



3 Kuwait Teachers Society blasts education minister



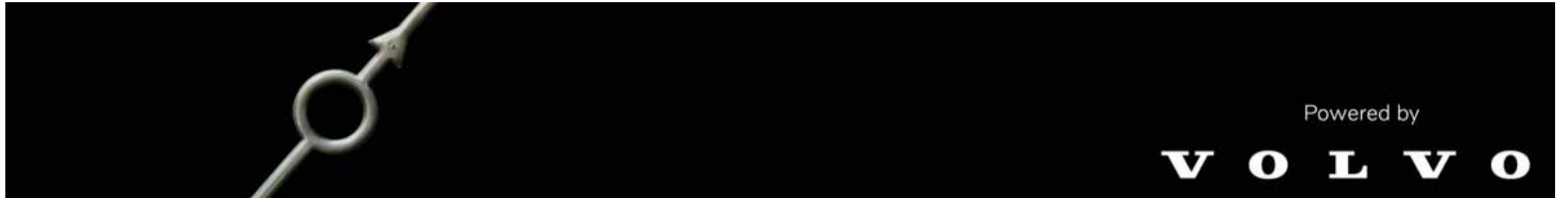
7 India court fines celebrated rights lawyer token 1 rupee



12 Lady Gaga, masks, coronavirus and Black lives dominate VMAs



16 Majestic Lyon beat Wolfsburg to win Women's Champions League



US, Israeli officials in 'historic' first commercial flight to UAE

Plane crosses Saudi airspace • Kushner urges Palestinians to negotiate



(Left) A US-Israeli delegation led by US Presidential Adviser Jared Kushner disembarks from an El Al airliner upon landing yesterday at Abu Dhabi airport. (Center) A screen onboard the aircraft displays a map showing the flight route from Israel to Abu Dhabi. (Right) An Emirati man wears a protective mask with the flags of the US, Israel and the UAE ahead of the arrival of the first commercial flight from Israel to the UAE. — AFP

ABU DHABI: Senior US and Israeli officials landed in the United Arab Emirates yesterday on a historic trip to finalize a pact marking open relations between Israel and the Gulf state, and they told Palestinians it was now time for them to negotiate peace. White House senior adviser Jared Kushner also said on arrival that Washington could maintain Israel's military edge while advancing its ties to the UAE, the Arab world's second largest economy and

a regional power.

The word "peace" was written in Arabic, English and Hebrew on the cockpit of the El Al flight that landed at the VIP terminal in the Emirates capital where US flags flew alongside the Star of David banner. The landmark direct flight by Israel's national carrier, numbered LY971 in a nod to the UAE's international dialing code, is due to return today with the number 972, matching Israel's dialing code.

In apparently unrelated incidents, two blasts at restaurants in Abu Dhabi and Dubai killed three people earlier in the day in what authorities said were the result of gas malfunctions. The Abu Dhabi government told residents "to avoid spreading rumors" about the blasts, and "use official news sources".

Announced on Aug 13, the normalization deal is the first such accommodation between an Arab country and Israel in more than 20 years and was

forged largely through shared fears of Iran. Palestinians were dismayed by the UAE's move, seeing it as a betrayal that would weaken a long-standing pan-Arab position which calls for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory and acceptance of Palestinian statehood in return for normal relations with Arab countries. Kushner said Palestinians should not be "stuck in the past".

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Budget deficit projected at KD 14 billion

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly budgets committee yesterday approved the state budget after introducing changes due to lower oil prices and also approved budgets of independent public agencies. But it only approved the final accounts of just five such agencies, the head of the panel said. MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the fiscal year's budget deficit is projected at KD 14 billion even after the Assembly last week issued a law suspending the 10 percent deduction of public revenues in favor of the future generations fund.

Abdulsamad said the committee postponed the approval of the final accounts of most government bodies because of certain remarks against them. He said the panel refused to approve the final accounts of the state because the government failed to apply recommendations made by the committee in previous years.

The committee however approved the final accounts of five establishments and agencies because they will supply some KD 1.44 billion in much-needed cash to the state reserve fund, he said. The accounts of Kuwait Petroleum Corp were one of those approved. Abdulsamad said the income of KPC and its subsidiaries is projected to drop by KD 9.5 billion or 44 percent to KD 12 billion as a result of the sharp drop in oil prices and reduced production due to the OPEC+ deal.

He said spending by KPC and its companies is projected to drop by 45 percent to KD 11 billion. As a result, net profits by KPC and its companies are estimated to decline by 36 percent to KD 938 million. Abdulsamad said revenues in the fiscal year 2020/2021 are projected to slide by 53 percent to just KD 7.5 billion, of which oil income is estimated to make up 75 percent and the rest will be supplied by non-oil sources.

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UK police free bedoon after 'security threat'

LONDON: British counterterrorism police yesterday released two men - including a bedoon man from Kuwait - held after a "security threat" aboard a Ryanair flight that led to fighter jets being scrambled to intercept it. Police said the 34-year-old man from Kuwait and a 48-year-old man from Italy were released without charge following their detention

New Lebanon PM-designate vows reforms

BEIRUT: Lebanon's under-fire political leaders yesterday designated a new prime minister, the diplomat Mustapha Adib, to tackle the country's deep political and economic crisis, hours before French President Emmanuel Macron was due to visit. Mustapha Adib, 48, Lebanon's former envoy to Germany, acknowledged in a televised speech that there is "a need to form a government in record time and to begin implementing reforms immediately".

