitor implementation.

The new move comes amid tremendous pressures on expatriates employed in the private sector because of the coronavirus-led shutdowns that forced many companies to either fire employees or cut their salaries. A majority of those impacted are expatriates. It is estimated that if the closures continue for a few more months, hundreds of thousands of expats would lose their private sector jobs.

Meanwhile, the ministry of health launched random drive-through testing for the coronavirus, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said. The ministry has set up a huge testing center at Jazeera Airways' Park & Fly facility at the Kuwait International Airport, and people will be selected randomly for the test. They will receive an SMS on their mobiles, setting the date and time of the test. The ministry said people will be selected randomly from all governorates and residential areas. The aim of the tests is to assess the spread of the disease in the country. The center can receive 15 cars at a time.

Sheikh Basel also said that the total curfew imposed on May 10 will be reassessed after 10 days of the start, around May 20.

A large number of cooperative society employees have tested positive for coronavirus in the past few days. More than 30 co-ops have been affected as the ministry continues its testing drive.

## Masks a must in Qatar on pain of prison

**DOHA:** Qatar yesterday began enforcing the world's toughest penalties of up to three years' imprisonment for failing to wear masks in public, as it battles one of the world's highest coronavirus infection rates. More than 30,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the tiny Gulf country - 1.1 percent of the 2.75 million population - although just 15 people have died. Only the micro-states of San Marino and the Vatican had higher per capita infection rates, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Violators of Qatar's new rules will face up to three years in jail and fines of as much as \$55,000. Drivers alone in their vehicles are exempt from the requirement, but several expats told AFP that police were stopping cars at checkpoints to

warn them of the new rules before they came into force. Wearing a mask is currently mandatory in around 50 countries, although scientists are divided on their effectiveness.

Authorities in Chad have made it an offence to be unmasked in public, on pain of 15 days in prison. In Morocco similar rules can see violators jailed for three months and fined up to 1,300 dirhams (\$130). Qatari authorities have warned that gatherings during the fasting month of Ramadan may have increased infections.

Abdullatif Al-Khal, co-chair of Qatar's National Pandemic Preparedness Committee, said Thursday that there was "a huge risk in gatherings of families" for Ramadan meals. "(They) led to a significant increase in the number of infections among Qataris," he said. Neighboring Saudi Arabia will enforce a round-the-clock nationwide curfew during the five-day Eid al-Fitr holiday later this month to fight the coronavirus.

Mosques, along with schools, malls, and restaurants remain closed in Qatar to prevent the disease's spread. But construction sites remain open as Qatar

Continued on Page 16



DOHA: In this photo taken on March 16, 2020, a man wearing a mask walks along the cornice. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Khafji production halt

**DUBAI:** Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have agreed to halt oil production from the joint Al-Khafji field for one month, starting from June 1, Kuwait's Al-Rai newspaper reported on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Kuwaiti officials. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have agreed with other members of the OPEC+ group of oil producers to cut output in a bid to reduce a glut in global supplies. Both Gulf states have also said they would make additional cuts beyond the agreed curbs. Last Monday, Oil Minister Khaled Al-Fadhel said Kuwait will slash production by 80,000 barrels per day in June, on top of the cuts already agreed under a pact by the OPEC+ group of major oil producing countries. — Reuters

#### Chinese envoy found dead

**JERUSALEM:** The Chinese ambassador to Israel, Du Wei, was found dead at his residence on the outskirts of Tel Aviv yesterday, police said. The envoy, who had arrived in Israel in mid-Feb, was found dead in his Herzliya home, spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP, adding that police were investigating. Du's wife and son were not with him in Israel. Du, 57, had previously served as ambassador to Ukraine, according to his biography on the embassy's website. The Haaretz daily said initial reports said staff had found Du dead in his bed and that there were no signs of violence. It quoted a first aid service as saying the cause of death appeared to be a cardiac incident. — AFP

## Coronavirus crisis punctures Tunisia tourism rebound

**TUNIS:** As the novel coronavirus pandemic wipes out a recovery from attacks in 2015, Tunisia's vital tourism sector is trying to find ways to avoid going under. "Normally, the season starts now. But there is nobody," said Mohammed Saddam, who owns an antiques shop in the famous blue and white village of Sidi Bou Said, near the capital Tunis. Usually its streets are filled with tourists at this time of year, but now Saddam is only opening his store for an hour a day to air it out.

"We are waiting for the airspace to reopen," he said. "But 2020 is a write-off."

The North African country has registered 45 deaths from the COVID-19 illness, and for several days this week saw no new infections, putting it among Mediterranean countries faring relatively well in the pandemic. But the crisis has led to a shortfall in tourism revenues of six billion dinars (over \$2 billion), the

Continued on Page 16



SIDI BOU SAID, Tunisia: This photo taken on April 4, 2020 shows an empty cafe in this village some 20 km northeast of Tunis. — AFP

## Tiffs over mask wearing trouble US airlines too

**WASHINGTON:** The wearing of masks to protect against the coronavirus has become such a sensitive issue in the United States that airlines are struggling to impose the practice on defiant travelers in the enclosed environment of an airplane. Johannes Eisele, an AFP photographer, experienced the problem in person. He recently took his seat on an American Airlines flight from LaGuardia Airport in New York City - then a coronavirus

hotspot - to Charlotte Douglas International Airport in North Carolina. He had a middle seat, wedged between two other passengers - only one of whom was wearing a mask.

As Eisele recounted it, "I asked him if he didn't have a mask. He said, 'Yes, I have.' And I asked him, 'Can you please wear it?'" "He said he feels more comfortable without the mask

Continued on Page 16



NEW YORK: Passengers, almost all wearing facemasks, board an American Airlines flight to Charlotte on May 3, 2020. — AFP



Local

# Health Ministry launches drive-thru coronavirus testing site at airport

## Pharmacies must sell masks at state-approved price

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health inaugurated late Saturday a drive-through novel coronavirus testing center at Jazeera Airways Park and Fly facility at Kuwait International Airport. The center will help increase the number of tests carried out by the ministry to discover unreported infection cases, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah told reporters during the inauguration ceremony. He pointed out that the center will be used to conduct 180 tests a day for 180 people from the six governorates. The ministry will cooperate with the Public Authority for

the Civil Information to randomly nominate 180 persons, representing the different state areas, the two sexes and different age categories, for the tests. SMS's will be sent to the phones of the selected persons including all related information about the date, time, location of the testing, he clarified, adding that the center can receive 15 cars at once.

Separately, the Health Ministry said Saturday that pharmacies will have to sell masks at a price approved by the state, which should not exceed 150 fils a piece. Undersecretary at the Ministry Dr Ab-

dullah Al-Bader affirmed that the decision came in line with the health authorities' guidelines to encourage people to wear face covers in Kuwait. He affirmed that the concerned authorities would monitor the sale of masks to make sure that pharmacies are abiding by the price regulation.

In other news, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has completed the inspection of 59 supermarkets, commercial establishments and pharmacies to ensure the flow of purchases and food deliveries and price stability. The ministry is also

currently monitoring 50 subsidised food outlets and will continue to dispatch its inspection teams around the country during the coronavirus lockdown measures, it said in a statement yesterday. Some 193 consumer complaints were received by the ministry on its 135 hotline. The need to comply with laws and regulations amid these unprecedented circumstances was strongly underlined, and the ministry warned it would be on the lookout for those seeking to take advantage of the current situation. — KUNA

## Police arrest man who quarreled with army officer

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior announced late Saturday that it has arrested an Arab man who appeared in a video clip, posted on social media, quarreling with an army officer at a shopping mall in Sulaibikhat. In a press release, the ministry said the man has been taken to the northwestern Sulaibikhat police station where he was cross-examined by prosecutors. The suspect was charged with two accounts of curfew rules violation and mobile phone misuse, it pointed out. It added that he will remain in jail pending further investigations. The ministry stressed that it will closely follow up this case and will take all necessary legal actions to maintain full respect to security and military personnel. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Companies distributed bread to residents in Farwaniya, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Standing in Solidarity and Joining Hands to Fight COVID-19

By LI Minggang, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

**C**urrently, COVID-19 is sweeping the globe, posing a grave threat to people's lives and health and a formidable challenge to global public health security. Some have described it as the darkest moment faced by humanity in a century. In a time of increasingly challenging situation under the shadow of COVID-19, it is even more imperative for us to stay rational and sustain confidence with the aim of looking for solutions to contain COVID-19, and have faith that humanity will triumph over this health crisis. As Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out in his article entitled "Solidarity and Cooperation are the Most Powerful Weapons for the International Community to Defeat COVID-19," mankind is a community with a shared future. To defeat a disease that threatens all, solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons.

The Chinese government and people have exerted tremendous efforts and sacrifices in fighting against the COVID-19 outbreak, and have yielded significant results. China will never forget the valuable understanding and support from the international community during the most difficult moment in our battle against the virus. Accordingly, China is fully aware that only with global solidarity can the international community win the battle against this deadly virus. China has been shouldering its due responsibilities by supporting the global response to COVID-19 in an effort to fulfill China's solid commitment to solidarity and cooperation.

To date, China has set up a special fund on COVID-19 cooperation worth 2 billion yuan (KD 87 million), provided anti-epidemic supplies to over 150 countries and international organizations, shared experience on prevention, control, diagnosis and treatment with the rest of the international community, established online knowledge center on epidemic prevention and control that is open to all countries, and held over 120 video conferences with more than 160 countries and international organizations. In the spirit of mutual support, China is not only reaching out to developing countries with vulnerable healthcare systems, but also extending its outreach to the hard-hit developed countries in Europe and the US. At the most difficult times when the world is combating COVID-19, the Chinese medical expert teams put themselves in harm's way and headed to many parts of the world to support

the global response, which shows their fearlessness and strong sense of commitment. China, running at full steam around the clock, has been providing anti-epidemic supplies to other countries to the best of its ability, which gives sustained support for ensuring crucial strategic supplies in the global fight against COVID-19. According to incomplete statistics, from March 1 to April 30, China exported 27.8 billion face masks and 73.41 million COVID-19 test kits. China is producing medical supplies the world needs at record speed to help people get through the trying times.

Since the outbreak, China and Kuwait has been mutually supporting each other in the spirit of sincerity, setting a good example for countries in anti-epidemic cooperation. President Xi Jinping and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged letters to express solidarity with each other. At the critical moments in China's fight against the epidemic, Kuwait donated \$3 million of medical supplies to China, and China has been facilitating Kuwait in procuring medical supplies from China, with over 10 Kuwaiti Air Force planes heading to China for bringing medical supplies back to Kuwait. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health attended three video conferences held by the Chinese side to discuss COVID-19 response and exchange experience. In an effort to aid fight against COVID-19, a Chinese medical expert team visited Kuwait and had in-depth discussions with the Kuwaiti counterparts to exchange experience in epidemic response and COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment, which demonstrates the great spirit of love across borders and our genuine friendship in times of need.

Viruses respect no borders. The only way to defeat them is through concerted efforts of all. As His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah stressed in his speech, fighting the COVID-19 epidemic necessitates the concerted efforts of the entire international community and the joint endeavors of scientists and medical specialists to develop an effective vaccine for the virus. Kuwait has been keen to support global humanitarian causes. Under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader, Kuwait has made a total donation of \$100 million in contribution to the global COVID-19 response, which adequately reflects the Kuwaiti government's great significance attached to international anti-epidemic cooperation. We appreciate and greatly value the humanitarian contribution from the Kuwaiti government.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues ravaging the world, more and more countries have come to realize that protecting the health and security of their own people means preserving global health security, and helping other countries in containing the outbreak helps to alleviate their burden, as only through solidarity can the international community foster greater efforts. However, we regret that as people all around the world are joining hands in fighting the epidemic, some politicians attempt to label the virus, politicize COVID-19 and continuingly stigmatize and tarnish other countries. It is worth underlining that human history is an evolutionary process of constant battles and adaptation between humans and nature. The novel coronavirus may appear in any place in the world, and its origin should be researched by scientists worldwide. Slanders, smears, blame games and lies will not help tackle the crisis, but will only waste more time and even lead to more loss of lives. Our common foe is the virus rather than each other. Putting political expediency before people's lives and health and spreading "political virus" are more worthy of vigilance than the novel coronavirus itself.

As the most professional international institution with the highest authority in global public health security, the World Health Organization (WHO) plays an irreplaceable role in the face of global public health crisis. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the WHO, under the leadership of Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has played a leading and coordinating role in promoting international anti-epidemic cooperation by actively fulfilling its responsibilities, which has been widely recognized and highly praised by the international community.

The 73rd Session of the WHO's World Health Assembly (WHA) will take place today, May 18, 2020. It is believed that the WHA will further foster international solidarity and promote the global COVID-19 containment efforts. Both China and Kuwait have all along advocated and practiced multilateralism, actively carried out international anti-epidemic cooperation, and extended unwavering support for the United Nations and the World Health Organization's leading role in coordinating international cooperation against COVID-19. Supporting WHO is to safeguarding international solidarity in the battle against the disease. We have reasons to believe that, with firm confidence and a collective response in solidarity, humanity will prevail over this outbreak and embrace a brighter future.

### News in brief

#### Cat rescued

**KUWAIT:** A cat stuck inside a restaurant on Blaajat Street in Salmiya for three days was rescued after local animal rescue account @icareq8 posted videos of the trapped cat. The account utilized crowd sourcing to notify officials and locate employees of the restaurant who contacted management and Ministry of Interior officials to release the cat. It was freed early yesterday morning and given food and water.

#### Six flights

**KUWAIT:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that six flights departed Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying expatriates wishing to go back home. They include one flight to Doha, three flights to Egypt, and two flight to Bangladesh, carrying a total of 1,035 passengers.

#### Curfew violators

**KUWAIT:** Police arrested 14 curfew violators on Saturday, the Ministry of Interior announced. The suspects, all Kuwaiti, were arrested as follows: Seven in Hawally governorate, one in Farwaniya, one in Jahra, two in Mubarak Al-Kabeer and three in Al-Ahmadi.

#### KD 300,000 million

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait government may save more than KD 300,000 million (\$1 billion) after suspending all government sponsored travel, exhibitions, conferences, official functions and related expenses. Citing an unnamed analyst, Gulf News reports that the Kuwait government will save significantly because it will not be spending government budgets on food and hotel allowances, transportation, gifts and other travel-related expenses for government departments and ministries.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf



# Human Rights Watch's submission to Committee on Rights of Child on Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Human Rights Watch recently submitted to the 87th pre-session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and its review of Kuwait's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In its submission, it proposes issues and questions that the committee members may want to raise with the government of Kuwait on the topics of nationality, migrant child abuse in detention, child labor and others. The following are excerpts from the review.

## Nationality (articles 7 and 8)

Nationality laws in Kuwait do not allow Kuwaiti women to pass nationality to their children in the same way as men, and as a result can sometimes prevent children from obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship. The Nationality Law of 1959 has been amended more than a dozen times since its passage, with each amendment creating more stringent requirements for those claiming citizenship. Kuwaiti men can automatically confer nationality to their children, whereas women can only confer nationality when the father is unknown or the "kinship to the father has not been legally established."

A 1980 amendment to the Nationality Law removed the section that allowed children of Kuwaiti mothers and stateless fathers the possibility to naturalize. Stateless persons in Kuwait are referred to as part of the Bidun community, which is comprised of more than 106,000 persons who claim Kuwaiti nationality but have remained in legal limbo for more than fifty years. In some cases, couples have divorced in an effort to allow their children to apply for citizenship under of the nationality law. However, these children still faced difficulty obtaining citizenship.

Many Bidun children do not have birth certificates and, lacking required identification, struggle to access even the most basic of state services. Bidun seeking other civil documents including marriage, and death certificates, as well as passports, must apply to the Central System to Resolve Illegal Residents' Status, more commonly known as the Bidun Committee. The Committee is the sole government body through which Bidun can register and seek resolution of their claims for Kuwaiti citizenship.

Bidun children cannot enroll in free government schools and instead attend private schools primarily serving Bidun students, where annual fees run

between KD250 and KD450 (\$860 to \$1,550) per child and parents must pay additional costs for textbooks and uniforms. Bidun parents, as well as Kuwaiti human rights activists and Bidun school administrators, told Human Rights Watch that these schools have inferior resources and standards to those found in government schools. Though many Bidun children can receive free education through a government-administered charity fund established by the Education Ministry, Human Rights Watch has found that not all Bidun children are covered by the fund.

In instances of divorce, article 110 of the Civil Code and article 209 of the Personal Status Law grant the father legal guardianship of his children regardless of whether a court has ordered that the children live with the mother. Women have told Human Rights Watch that following their divorce, they had to apply to a court to obtain an order for each decision that they wished to make for their child such as registering them at a school. Children can also be removed without their consent from living with their mothers if their mothers re-marry.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- What steps are being taken to ensure women can pass nationality to their children on an equal basis as men?
  - What steps are being taken to ensure that children of Bidun men and women can obtain citizenship?
  - What measures are in place to ensure that children born in Kuwait's territory will not be stateless?
  - How many children are currently stateless in Kuwait?
- We recommend that the Committee call upon the government to:
- Legally recognize members of the Bidun community and their children and provide them with a path to obtaining nationality.
  - Grant nationality to children born in its territory who would otherwise be stateless.
  - Ensure that members of the stateless community and their children are properly accounted for in official population statistics.
  - Amend the Nationality Law to ensure that Kuwaiti women can pass nationality on to their children on an equal basis as men.
  - Amend article 110 of the Civil Code and article

209 of the Personal Status Law to ensure women have equal rights as men with respect to guardianship and other matters concerning children in divorce.

• Ensure that in instances of divorce and remarriage the best interest of the child is the primary concern when determining which parent a child should live with and which guardianship rights each parent should have.