India, China claim border provocations

NEW DELHI: India and China accused each other yesterday of military provocation on their contested Himalayan border where a deadly showdown erupted in June - even as commanders from the two sides held talks aimed at easing tensions. China's military said Indian troops had crossed the border yesterday near

Pangong Tso, a lake at 4,200 m, and engaged in "open provocation and caused the border situation to become tense".

"The Chinese military is taking necessary countermeasures," the People's Liberation Army's regional command said in a statement, accusing India of "seriously violating China's territorial sovereignty". Earlier yesterday, India's defense ministry said Chinese troops had "carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo" in the eastern Ladakh region over the weekend.

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late Sunday when the flight from Vienna landed at Stansted airport. Late yesterday, Kuwait's Embassy in London said the passenger who was apprehended is not a Kuwaiti national but an illegal resident (the term used by the Kuwaiti government to refer to stateless persons or bedoons).

Officers from the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) had held the men under terrorism legislation after a "suspicious object" - later said to be a mobile phone - was found in the plane's toilet. "We understandably take any reports of suspicious objects or behavior on flights very seriously and thankfully on this occasion there was no cause for concern," Detective Superintendent Andy Waldie, head of ERSOU's Counter Terrorism

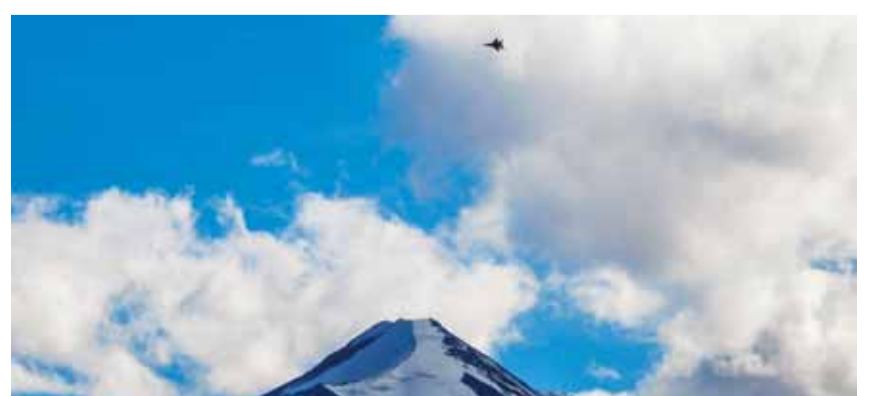
Policing unit, said.

The incident prompted the Royal Air Force (RAF) to launch two Typhoon fighters from a base in nearby Lincolnshire "to intercept a civilian aircraft" and escort it to Stansted. A spokesman for budget carrier Ryanair said its crew had been alerted to a "potential security threat on board".

"In line with procedures, the captain informed UK authorities and continued to London Stansted, where the aircraft landed normally and taxied to a remote stand where passengers disembarked safely," said the airline. "Passengers in London Stansted waiting to depart to Vienna were transferred to a spare aircraft to minimize the delay to their flight." — Agencies



BEIRUT: A wounded man takes a picture with newly-designated Prime Minister Mustapha Adib during his tour of the badly-hit Gemmayzeh neighborhood yesterday. — AFP



LEH: An Indian fighter jet flies over a mountain range in the capital of the union territory of Ladakh yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait, United States discuss boosting health cooperation

Minister, envoy talk plans to train doctors, health care providers



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah meets with the Ambassador of the United States to Kuwait Alina L Romanowski. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah discussed with the Ambassador of the United States to Kuwait Alina L Romanowski ways to improve cooperation in the medical field between the two countries. During their meeting yesterday, the two sides discussed plans and programs for training doctors and health care providers, in addition to exchanging experiences, protocols, and work policies, as well as strengthening the infrastructure to deal with emergencies, the Ministry of Health said in a press release.

Furthermore, the two sides discussed areas of cooperation between the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health and US medical institutions and centers, and prospects for future cooperation to strengthen bilateral relations in various medical fields and develop joint health programs and strategies, the ministry added. "The discussions were held as part of the ministry's plans and programs to strengthen international cooperation," said Dr Rehab Al-Watyan, Director of the International Health Relations Department at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health. She further stressed that both sides expressed keenness to boost joint programs in line with the friendly relations between the two countries, as well as Kuwait's future visions for health care development. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Dar Al-Yamama yesterday. — KUNA

Inflation in Kuwait up by 1.92 percent in July

KUWAIT: Kuwait's inflation rate in July rose by 1.92 percent on a year-on-year basis, the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) said yesterday. In its monthly report, CSB noted that the inflation rate rose by 0.43 in July compared with the previous month. The benchmark of the first group of commodities, food and beverages, climbed by 3.74 percent compared to 2019. Likewise, the main index of the second group, tobacco and cigarettes, by 3.29 percent. The clothing index increased 3.27 percent, annually as housing services remained unchanged. Inflation in the fifth group, home furnishings, moved up by 2.02 percent. Similarly, did healthcare, 1.47 percent and transport with a 0.32 per-

cent rise. The index of telecommunications also increased by 3.20 percent, along with entertainment and culture, 0.82 percent and education, 1.72 percent. Elsewhere, restaurants and hotels was the only sector to have witnessed a downturn, dropping by 0.08 percent, with commodities and other services climbing by 5.54 percent. The benchmark of consumer prices is a tool to measure prices in general, whether being on a monthly or yearly basis. It is also used to measure growth or economic recession, which the state may take into consideration, when making decisions regarding economic, commercial sectors and to map out monetary and financial policies. — KUNA

Kuwait Airways new board holds first meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways has formed a new board of directors in a meeting led by Chairman Ali Al-Dukhan, the state carrier said yesterday. Faisal Al-Ghareeb was appointed during the meeting as Deputy Chairman of the Board, while the remaining board members, who will each serve a three-year term, were also selected, according to a statement by the airline. The move comes after Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan's decision on Thursday for restructuring the national carrier's board. Chairman Dukhan was quoted in the statement as saying that the airline "enters a new era." The new board is "full of ambition and ready for challenges, particularly in



KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways' new board of directors meets yesterday. — KUNA

light of the current circumstances that the commercial aviation sector faces globally due to the coronavirus pandemic," he said. — KUNA

India, China claim border...

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Military commanders from the two sides held talks yesterday in a new bid to ease tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors, who fought a border war in 1962 and have staged regular high altitude clashes since. China did not confirm Saturday's incident, but the foreign ministry said its troops have "always strictly respected" the unofficial border known as the Line of Actual Control.

On June 15, troops from the two sides fought hand-to-hand combat in Ladakh in which 20 Indian troops were killed. China acknowledged casualties but did not give figures. The two sides blame each other for recent clashes and the two armies have since poured tens of thousands of troops into the region. Military and diplomatic talks are at an apparent stalemate.

Pangong Tso is one of several hotspots where troops have massed since June. "Indian troops preempted this PLA activity on the southern bank of Pangong Tso lake, undertook measures to strengthen our positions and thwart Chinese intentions to unilaterally change facts on ground,"

said India's defense ministry. Senior officers met at a border post near the scene of the standoff yesterday, it added.

According to Indian military sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, Indian troops pushed back Chinese troops who crossed the Line of Control. "PLA soldiers walked into our area near the south bank of Pangong, but our soldiers were prepared and quickly pushed them back without any violence," said one source. "They tried to come in again several hours later but we stood firm. There has been no such confrontation in this area in the past."

China's foreign ministry said Chinese troops "have always strictly respected the Line of Actual Control and never crossed the line." "Border troops from both sides have maintained communication over issues on the ground," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a press briefing.

Amid calls for boycotts of Chinese goods, India has stepped up economic pressure on China since the June battle and repeatedly warned that relations would suffer unless its troops pull back. India has banned at least 49 Chinese owned-apps - including the TikTok video platform - frozen Chinese firms out of contracts and held up Chinese goods at customs posts. China has complained about the action and warned that Indian consumers will suffer. — AFP

while opening its airspace to the El Al flight, has signaled it is not ready. On board the packed airliner, passengers were welcomed in Arabic as well as English and Hebrew, a gesture marking the historic flight.

"Wishing us all salaam, peace and shalom, have a safe flight," the pilot, Captain Tal Becker, said on the intercom, in Arabic, English and Hebrew, using all three languages to also announce the flight number and destination. Like all El Al 737s, the aircraft was equipped with an anti-missile system, an Israeli spokesman said, and carried security agents of the US Secret Service and the Israeli Shin Bet.

Israel's health ministry had late Sunday updated its list of "green countries" with low coronavirus infection rates to include the UAE and eight other countries. The change meant the Israeli officials and journalists travelling to Abu Dhabi would be exempted from a 14-day quarantine upon return.

Palestinian leaders expressed anger at a deal which they believe further erodes their struggle for an independent state. "Peace is not an empty word used to normalize crimes and oppression. Peace is the outcome of justice," politician Saeb Erekat said in a tweet. "Peace is not made by denying Palestine's right to exist and imposing an apartheid regime. Apartheid is what Netanyahu means by 'peace for peace.'"

The Islamist Hamas group, which controls the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, also condemned the UAE. The flight represented a "stab in the back of the Palestinian people, a prolonging of the occupation, and a betrayal of the resistance of the (Palestinian) people," Hamas said in a statement.

Hours before the plane landed, three people were killed and several others were injured in two separate explosions in Abu Dhabi and UAE tourism hub Dubai, police and local media said. The Abu Dhabi government media office said two people were killed in the blast in the capital, which the National daily reported hit KFC and Hardee's restaurants, which are located on a main road leading to the airport. — Agencies

Budget deficit projected at...

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The huge deficit came as a result of calculating oil prices in the budget at just \$30 a barrel, as recommended by KPC and the finance ministry, even though the price of oil currently hovers around \$45 a barrel, which is 50 percent higher than estimates, Abdulsamad said. The lawmaker said the decision to

adopt a low oil price comes as a precautionary measure, adding that if oil prices were adopted at \$45 a barrel, the deficit would have been lower.

Spending in the budget is estimated at KD 21.5 billion, around four percent lower than the previous year despite adding KD 500 million in expenditures for countering the coronavirus crisis, in addition to KD 240 million to double the support for Kuwaitis working in the private sector. Abdulsamad said wages and related expenditures are estimated to make up some 56 percent of total public spending, while subsidies are estimated to make up some 17 percent or KD. 3.5 billion. Capital spending on projects is estimated at KD 2.8 billion or 13 percent of total spending.

at up to \$3.5 billion.

Suspicion was rife that Lebanon's long-serving political heavyweights were only paying lip service to reform ahead of Macron's visit. "When the political class talks about the introduction of the civil state, it reminds me of the devil talking about virtue, it doesn't make sense," said political science professor Hilal Khashan. "There is a big difference between raising a slogan and really putting it to work," said the American University of Beirut academic. Adib's designation "will not usher in a new period in Lebanese history and I don't think it will put Lebanon on the road of genuine political development".

Adib emerged as a consensus option Sunday and was named premier the next day in a statement by the presidency. The close aide to former prime minister Najib Mikati received backing from the country's top political parties. The only major dissenting voice within the establishment came from the Lebanese Forces party which backed Nawaf Salam, an independent diplomat who also served as a judge at the International Court of Justice.