## Child Marriage (articles 19 and 34)

According to article 26 of the Personal Status Act of 1984, the minimum legal age for marriage is 15 for girls and 17 for boys. However, under article 24 of the Act, both parties may be married before the minimum age if they have both reached puberty. Data regarding child marriages and the frequency with which they occur are difficult to obtain, as government data is not publicly available and it is unclear whether the government collects this data at all. Recent reports estimate that 6 percent of girls under 18 are married. Some reports suggest that the practice is more prevalent in the Bedouin communities. Women's rights activists also reported that women in general marry at a later age but that the practice of child marriage persists mostly in the Bedouin community.

Health research demonstrates that girls who enter marriages at a young age face greater risks in pregnancy, including difficulties during childbirth that can result in death. Child marriage also often ends a girl's education and can expose her to domestic violence and marital rape.

During its 2015 Universal Periodic Review, Kuwait agreed to examine recommendations to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 for girls and boys but has taken no steps to do so.

Kuwait has yet to become a signatory on the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- What steps are the government taking to prevent child marriage, including to raise the minimum age of marriage?
- Are there monitoring systems in place to identify children most vulnerable to child marriage?
- What is the number of child marriages in the country, broken down by gender?
- Do children currently in marriages have access to legal redress including measures to annul the marriage?

We recommend that the Committee call upon the government to:

- Raise the minimum age of marriage to 18.
- Take measures to combat the prevalence of child marriage by developing national strategies and action plans to eradicate child marriage including mainstreaming prevention strategies into policies and programs that deal with reproductive health, education, and literacy development.

## Violence Against Children (article 19)

Violence against women and girls is still provided with lenient sentencing under the penal code. Under article 153 of the Kuwaiti penal code, a man who finds his mother, wife, sister, or daughter in the act of adultery (zina) and kills them is given a reduced sentence of either a small fine or a maximum three-year prison sentence. Article 182 of the Penal Code also provides that an abductor who uses force, threat, or deception with the intention to kill, harm, rape, prostitute, or extort a victim is spared any punishment if he marries the victim with her guardian's permission. Several states in the Middle East have repealed such provisions but Kuwait is one of handful of states in the region that still retains such a provision.

A comprehensive child protection system had not been in place before the Ministry of Health in March 2015 established the Kuwait National Child Protection Program (KNCPP). Kuwait has previously reported to this committee that all Kuwait schools were equipped with a socio-psychological counselling service that could confidentially refer complaints made by teachers, parents, or students to "the highest educational authority" and sanction perpetrators if complaints were verified. Complaints could allegedly be broadcast on radio or television and publicized through the bulletin of the Ministry of Education.

In the same report to this Committee, Kuwait alleged that corporal punishment in schools was banned by a statute "dating back to the 1960s." However, hitting or paddling and other forms of corporal punishment are still legal forms of disciplining children in homes, day care institutions, alternative care settings (including foster homes and emergency care institutions), and penal institutions.

According to a media report, the Ministry of Health in 2019 referred at least 150 cases of child abuse to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Most of these referrals were against parents for sexual assault or emotional neglect.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- What monitoring mechanisms are in place to identify children most vulnerable to violence in homes, day care institutions, alternative care settings, and penal institutions?
  - What reporting mechanisms are there if a child is subjected to corporal punishment or violence in a care setting?
- We recommend that the Committee call upon the government to:
- Repeal article 153 and 182 of the Kuwaiti penal code which reduce punishments for perpetrators in relation to crimes of violence against women and girls.
  - Ensure an accessible reporting mechanism for children subjected to violence.
  - Introduce awareness-raising programs to educate the public on the problems associated with

the hitting or paddling of children.

• Offer children experiencing violence in their homes support and alternative care, when appropriate.

## Migrant Children in Detention (article 37)

Some reports indicate that migrant women in Kuwaiti deportation proceedings are detained with their children. Human Rights Watch has found that "migrant women with children who go through deportation proceedings or who end up in jail also have their children in deportation detention or in jail with them. In some cases their husband is not Kuwaiti and no longer in the country, and in some cases the children were the result of rape or a relationship outside of marriage." If any of these women give birth while awaiting deportation, they and their newborns are taken to the Women's Prison.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- Are there specific protections for women and children held in migrant detention centers and are these included in the trainings, rules, policies, and manuals for detention center staff?
  - Are there identification and reporting mechanisms in place to keep track of children in detention?
- We recommend to the Committee that it call upon the government to:
- Ensure that no child is ever detained for reasons relating to their own immigration status.
  - Where children are held with a parent awaiting detention, consider all alternatives to detention, and ensured decisions are based on the best interest of the child.
  - Ensure that any children held in detention centers have access to appropriate food, medical care, education, and communication with their families.

## Child Labor (article 32)

Article 10 of the constitution obligates the state to "watch over the youth and protect it from exploitation." The labor law also stipulates that no child can be employed under 14 years of age. However, the United States Department of State reports that children of migrant laborers currently pursue work as domestic laborers, some as young as seven years old. There are also reports of Bidun and migrant children working in the informal sector as street vendors. Efforts to enforce child labor laws in the informal sector are reportedly inconsistent.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- What steps has the government undertaken to identify children who are working as domestic laborers?
- What steps has the government taken to monitor the use of child labor in the informal sector?
- What steps has the government taken to enforce laws against child labor?
- How many children under the age of 14 are currently working in Kuwait?

We recommend to the Committee that it call upon the government to:

- Publicly report on the impact of its interventions to prevent and respond to child labor (Bidun, migrant, or otherwise) in the informal and other sectors.
- Protection of Education During Armed Conflict (article 28)

As of May 2020, 103 countries have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. Kuwait has yet to endorse this important declaration. The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express political support for the protection of students, teachers, and schools during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of education during armed conflict; and the implementation of the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- Do Kuwaiti laws, policies, or trainings provide explicit protection for schools and universities from military use during armed conflict?

We recommend to the Committee that it call upon the government to:

- Endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration to deter the military use of schools, including by bringing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict into domestic military policy and operational frameworks.

## Female Genital Mutilation (article 19)

Statistics about the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Kuwait are difficult to source, and official government data on the practice are not publicly available. A study conducted between 2001 and 2004 found that 38 percent of pregnant Kuwaiti women had undergone FGM as girls, most of them between the ages of 4 and 12. As of this writing, Kuwait had not explicitly criminalized the practice of FGM.

We encourage the Committee to pose the following questions:

- What steps are the government taking to eliminate the prevalence of FGM?
- We recommend that the Committee call upon the government to:
- Pass a law banning FGM for girls and non-consenting adult women.
  - Take measures to combat the prevalence of FGM, and the practice of FGM by developing national strategies and action plans to eradicate FGM including mainstreaming prevention strategies into policies and programs that deal with reproductive health, education, and literacy development.

**Kuwait Times**  
ESTABLISHED 1961  
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

**STAY CONNECTED**

• Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**

• Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**

• Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

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

## Local

## Kuwait Heritage



**KUWAIT:** Al-Derbaha, a famous children's game from the Kuwaiti heritage. The boys race while pushing a wheel, and whoever reaches the target first is declared the winner. The image dates back to 1958, and was taken in the 'Merqab' district of Kuwait City. The children are (from right to left) Ali Salimi, Al-Shuaibi brothers and Al-Faheed brothers. (Source: A total of commemorative printed images to the Ministry of Information in the 1960s and 1970s. — Researched by Mohammed Zakaria Abu El-Ella, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)

## Crisis management

By Eng Mohammad Bokhamseen & Yousef Bokhamseen

Is it a blizzard? A storm? Maybe a war? Albeit, I do not see any snow, gust of winds, guns, weapons or soldiers. Where's the enemy?

A lot can go wrong in answering this question because there is no one right answer. Yet, the solution should be systemic and universal. This is everyone's war to fight. It is challenging all and every aspect of the socio-economic spectrum as we have known it, as we are living it. Damage is likely to occur, but it is controllable, if we all do our part.

Pointing-fingers and name-calling will only add to lengthen the ordeal and reinforce the difficulties. Every resource is required to manage this pandemic. At this point, quick decisions are better than no decision. In times like this, the only way to manage this mass crisis is through trust and transparency. So citizens and denizens — get prepared for the long ride — fortify and toughen your resolve.

Realize this - the superpowers of this century have not been able to manage this pandemic as efficiently as the government of Kuwait. Moreover, the government of Kuwait (and their nominated supervisory ministries) have demonstrated their abilities to manage this crisis effectively and, so far, with limited casualties.

There are two ways to view this: Firstly, on the human level. Secondly on the Governmental level.

Human level - Brothers and sisters, citizens and netizens — nationals and expats, we need to do our bit i.e. have faith in the government to implement the right measures and have our interests at heart, and follow the curfew and lockdown rules. It is for our own good. For the safety of our families. For the existence of humanity. If anything, this crisis has brought people together, nations to set aside their differences and squabbles, recognize the role of the health-care professionals, and understand the worth of citizens worldwide.

Governmental level - there has been unprecedented progress. The Government has stayed ahead and did the right thing by shutting down the country early on. We haven't seen this level of strong resolve and decisions to stay on top of things, be actively involved since the 2008 financial crisis. Everything from local to global undertakings - the government has intervened in the economy by holding emergency meetings concerning the OPEC and OPEC+ to overhaul the global economic state, international trade sanctions and also at the same time, aid other governments and nations. This is truly significant. Further, the government

wants to see the families united this Ramadan and hence they have decided and begun to bring back the Kuwaiti nationals who were stranded in other parts of the world. They have not hesitated, even an iota, to implement this mass evacuation plan. They have encouraged the strategy and provided the resources, which are steep and significant. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources have been actively involved in keeping the food chain replenished and available. Government's internal processes have been updated and interlinked. The Ministry of Public Works is carrying out repairs and maintenance at record pace and is predicted to reach a 600 percent efficiency rate.

Equally important is the role of the health-care professionals. They too did not envisage we would face such a deadly virus. They are the front-liners who are very much needed and doing their job unflinchingly. They are putting themselves at risk right from the moment they wake up with the intention of going to work, donning their PPE and literally getting their hands dirty. And of course, their risk does not end there. They then go to their respective homes, doff/shed their uniforms and take exacting hygiene-related precautions before greeting anyone at their home - their contribution to stem the spread of the infection does not stop when they leave work. They require our deepest gratitude.

When the Going gets tough, the tough get going - the sunny side of this lockdown is witnessing the tremendous efforts of the people of this beautiful and warm country to reduce the number of cases, provide the medical aid required, how the citizens are working together tirelessly, in unison, for the residents (nationals and expats alike) and the labor of the front-liners, our health-care workers - their non-stop and assiduous efforts for the people of Kuwait. The country is tough. Leadership is focused, attentive and productive. And it is the time, to change. For the better, in a positive way. This fundamental change also includes industry structures, market positions, and consumer behavior. This is a wakeup call, and an opportunity for growth and reform. This series of unfortunate events was and is world-changing and has caused uncertainty and fear. But we should counter by being strong and resilient. And above all, emerge victorious.

• *Courtesy of the TIES Center:* The TIES Center is the social and educational hub for English Speaking Muslims in Kuwait and aims at empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, you can contact TIES at Tel:25231015/6; Hotline:94079777; e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

## stc strikes deal with Mishref Co-op to sell thermal cameras

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has concluded a deal with Mishref Co-op for the sale of high body temperature detecting thermal cameras to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative comes as one of several innovative solutions released by stc business to assist in the early detection of symptoms that may be related to the virus.

stc released a statement indicating that the sale, led by General Manager of Sales and Account Management at stc, Meshari Al-Hamad, will allow Mishref Co-op to set up a pre-screening process to detect high body temperatures in customers, while allowing staff to institute facility protocols when needed. Considering that high fever is one of the known symptoms of contracting COVID-19, the thermal cameras apply a sophisticated algorithm



using high thermal sensors to provide high accuracy readings within a matter of seconds. The system then sends out an alert upon detecting an abnormal temperature allowing the authorized personnel to take charge and assess the situation. The cameras can easily be set up at entrances and crowded locations, reading multiple temperatures at a time.

stc indicated that the thermal technology is an effective method of early detection that is currently being used across the world as a precautionary measure to combat the spread of infection. This effective solution can be used by government entities, Co-ops, SMEs, and other organizations as a precautionary step to ensure the health and safety of both employees and customers. The Company is also offering other innovative digital solutions to combat the pandemic that include monitoring bracelets that track movements around the clock and

send notifications to assigned Emergency Command Centers.

In line with stc's commitment to provide advanced solutions enabling digital transformation in Kuwait, the Company stated that it will continue to introduce products and services that will help efficiently battle COVID-19 locally. Following on its commitment, stc has also launched a series of campaigns related to help ease the restrictions imposed by the government for its customers as well as corporate social responsibility initiatives to assist citizens and residents through these difficult times.

stc concluded by urging citizens and residents to adhere to the guidelines imposed by the government and stay safe by staying home. It is critical to follow the government's directions and refrain from any interactions that may compromise the wellbeing of loved ones or other individuals in order to overcome the pandemic.

## stc distributes iftar meals to paramedics during Ramadan

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the distribution of around 7,000 iftar meals to paramedics across Kuwait during the holy month of Ramadan in collaboration with Tarahom Voluntary Group, as part of the Company's "Ramadan Lives On" campaign.

This initiative led by Ahmed Al-Nowaihet from stc's Public Relations Team, serves as an act of appreciation and gratitude to the paramedics on the frontlines of the pandemic, placing their lives at risk daily to ensure the health and safety of the citizens and residents of Kuwait. This year iftar meals were distributed to 7 main Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) centers across different governorates in Kuwait including Jaber Hospital, Al Amiri, Al Jahra, Al Adan, Al Sabah and Mishref, in addition to 4-6 sub-centers under these main dispatch centers.

The initiative falls in line with stc's corporate social responsibility program, with a strategic focus on giving back to the community while strengthening the communication channels between individuals in the community. Despite the current conditions, stc stands by its commitment, especially during the holy month, to continue providing its customers with

uninterrupted services, allowing them to connect with their loved ones through stc's advanced digital channels and solutions.

In her role, Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "In an effort to build on our societal commitment, stc launched a series of programs and initiatives under our "Ramadan Lives On" campaign that aim to support the local community in facing the unstable conditions that the state is currently facing. stc will continue to follow on its commitment to support the community from an economic and social perspective as we overcome this pandemic together."

She added, "This specific initiative aims to fully support, motivate and thank the frontliners at the ambulance centers for their hard work and great efforts in taking care of the citizens and residents in Kuwait. Since the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in Kuwait, stc has worked diligently to assist and collaborate with the government in various initiatives to spread awareness and reduce the spread of infection. In our most recent initiative, stc utilized its resources to accommodate returning citizens to their beloved country, as well as back the preventative measures the country has set in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic."

AlJasem concluded, "Even though the coun-

try is facing tighter restrictions to battle the outbreak, Ramadan lives on in our hearts with its holy essence and continues to be filled with life through our strong faith. We at stc would also like to emphasize the importance of adhering to the government's guidelines and instructions during the full lockdown while practicing social distancing. We urge citizens and residents to utilize the available digital platforms we have today to connect with their loved ones and maintain ongoing communication as they please from the safety of their homes."

The "Ramadan Lives On" campaign was initiated at the beginning of the blessed holy month as a dedication to the people of Kuwait and the Arab World. The first initiative launched within the campaign was stc's 2020 Ramadan TV commercial which generated 4 million views in its first 24 hours uploaded on stc's digital platforms. The production received positive reviews and feedback from the public marking it as a success, attracting a high level of viewership even during these difficult times.

To better serve its customers during the pandemic, stc upgraded its digital channels to offer the Company's array of products and services to new and existing customers from the comfort of their homes. stc's online platforms also allow customers to seamlessly execute transactions related to their accounts online and hassle free. With the upgrade came a series of online exclusive offers to enrich the customers' experience at home, whether it be online gaming, working remotely from home or enjoying services to fulfill their entertainment needs.





Brazil's coronavirus death toll tops 15,000

## Tensions rise as Germans clamor to return to Mallorcan homes

Page 8

Page 8



KIGALI: A worker stands near victims' bones recovered from pits which were used as mass grave during 1994 Rwandan genocide and hidden under houses in Kabuga, on the outskirts of Kigali. France on May 16, 2020 arrested Felicien Kabuga, one of the last key fugitives wanted over 1994 Rwandan genocide, leaving him facing a likely trial at an international tribunal after a quarter of a century on the run. —AFP

# 'Financier' of Rwanda genocide nabbed

## One of the last key fugitives in French custody

**PARIS:** Felicien Kabuga, one of the last key fugitives wanted over the 1994 Rwandan genocide, was in French custody Saturday after a quarter of a century on the run, and now faces likely trial at an international tribunal. French police arrested Kabuga, once one of Rwanda's richest men, in a dawn raid in the Paris suburbs, where he had been living under a false identity, the prosecutor's office and police said in a joint statement. Officers found an 84-year-old man "who has been sought by the judicial authorities for 25 years", the statement said.

Around 800,000 people - Tutsis but also moderate Hutus - were slaughtered over 100 days by ethnic Hutu extremists during the 1994 genocide. Kabuga was arrested at his home in Asnieres-sur-Seine north of Paris, where he had been hiding with the help of his children. The police statement described him as "one of the world's most wanted fugitives". The news was hailed in Rwanda. "Capturing Felicien Kabuga is very welcome and a commendable act that serves justice... our wish as the umbrella body for genocide survivors is for him to be deported and tried in Rwanda where he committed the crimes," Jean Pierre Dusangizemungu, head of the Ibuku association, told AFP.