Under multi-confessional Lebanon's political system, the premier must be a Sunni, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian and the post of parliamentary speaker goes to a Shiite. "The opportunity for our country is small and the mission I have accepted is based on all the political forces acknowledging that," Adib said after being designated by Aoun.

Lebanon's last government, headed by Hassan Diab, resigned after the massive explosion, which revived calls at home and abroad for radical revamp of the state. Those who have taken to the streets in mass protests since Oct 17 against the entire political class had already rejected any name that might emerge from the parliamentary consultations. Despite promises of change, the process of forming the new government follows the same blueprint that has chronically mired Lebanon in political deadlock. — Agencies

US, Israeli officials in 'historic'...

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"They have to come to the table. Peace will be ready for them, an opportunity will be ready for them as soon as they are ready to embrace it," said Kushner, part of a US delegation that accompanied Israeli officials on the first official Israeli flight from Tel Aviv to the UAE. Kushner and national security adviser Robert O'Brien head the US delegation. The Israeli team is led by O'Brien's counterpart, Meir Ben-Shabbat.

Israel and the United Arab Emirates will discuss economic, scientific, trade and cultural cooperation on the visit. Direct flights between the two countries will also be on the agenda, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman told Al Arabiya television after landing in Abu Dhabi. Even before landing, the delegates made aviation history when the Israeli commercial airliner flew over Saudi territory on the direct flight from Tel Aviv to the UAE capital. "This is the first time this has ever happened. I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for making that possible," Kushner said.

"That's what peace for peace looks like," Netanyahu tweeted, describing a deal for formal ties with an Arab state that does not entail handover of land that Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war. Israeli officials hope the two-day trip will produce a date for a signing ceremony in Washington, perhaps as early as September, between Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. That could give US President Donald Trump a foreign policy boost ahead of his re-election bid in November.

The Trump administration has tried to coax other Sunni Arab countries concerned about Iran to engage with Israel. The most powerful of those, Saudi Arabia,



BEIRUT: President Michel Aoun meets Prime Minister-Designate Mustapha Adib (right) and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri at the presidential palace in Baabda yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Teachers Society blasts education minister for 'mishandling COVID-19 crisis'

Society warns of 'lack of planning' for upcoming school year

KUWAIT: Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS) made harsh accusations against Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi in a statement, arguing that Harbi had lost the teachers' trust because of his reluctance, weakness and inability to make decisive decisions concerning unresolved educational issues. The statement also accused the minister of lacking the vision and strategy on the future of education in Kuwait, failing to achieve justice and equality between public and private education students and failing to deal with the COVID-19 crisis when he suspended school. "Education will not revive the coronavirus setback under minister Harbi," reads the KTS statement published by Al-Rai daily yesterday.

KTS noted that it had previously recommended, underlined and then warned that the minister must be up to his responsibilities in general, and said that his alleged mistakes include disregarding the role of educational institutions including the Supreme Council of Education and the National Center for Education Development.

"Harbi has, without a doubt, proven his incapability to run the ministry and be involved in teamwork, which was clearly reflected by the ministry's senior officials' lack of knowledge about the decisions he makes except through social media networks," KTS added, noting that this reflects lack of coordination between the minister and ministry officials.

Foggy vision

In addition, KTS stressed that the education

ministry seems to still have a foggy vision about the coming school year. "There is no clear planning concerning the mechanism of study in various stages. School administrations, teachers and parents are torn between ambiguity and perplexity," KTS added, urging legislatives and executives to "come to the rescue and save education from Harbi's leadership."



Fears over cutting ministry's budget

The Ministry of Education had announced on July 17 ending the 2019-2020 school year, and starting the 2020-2021 academic year virtually on October 4. Pre-school pupils, students of elementary and intermediate levels as well as high school students up to grade 11 were promoted to the higher classes at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

As for grade 12, the remaining period of the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year was set at six weeks between August 9 and September 17,

while curricula were amended in tandem with the complementary study period that will be via electronic means. Students' assessment will be on weekly basis through interaction and virtual presence at the set educational website.

The ministry is still expected to release regulations regarding the start of the 2020/2021 school year at foreign private schools. Earlier, the Ministry of Education had suspended classes at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs); first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other stages.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly is scheduled today to debate two grillings against Minister Harbi filed by MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie, Khalil Abul and Ouda Al-Ruwaie, alleging mismanagement in handling the education ministry's response to the COVID-19 crisis, among other issues.

New teachers

In another report, Al-Rai quoted educational sources who said 250 new teachers and 170 social and psychological workers from GCC nationals, children of Kuwaiti women and bedoons have so far applied to work for the education ministry, and stressed that applications will remain open until the numbers the education ministry needs are hired. The sources added that the education ministry's administrative sector receives 30 to 40 applications



Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi

a day, then refers accepted applicants to the public education and educational development sectors to arrange for interviewing them.

Meanwhile, the sources said the 'new school year preparation committee' re-formed by former minister Khaled Al-Azmi has started receiving reports from various schools about their needs of air-conditioners, water coolers, teaching and administrative staff members, nurses, cleaners, security officers, couriers, furniture and technological devices.

Finally, the sources expressed fears of cutting the education ministry's budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021, especially after appointing new teachers and staff members and adding them to the ministry's payroll that so far includes around 120,000 employees.