### Kabuga arrested in a dawn raid in the Paris suburbs

#### 'Behind Interahamwe'

Kabuga is accused of creating the notorious Interahamwe militia that carried out massacres during the genocide. He also helped create Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines which, in its broadcasts, incited people to carry out murder. During his years on the run, Kabuga spent time in Germany, Belgium, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Switzerland. Eric Emeraux, the head of the OCLCH, France's agency for fighting crimes against humanity, told AFP renewed efforts were made to track down Kabuga two months

ago after new intelligence emerged. Olivier Olsen, head of the association of homeowners in the building where he lived, described Kabuga as "someone very discreet... who murmured when you said hello". He said Kabuga had lived there for three or four years. Kabuga is accused of using his wealth and influence during the genocide to funnel money to militia groups as chairman of the Fonds de Defense Nationale (FDN) fund. According to the US State Department, which has offered a \$5 million reward for information about him, Kabuga through the FDN "is alleged to have provided funds to the interim Rwandan government for the purposes of executing the 1994 genocide".

#### 'Brought to account'

Kabuga was indicted by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1997 on seven counts, including genocide. Among other things, it accused him of having arranged the shipments of "an impressive number of machetes and other weapons to the Interahamwe militia, which were used in the massacres. The tribunal formally closed in 2015.

Its duties have since been taken over by the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT), which also deals with cases left over from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. "The arrest of Felicien Kabuga today is a reminder that those responsible for genocide can be brought to account, even 26 years after their crimes," said Serge Brammertz, chief prosecutor of the MICT in The Hague. He was ordered to be remanded in custody until the judicial authorities can rule on whether or not he should be sent to The Hague to face justice. Kabuga is expected to be tried at the mechanism's branch in Arusha in Tanzania, an official from the prosecutor's office said.

clashed with anti-lockdown protesters. The growing demonstrations have sparked comparison to the anti-Muslim Pegida marches at the height of Europe's refugee crisis in 2015, raising questions over whether the strong support that Merkel is currently enjoying due to her handling of the virus crisis could evaporate.

Just as it won popularity by fanning anti-migrant sentiment five years ago, the far-right AfD party is now openly encouraging protesters and repositioning itself as an anti-lockdown party. A recent poll commissioned by the Spiegel news magazine found that almost one in four Germans surveyed voiced "understanding" for the demonstrations. The development has shocked the political establishment, with Merkel reportedly telling the top brass of her centre-right CDU party of the "worrying" trend that may bear some hallmarks of Russia's disinformation campaigns.

#### 'Vilification'

Germany in March took unprecedented measures to shut down public life. While a huge majority of Germans back the action, giving Merkel's government a big boost in approval ratings, dissent is fomenting, particularly online where YouTube videos championing conspiracy theories or quack medical advice are attracting tens of



Photo shows Felicien Kabuga, one of the last key fugitives wanted over the 1994 Rwandan genocide, who was arrested in a Paris suburb on May 16, 2020. —AFP

#### Two more still at large

The son of peasants, Kabuga grew his business from selling cigarettes and second-hand clothes at markets in his northern home region of Byumba. He expanded by opening businesses in the capital Kigali and by 1993 was already part of the inner circle of then Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, his daughter marrying one of the president's sons. It was the assassination of Habyarimana on April 6, 1994 that unleashed the genocide. Along with former defense minister Augustin Bizimana and top-ranking military figure Protais Mpiranya - both still at large - Kabuga was one of the three most significant suspects still sought over the genocide.

France has long been known as a hiding place for wanted genocide suspects and French investigators currently have dozens of cases underway. The genocide has cast a long shadow over Franco-Rwandan relations. Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, a Tutsi, accuses France of having supported the ethnic Hutu forces behind most of the slaughter and of having helped some of the perpetrators to escape. Last year, President Emmanuel Macron announced the creation of a commission of experts to delve into the French state archives in a bid to set the historical record straight. —AFP



MUNICH: Police officers with horses stand near an unauthorized protest near the official demonstration against the restrictions implemented to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus Covid-19 in Munich. —AFP

thousands of views. Seeking to counter absurd claims, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that although he wasn't a medical practitioner, he could safely suggest that the "uncomfortable and cumbersome face mask is more to be recommended than a tin-foil hat". —AFP

## Homophobic crimes on the rise in France

**PARIS:** Homophobic attacks and insults in France rose by 36 percent last year, according to figures released by the Interior Ministry on Saturday, prompting the government to talk of an "anchoring" of homophobia in the country. The leap comes after 2018 was described as a "black" year by associations with an unequalled level of physical violence against LGBT people.

The new figures, which show a steady increase in offences, come on the eve of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, and 30 years after the withdrawal of homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses by the World Health Organization (WHO). Last year, the police "identified 1,870 victims of homophobic or transphobic offences compared to 1,380 in 2018", representing a "36 percent increase in the number of victims of anti-LGBT acts", the ministry said in a statement.

"These figures testify to the deep anchoring of homophobia and transphobia in society," said the ministry, adding that they form part of a broader increase in "hate acts and identity extremism". Insults constitute 33 percent of the offences, while violence (physical and sexual) make up 28 percent of the complaints. The victims are mainly men - 75 percent - with 62 percent perpetrated against those under 35 years of age. LGBT associations claim that the figures do not tell the whole story as many victims do not report crimes to the police. The SOS Homophobia association is due to publish its own figures on Monday.

The report shows that the incidents of homophobia are spread across the country with 36 percent of the complaints coming in the big cities. "This shows us that there is homophobia throughout the territory, including in rural areas," Frederic Potier, the interministerial delegate for the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and anti-LGBT hatred (Dilerah) told AFP. The world of sport comes under the microscope after several top football matches were interrupted because of homophobic chants from the stands or the display of abusive banners.

The Interior Ministry, which called on Saturday for "increased vigilance by the public authorities" and more effort from society as a whole, recorded around 30 complaints concerning insults or threats made on the internet. French lawmakers on Wednesday approved a controversial bill to ban hate speech on social media, a measure dismissed as censorship by detractors. The law obliges platforms and search engines to remove offensive content - incitement to hate or violence and racist or religious bigotry - within 24 hours or risk a fine of up to 1.25 million euros (\$1.35 million). —AFP

## Alarm in Germany as 'corona demos' take off

**MUNICH:** Angered by a slew of lockdown measures, purported vaccine plans or alleged state surveillance, thousands took to the streets on Saturday in Germany in a growing wave of demonstrations that has alarmed even Chancellor Angela Merkel. Initially starting as a handful of protesters decrying tough restrictions on public life to halt transmission of the coronavirus, the demonstrations have swelled in recent weeks to gatherings of thousands in major German cities. Huge numbers of anti-lockdown protesters, conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxxers or extremists massed across Germany again on Saturday, with more than 5,000 gathering in Stuttgart, at least 1,500 in Frankfurt and around 1,000 in Munich.

"Corona is fake", claimed one poster held aloft in Stuttgart, "Isolation, Masks, Tracking, Vaccine — that's a no go", cried another. Police in Berlin made 200 arrests as scuffles broke out, while in Hamburg, conspiracy theorists

## International

# Ecuador capital braces for worsening spread of virus

## Cemeteries run out of space; Guayaquil stabilizes

**QUITO:** As the coronavirus outbreak in Ecuador's largest city of Guayaquil begins to stabilize, the government is bracing for worsening spread in the highland capital Quito, where at least six people have died in the streets in the past month. Guayaquil was at the center of one of Latin America's worst outbreaks of the novel coronavirus in March and April. Cemeteries ran out of space and families stored relatives' dead bodies in their homes or on the streets as the virus strained the health system's capacity to collect them.

But authorities' attention is now turning to Quito, whose 2.8 million residents are under a strict lockdown to contain the virus' spread. The local government said in a statement on Friday that between April 4 and May 13 it had picked up the bodies of six people who had died in the streets, in addition to seven bodies from homes and two from nursing homes. The government said on Thursday night that 135 of the 164 intensive care beds in the city's public hospitals are occupied, and that it plans to install some 80 more. "Quito's health system is reaching its limit," the city's mayor, Jorge Yunda, said on Friday during the opening of a temporary 380-bed hospital for

coronavirus patients.

Pichincha province, where Quito is located, has registered some 2,400 coronavirus cases and 181 deaths. That is still fewer than southern Guayas province, where Guayaquil is located, where 55% of the country's 31,467 total cases have been registered.

But the deaths in the streets have caused alarm. On May 3 a 60-year-old merchant who had been diagnosed with COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus, collapsed and died after walking just a few meters on the street, Yunda told local media last week.

Despite the strict lockdown in Quito, informal salesmen seeking income to subsist have continued to cluster in many parts of the city. The government has extended the lockdown through May 31, and is implementing a web-based system to help residents locate the nearest place to seek medical attention. Authorities also said they will be working together with funeral homes to avoid delays in cremating bodies. "We have taken all the necessary measures, and we have a plan to deal with deaths at homes and at hospitals," Sebastian Barona, the coordinator of an industry group representing Ecuador's funeral homes said. — Reuters



### Residents under strict lockdown



**QUITO:** An Ecuadorian criminalistics police member verifies the death of a woman who died of unknown causes in a street of Quito amid the new coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

## First virus death in Nepal - a new mother

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal reported its first coronavirus death late Saturday - a 29-year-old woman who recently gave birth - as the total number of people infected in the country reached 281. The victim - who was from Sindhupalchowk district, some 90 kilometers (about 55 miles) from the capital Kathmandu - was on her way to a hospital for treatment when she died.

"It has been proven that is this the first case of death caused by COVID-19 in Nepal," the deputy spokesman for the health ministry, Samir Kumar Adhikari, said in a statement. The woman gave birth at a hospital in Kathmandu on May 6 and then returned to her home district a day later. She was treated at a local hospital after suffering from fever and respiratory problems. When her condition worsened, she was referred to another hospital. Her newborn and other family members will be tested to see if they have contracted the virus, local media reported.

Nepal, which has a population of 28 million, has



**KATHMANDU:** People stand in queues as they wait to be tested for a coronavirus test at Kalimati vegetable market during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. — AFP

conducted fewer than 100,000 tests so far. Experts say the lack of mass testing may have prevented identification of other fatalities. "I don't think this is the first death. There have been cases of deaths where similar symptoms were seen, but the cause was unclear," said epidemiologist Lhamo

Sherpa. "There needs to be more tests, contact tracing... and more transparency." In January, Nepal was the first south Asian country to report a case of coronavirus. The country has been under lockdown since March 24 after a second case was confirmed. — AFP

## Nigerian leader gets Madagascar's virus potion; WHO warns

**ABUJA:** Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Saturday received samples of a herbal concoction that Madagascar claims can cure people infected with the new coronavirus, his office said. Buhari who collected the potion from President Umaro Sissoco Embalo of Guinea Bissau who visited him in Abuja said the native remedy would be scientifically tested before use. "We have our institutions, systems and processes in the country. Any such formulations should be sent to them for verification," he said. "I will not put it to use without the endorsement of our institutions," he added. The virus has so far infected 5,445 people and claimed 171 lives in Africa's most populous nation of 200 million inhabitants. Several other African nations have also expressed interest in the purported remedy, which is known as Covid-Organics.

The drink is derived from artemisia - a plant with proven efficacy in malaria treatment - and other indigenous herbs. But the World Health Organization has warned against "adopting a product that has not been taken through tests to see its efficacy", and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has also said it should be "tested rigorously". Madagascar leader Andry Rajoelina on Monday dismissed criticisms against the herbal concoction, saying the West was against it because it was discovered in Africa. Madagascar's official body in charge of drug control has not approved the drink for sale in the country.

### WHO cautions

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization on Thursday advised governments to clinically test a herbal drink touted by Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina as a remedy against coronavirus. The Covid-Organics infusion is derived from artemisia - a plant with proven anti-malarial properties - and other indigenous herbs. Rajoelina hopes to distribute the infusion across West Africa and beyond, claiming it cures COVID-19 patients within 10 days.

Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Niger have already received consignments of the potion. Others such as Tanzania have expressed interest. But the World Health Organization (WHO) has repeatedly warned that there are no published scientific studies of the herbal tea and that its effects have not been tested. "We would caution and advise countries against adopting a product that has not been taken through tests to see its efficacy," WHO Africa Director Matshidiso Moeti said in a press briefing on Thursday, calling on Madagascar to take the drink "through a clinical trial".

Moeti said that in 2000, African governments had committed to taking "traditional therapies" through the same clinical trials as other medication. "I can understand the need, the drive to find something that can help," Moeti said. "But we would very much like to encourage this scientific process in which the governments themselves made a commitment." Rajoelina defended his tonic during a coronavirus screening campaign in Madagascar's eastern city of Toamasina on Thursday. "The WHO has indicated that artemisia could lead to a cure for coronavirus," the president said, promising to submit the drink to clinical trials. Earlier this week, the WHO recognised artemisia as a "possible treatment" for COVID-19. But the organization also repeated its calls for more rigorous testing. South Africa's Health Minister Zweli Mkhize on Wednesday said Madagascar had reached out for "help" with scientific research. — Agencies



**Fighters loyal to Yemen's Southern Transitional Council (STC) separatists stand in the back of a pick-up truck, bearing the portrait of STC Chief Aidarus Al-Zubaidi, at the frontline during clashes with pro-government forces for control of Zinjibar, the capital of the southern Abyan province. — AFP**

## 14 dead in sixth day of fighting in south Yemen

**ADEN:** Fourteen combatants died in Yemen on Saturday, as fighting between pro-government troops and separatist forces entered a sixth day in the southern province of Abyan, according to sources on both sides. Separatist forces of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) are resisting an offensive by pro-government troops launched on the outskirts of Zinjibar, some 60 kilometers from the main southern city of Aden. "Fourteen fighters, including ten pro-government soldiers, were killed on Saturday," a government military official told AFP on condition of anonymity. The toll was confirmed by a separatist military source, who also claimed the capture of "40 pro-government soldiers and the seizure of military equipment".

"They (pro-government soldiers) were unable to

advance toward Zinjibar and they will only get there over our dead bodies," a separatist commander on the front line told AFP. The offensive was being carried out by the military wing of the Islamist party Al-Islah - allied to the government - according to several sources. The fighting is the first major confrontation since the separatists declared self-rule in southern Yemen on 26 April, accusing the government of failing to carry out its duties and of "conspiring" against their cause. At least ten fighters were killed and many were wounded on both sides in fighting on Monday.

The clashes complicate Yemen's war between the government - backed by a Saudi-led military coalition - and Iran-backed Houthi rebels who control much of the north, including the capital Sanaa. The government and the STC have technically been allies in the long war against the Houthis. But the separatists in the south, which used to be an independent country, have agitated to break away again - a campaign that was temporarily put to rest with a power-sharing deal signed in Riyadh last November. Over the past six years, the Yemen conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, and triggered what the United Nations considers to be the world's worst humanitarian crisis. — AFP

## Trauma endures of South Korea's Gwangju Uprising

**GWANGJU:** It is 40 years since Choi Jung-ja saw her husband, who has been missing since South Korea's military dictatorship killed hundreds of people when they crushed the pro-democracy Gwangju Uprising, a scar that burns in the country's political psyche to this day. On May 18, 1980 demonstrators protesting against dictator Chun Doo-hwan's declaration of martial law confronted his troops and 10 days of violence ensued. But conservatives in the South still condemn the uprising as a Communist-inspired rebellion backed by the North, while left-leaning President Moon Jae-in wants to enshrine it in the constitution.

Choi's husband was 43 when he left their house in the southern city to buy oil for a heater at the family pub, never to return. Once the violence was over Choi frantically searched for him, even opening random coffins in the streets covered with blood-stained Korean flags. "I couldn't continue after opening the third coffin," she told AFP. "The faces were covered with blood - there were no words to describe them. The faces were unrecognizable." She still takes medication to deal with the trauma, she said, and curses whenever Chun appears on television.

### 'Fuel for the fire'

There is no agreed toll for Gwangju, with reports of secret burials both on land and at sea. The military remaining in power for another eight years offered ample opportunity to dispose of the evidence. Official bodies point to around 160 dead - including some soldiers and police - and more than 70 missing. Activists say up to three times as many may have been killed. But the search for justice has gone through multiple twists and turns and Gwangju is one of the most politicized historical events in a viciously polarised country. The South is still technically at war with the nuclear-armed North. At the time of the Gwangju Uprising, Chun's military regime described it as a rebellion led by supporters of then-opposition leader Kim Dae-jung, who comes from nearby Sinan, and pro-Pyongyang agitators. Kim was arrested, convicted of sedition and sentenced to death. But the penalty was commuted under international pressure and he was granted asylum in the US, before being elected president himself in the 1990s after the restoration of democracy and winning the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize. — AFP

## International

# Trump vs Biden: First it was wild - then came COVID-19

## Coronavirus throws the race into surreal confusion

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's reelection battle against Joe Biden was always going to be wild—and then came the coronavirus, killing nearly 90,000 Americans, scuttling the economy and throwing the race into surreal confusion. Less than six months before election day, neither candidate can campaign normally, voters wonder whether they'll be safe, and Trump suddenly faces what amounts to a referendum on his handling of a once-in-a-century crisis. "We really don't know how this is going to play out," politics professor Christopher Arterton at George Washington University told AFP.

Four months ago the narratives of the 2020 election seemed clear. Touting record low unemployment and solid GDP growth, Trump promised four more years of a presidency molded on his persona of the hard-nosed businessman. Biden, milking nostalgia for the now seemingly calm years of his vice presidency under Barack Obama, vowed to end the scandals and division of Trump's reality show-style administration and restore "the soul of America." Biden, 77, led in polls, but many believed that Trump, 73, would seize the upper hand on November 3.

The last incumbent to lose reelection was George Bush in 1992 and, historically, presidents presiding over strong economies are almost invulnerable. Exuding macho self-confidence, Trump toured the country for political rallies with his

adoring right-wing base, and delivered a seductively simple message: aggressive nationalism abroad, jobs at home. How, Trump openly wondered at his rallies, could the man he brutally insults as "Sleepy Joe" even compete? Then the coronavirus tore up the script. Trump wanted America praising his triumphs. In-

stead, his fate rests on how people will judge his handling of a disaster.



**Deadly virus kills nearly 90,000 in US**

stead, his fate rests on how people will judge his handling of a disaster.

### Referendum election

"This election will be primarily a referendum on President Trump," said Allan Lichtman, a presidential historian at American University renowned for his accurate predictions of previous contests. The COVID-19 crisis poses a test of leadership at least as high-stakes as the 9/11 attacks in 2001 or the massive 2008 recession. And Trump thinks he's more than passed. "I'd rate it at 10," he responded when asked once to grade his perform-

ance. But many don't agree.

They don't like his divisive political style, his only rare demonstrations of empathy, and the haphazard marshalling of federal resources on testing and treatment. According to the latest CBS poll, 57 percent of Americans think Trump has done a "bad job." In March the number was 47 percent. This might seem a golden opportunity for Biden. Instead, like millions of Americans, he has been locked down at home. Although Trump has had to give up his beloved rallies, he still gets out occasionally on Air Force One and frequently dominates evening news broadcasts from the White House.

Biden, by contrast, has gone no further than his Delaware home's garden, while relying on amateurish video platforms to communicate. Yet ironically, Trump's massive advantage may be working partly in Biden's favor. Yes, Trump is in the spotlight, but what he does there enrages half the country. "It has exposed all his flaws that were apparent throughout his presidency, but are much more immediate now in the lives of Americans," Biden spokesman Michael Gwin said. In other words, Biden doesn't have to lift a finger. "There is an old saying," Lichtman noted: "Never interrupt an opponent when he is making a mistake."

### Wild cards

Most days Biden rips the president on Twitter, as he did Thursday, saying Trump



This combination of pictures shows former US vice president Joe Biden and US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY). Progressive rising star Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has been named as a co-chair of a new task force aimed at unifying the party's more liberal wing with moderates in support of White House hopeful Joe Biden. — AFP

"failed the American people on every single front." But Gwin said the Democrat is wary of trying to out-attack the attacker-in-chief. "We need to present a better alternative." While the latest polls show Biden still ahead nationally, US presidential elections are decided by electoral college votes, meaning the result will likely come down to a handful of swing states like Florida and Wisconsin. Polling there is tighter and Trump could retain the presidency even while winning fewer votes nationally than Biden—as happened in 2016 against Hillary Clinton.

And just one of a half dozen wild cards

could make the difference. Will economic recovery start in the third quarter, as Trump predicts, allowing him to sell a powerful message of renewal? Will there be a foreign policy drama, perhaps a showdown over North Korea's nuclear arsenal or conflict with Iran? What role will Russia play after sowing discord and misinformation in 2016? Will tension with China, which Trump is working overtime to make the coronavirus bogeyman, trigger a devastating new trade war? But the biggest wild card, almost certainly, will be Trump himself. How far will he go in a last-ditch fight? — AFP

## US Democrats probe ouster of watchdog

WASHINGTON: Congressional Democrats have launched a probe into President Donald Trump's "politically-motivated" dismissal of a government watchdog believed to have been investigating Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The announcement came after Trump told House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi late Friday that he planned to dismiss State Department Inspector General Steve Linick. It was Trump's third abrupt dismissal of an official tasked with monitoring governmental misconduct and abuse since April, and drew criticism even from members of his own party.

"The firings of multiple Inspectors General is unprecedented; doing so without good cause chills the independence essential to their purpose," tweeted Republican Mitt Romney. "It is a threat to accountable democracy and a fissure in the constitutional balance of power." Romney continued. Two senior Democrats - Senator Bob Menendez and congressman Eliot Engel - said in a statement they "unalterably oppose the politically-motivated firing".

The lawmakers said Linick had apparently "opened an investigation into wrongdoing by Secretary Pompeo himself," and said the firing was "transparently designed to protect Secretary Pompeo from personal accountability ... and may be an illegal act of retaliation." A Democratic congressional aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Linick was probing complaints that Pompeo inappropriately used a political appointee to perform personal tasks for himself and his wife Susan.

CNN, citing a senior State Department official, reported that Pompeo himself had recommended the firing and hand-picked Stephen Akard, a former aide to Vice President Mike Pence, to succeed Linick. By law, the administration must give Congress 30 days' notice of its plans to terminate an inspector general, in theory giving lawmakers time to study the move - and protest if warranted. "A general lack of confidence simply is not sufficient detail to satisfy Congress," warned Republican senator Chuck Grassley.

But previous such firings have gone through unimpeded, and those dismissed have been replaced by political allies of the Republican president. Engel, who heads the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, requested that the White House and State Department turn over records related to Linick's dismissal. They also asked to see files for IG investigations "involving the Office of the Secretary that were open, pending, or incomplete at the time of Mr Linick's firing."

### Dog-sitting and takedown

Pompeo has raised eyebrows for frequently traveling the world on his government plane with his wife, who has no official role. CNN reported last year that a whistleblower had complained that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which guards US missions overseas as well as the secretary of state, had been assigned questionable tasks for the Pompeos, such as picking up takeout food or tending to the family dog. The State Department confirmed Linick's firing but did not comment on the reason - or on whether Pompeo was under investigation. A State Department spokesperson also confirmed that the new inspector general would be Akard, an attorney who served as a foreign affairs advisor to Pence when the latter was governor of Indiana. — AFP

## Brazil's coronavirus death toll tops 15,000

SAO PAULO: Brazil's COVID-19 death toll passed 15,000 on Saturday, official data showed, while its number of infections topped 230,000, making it the country with the fourth-highest number of cases in the world. With 15,633 deaths and 233,142 confirmed cases, Brazil - whose president Jair Bolsonaro has dismissed the disease as a "little flu" - is at the epicenter of infections in Latin America. Experts say under-testing means the real figures could be 15 times higher or more, and warn the worst is yet to come. The sprawling South American country registered 816 deaths and 14,919 new cases in the past 24 hours.

Despite the rising tolls, Bolsonaro on Saturday attacked lockdown measures taken by some governors to contain the spread of the virus. "Unemployment, hunger and misery will be the future of those who support the tyranny of total isolation," the far-right president tweeted, a day after Health Minister Nelson Teich resigned after less than a month on the job. The president insists business closures and stay-at-home orders are unnecessarily damaging the economy. The pandemic has already claimed almost 310,000 lives worldwide.

### Hospital in Amazon

Meanwhile, Peru said it will construct a fast-build hospital in the Amazon as it seeks to respond to a growing COVID-19 emergency sweeping through the indigenous population. State social security body EsSalud said it expects the 100-bed hospital in Pucallpa, capital of the remote Ucayali region on the border with Brazil, to be operational within three weeks. "EsSalud will install a fast-build hospital in Ucayali to serve COVID-19 patients," the government

## Chile capital silenced amid lockdown over COVID-19 surge

SANTIAGO: With near-deserted streets and police checks, the seven million people of Chile's capital, Santiago, began a strict quarantine Saturday after a sharp resurgence of coronavirus cases. Normal activity in the capital was down 85 percent, the government said, as people were only allowed to leave their homes for essential food and medicine and a short period of exercise.

"Blocks and blocks of the city are completely empty and we can take it that this is a good start," Health Minister Jaime Manalich told reporters at Santiago airport after a fly-over of the city. Long lines of cars caused gridlock Friday evening as people streamed out of capital for the coast, 100 kilometers (60 miles) away, hours before the lockdown came into force at 10:00 pm (0200 GMT). The lockdown order, announced by Manalich on Wednesday and due to last at least a week, dealt a blow to earlier hopes the South American country could reopen its economy following evidence it had flattened the curve.

New infections had reduced to between 350 and 500 a day in late May, leading to the government of conservative President Sebastian Pinera relaxing some restrictions, and allowing businesses and stores to reopen. However, new cases have doubled in the past 10 days. Having remained below 1,000 a day last month, the daily average has shot up to well over 2,000 new



MANAUS: This file aerial picture shows a burial taking place at an area where new graves have been dug up at the Nossa Senhora Aparecida cemetery in Manaus, in the Amazon forest in Brazil, during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

body said in a statement late Friday.

The Peruvian Amazon is already facing a dire emergency, with hospitals in its largest city Iquitos overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients and local morgues unable to cope with the number of bodies. The government said it would rush 220 healthworker reinforcements to the Amazon. "We have been working intensively to expand the services and provide hospitals in the Peruvian Amazon with all the necessary means to care for patients with COVID-19," said Federico Tong Hurtado, a spokesman for the social security services.



SANTIAGO: Photo shows an aerial view of an empty road in Santiago, amid mandatory total quarantine due to the new coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

infections a day. The South American country had 41,428 infections by Saturday, with 421 deaths - 27 of those fatalities coming in the previous 24 hours.

Santiago has reported 80 percent of the country's cases, amid concern that the country's emergency services were already operating near their limit. "We have kept the case fatality rate close to 1 percent, but when we see a greater number of people infected, obviously the number of deaths also increase," said Arturo Zuniga, a health ministry official with responsibility for care networks. Some patients have been transferred to a hospital in the southern city of

Concepcion to free up intensive-care beds in the capital ahead of expected increased demand in the coming weeks, authorities said.

Santiago's main avenues were almost entirely deserted on Saturday. Supermarkets and small neighborhood grocery stores remain open, though the numbers of people entering was being strictly limited. Some people walked their dogs in the 30 minutes available for them to do so. Police limited access to the city's main La Vega market which normally draws large crowds on Saturdays. Police and military also stepped up checks on drivers to examine travel permits. — AFP



## Business

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020

**10** Ukraine workers skirt lockdowns to rescue European crops, farms**11** Boursa Kuwait net profits soar by 307% to KD 9.6 million in 2019**11** JC Penney files for bankruptcy

DETROIT: In this file photo, workers leave FCA Chrysler Warren Truck Assembly after the Detroit three automakers agreed to UAW demands to shut down all North America plants as a precaution against coronavirus, in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

# Detroit's 'Big 3' begins to motor back up

## Factory workers wary as worries over deadly coronavirus persist

DETROIT: Detroit's auto giants are keen to resume production this week, but there will be unease on assembly lines where social distancing is difficult and worries about the deadly coronavirus persist.

Motor City carmakers insist they are taking precautions to protect employees for the ramp-up that marks a key moment in the attempted relaunching of the US economy. But not everyone is convinced.

"I am expecting a bumpy ride," said one United Auto Workers official, who asked for anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The "Big Three," which have the experience of relaunching in Asia, have set their US restart for May 18. That is the same day Tesla has been cleared by local regulators in California to resume full production following a faceoff between public health officials and brash Tesla boss Elon Musk that apparently was resolved with a compromise on enhanced safety measures. Unlike California, Michigan has been the site of armed marches to the state capitol in protest over restrictions imposed by Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Under pressure from the state's automotive suppliers and carmakers, she modified her stay-at-home orders to allow for the resumption of manufacturing with social distancing.

After effectively shutting down in March to combat the deadly virus, US carmakers say they are now ready to get back to business. "Above everything else, our top priority has always been to do what is right for our employees," Fiat Chrysler CEO Mike Manley said in a statement this week.

"We have worked closely with the unions to establish protocols that will ensure our employees feel safe at work and that every step possible has been taken to protect them."

### Safeguarding plants

The monumental tasks at FCA includes sanitizing 57 million square feet of production space and implementing new disinfection schedules to maintain hygiene. Some 4,700 work stations were modified to allow for social distancing. Temperature checks and daily health self-screening are required for all employees and visitors; start times will be staggered; and break and lunch times will be altered to increase social distancing. Everyone will have to wear face masks and safety goggles, FCA officials said.

Manley said FCA was using what it has learned from opening plants in China and Italy as it resumes production in the US, Mexico and Canada. General Motors and



Not everyone is convinced about reopening

Ford have described similar measures.

Jim Glynn, a vice president for workplace safety at GM, said on a conference call that workers will follow a strict protocol each day beginning with filling out a questionnaire and having a temperature scan.

"We have not had one case of person-to-person spread among our employees" when the rules have been followed at GM's plants in Asia and at US plants now making medical equipment, Glynn said. However, none of the companies will test employees regularly. Kiersten Robinson, Ford's chief human resources officer, said during a conference call there is not enough capacity for regular tests.

### Good enough?

Lack of testing is an issue for the UAW, which has stopped short of endorsing the industry's return to work model. The union also pressed GM, Ford and FCA to relax their policies on absenteeism so workers will stay home or self-quarantine if they feel ill. "While it is the companies that have the sole contractual right to determine the opening of plants, we have the contractual right to protect our members, and we will do so at all costs," said UAW President Rory Gamble. "We have made it clear in our talks that we are asking for as much testing as possible at the current time."

Gamble has praised Whitmer's stay-at-home orders that have sparked gun-toting protests outside the state capitol building Michigan. The state has had about 50,000 confirmed coronavirus cases and nearly 4,800 fatalities. The union's reticence is due in part to the fact more half of GM, Ford and FCA workers are over 50. Also, nearly three dozen auto workers have died from COVID-19, according to the UAW. "I'm personally not ready to return to work and feel they are rushing to get us back into the plant to make a profit at the expense of those working there," said one anonymous worker in a Facebook post, adding that it is "almost impossible" to socially distance at an auto plant facing ambitious production targets. —AFP

## Amazon hit from all sides during virus crisis

SAN FRANCISCO: As Amazon becomes an increasingly important lifeline in the pandemic crisis, it is being hit with a wave of criticism from activists, politicians and others who question the tech giant's growing influence. Amazon has become the most scrutinized company during the health emergency. It has boosted its global workforce to nearly one million and dealt with protests over warehouse safety and reported deaths of several employees. But Amazon has also pledged to spend at least \$4 billion in the current quarter—its entire expected operating profit—on coronavirus mitigation efforts, including relief contributions and funding research.

Amazon's AWS cloud computing unit, which powers big portions of the internet, is also a key element during

the crisis with more people and companies working online. Amazon's market value has hovered near record levels around \$1.2 trillion dollars as it reported rising revenues and lower profits in the past quarter.

"Its sheer size justifies the scrutiny," said Dania Rajendra of the activist group Athena, a coalition which is focused specifically on Amazon's corporate activity and treatment of workers.

Athena activists fret that Amazon, which also controls so many aspects of people's lives. Ranking many activists, the rise in Amazon's shares has boosted the wealth of founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos to over \$140 billion even as the global economy has been battered by the virus outbreak. Amazon has faced employee walkouts at several facilities over safety and hazard pay and has been accused of firing people for speaking out against the company. "It's a minority going on strike but the sentiment represents thousand if not hundreds of thousands," said Steve Smith of the California Labor Federation.

While Amazon has boosted base pay to \$15 an hour, above the minimum wage required, and added bonuses

during the pandemic, activists say it's insufficient, especially in high-cost states like California.

"This company can afford to make these jobs middle class jobs, good jobs," Smith said.

The tensions have spilled over into the US capital Washington and elsewhere. US lawmakers leading antitrust investigations asked Bezos to respond to reports that the company improperly used data from third-party sellers to launch its own products, which the company has denied. New York state Attorney General Letitia James called Amazon "disgraceful" for firing a warehouse employee who led a worker protest over safety. Amazon said the employee refused to quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19.

In a statement to AFP, Amazon defended its actions on workplace safety, social distancing and noted that it is implementing its own employee testing program.

The company also disputed claims it was stifling employee speech. Spokeswoman Lisa Levandowski said the employees in question were dismissed "not for talking publicly about working conditions or safety, but for repeatedly violating internal policies." —AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo, Amazon workers at Amazon's Staten Island warehouse strike in demand that the facility be shut down and cleaned after one staffer tested positive for the coronavirus in New York. — AFP



## Business

# Boursa Kuwait net profits soar by 307% to KD 9.6 million in 2019

## Company's Board of Directors proposes dividend of 25 fils per share

**KUWAIT:** Delivering an exceptional performance in 2019, Boursa Kuwait announced its financial results for the year ended 31 December 2019 with net profits of KD 9.6 million, an approximately 307 percent increase in comparison to the corresponding period in 2018, when the company recorded profits of KD 2.35 million.

The company's total assets came in at approximately KD 36.19 million, which is a 41 percent increase over its 2018 total of KD 25.6 million, while shareholder equity increased from KD 22.5 million in 2018 to KD 32.1 million for the year ended 31 December 2019.

Boursa Kuwait's Board of Directors has proposed the distribution of a final cash dividend of 25 fils per share, which is subject to shareholders' approval at the Annual General Meeting. Earnings per share came in at 48.5 fils, as compared to 14.5 fils in 2018.

Boursa Kuwait's Chairman Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi commented: "Boursa Kuwait has recorded an increase of over 307 percent in net profits in comparison to net profits for 2018, which is considered the highest since its establishment. This comes as a result of the continuous market developments and reforms we have diligently rolled out over the past few years, which has led to significant progress in our journey to become a prominent stock exchange in the Middle East and a capital market ranked by the most prominent international providers of equity, fixed income, hedge fund stock market indexes, and multi-asset portfolio analysis tools."

Boursa Kuwait's operational and regulatory improvements led to the enhancement of the Kuwaiti capital market. Trading operations

improved substantially during 2019, with the "All-Share" closing at 23.68 percent, while the "Main Market" index recorded gains of 32.44 percent, which placed it at the forefront of the GCC markets and among the highest performing markets across the world in 2019.