Foreign Minister receives outgoing IOM mission chief

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday the outgoing Chief of Mission for the International Organization Migration (IOM) in

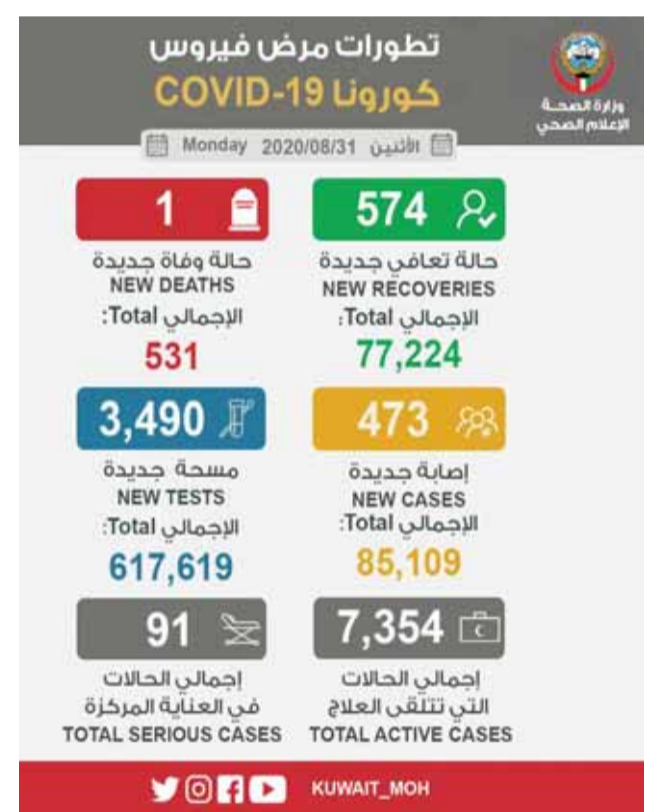
Kuwait Iman Eriqat, lauding the official's services and cooperation during her tenure. In the reception at the Foreign Ministry, Sheikh Dr Ahmad commended the coordination between IOM and Kuwait, saying that Eriqat played an integral role in boosting collaboration between the two sides. Meanwhile, Eriqat expressed satisfaction towards the support allocated by the State of Kuwait during her tenure and voiced praise for Kuwait's contributions to the IOM and its projects around the globe. A number of senior Foreign Ministry officials were present at the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Chief of Mission for the International Organization Migration in Kuwait Iman Eriqat. — KUNA

Kuwait reports 1 death, 473 new COVID-19 cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health said yesterday 473 people tested positive for the coronavirus in the past 24 hours while one person died of the disease. Ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, in a statement to the press, said total deaths reached 531 and registered infections topped 85,109. He said distribution of cases as per health zones was as follows: 124 in Ahmadi, 111 in Farwaniya, 73 in Hawally, 90 in Jahra and 75 in the Capital. Dr Sanad said 91 people were in intensive care units and the total number of patients receiving treatment was 7,354. He said health care workers conducted 3,490 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising total tests since the outbreak to 617,619. Dr Sanad called on the public to remain vigilant and abide by social distancing and hygienic rules. The health ministry had announced earlier the recovery of 574 people from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, with total recoveries reaching 77,224. — KUNA



Crimes

'Large quantity of drugs' seized

KUWAIT: Coastguard forces foiled an attempt to smuggle a very large quantity of drugs into Kuwait by sea, said security sources. The interior ministry said coastguard forces had spotted a suspected boat sailing into national waters and heading towards a Kuwaiti island. A coastguard patrol intercepted the boat and found two Kuwaitis onboard, who confessed that there was a large quantity of drugs submerged near Kubbar Island and that they had 'fished out' three bags loaded with three types of drugs. Both the suspects and the contraband were referred to relevant authorities pending further investigations.

Human trafficking

The Public Authority for Manpower announced referring around 400 files to the public prosecution on human trafficking suspicions during the COVID-19 period, Assistant Director for Manpower Protection Affairs Dr Mubarak Al-Azmi said.

Vehicle damaged

Two brothers reported that two friends they know assaulted them in Sulaibiya and damaged their vehicle before fleeing, said security sources, noting that the brothers provided detectives with medical reports from Jahra Hospital about their injuries. They also provided detectives with the assailants' names and information. A case was filed pending summoning the two suspects for further investigations.

KD 400 stolen

A Kuwaiti reported that a unidentified thief broke the window of his vehicle and stole KD 400 he had forgotten in the glove compartment on returning home, said security sources. The citizen said while leaving his house, he noticed that a window was broken and on checking the contents, he discovered the theft. A case was filed pending further investigations. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.



Local

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COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netIFAATU condemns
measures taken
against employees

KUWAIT: The International Federation for Asian and African Trade Unions (IFAATU) condemned the 'double-measured policies' it accused some private companies were following in dealing with the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 at the expense of employees. The federation argued in a statement that laying off employees or cutting their salaries "has the worst consequences on the future, safety and stability of their families." IFAATU made that statement during a meeting held recently via Zoom, with attendance of the union's executive council members in both continents to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on workers. IFAATU also condemned the repressive measures committed by the Zionist occupation authorities against the chairman of the Palestinian Unions Coalition (PUC) when they barged into his house, damaged its contents and arrested his son for taking part in a meeting merely because PUC rejects the policy of normalization with the Zionist entity. Stressing that Jerusalem is an Arab city, IFAATU hailed the attitude of Kuwait's Amir, government and people on rejecting all forms of normalization with the Zionist enemy. Speaking on the meeting, chairman of IFAATU's executive board Soud Al-Hujailan condemned the policies followed by some governments in dealing with the negative impacts of COVID-19, accusing them of taking sides with employers at the expense of employees who got laid off or had their salaries cut down without securing the future of their families and leaving them to unknown fates without any form of accountability for the employers.