The periodic review of the FTSE Russell index for Kuwait and the increase in its weight in Emerging Markets index helped attract foreign cash flows to the market, as did the inclusion of Kuwaiti companies in the S&P Dow Jones Emerging Markets index in September 2019 and the announcement of Kuwait's reclassification to an Emerging Market in the MSCI index in December 2019, which has undoubtedly reinforced the nation's position as a leading exchange.

In 2019, the Kuwaiti capital market witnessed an increase in the value of shares traded, amounting to 7.937 billion Kuwaiti dinars in 2019 compared to 4.138 billion Kuwaiti dinars traded during 2018. The number of traded shares increased by almost 80 percent during 2019, to reach 39.04 billion shares, compared to 21.71 billion shares traded during the year 2018.

The company became the only stock exchange in the Middle East owned by the private sector after finalizing its privatization process over two phases. The first phase of privatization kicked off in February 2019, when a consortium comprised of



Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi



**Total assets increase to KD 36.19m**

## Carmaker Kia closes Algeria assembly line

**ALGIERS:** South Korean carmaker Kia will shut down its assembly line in Algeria from Sunday due to supply chain disruptions after authorities imposed a ban on the import of spare parts. "Work will be interrupted from May 17" at the factory in the town of Batna, northeast of the capital Algiers, according to an internal company message published by employees on Facebook this week.

Around 1,200 people were employed at Batna, where production was launched in 2018 with a reported capacity of around 50,000 vehicles, although not more than 10,000 were ultimately assembled there. There was no immediate confirmation from the company.

The decision to halt production comes after the government announced on Sunday it would indefinitely ban the import of spare parts used in assembly lines. The ban was expected to deal a heavy blow to Algeria's nascent automobile industry, which revolved around the "semi knocked-down" or SKD kits system. Launched in 2014, the SKD method consisted of vehicle part kits that were imported from the producer and then assembled.

Use of the system aimed to reduce the import bill in Algeria at a time when oil revenues were dropping as global prices fell. But it apparently had an opposite effect and was surrounded by domestic corruption scandals last year in Algeria.

## JCPenney files for bankruptcy

**NEW YORK:** US department store JCPenney, which has not turned a profit since 2011, on Friday became the latest American retailer to be pushed into bankruptcy by the coronavirus pandemic. The iconic business said it was filing for Chapter 11, a mechanism which allows a company that can no longer pay its debts to restructure.

The group, based in Plano, Texas, will close some stores across the US as a result, it said in a statement. It has \$500 million in cash and has received financing commitments of \$900 million from lenders, it added. The company missed a debt interest payment in April, fueling rumors of an impending bankruptcy. "The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for our families, our loved ones, our communities, and our country," chief executive officer Jill Soltau in a statement.

"The American retail industry has experienced a profoundly different new reality, requiring JCPenney to make difficult decisions in running our business," she continued. "Until this pandemic struck, we had made significant progress rebuilding our company... While we had been working in parallel on options to strengthen our balance sheet and extend our financial runway, the closure of our stores due to the pandemic necessitated a more fulsome review to include the elimination of outstanding debt," Soltau said. —AFP

## Investors gear for more US stock swings

**NEW YORK:** Investors are bracing for more turbulence in US stocks as some states prepare to reopen their economies and global trade tensions rise. The Cboe Volatility Index, known as Wall Street's fear gauge, posted its biggest weekly gain in about two months, reflecting the S&P 500 index's 2.6 percent slide from its April 29 high. VIX futures have jumped as well, with investors pricing elevated risk into June contracts.

Whether recent losses in stocks resulted from profit taking after April's swift rally or were the start of a prolonged decline may become more apparent in weeks to come, investors said. Many are watching progress of US states trying to reopen their economies without fueling a resurgence in coronavirus cases. Parts of New York, Virginia and Maryland moved toward lifting lockdowns on

## Mexico speeds up auto sector reboot

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico's automotive industry can exit the coronavirus lockdown before June 1 if companies have approved safety measures in place, the government said on Friday, seeking to set the record straight after sending out confusing signals on the restart.

The announcement in the government's official gazette means that from as early as next week automakers can begin reconnecting supply chains between Mexico and the rest of North America, which depends heavily on parts made south of the US border. "If the process is concluded and approved before June 1, the relevant company or industry will be able to begin its operations," the government said, warning, however, that companies which put workers' health at risk would be shut down.

Mexico's automotive industry wants to get safety protocols in place as quickly as possible despite concerns about bringing production back online too soon. On Wednesday, the government of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador indicated the auto sector would start reopening on Monday, and published advice to that effect in its gazette.

The government later withdrew that advice without clarifying

Friday, and Connecticut and Minnesota are set to ease restrictions in the coming week.

"We don't know what the new normal will be," said Alessio de Longis, portfolio manager at Invesco. "The managing of expectations will lead to some false steps along the way." For now, a pile-up of worrying domestic and international news prompted investors to pull back on equities after the S&P 500 in April notched its best monthly gain in decades.

U.S. President Donald Trump has ratcheted up rhetoric on China, floating the possibility of cutting ties with the world's second-largest economy. The White House on Friday moved to block shipments of semiconductors to Huawei Technologies Co Ltd from global chipmakers, which could put pressure on a global economy already suffering its deepest contraction in decades.

Hopes for a speedy return to normal took another hit when California's state university system canceled classes for the fall semester because of the coronavirus and Los Angeles County said its stay-at-home order was likely to be extended by three months.

unequivocally whether it would affect the restart dates. Then, on Thursday, it published new instructions indicating the industry would not be allowed to reopen until June 1. Senior US politicians and auto companies have pressed the Mexican government to reopen factories, and the conflicting statements stirred concern about disruptions.

Fausto Cuevas, director general of Mexican automaking lobby AMIA, said his members aim to be able to tell suppliers by the weekend that they are meeting the new safety requirements. "The sooner we can align ourselves with our trading partners in the US and Canada, the closer we'll be to resolving this situation (coronavirus) created," he told a Senate committee.

### Shortages

The US Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association on Friday thanked Lopez Obrador for his efforts to ramp up vehicle and parts production in Mexico, and said its members were working to put in place the safety protocols. "Allowing motor vehicle parts manufacturing to take steps toward reopening will be a critical component to economic recovery," it said in a statement. Still, Germany's Daimler AG said Friday it would idle its Mercedes-Benz sport utility vehicle assembly plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, next week because of a parts shortage.

An industry source said the decision was taken due to a lack of parts from Mexico. Daimler has not clar-

ified that. General Motors Co Chief Financial Officer Dhivya Suryadevara said the situation would be "fluid" up to the restart, but that the company aimed to start a majority of its operations next week under strict safety measures.

The coronavirus outbreak is still intensifying in Mexico, with new infections and confirmed deaths reaching their highest daily totals this week. Mexico registered its first confirmed cases weeks after Canada and the United States. The health crisis has worried some in Mexico, including a few lawmakers in the president's National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) that the government is moving too quickly to reopen. At the

same time, parts of the auto industry had begun preparing for a restart on Monday, saying they regarded the government's statement pointing to May 18 as having legal force. Lopez Obrador said on Friday that according to experts' projections, the pandemic would begin easing in the worst-hit areas of the country in the coming days. "We're seeing the light at the end of the tunnel to return to the new reality," he said in a regular news conference. Friday's government directive referred to manufacturers of transportation equipment, as well as the mining and construction industries, which the government has designated essential. —Reuters



**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico's automotive industry can exit the coronavirus lockdown before June 1 if companies have approved safety measures in place, the government said on Friday.

market turmoil.

Andrew Graham, managing partner at Jackson Square Capital in San Francisco, has focused on stocks he believes can maintain high dividend yields, especially within the pharmaceutical industry. His firm owns shares of Bristol-Myers Squibb Co, AbbVie Inc and Merck & Co Inc.

Investors will also watch the US Treasury Department's first auction for its 20-year bond on Wednesday. Treasury plans to borrow a record amount of nearly \$3 trillion this quarter.

Some investors said they were likely to keep equities at a slight underweight in their portfolios given the likelihood of further declines. Dave Lafferty, chief market strategist at Natixis Investment Managers, believes the recent stock rally did not factor in the likelihood of businesses operating below their usual capacity even if states reopened their economies.

"Yes, there's going to be a strong growth rate from the bottom, but the place we're getting back to is going to be subpar for a while," Lafferty said. "Are stocks priced for subpar growth? I think they aren't." —Reuters

## Researchers go 'cuckoo' over penguin poop

**COPENHAGEN:** Antarctica's king penguins emit such copious amounts of nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, via their faeces that researchers went a little "cuckoo" studying them, according to a Danish scientific study. "Penguin guano produces significantly high levels of nitrous oxide around their colonies," said the head of the study, Professor Bo Elberling, of the University of Copenhagen's Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management.

While studying colonies of king penguins on the Atlantic island of South Georgia between South America and Antarctica, "the researchers went 'cuckoo' from being surrounded by penguin poop", he said. Besides being a strain on the climate, nitrous oxide has an effect very similar to the sedative laughing gas used at the dentist's. "After nosing about in guano for several hours, one goes completely cuckoo. One begins to feel ill and get a headache," Elberling said.

Nitrous oxide is 300 times more polluting to the environment than carbon dioxide. The nitrous oxide is explained by the penguin diet of krill and fish, which contains high levels of nitrogen. Nitrogen is released from the penguins' faeces into the ground and soil bacteria then convert it into nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas. "While nitrous oxide emissions in this case are not enough to impact Earth's overall energy budget, our findings contribute to new knowledge about how penguin colonies affect the environment around them, which is interesting because colonies are generally becoming more and more widespread," Elberling said. — AFP

## Spraying disinfectants can be harmful: WHO



**AMRITSAR:** Volunteers spray disinfectant at Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport after the government eased a nationwide lockdown imposed as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus. — AFP

**GENEVA:** Spraying disinfectant on the streets, as practiced in some countries, does not eliminate the new coronavirus and even poses a health risk, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Saturday. In a document on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces as part of the response to the virus, the WHO says spraying can be ineffective. "Spraying or fumigation of outdoor spaces, such as streets or marketplaces, is... not recommended to kill the COVID-19 virus or other pathogens because disinfectant is inactivated by dirt and debris," explains the WHO.

"Even in the absence of organic matter, chemical spraying is unlikely to adequately cover all surfaces for the duration of the required contact time needed to inactivate pathogens." The WHO said that streets

and pavements are not considered as "reservoirs of infection" of COVID-19, adding that spraying disinfectants, even outside, can be "dangerous for human health". The document also stresses that spraying individuals with disinfectants is "not recommended under any circumstances".

"This could be physically and psychologically harmful and would not reduce an infected person's ability to spread the virus through droplets or contact," said the document. Spraying chlorine or other toxic chemicals on people can cause eye and skin irritation, bronchospasm and gastrointestinal effects, it adds. The organization is also warning against the systematic spraying and fumigating of disinfectants on to surfaces in indoor spaces, citing a study that has shown it to be ineffective outside

direct spraying areas. "If disinfectants are to be applied, this should be done with a cloth or wipe that has been soaked in disinfectant," it says.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus, the cause of the pandemic that has killed more than 300,000 people worldwide since its appearance in late December in China, can attach itself to surfaces and objects. However, no precise information is currently available for the period during which the viruses remain infectious on the various surfaces. Studies have shown that the virus can stay on several types of surfaces for several days. However, these maximum durations are only theoretical because they are recorded under laboratory conditions and should be "interpreted with caution" in the real-world environment. — AFP

CLINIC

PAGE







248 33 199

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

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

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





1808088 taibahospital.com

fb tw in

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY



Dr. Huthayfah Bin Nekhi  
Consultant Orthopedic



Dr. Waleed Altnaib  
Consultant Orthopedic



Dr. Hamad Al Hazzan  
Orthopedic Surgery Consultant



Dr. Jamil Qaddouri  
Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Wael Al Raiss  
Orthopedic Surgery Consultant



Dr. Mohammad Agha  
Orthopedic Surgeon Specialist



Dr. Manimara Chozhan  
Orthopedic Surgery Specialist



1808088 taibahospital.com

fb tw in

CLINIC

PAGE



Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally  
Senior Registrar



Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid  
Consultant



Dr. Abeer Khattab  
Specialist



Cataract Surgery



Glaucoma



Retina



General Ophthalmology



Follow-Up All Treatments



Tel: 1828282

Whatsapp Us

+965-6000 2184

To advertise on this Page



Call: 24833199 ext:101,102

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617

or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali

Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon.

Membership of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.

10 years work experience in Zain Hospital MOH Kuwait.

Ex Head of ENT department in Farwaj Hospital MOH Kuwait

10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.

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





1 888 883

www.qmc-kuwait.com

fb tw in

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!



Dr. Kiran Turaka  
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zareena Zahir  
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hasan Khan  
Senior Cardiologist



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



50721507

24551555

www.exircenterkw.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER

Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

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

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

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

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

**Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122**

@Malhajry

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

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

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

SHARQ, Ahmad Aljaber st., Building 04, Floor 13.  
Tel: (+965) 22060777  
@Drbuhaimed, @Renovebb, @dardonabb  
Email: drbuhaimed@beautybeyond.com.kw  
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

Renova  
BEAUTY & BEYOND

**To advertise on this Page**

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

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa

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

**Specialized in:**

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

alsalam.int.hospital

**Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

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

**Experienced In:**

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

2536 0000  
www.royalehayat.com

مستشفى زوال الحياة  
ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL

**IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC**

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

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

**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant

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

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

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

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**

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

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

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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

## Lifestyle | Features



This undated photo released by The Inn at Little Washington shows mannequins set up in the restaurant's dining room in Washington, Virginia. —AFP photos



Mannequins costumed in 1940s era clothing are seated in the dining area of the Inn at Little Washington, a Michelin three star restaurant in the Virginia countryside, in Rappahannock County.

## Dinner with dummies: US eatery fills empty seats with mannequins

Their eyes are vacant, their smiles uncanny — but they're dressed to the nines and they don't need a reservation for some of America's finest dining. A Michelin-starred restaurant in the US state of Virginia has found a fun — or creepy, depending on your tastes — way to enforce social distancing when it reopens at the end of May: costumed mannequins seated among the breathing guests. "When we needed to solve the problem of social distancing and reducing our restaurant's occupancy by half, the

solution seemed obvious — fill it with interestingly dressed dummies," says chef Patrick O'Connell, owner of The Inn at Little Washington, in an e-mail to AFP.

"This would allow plenty of space between real guests and elicit a few smiles and provide some fun photo ops," he adds. The Inn, which says it is "known for being reverently irreverent" and which also happens to be the only restaurant with three Michelin stars in the Washington, DC area, is scheduled to

reopen May 29. The theatrical, life-sized mannequins are dressed to evoke the post-war ambience of the 1940s, with pearl necklaces, checkered dresses and striped suits.

The glamor needs to suit the rest of the Inn, whose sprawling grounds are distinguished by features such as a chicken coop complete with crystal chandelier, and where a tasting menu can cost each guest \$248 before the drink. The Inn has collaborated with local businesses to provide the staging, costumes and

make-up for the mannequins, strategically placed at tables which must remain empty. "We're all craving to gather and see other people right now. They don't all necessarily need to be real people," O'Connell mischievously points out. "I've always had a thing for mannequins — they never complain about anything and you can have lots of fun dressing them up," he adds. Unlike the real guests. —AFP

## Tributes paid after death of Beatles photographer Astrid Kirchherr

Tributes emerged Saturday for German photographer Astrid Kirchherr, whose striking images of The Beatles in the early 1960s helped turn them into cultural icons, following the announcement of her death this week aged 81. Kirchherr passed away on Wednesday in Hamburg a few days before her 82nd birthday, Beatles historian Mark Lewisohn confirmed Friday. "Her gift to the Beatles was immeasurable," he said on Twitter, describing Kirchherr as "intelligent, inspirational, innovative... smart, loving and (an) uplifting friend to many". Those close to her told several German media outlets, including the weekly Die Zeit and NDR public television, that she had died after a serious illness.

Beatles drummer Ringo Starr took to social media to pay his own tribute. "God bless Astrid a beautiful human being and she took great photos," he said. Kirchherr met and befriended the band in 1960 during a tour in Hamburg, before they achieved worldwide fame. "My whole life changed in a couple of minutes," she is quoted as saying. At the time, the group was made up of five members: John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison, as well as bassist Stuart Sutcliffe and drummer Pete Best, who was later replaced by Starr.

### Mop-top hairstyles

Sutcliffe fell in love with Kirchherr and stayed on in Hamburg, but died from a brain haemorrhage in 1962. She later married and divorced twice, but had no children, The Guardian reported. Kirchherr went on to take numerous photos of the group, showing



Picture taken on October 6, 2000 in Itzehoe, northern Germany, shows German photographer Astrid Kirchherr posing in front of one of her photographs depicting British musician and Beatles member John Lennon. —AFP

them both as rebels and romantics. She later lived mainly off the reproduction rights of the pictures, NDR said. She was also said to have worked as a stylist and interior designer and opened a photography shop. Kirchherr was behind the group's so-called mop-top hairstyles of the early 1960s.

The photographer later kept in touch with The Beatles, Harrison in particular. Dhani Harrison, his son and himself a musician, posted a message to Kirchherr on Twitter alongside a photograph of her. "Dearest Astrid, I really wish I could have spent more time with you in this life," he said. "You were always so kind and loving towards me. May God bless you always." Last month saw the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' unofficial break-up, with the so-called "Fab Four" still seen as influential pop music pioneers half a century later. The band remain the best-selling music artists of all time, with enduring hits from "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "Hey Jude" to "Yesterday" and "Let It Be" familiar to at least four generations of fans. —AFP



(From left) Rai, Klaus and Guillem of the Stay Homas music group perform on the terrace of the trio's apartment in Barcelona. —AFP photos

## How lockdown spelled stardom for 3 play-at-home musicians

When the epidemic hit, they were just three musicians stuck at home who started larking around on their terrace with a guitar and a bin in the hope of livening up lockdown. But two months and 27 songs later, the Barcelona trio has become a rooftop sensation, their catchy tunes in a mix of Spanish, Catalan and English winning them an impressive following online — and a contract with Sony. Known as the "Stay Homas", Klaus, Rai and Guillem now have 400,000 followers on Instagram, Michael Buble has covered one of their songs and they have collaborated with Manu Chao and Pablo Alborán. And their first album will be out this autumn. "Not in a hundred lifetimes would I have ever believed this was going to happen to us. That Sony would come knocking because they like the songs we make on our rooftop with a guitar and a metal rubbish bin," Guillem Bolto, 25, told AFP at their flat. "It's completely incredible."