Soud Al-Hujailan

Meanwhile, IFAATU executive board member Khaled Al-Tahous said that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed two extremely dangerous phenomena: the corruption of some employers towards the rights of helpless laborers, and the 'hibernation' of some trade unions whose members only care for personal interests, totally disregarding the trust of employees and laborers who had elected them as representatives to voice out and solve their problems.

Kuwait Deputy PM thanks Interior
Ministry staff for frontline efforts

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh sincerely thanked Interior Ministry employees for their relentless efforts on the frontlines of the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. This came in a cable that Saleh, also State Minister for Cabinet Affairs, addressed to ministry personnel, including policemen, senior and junior, along with civilians. "With this work, you have gained the appreciation and respect of nationals and residents alike. You have pledged yourselves to serve Kuwait and its people and everyone who resides on its good land, and you have fulfilled your national duty with professionalism, devotion and sincerity," he said. He also prayed for an end to the pandemic and for the country's security, stability and prosperity under the wise leaderships of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh

Kuwait's July crude oil
exports to Japan down

TOKYO: Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan declined 34.8 percent in July from a year earlier to 4.40 million barrels, or 142,000 barrels per day (bpd), for the fourth consecutive monthly fall, government data showed yesterday. As Japan's fourth-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.8 percent of its total crude imports, compared with 7.1 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil in June tumbled 31.9 percent year-on-year to 2.09 million bpd, down for the seventh month in a row. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 95.2 percent of the total, up 8.3 percentage points from the year before. Saudi Arabia remained Japan's top oil supplier, but imports from the kingdom fell 8.7 percent from a year earlier to 929,000 bpd, followed by the United Arab Emirates with 711,000 bpd, down 22.0 percent. Qatar ranked third with 160,000 bpd and Bahrain fifth with 47,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US. —KUNA



KUWAIT: A supervisory team from Kuwait Municipality's Mubarak Al-Kabeer branch inspected 13 women's spas and salons on Sunday, and issued 12 warnings in total.



stc's Corporate Communications team members Ahmed Al-Shayji and Ahmed Al-Nowaibet with Interior Ministry officers.

stc recognizes Interior
Ministry for stand
during curfew period

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, recognized, in a gesture of appreciation, the strenuous efforts and diligent organization made by the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait police force since the COVID-19 outbreak.

In appreciation of the critical and vital role, stc's Corporate Communications team, led by Danah Al-Jasem, with the presence of her team members Ahmed Al-Shayji and Ahmed Al-Nowaibet, visited several check points throughout Kuwait to honor the men and women in uniform. The initiative was carried out in cooperation with the Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior to express stc's gratitude for the solid dedication throughout the seven-month curfew period, which ended the beginning of this month.

To commemorate this occasion, stc produced a video dedicated to the initiatives carried out by the Kuwaiti police and public security force, which included highlights from stc's public relations team's field visits to several security points located in different areas around Kuwait. The production featured Kuwaiti poet, Safer, who used gentle and expressive words to convey the true appreciation for the frontline officials, who are the real heroes of this difficult period.

Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "This initiative comes as an additional step in the range of activities launched by stc since the Coronavirus outbreak in support of the relentless efforts made by State officials to overcome current challenges. It goes without saying that stc, as well as other members of the private sector, will stand by the Kuwaiti society and continuously support government institutions during challenging and prosperous times."

She added, "On behalf of the team at stc, I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our frontline heroes that include ranking officials and police officers at the Ministry of Interior for placing their lives on the line to serve and protect the residents of Kuwait. Even though curfew restrictions have been lifted, their critical role in preserving the health and safety measures in Kuwait does not go unnoticed."

Jasem concluded, "Since the beginning of the pandemic, stc launched a series of humanitarian activities aimed at supporting Kuwaiti residents. The company also focused on granting its customers with greater accessibility to its distinguished offerings and promotions by upgrading its digital platforms to permit a safe and convenient user experience, in line with the stc's strategy to enable digital transformation."

It is worth mentioning that stc launched several community related initiatives in the past period that include distributing 5,000 vouchers, to returning citizens and at Ambulance Centers to front-liners, during the company's field visits to welcome back citizens and show appreciation to paramedics. This initiative was within the framework of stc's "Stay Safe" campaign, which also included the distribution of 25,000 free prepaid lines to travelers returning to Kuwait.

stc also distributed iftar meals during the holy month of Ramadan. The meals were sent to paramedics across Kuwait as part of the company's 'Ramadan Lives On' campaign as a sign of appreciation to paramedics for their great efforts in taking care of residents during the challenging period. The company also worked side by side with the Ministry of Health to facilitate seamless data transfer, and to import statistics and updates relevant to COVID-19 onto stc website.

In its final statement, stc urged residents to adhere to the safety protocols issued by both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior, following the government's decision to practice social distancing and avoid direct contact with individuals, that may lead to the spread of infection, to overcome the pandemic.



Kuwaiti poet Safer.

In my view

Battleground
is wide open

By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

On Sunday, Kuwait emerged out of curfew - be it total or partial. We all know that restrictions, curfews, businesses shutting down, government departments stopping work and employees given leaves was to absorb the first wave of attacks of the coronavirus, to be later officially named by the World Health Organization as COVID-19. Experts and the public alike were still attempting to understand this virus and its strategy of survival and the ability to spread all over the globe. We first heard about it in China, and China is far away, so we believed we were on the safe side of things - how wrong was that.

Anyway, it did not take long for the government to prepare and take measures to control the situation, and we started hearing about something called social distancing, wearing a facemask, using sanitizers, wearing gloves and so on. We the people must admit that we did not comply with the instructions completely at the beginning, as cases began to spring up in Kuwait, so authorities stepped in and imposed more measures, shutting down all businesses except food and other absolutely necessary requirements accessed by an appointment system.

The famous request by health authorities was "stay home unless it is a must to leave," along with warnings about the danger of this virus, which spares no one. Many heeded the warnings and many were lax and complacent, so authorities stepped up measures, starting with partial curfews that gradually developed into a full curfew during the holy month of Ramadan, besides having certain areas totally isolated, all because of a lack of cooperation by a good number of people.

You can tell the war was fierce and the battles are still raging and the numbers are still in the red zone, bearing in mind that just one case is too much. Now, as the curfews are in the past tense, we must remember that the virus is still present, is still strong, is still fighting as hard as when it started and is still causing harm regardless of the degree. So please remain vigilant and keep wearing your masks, use your sanitizers, wash your hands more often, maintain social distancing, etc, as the war is still on!

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Off the air: Top Philippines broadcaster shuts stations

Prominent Indian lawyer found guilty of contempt, fined one rupee

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NEW DELHI: In this aerial picture, graveyard workers and relatives lower the coffin of a COVID-19 coronavirus victim during a funeral at a graveyard in New Delhi. — AFP

COVID: US nears 6 million cases

Global coronavirus infections soar past 25 million

WASHINGTON: The United States neared six million coronavirus cases on Sunday, nearly a quarter of the planet's total, as nations around the world battle to contain the raging pandemic. Global coronavirus infections soared past 25 million, as countries tightened restrictions to halt the health crisis that has upended life for most of humanity.

A million additional cases have been detected globally roughly every four days since mid-July, according to an AFP tally, with India on Sunday setting the record for the highest single-day rise in cases with 78,761. The world's hardest hit country, the United States, had recorded 5.99 million cases of infection as of 0030 GMT Monday, according to Johns Hopkins University's tracker. And the death toll is just over 183,000. The US hit five million cases three weeks ago, just 17 days after reaching four million, the tracker said.

The virus has hobbled the US economy, the world's largest, and cast a shadow over President Donald Trump's once-promising re-election prospects. As Trump faces enormous pressure to curb the contagion, the head of the US Food and Drug Administration, Stephen Hahn, raised the possibility that a still-elusive vaccine might be given emergency approval before the end of trials designed to ensure its safety and effectiveness.

The virus has proven a tenacious foe even in nations such as New Zealand and South Korea, which had previously brought their outbreaks largely under control but are now battling new clusters of infections. On the other side of the world, Latin America - the worst-hit region - is still struggling with its first wave, with Covid-19 deaths in Brazil crossing 120,000, second only to the



Nearly a quarter of planet's total

United States.

Nearly 855,000 people have died of COVID-19 globally, and with no vaccine or effective treatment available yet, governments have been forced to resort to some form of social distancing and lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus. Masks will become mandatory from Monday on public transport and flights in New Zealand, which went more than 100 days without local transmission before the current cluster emerged. And tightened virus curbs kicked in on Sunday in South Korea, which is also battling fresh clusters - including in the greater Seoul region, home to half the country's population.

In Iraq, thousands of Shiite pilgrims wearing gloves and masks flooded the holy city of Karbala to mark Ashura, in one of the largest Muslim gatherings since the pandemic began. Typically, millions of Shites from around the world flock to the shrine, but this year's commemoration was subdued with employees spraying disinfectant mist, checking temperatures and enforcing social distancing. "It stands out because there are so few people," said Fadel Hakim, a blue medical mask cupping his chin.

'Anti-corona' rallies in Europe

Despite all the grim numbers, there has been steady opposition to lockdowns and social distancing measures in many parts of the world, often because of their crushing economic cost. But resistance has also come from the extreme right and left of the political spectrum, as well as conspiracy theorists and anti-vaccine campaigners. In Berlin on Saturday, thousands gathered to march against coronavirus restrictions - but police later stopped the rally because many participants were not respecting social distancing measures.

Protesters waved German flags and shouted slogans against Chancellor Angela Merkel often used by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. Similar protests were held in London and Zurich, where some carried signs supporting the far-right QAnon movement, which promotes bizarre theories about Satan-worshipping cabals and "deep state" plots - without any credible evidence. The pandemic has upended economies and societies around the world, and halted most large gatherings - from sport and music to religion and politics.

In Spain, football superstar Lionel Messi missed a virus test at Barcelona's training ground, club sources confirmed, raising the possibility he will boycott pre-season to force a transfer from the Spanish club. Without a coronavirus test, Messi will be unable to join team-mates for new coach Ronald Koeman's first training session on Monday. The world's top sport, culture and music events are struggling with the challenge of hosting spectators while reducing the risk of virus transmission. The US Open Tennis tournament was also hit, announcing an unidentified player had been withdrawn after testing positive. — AFP

Kid survives terrifying kite flight

TAIPEI: A three-year-old girl in Taiwan survived being launched into the air for a terrifying half-minute flight after she was ensnared in the tail of a kite at a weekend festival. Dramatic footage captured the girl's ordeal in Hsinchu city. Initial excited gasps of excitement as the large pink kite took flight turned to screams of horror as onlookers realized the toddler had become entangled in the tail, and taken along for the ride.