Since the start of the year, the three have shared an attic flat in Barcelona whose hallway is now full of beers and freebies sent in by brands whose products appear in their videos. They play in two local bands: Bolto sings and plays trombone in one, while Klaus Stroink, 25, plays trumpet in another with 28-year-old bass player Rai Benet. But they never wrote anything

together until the March 14 lockdown when they found themselves at a loose end while having a beer in the sun on the roof in Barcelona's Ensanche neighbourhood. "Rai started playing bossanova-style and mucking around and we started to put together a song which we recorded and put online," explains Bolto sitting on the terrace next to pots of cacti. It was a hit, so the next day they recorded another called "Stay Homa" which they took as their name. Another followed and then another.

### 'Please stay homa, don't want corona'

At first, they were recording every day in what they named their "Confinement Songs". "It was out of our hands pretty quickly because people were more and more enthusiastic which really motivated us. Suddenly it just exploded," Bolto said. And over the past two months, they've touched on everything from reggae to folk, flamenco to trap, always in a lighthearted manner and with a sense of humour. "Please stay homa (please stay home), don't want the corona (please stay home), Oh God please stay homa (please stay home) It's ok to be alone," they lyricise in the track from which they took their name. The idea was to "give a sort of positive message which says OK, this is a shitty situation but let's try and find some good in it," says Stroink



Rai of the Stay Homas music group smiles on the terrace of the trio's apartment in Barcelona.



Klaus of the Stay Homas music group poses on the terrace of the trio's apartment in Barcelona.

With all the restrictions, it has been a barebones project, they say, making music "on the cheap" with whatever was lying around the house — a cardboard box, an empty gin bottle, a metal wastepaper bin, a spatula. "Very little has been planned in this project," admits Stroink. "We're using a bin because we don't have drums, if we had drums we'd play them. For the first three weeks we only had one drumstick."

### 100,000 followers in a week

Their tunes have drawn many collaborators who record themselves at home — then send their video which is shown on a mobile phone as the trio performs their latest song. Even so, it took them a while to set up a website and a social media profile — because they worried they wouldn't have any followers. "Within a week, we had more than 100,000 followers — 100,000!" chuckles Benet. But it's a bitter-sweet feeling, coming at a bad moment for the music industry with so many people out of work. And the sudden fame is "a bit overwhelming", Stroink says. "I'm doing just fine with my friends, with my people and I don't want that to change. —AFP

## US comedian Fred Willard passes away aged 86

Four-time Emmy award-winning comedian Fred Willard, who appeared in films including "Anchorman" and "This is Spinal Tap" and television shows such as "Modern Family," has died aged 86, his agent announced Saturday. Tributes poured in for the actor, with long-time friend and fellow showbiz veteran Jamie Lee Curtis tweeting "Thanks for the deep belly laughs Mr. Willard." "Fred Willard was the funniest person that I've ever worked with. He was a sweet, wonderful man," tweeted actor Steve Carrell. Willard himself had just paid homage to two other showbiz legends, singer Little Richard and fellow comedian Jerry Stiller, who also passed away this month.

"A bad time! Just getting over the loss of Little Richard, and now I learn my old friend Jerry Stiller has passed away. He was a good friend and a very funny man," he wrote on May 11, in the last thread on his Twitter account. "I met him in the 60s when we played in the same clubs in The Village as he and Anne Meara. Unfortunately for us, they were much funnier! We couldn't be jealous, so we became good friends instead." Modern audiences knew Willard as the TV father of actor Ty Burrell's character Phil Dunphy on ABC's hit sitcom "Modern Family." But his decades-long career saw him make audiences laugh in ensemble films such as "Waiting for Guffman," "A Mighty Wind" and "Best in Show." Earlier audiences encountered him as Jerry Hubbard, sidekick to actor Martin Mull in the 70s talk show spoof "Fernwood Tonight." Willard's stage career began when he moved to New York in the late 1950s. His initial work included a production of "Desperate Hours" at a local YMCA, where he worked with future comedy partner Vic Grecco.

They later performed under the moniker Willard & Grecco in the Greenwich Village area. The comedy



In this file photo taken on November 07, 2013, actor Fred Willard poses on arrival for the AFI Fest opening night gala screening of Disney's 'Saving Mr. Banks' in Hollywood. —AFP

duo found some success touring and made appearances on "The Dean Martin Show," "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour," and "The Tonight Show." Willard also had a recurring role as Hank MacDougall on the later seasons of CBS's "Everybody Loves Raymond." He was cast as a sportscaster in the television series "Back to You," which premiered on the Fox Network in 2007. The Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters presented Willard with the Art Gilmore Career Achievement Award at their celebrity luncheon in 2015. His agent, Mike Eisenstadt, did not specify the cause of Willard's death, nor his whereabouts at the time. —AFP

## Scarface reboot penned by Coen bros set in Los Angeles

A reboot of classic gangster movie "Scarface" scripted by the Coen brothers and set in Los Angeles is moving forward with a new director at Universal Pictures, a source familiar with the deal told AFP Thursday. The film will be directed by Oscar nominee Luca Guadagnino ("Call Me By Your Name") and will be the third big-screen take on the blood-soaked immigrant underworld story. The original 1932 movie directed by Howard Hawks — itself based on a novel partly inspired by Al Capone's life — depicted Italian mafia in Chicago.

The action was transplanted to Miami in Brian De Palma's 1983 hit movie, starring Al Pacino as ruthless Cuban refugee Tony Montana, who builds a criminal empire based on cocaine. The new film will reimagine "the core immigrant story" told in both the 1932 and 1983 films. In adapting the story once again, Joel and Ethan Coen ("Fargo") follow in the footsteps of Oliver Stone, who won plaudits for his flashy and ultra-violent screenplay for the second version — which included Pacino's immortal line "Say hello to my little friend." The multiple Oscar-winning Coen brothers wrote the latest version of the script based on previous drafts for the long-gestating project. —AFP



In this file photo actors F. Murray Abraham, Al Pacino and Steven Bauer arrive at the release of "Scarface" On Blu-ray at the Belasco Theatre on August 23, 2011 in Los Angeles, California. —AFP



Lorenzo Saa is pictured as he works on his creation for May 14 - his 56th daily effort since the UK's lockdown began - at his home in north London.—AFP photos



Lorenzo Saa is pictured as he works on his creation for May 14 - his 56th daily effort since the UK's lockdown began - at his home in north London.



Lorenzo Saa is pictured looking at the photos posted of his previous creations, at his home.

## Prickly pastime: Cactus inspires lockdown art project



What do a match-studded turnip, celeriac embedded with coffee capsules and a kiwano melon decorated with lollipops and pins have in common? All are the brainchild of a British man trying to keep busy during lockdown, reproducing the shape of the novel coronavirus from everyday objects. "The idea started a bit randomly," Lorenzo Saa told AFP at his flat in north London. "I have a cactus at the house, one of these beautiful round ones, and it sat there and I looked at it and it made me think of all these images that we were seeing of COVIDs. "And so I had some felt balls, I put them on the cactus, and it was like, 'Oh my God, this is COVID-19.'"

### Supporting local communities

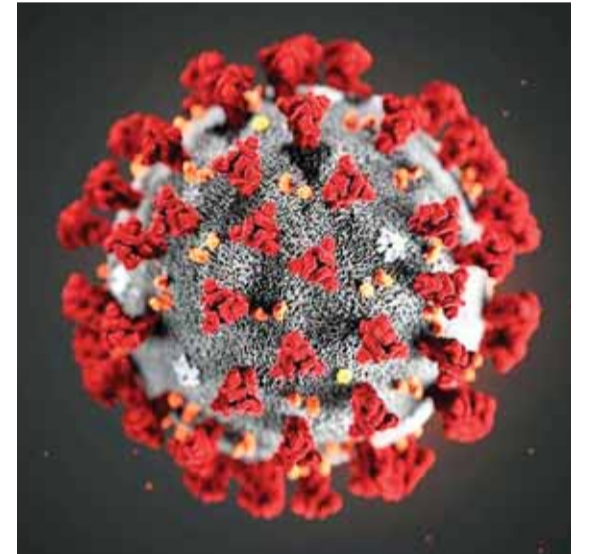
Saa, who works for an investment consulting firm, spends four hours a day on his increasingly inventive creations before posting them to a dedicated Instagram account, covid19replicas. Most of his creations start with a round fruit or vegetable, to which he adds everyday objects to depict the different-sized stalks of the virus. So far he has used items including candles, radishes, buttons, flowers, cloves, dried pasta and incense sticks.

With the exception of the incense sticks, Saa has made it a point of principle to try to eat all of his creations, and views it as a way of staying healthy and supporting the community. "Fruit and vegetables... are much better for the environment, plus they're better for your health," he said. "It's health, it's environment, it's local communities that you actually support by shopping there and not shopping at chains."

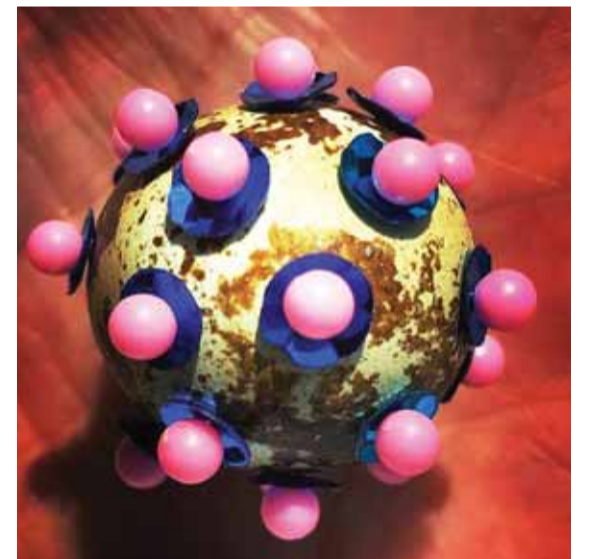


### 'Divert the absence'

Britain entered coronavirus lockdown in late March as the virus took hold. More than 33,000 people have now died — the second-highest toll in the world. Restrictions were eased slightly this week in England, with indications of a downward trend in cases, hospital admissions and deaths. Saa said it had been a struggle to keep coming up with new ideas as the days passed. An iced version and another with light bulbs are in the pipeline. But he said the project has kept him occupied. "I think having a project is key in mental health, and I think this has helped my mental health," he added. "I'm a very social person, so I needed something to help me divert the absence of something that was important for me, which was the social connection to people."—AFP



Lorenzo Saa's art creations are seen.



## Mythical monster goes viral as Japan prays for end of pandemic

Move over Pokemon and Hello Kitty, in coronavirus-hit Japan, a new character has captured hearts and hopes: Amabie, a beak-nosed, long-locked mythical mermaid monster said to repel plagues. In recent weeks, the mash-up monster has become the unlikely mascot of hopes for an end to the pandemic, emerging from relative obscurity to become a trending Twitter hashtag, as well as the inspiration for everything from cakes to nail art. Her revival in fortunes was sparked in early March, when the Kyoto University Library tweeted an 1846 drawing of the creature floating above the sea, accompanied by a text explaining her apparent infection-fighting powers.

The scaly social media star is supposed to have appeared to a samurai in southern Kumamoto prefecture, warning of the spread of an infectious disease and instructing him to draw a picture of her and show it to people to protect them. The post quickly went viral, and sparked the "Amabiechallenge", with everyone

from amateurs to artists posting their renditions of the mythical monster. The long-locked legend has also sparked an outpouring of creative content, including an udon dish featuring Amabie in the form of a fish sausage emerging from a bowl, with the traditional wheat noodles for her hair. She has also found herself immortalized in bento form, her body and distinctive beak carved from a piece of luncheon meat and hair represented by thin strips of Japanese rolled omelette. Amabie is part of a rich pantheon of Japanese mystical monsters called yokai. Many have faded from popular imagination, but others live on, including in the form of modern-day mascots like the turtle-inspired river monster Kappa, now associated with Tokyo's famed kitchen street Kappabashi.

### Amabie-themed cakes

Amabie's recent revival has come as something of a surprise to some yokai experts, including Masanobu Kagawa of the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History. "Amabie is not the oldest yokai in Japanese history to warn of an epidemic, so it's not that important to researchers," he told AFP, describing others including "Jinja-hime" (shrine princess), who features a woman's face and a dragon's body. But none seem to have captured the imagination quite like Amabie. At one Japanese cake shop in northern Akita prefecture, a version of her rendered as a traditional wagashi cake in pastel pinks and blues has been flying off the shelves, sales manager Hirohide Kato told AFP. "This is the first time we've made Amabie-themed cakes," he said. They can only produce 250 a day, but "they're so popular they sell out by noon."

And at an aquarium in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, a sea lion who has gained fame for his calligraphy and painting skills has been trained to draw the monster. "He started drawing Amabie in late March, practicing

for about a month," keeper Sae Ishino told AFP. "We perform the drawing of Amabie hoping the pandemic of the new coronavirus will come to an end soon."—AFP



This photo shows florist Yuko Kawakami displaying her drawing (bottom) of Amabie, a beak-nosed, long-locked mythical mermaid monster said to repel plagues, at her shop in Tokyo.—AFP



This undated handout image shows the mythical mermaid monster Amabie accompanied by text which reads in Japanese and English "You will spread (the virus) without knowing. STOP spread of infections — COVID19".

## Virus permitting, Bolshoi hopes for September curtain-up

The legendary Bolshoi Theatre, whose dancers and singers are currently under virus lockdown, hopes to hold its first performances in September, the general director Vladimir Urin told AFP on Friday. Under his "optimistic scenario," rehearsals will begin in late July, allowing performers enough time to limber up their skills, Urin said. "I very much hope that in mid-September we will open the season." Nevertheless, Urin stressed the Bolshoi will not be able to open until Russia's last virus restrictions are lifted, while the country has the second-highest number in the world of COVID-19 infections, with 262,843 cases.

Even if audiences could socially distance and wear masks, those on stage cannot, he pointed out. "A musical theatre with masks and gloves and a distance of 1.5 metres (five feet) is impossible." The Bolshoi, like other Moscow theatres, has not staged any shows since March 16 when public events involving large numbers of people were banned. Speaking in a box overlooking the Bolshoi's historic red-and-gold auditorium, 73-year-old Urin said he still goes in most days and makes plans, albeit provisional ones.

It is the performers who are chafing in confinement as they waste time at their peak, he said. "More than half a year's break is a serious professional problem... especially for ballet." "Of course the mood is not very good and of course they are all longing to return and start rehearsing." The government has just announced 3.8 billion rubles (\$51.5 million) in extra funding for the arts, and Urin said the theatre has enough savings and ongoing support to survive. "I think everything will be OK," he said. "Naturally, the Bolshoi Theatre wasn't doing badly while we were working, so we have a small financial cushion (and) we've kept the whole state subsidy." —AFP

# Obama: Leaders 'aren't even pretending to be in charge'

WASHINGTON: Former US President Barack Obama on Saturday criticized the response to the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging America, in what was widely regarded as a rare public rebuke of his successor Donald Trump. His remarks came as he spoke at two virtual commencements for high school and university students locked down instead of celebrating their graduations, a rite of passage every spring in the United States.

"More than anything, this pandemic has fully, finally torn back the curtain on the idea that so many of the folks in charge know what they're doing," Obama told graduates from several dozen historically black colleges and universities at the first ceremony. "A lot of them aren't even pretending to be in charge," he said as he discussed the implications of the pandemic during the online event, without naming any specific leaders.

That celebration was followed by a second, star-studded prime-time ceremony for high school students in which Obama continued along the same lines, telling students to step up where leaders had failed. "If the world is going to get better, it's going to be up to you," he said.

"Doing what feels good, what's convenient, what's easy - that's how little kids think. Unfortunately, a lot of so-called grown-ups, including some with fancy titles and important jobs, still think that way - which is why things are so screwed up," he continued. "I hope that instead, you decide to ground yourself in values that last, like honesty, hard work, responsibility, fairness, generosity, respect for others."

The ceremony, carried by all the major American television networks, flashed between stirring speeches and performances students and celebrities alike, including basketball superstar LeBron James and singers the Jonas Brothers. James echoed Obama's call for the students to step up, urging them to "Stay close to home" and help rebuild communities devastated by the virus and shutdowns.

## Uncertain future

The US leads the world with coronavirus cases and deaths, at 1.4 million and nearly 90,000, respectively. This year's graduates face a grim reality: The US unemployment rate has shot up to nearly 15 percent and more than 36 million people have filed for unemployment benefits as America grapples with the fallout from months of lockdown and business closings.

The gravity of Obama's message was underscored by the fact it was the second time in a week he had hit out at the response to the pandemic, having pointedly refused to criticize Trump in public in the three years since leaving office. He kept his profile low despite being frequently attacked by the president.

But on May 9, in remarks leaked from a web call with people who worked in his administration, he called Trump's handling of the pandemic a catastrophe. "It would have been bad even with the best of governments. It has been an absolute chaotic disaster when that mindset - of 'what's in it for me' and 'to heck with everybody else' - when that mindset is operationalized in our gov-



In this screengrab, former US President Barack Obama speaks during Graduate Together: America Honors the High School Class of 2020 on Saturday. — AFP

ernment," he said in that call.

In his comments Saturday, Obama also highlighted how the health crisis has underscored racial inequality in America, and expressed outrage at the shooting death of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, killed on Feb 23 while out for a jog in Georgia. "A disease like this just spotlights the underlying inequalities and extra burdens that black communi-

ties have historically had to deal with in this country," he said at the first ceremony.

"We see it in the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our communities. Just as we see it when a black man goes for a jog and some folks feel like they can stop and question, and shoot him, if he doesn't submit to their question," he continued, without naming Arbery. — AFP

## Canada parliament goes virtual during pandemic

OTTAWA: Canada's parliament has gone virtual through the pandemic, assembling MPs across six time zones and giving a rare peek at Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's bookcase, a deer head and a stifled opposition. Every Tuesday and Thursday over the past month 338 Canadian MPs logged into Zoom from home to question ministers in lieu of holding a daily in-person question period.

The first sessions were marred by glitches - "Can you hear me now?" "There's an issue with the translation." "The minister is being cut off." "Please unclick your mute." "You might also hear my son, he doesn't sound too happy, in the background." "This is a historic day," Speaker Anthony Rota said when it began, while admonishing MPs over sounds of camera clicks "not to post photos on the Internet of the screen," as per parliamen-

tary rules.

A few others including the British and Latvian parliaments have also gone online to limit person-to-person spreading of the COVID-19 virus. "We cannot be vectors for the virus," New Democrat MP Peter Julien told AFP, explaining why his party pushed for this arrangement to maintain democracy in a crisis. "The only way to ask questions on behalf of constituents and hold government accountable without endangering the public is a virtual parliament," he said.

Critics such as Democracy Watch co-founder Duff Conacher lamented that it has diminished the role of the official opposition, while the minority Liberal government of Trudeau uses daily press briefings to discuss policy. "It's very difficult in these mass virtual sessions to put a minister or the prime minister on the spot," Conacher said, describing the sessions as "chaotic". He also warned of the risk of abuse if parliamentary oversight is curtailed.

## Accountability and oversight

The official opposition Tories had from the start objected to the virtual confabs. "Mr. Trudeau should not be using a pandemic to avoid account-

ability and oversight and should not be eliminating the role of the peoples' representatives," leader Andrew Scheer said Friday. But the prime minister, with the backing of New Democrats and the Bloc Quebecois, had said it would be irresponsible to have regular sittings while public health officials urged social distancing.

Thirty MPs also meet each Wednesday in person - striking "a balance that is yielding very good results," Trudeau said. No legislation except emergency spending bills have been passed during the nationwide lockdown. A ban on assault weapons was enacted by executive order after a mass shooting in Nova Scotia. Western provinces, which elected mostly Conservatives, say they're not seeing their priorities reflected in the Liberal agenda. And the government has racked up Can\$325 billion (US\$230 billion) in pandemic aid.

Working from home in a suburb of balmy Vancouver, Julien doesn't miss Ottawa, which had flurries this week. "It's nice spending more time in Vancouver," he said. But his days are longer as he deals with a surge in constituents' concerns such as job losses, and challenges of politicking by phone across 5,500 kilometers (3,400 miles) from coast to coast.

"When people are scattered across the world's largest democracy (geographically) it takes longer to actually get people on the phone," he said, versus walking down the hall to MPs' offices in Ottawa "for a quick face-to-face meeting." Now, an MP in Newfoundland might start work at 8:30 am local time, when it's 4 am in British Columbia.

A committee report released on Friday called for setting up a "secure electronic voting system" for the virtual parliament to fully function. It noted that Zoom also did not provide sufficient security for in-

ness to de-escalate the situation". "During the pandemic, we must partly rely on common sense and responsible actions" by travelers, the Southwest spokesman said.

In short, the airlines appear to have chosen the course of conciliation over confrontation with insistent and sometimes angry traveler - even it means a greater health risk to others sitting nearby. The wearing of masks has to some extent been politicized by President Donald Trump, who has refused to wear one, in the face of virtually unanimous medical advice and even after some White House staff members have contracted the coronavirus.

Scientists say the risk of infection is near its highest when people spend long periods in enclosed spaces - like airplanes. Not to wear a mask on an airplane "is hugely irresponsible", said Jonathan Metzl, a professor of sociology and psychiatry at Vanderbilt University, in Tennessee. "I think if someone doesn't wear a mask on a plane, they should be arrested."

Deciding not to wear a mask in one's own car is one thing, Metzl said, but refusing to do so while in public transport is a different matter. "I think that President Trump and the Republicans have successfully coded a mask as a political symbol," he added. "They're basically rallying their base by suggesting that wearing a mask is a sign of submission, or that people who wear masks are weak."

Beth Redbird, a sociology professor at Northwestern University, has been studying Americans' behavior during the pandemic. "Republicans who are skeptical of Donald Trump support social distancing," including the wearing of masks, she said, while "independents who are supportive of Donald Trump are skeptical of social distancing."

On Thursday, the chairman of the House transportation committee, Peter DeFazio, urged the airlines to "leave at least one seat-width of spacing between passengers". In a letter to a group representing the major airlines, he said they could "adjust fares as needed" to account for emptier planes. — AFP

## Coronavirus crisis punctures Tunisia...

Continued from Page 1

country's national tourism office has estimated, and some 400,000 jobs are at risk.

The sector had been bouncing back to levels not seen since before the 2011 revolution that toppled longtime autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. "Tunisia had started off the year well, with an increase in (tourism) revenue of 28 percent," said Feriel Gadhomi, a coordinator at the tourism office. But that all came to a halt in March as countries imposed travel restrictions and border closures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

Now, seaside resorts are empty and hoteliers are trying to salvage what they can of the season, counting on the country's relatively optimistic health situation and sector-specific virus prevention measures. While most hotels have shut for now, some are providing accommodation for people in compulsory quarantine, notably Tunisians repatriated from abroad.

The tourism ministry is preparing protocols for facilities that reopen, with some planning to do so from June. Measures are expected to include temperature checks at hotel entrances, rooms being disinfected and left empty for 48 hours between guests and the intensive cleaning of common areas. Such steps are necessary to "regain the trust of partners", Gadhomi from the tourism office said.

The UN World Tourism Organization has warned that international tourist numbers could drop by 60 to 80 percent in 2020. The sector accounts for around 14 percent of Tunisia's GDP, according to the tourism ministry. Other changes could include offering fixed menus instead of buffets and giving guests the same tables and umbrellas for the length

of their stay, hotel sales manager Anis Souissi said. Clients will focus "on health and hygiene", he added.

But it is unclear whether hotels, some of which are already on the edge of bankruptcy, will be able to make the necessary investments. Even before the pandemic struck, a series of crises had weakened Tunisia's tourism sector. After the political instability that followed the fall of Ben Ali, attacks in 2015 targeted European holidaymakers at the Bardo museum in Tunis and the coastal tourist resort of Sousse. The attacks killed 60 people, many of them British tourists, and dealt a heavy blow to the sector.

The security situation has greatly improved since then, and tourist numbers last year had returned to pre-2011 levels, with 9.5 million visitors. But the collapse in September of British tour operator Thomas Cook, which brought five percent of Tunisia's European tourists, shook some hotels. Thomas Cook had suspended trips to Tunisia after the attacks, but had returned in force in the last two years.

Now, the sector is searching for ways to survive, as the coronavirus crisis persists and as passenger flights from Europe, Tunisia's main market, are expected to remain grounded for much of the summer. Although thousands of foreigners remain stuck in the country due to border closures and flight suspensions, their presence won't be nearly enough. Instead, hoteliers have their eyes set on local tourists, as well as Algerian or Russian holidaymakers who helped dampen the previous crises.

But domestic tourism accounts for just 20 percent of Tunisia's market, and many locals have seen their income and holiday allowances disappear during the lockdown. Bringing more bad news, Algeria has been seriously affected by the pandemic and reopening its borders is not envisaged in the short term, while Russia currently has the second-highest number of reported infections in the world. "Targeting the local market and preparing for the next season are the only choices we have," sales manager Souissi said. — AFP

Tens of thousands of migrant laborers were quarantined in Doha's gritty Industrial Area after a number of infections were confirmed there in mid-March, but authorities have begun to ease restrictions. Khal said that most new cases were among migrant workers, although there has been a jump in infections among Qataris. He said the country had not yet reached the peak of its contagion. Rights groups have warned that Gulf laborers' cramped living conditions, communal food preparation areas and shared bathrooms could undermine social distancing efforts and speed up the spread of the virus. — AFP

## Masks a must in Qatar on...

Continued from Page 1

prepares to host the 2022 World Cup, although foremen and government inspectors are attempting to enforce social distancing rules. Officials have said workers at three stadiums have tested positive for the highly contagious respiratory virus. Masks have been compulsory for construction workers since April 26.



Stars

**Daily SuDoku**

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

medium

**Friday's Solution**

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

very hard

STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

Do you think your body reflects who you are, Aries? If you're feeling that it doesn't, it's probably because something is a little off about your self-image. Take a close look at yourself in order to readjust that image. You'll recognize that your body is the exact mirror of who you are at the moment. The alignment of the planets will help you see this more clearly now.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

Was someone close to you rude without any provocation? Were you the target of unpleasant criticism? You take these slights to heart. Beginning today, and throughout the days to come, you can expect to withdraw and lick your wounds. That's easy enough when all you have to do is ignore phone calls and emails. You need more harmony and gentleness in your love life. Be patient!

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

Has it been difficult these past few days to communicate with those close to you? Are you a little skeptical about your charm? In fact, have you been feeling somewhat unsure of yourself in general? The day ahead is excellent for a fresh start. You're full of confidence. You have a natural gift for diplomacy, and your sense of refinement will once again be noticed and appreciated.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

Having a personal opinion on any question isn't hard at all, Scorpio. More difficult is maintaining some respectful objectivity about the opinions of others. The current celestial energy is marking a change toward a more scientifically oriented mindset. This is no longer the moment to affirm yourself but rather to learn from others. Opinions can change based on reliable information.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

It has been fairly easy for you to detect the truth behind most situations lately. Today, however, your analytical abilities won't be so reliable. The ups and downs of your relationships are puzzling, and no amount of analysis seems to yield a solution. Lack of commitment from others may stir doubt, and you'll wonder if you're truly appreciated and understood. Be gentle with yourself.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

Enough of thinking about yourself, Sagittarius! The hour has now arrived to draw some conclusions. You're at the end of the lengthy volume you were writing on your inner life. You'll have to integrate what you've learned with the different emotions and situations that you currently inhabit. "Normalization" will be the key word in the days to come. Look at this as a dry run for when we all emerge from lockdown.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

How intense the past few days have been! You could spend months just reflecting on these recent experiences. But the mood isn't conducive to introspection right now. A change of temper today encourages you to share your life more generously. But with whom will you share it? And how, given the limitations of social distancing? These may well be the questions of the day.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

Seduction through words is your real power, Capricorn. You have a great talent for anything involving words. So you're going to be able to attract even more virtual admirers today! The physical part will have to wait. With the current planetary energy at work, you'll surely get first prize in any contest of words. If you've been thinking about writing a love letter or a profile for a dating website, by all means, do so now!

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

The day ahead may help you break away from the gloom and doom that so many people are experiencing right now. A more playful influence is trying to make its way into your relationships, especially your emotional commitments. It could refresh your interest in your love life. If you haven't been spending enough quality time with your partner, you'd better make up for it now. Your mate will be overjoyed.

**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**

With today's celestial energy, you'll feel like you're on vacation, Aquarius. This planetary configuration often gives people the feeling of a fresh mind and calm disposition. Problems that once seemed so complicated now appear simple and surmountable. You could also have some fun writing. Try it. You may be surprised by the results.

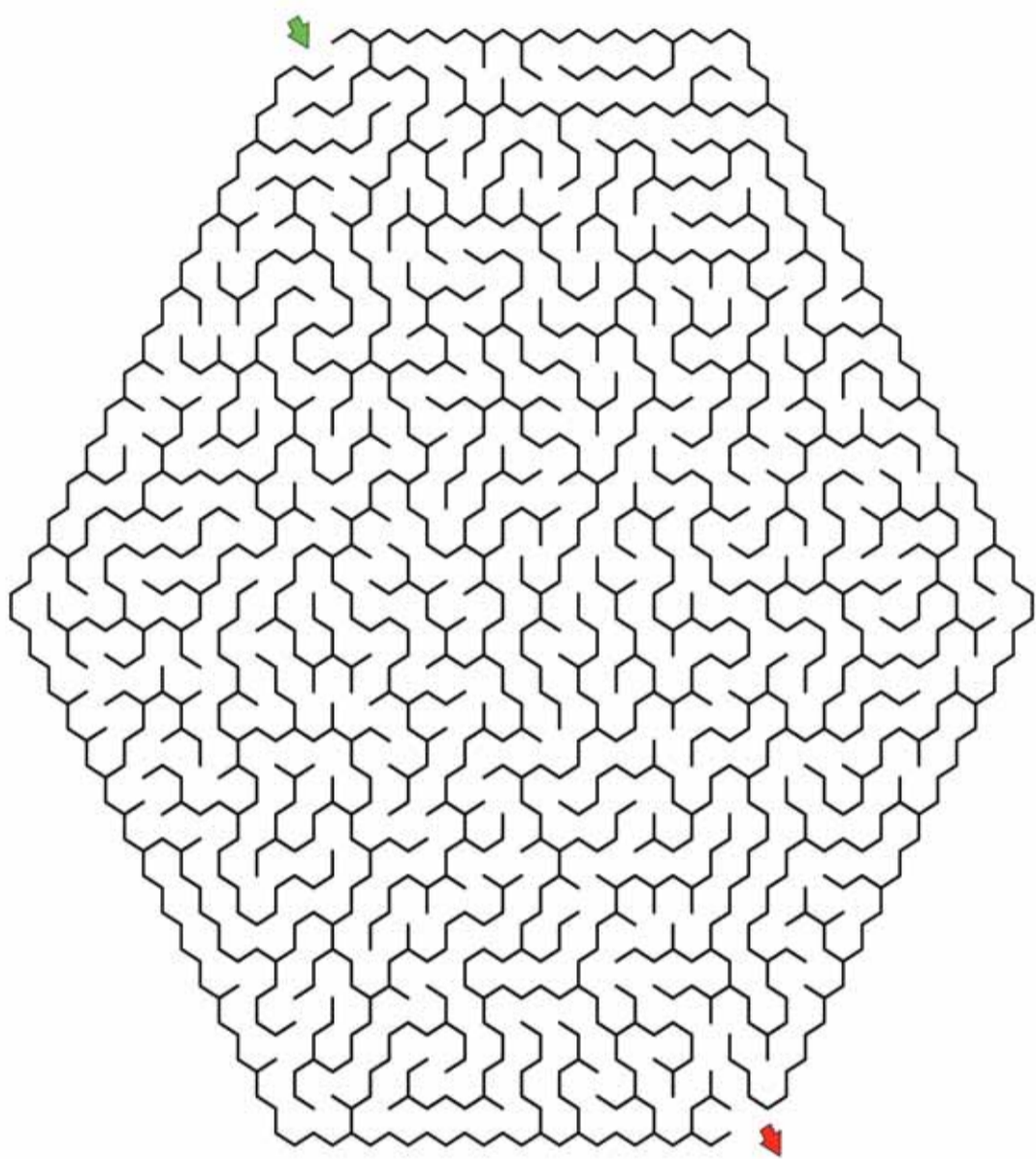
**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

Sometimes you feel like you're navigating through a thick fog, but the obscurity will finally lift today. The skies ahead are sunny and clear! You can expect an invitation to step outside of yourself (while still sheltering in place, of course) or an offer to join a special group. Don't pass up any opportunities to have fun, Virgo. You can benefit from a diversion right now!

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

Do you say yes every time someone asks for a favor, Pisces? Is it sometimes hard to find time for yourself because you're so busy coming to the rescue of a friend or family member? Today's celestial energy asks you to think about you. Say no to the expectations of people who have other resources. Do absolutely nothing if that's what you wish. Take care of yourself before taking care of everyone else!

Find the way



Join the dots



Word Search

**Leap for LEAP DAY**  
February 29th, 2020

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

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

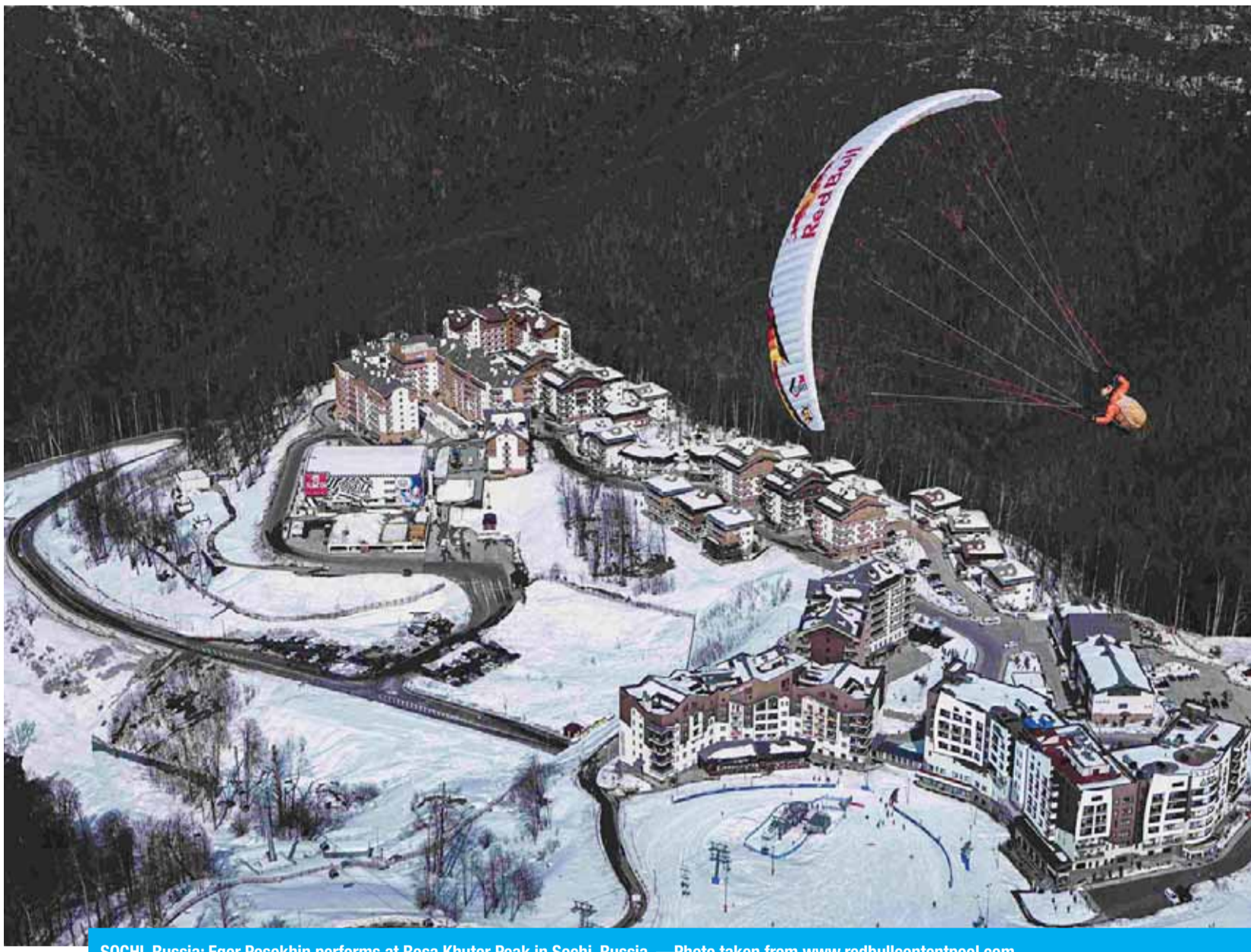
**Words to Find:** ACCURACY, CALENDAR, DAY, EXTRA, FEBRUARY, FOUR, LEAP, LEAPLINGS, REVOLUTION, SUN, TWENTY-NINTH, YEAR

**BONUS Words:**

- Find five synonyms for the word leap.
- Find five animals that leap.

## Sports

Photo of the day



SOCHI, Russia: Egor Posokhin performs at Rosa Khutor Peak in Sochi, Russia. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## N Zealand gives sports sector \$157m boost

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's struggling sports sector has received a NZ\$265 million (\$157 million) injection from the government to help it mitigate some of the worst financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sports Minister Grant Robertson said yesterday.

Robertson, who is also New Zealand's finance minister and delivered the national budget on Thursday, said funding and revenue had dried up for nearly all sports organisations and that they were under "immense strain".

"We are providing the support needed to sports at all levels to remain viable, get stronger and adapt," Robertson said in the post-budget statement.

"We have also seen many of our professional sports and athletes struggle as competitions have been cancelled or suspended. Budget 2020 will provide some assistance, so they can keep competing."

The funding would be spread over four years, with NZ\$83 million made immediately available for "short-term support". A further NZ\$104 million would be available in the medium term to help the sector rebuild, while the remaining NZ\$78 million would be for the development of new programmes that help communities get back into activity and recreation.

All levels of organised sport have been on hold since March when New Zealand went into a national lockdown to attempt to contain the spread of the disease, restricting exercise to walking, running or cycling alone.

The government loosened restrictions in April and then eased them further on Thursday, allowing the resumption of professional sport, although fans will not be able to attend matches. Community and club sports competitions are still on hold, with organisations told by government body Sports NZ to enter a "get ready" phase to prepare for a return.

Health officials reported one new coronavirus infection yesterday, bringing the total to 1,499, of which 1,149 are confirmed. Only 45 are still considered active cases. There have been 21 deaths from COVID-19, the disease caused by the new virus. —Reuters

## Jordan memorabilia soars in value amid 'Last Dance' nostalgia

## Will we ever crack the \$1 million mark?

NEW YORK: The immense global success of the documentary "The Last Dance" amid the coronavirus lockdown has boosted sales of collectibles related to NBA icon Michael Jordan, some of which are trading in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"Timing is everything," says Jordan Geller, a collector who will be richer by at least \$240,000 thanks to the sale at Sotheby's of a pair of Air Jordan 1 sneakers — the first model created especially by Nike for Michael Jordan, who made his NBA debut in 1984.

The game-worn pair could set an auction record for sneakers set last year by Nike's Moon Shoe, a pair of which sold for \$437,500.

The various Air Jordans have been popular with collectors for 30 years, along with jerseys and trading cards featuring Jordan — who won six NBA titles with the Chicago Bulls and is widely considered the greatest player in league history.

Many specialists consider Jordan a key figure in creating the market for collectible sneakers, with only non-sports personalities such as Kanye West or Travis Scott able to compete with him today.

But ESPN's 10-part documentary "The Last Dance" which weaves details of Jordan's entire career through the narrative of the Bulls' pursuit of a sixth NBA title, has ramped up interest in all things Jordan.

## 'ICONIC, MYTHICAL'

"I think this is a game-changer," Chris Ivy, director of sports collectibles at Heritage Auctions, said of the documentary series that was carried globally by Netflix. Ivy predicted the interest fueled by "The Last Dance" will continue.

On the StockX shoe resale platform, the Air Jordan 1 Chicago model now sells for up to \$1,500, compared to \$900 in March. The first episode of "The Last Dance" aired on April 19.

"That could be largely attributable to the documentary because that's a sneaker that's been on the market for years," says StockX economist Jesse Einhorn. Likewise, a 1986 Fleer collector's card sold for \$96,000 in early May at Heritage, an item that was worth \$20,000 to \$30,000 at the beginning of the year.

"A lot of people who had a sports cards collections as a kid have been frantically going through their attics to find those boxes and those binders," laughs Geoff Wilson, founder of the Sports Card Investor platform.

"I haven't seen anything like this, where it's well past his career," Ivy said, noting Jordan retired in 2003. The excitement extends beyond Jordan himself.

Sales of Bulls-branded items are up 400% in May compared to last year on the sports merchandise site Fanatics. "For a lot of people my age between 40 and 50

years old, Michael Jordan was the Babe Ruth of our generation," Ivy said. "People in that age range are starting to get in a point in their lives where they're starting to collect again."

Even younger fans, weaned on the exploits of the late Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, are feeling the allure of Jordan. "The majority of our customers are millennials and Gen Z, many of whom were not necessarily alive when Jordan played," Einhorn said. "It's a testament to Jordan's staying power as an iconic, almost like mythical, cultural figure."

And the market for basketball shoes is maturing, with support from a new generation of enthusiasts

so dead'. And he was like, 'mate, look around — if I gave him out, I won't make it back to the hotel.'"

Steyn, however, was full of admiration for Tendulkar, international cricket's all-time leading run-scorer and century-maker, saying he had "everything covered, he's got every shot in the book."

"He was so good, and very rarely got out lbw," added Steyn of the 'Little Master', who retired in 2013. "And, like Jimmy said, you just didn't want to bowl a bad ball to him. Especially in a place like India."

"You bowl a bad ball, and he hits you four — he's on nought and he hits you for four in Mumbai (Tendulkar's home town), it feels like the world is closing in on you. He's only on four not out, he may as well have been on 500!"

"You feel like, 'maybe I could bring the pace down a little bit and really focus on getting the ball in the right place for as long as I possibly can'. You just didn't want to bowl a bad ball. "You just hope one will do something off the seam or he's got an off day, and it goes in your favour." —AFP



CHICAGO: File photo taken shows Chicago Bulls player Michael Jordan sticks out his tongue as he goes past Jeff Hornacek of the Utah Jazz during game two of the NBA Finals at the United Center in Chicago. The immense global success of the documentary "The Last Dance" amid the coronavirus lockdown has boosted sales of collectibles related to NBA icon Michael Jordan, —AFP

as evidenced by the emergence of trading platforms and the prices realized at auctions over the last three years.

"Sneaker collecting and reselling used to be underground activities that were enjoyed by a few sneaker heads," Geller said. "It's much more mainstream now."

The change has not escaped the notice of manufacturers, who have adapted their marketing and promotional strategies accordingly. "Sneaker brands are catering to sneaker collectors by releasing more and more limited edition sneakers, so with

smaller quantities demand goes through the roof."

But in Geller's opinion, nothing can compare to the original Air Jordans, especially those that can be linked to the great man himself. "I think the Game Worn Air Jordan 1s are the most iconic sneakers of all time," Geller said. "The fact that these shoes were Game-Worn by Michael Jordan takes them to a whole other level."

Will we ever crack the \$1 million mark? "I think so," said Ivy. "I'm working towards a consignment in the future that I think has the potential to get to a million dollars." —AFP

## Steyn says worried umpire refused to give Tendulkar out

LONDON: South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn is convinced he had Sachin Tendulkar lbw as he approached the first individual double century in one-day internationals only to be denied by umpire Ian Gould's fear he wouldn't make it back to his hotel if he gave the India great out.

The historic innings took place in front of a lively India home crowd at Gwalior in 2010. Discussing how tough it was to dismiss Tendulkar with England paceman James Anderson during a Sky Sports cricket podcast, Steyn said: "He scored the first double-hundred in ODI cricket, and it was against us in Gwalior."

"And I actually remember — I think I got him out lbw when he was about 190-odd. Gouldy was the umpire, and he gave him not out. "And I was like, 'why, why did you give him not out!? That's

## Stefanidi wins women's pole vault contest

PARIS: Olympic pole vault champion Katerina Stefanidi beat American Katie Nageotte and Canadian Alysha Newman in a competition carried out on two continents on Saturday.

The showdown was the second round of the so-called 'Ultimate Garden Clash', a response to the cancellation of meets caused by the coronavirus pandemic. On May 3, male pole vaulters Armand Duplantis, Renaud Lavillenie and Sam Kendricks staged a highly successful competition, broadcast live online.

Between them the men cleared a bar fixed at 5.0 metres, 98 times in 30 minutes, with Lavillenie and Duplantis tying with 36 successful vaults. Since, unlike the men, the women did not have back-yard jumping pits, they com-

peted at their training bases with the help of a few relatives: Greek Stefanidi in the sweltering heat of an Athens afternoon, Katie Nageotte in the morning before Marietta, Georgia, heated up and Alysha Newman in the cool of the Toronto area.

The bar was set at 4.0 metres, some distance off the world record of 5.06 metres, but the women failed in their goal of recording more "makes" than the men, finishing with a total of 85. Stefanidi, following a metronomic rhythm, was on course to record more clearances than any of the men but lost time in the final minutes as she struggled to put the bar back on her own, as the rules require, after a failure and finished with 34 successful vaults.

Nageotte managed 30 and Newman 21. "Renaud said he was very sore for a long time and I can imagine, I can already feel it," Stefanidi said. But, she added, the exhausting race against the clock is "a great way to shut our brains, and sometimes you need to just do that in pole vault instead of thinking too much". —AFP



**18** Jordan memorabilia soars in value amid 'Last Dance' nostalgia



**19** Bayern aim to shake off cobwebs with quiet confidence in Berlin



**19** Kyrgios tells Murray 'you are better than Novak'



## Dortmund thrash Schalke in empty stadium

Haaland, first player to score a goal after two-month shutdown



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's Norwegian forward Erling Braut Haaland (Center L) vies for the ball with Schalke's Senegalese defender Salif Sane during the German first division Bundesliga football match BVB Borussia Dortmund v Schalke 04 on May 16, 2020 in Dortmund. — AFP

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund provided much-needed fireworks with a 4-0 demolition of bitter rivals Schalke 04 on Saturday after the German league restarted in front of empty stands after a suspension of over two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Bundesliga is the first major soccer league to return to action since the virus earlier this year shut down sports, and its return in a country that still has hundreds of positive virus cases a day is being closely watched by other leagues.

With a strict health protocol governing the fragile restart, which includes no fans, face masks for everyone but the players, no handshakes and no group celebrations, it was up to title hopefuls Dortmund, who host leaders Bayern Munich in 10 days' time, to find a spark badly missing in the eerily empty ground.

The Ruhr valley club, in second place, scored the first goal of the matchday after nearly half an hour when teenager Erling Haaland connected with a

Thorgan Hazard cutback. The exciting 19-year-old Norway striker, who knocked in his 13th goal in 12 appearances for Dortmund in all competitions, picked up exactly where he left off in March.

He is already at the top of the transfer wish list of every major European club and, with an expected television audience of a billion for the Bundesliga this weekend, his immediate return to scoring will have enhanced his already stellar reputation.

Portuguese midfielder Raphael Guerreiro added two more goals and Belgium international Hazard also got on the scoresheet as Dortmund climbed to 54 points, one behind defending champions Bayern, who are in action at Union Berlin on Sunday.

"I'd have preferred if the conditions were normal," Dortmund midfielder Julian Brandt said. "We all have to adapt and try to have fun under the circumstances. We did that pretty well today and what better way to restart the league than with a win."

When Schalke brought on Timo Becker to replace Jonjoe Kenny in the 87th minute at the 80,000-plus-capacity Signal Iduna Park it was the first time in Bundesliga history a team had made five substitutions after FIFA announced the temporary rule change.

### MUTED CELEBRATIONS

Goal celebrations around the Bundesliga on Saturday were limited to smiles, thumbs-up and the occasional fist or elbow bump as mask-wearing substitutes, dispersed in the stands to keep them apart, applauded from the sidelines.

Only Hertha Berlin's players violated the rules when they celebrated their goals in the usual way as a group during a 3-0 win at Hoffenheim that earned coach Bruno Labbadia a winning debut on their bench. While Dortmund's comfortable victory cranked up the pressure on leaders Bayern, RB Leipzig suffered a major setback in their title chal-

lenge when they were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Freiburg as they slipped to fourth.

Leipzig, who used airplane stairs in the stadium to keep their substitutes in the stands at a safe distance from the bench, are now on 51 points, four behind Bayern who visit lowly Union Berlin on Sunday.

Borussia Mönchengladbach overran hosts Eintracht Frankfurt with early goals from Alassane Plea and Marcus Thuram and a late Ramy Bensebaini penalty to win 3-1 and take over third spot on 52 points to maintain their outside shot at winning the title.

VfL Wolfsburg reignited hopes of Europa League football next season with a 2-1 win at Augsburg courtesy of Daniel Ginczek's stoppage-time winner that moved them up to sixth on 39.

Fans across the country followed police orders to stay away from the stadiums, including at the Ruhr derby, as the league tries to finish the season for contractual reasons by June 30. — Reuters

## Pioneer Phyllis George dies at age 70

**NEW YORK:** Phyllis George, the former "The NFL Today" studio co-host and 1971 Miss America, has died. She was 70.

George, the first woman to be a sportscaster for a major television network, died Thursday at University of Kentucky Medical Center in Lexington, according to ex-husband John Brown Jr. The former Kentucky governor told the Louisville Courier-Journal that George died from complications due to a blood disorder. George has been viewed as pioneer due to her role on

the CBS studio show with Brent Musburger and Irv Cross. Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder was part of the show for some of the years.

George served two stints on the show — totaling eight seasons — between 1975-84. Musburger was a strong backer of George, who often had her knowledge of football questioned because she was a woman as well as a beauty queen. "Phyllis George was special. Her smile lit up millions of homes for the NFL Today," Musburger said in a statement posted on Twitter. "Phyllis didn't receive nearly enough credit for opening the sports broadcasting door for the dozens of talented women who took her lead and soared.

"Folks — men and women — were comfortable with Phyllis talking about their favorite sport. And in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, they loved Phyllis despite her Dallas Cowboys bias!

"RIP Phyllis. Irv Cross and I will miss you dearly." CBS Sports chairman Sean McManus expressed con-

dolences on behalf of the network. "The CBS Sports family is deeply saddened by the passing of Phyllis George, an icon in the sports broadcasting industry who contributed greatly to the rich history and tradition of CBS Sports," McManus said in a statement. "Phyllis was not only a key member of a show that remains the gold standard of NFL pregame shows, The NFL Today with Brent, Irv and 'The Greek,' but also a pioneer for all women in broadcasting."

George was born in Denton, Texas. After winning Miss America, she relocated to New York City and eventually was hired by CBS in 1974.

One year later, she was in the high-profile studio role and it didn't start off well. George said she received a barrage of hate mail and had to prove that he was more than "BQ — you know, beauty queen."

"When you're the first, you're a pioneer," George told USA Today in a 1999 interview. "I felt they didn't know who Phyllis George was. They played me up as a

former Miss America, a sex symbol. I can't help how I look, but below the surface, I was a hard-working woman. If I hadn't made that work, women eventually would have come into sportscasting, but it would have taken them longer."

After the show won multiple Emmys, George figured that proved she knew football. ESPN's Hannah Storm is one of the women working in sports who is thankful for George's efforts.

"Rest In Peace Phyllis George," Storm said on Twitter. "A true pioneer who approached her job with enthusiasm, empathy and humour. She was herself — charming and funny — helped her audiences connect with some of the great sports figures of the day. Condolences to her family & all who loved her." George was Kentucky's first lady from 1979-83. She and Brown divorced in 1998. George's daughter, Pamela Brown, is a White House correspondent for CNN. George also leaves behind a son, Lincoln Brown. — Reuters