Strong wind propelled the kite for a 31-second flight as the girl bobbed and weaved in the air. The kite eventually came down and crowds were able to free the girl unharmed. Hsinchu mayor Lin Chih-chien said the girl suffered some scratches to her face and was terrified by the ordeal, but otherwise unharmed. "The city government expresses its deepest apologies to the girl and the public," he said on Facebook. Footage of the incident quickly went viral. "Everybody at the scene was almost scared to death. It really just happened in a blink of an eye," wrote one blogger, who goes the name Via, in a Facebook post featuring a video of the accident that had over 1.61 million viewings. — AFP

El Al 971 to Abu Dhabi: The first Israel-UAE 'flight'

TEL AVIV: An Israeli-American delegation was taken off yesterday on the first commercial flight from Tel Aviv to Abu Dhabi as the US-brokered normalization agreement between the Jewish state and the UAE takes hold. The El Al flight, scheduled to leave at 0730 GMT from Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, will carry a delegation led on the American side by President Donald Trump's son-in-law and White House advisor Jared

Kushner. The word "peace" was painted on the plane's cockpit in Arabic, English and Hebrew, images issued by El Al showed. The agreement between Israel and the Emirates to normalize ties was announced on August 13, making the UAE the first Gulf country and only the third Arab nation to establish relations with Israel, after Egypt and Jordan. Israel's National Security Advisor Meir Ben Shabbat will be the most senior figure aboard the flight on the side of the Jewish state. The scheduled talks in Abu Dhabi aim at boosting cooperation between the two regional economic powerhouses in areas including aviation, tourism, trade, health, energy and security.

The flight by Israel's national carrier, numbered 971 like the UAE's international dialling code, was reported to have received permis-

sion to cross Saudi Arabia's air space. Officials at El Al and the Israel Airport Authority would not confirm the reports, which would be the first known time El Al crosses Saudi airspace. The return flight, set to leave Abu Dhabi on Tuesday morning, is numbered 972 - Israel's international dialling code.

'Sparks fly'

Late Sunday, Israel's health ministry updated its list of "green countries" with low coronavirus infection rates to include the UAE and eight other countries. The change meant the Israeli officials and journalists travelling to Abu Dhabi would be exempted from a 14-day quarantine upon return. Since the agreement between the UAE and Israel was unveiled, there have been phone calls between their ministers, and on Saturday the Emirates in a new milestone repealed a 1972 law boycotting Israel. "It will be permissible to enter, exchange or possess Israeli goods and products of all kinds in the UAE and trade in them," read a federal decree issued by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking alongside Kushner in Jerusalem on Sunday, praised "the swift pace of normalization" between his country and the UAE.

Noting the UAE's Saturday move, Netanyahu said it "opens the door" for "unbridled trade, tourism, investments, exchanges between the Middle East's two most advanced economies". "You will see how the sparks fly on this. It's already happening," he said, predicting that "today's breakthroughs will become tomorrow's norms. It will pave the way for other countries to normalize their ties with Israel." — AFP



LOD, Israel: Photo shows Israeli women taking pictures of the El Al's airliner, ahead of the first-ever commercial flight from Israel to the UAE at the Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, which will carry a US-Israeli delegation to the UAE following a normalization accord. — AFP

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May her soul Rest in Peace

International

Turkish leader calls French, Greek leaders 'greedy and incompetent'

Turkey accuses Greece of 'piracy, arming island'

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lashed out at leaders of France and Greece, calling them "greedy and incompetent" for challenging Turkish energy exploration in the eastern Mediterranean. Erdogan's charge came as the country celebrated a 1922 victory over Greek troops during Turkey's war of independence.

Ankara and Athens now dispute major offshore gas fields and France's support for Greece has drawn it into a serious crisis for the NATO military alliance. Cyprus is a third, albeit much smaller, nation vying for access to large energy deposits that have been discovered in the region. Erdogan asked newly-commissioned officers in Ankara: "Do Greeks accept what could happen to them because of their greedy and incompetent leaders? Do the French know the price they will pay because of their greedy and incompetent leaders?"

The crisis between putative NATO allies began on August 10 when the Turkish research vessel Oruc Reis entered Greek waters, after which both sides began to stage naval exercises. French frigates and fighter jets joined the Greek side, and have shadowed Turkish vessels while Paris warned Erdogan not to overplay his hand. On Sunday, Paris denounced "escalating behaviour" on the part of Ankara. Ships from Cyprus, Italy and the US have also taken part in the Greek exercises, while the US and Italy has held drills with Turkish units as well.

Erdogan has challenged Greece and France in particular however, and said Sunday: "When it comes times to fight, we will not hesitate to make sacrifices. The question is: when they stand against us in the Mediterranean, are they ready to make the same sacrifices? To our enemies, we say: Bring it on!" Turkey on Saturday announced fresh military manoeuvres in

northern Cyprus. Turkish vice president Fuat Oktay also warned Greece not to expand its coastal zone into the Ionian Sea by six nautical miles under international maritime law, saying it would be a "casus belli" that could lead to armed conflict.

Greece 'arming island'

Turkey yesterday accused Greece of "piracy" and attempting to "arm the island" at the centre of their row over gas exploration in the eastern



Turkey, Greece fight over major gas fields

Mediterranean. Relations between the two countries have sunk to a new low over disputed maritime rights and energy resources, with both sides staging military drills in the area.

Greece argues the waters around the island two kilometers off the Turkish coast are under Greek sovereignty and opposes any Turkish exploration nearby. Images published in the media last week show Greek soldiers arriving on the island - known as Kastellorizo in Greece and Meis in Turkey - much to Ankara's chagrin. "Greece's attempt to arm the island of Meis is an example of a new piracy," said Omer Celik, spokesman for Turkey's ruling Justice



AT SEA: Photo shows military personnel of the Hellenic Navy during a military exercise in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. —AFP

and Development Party.

"It's stupidity to direct weapons toward Turkish shores," Celik wrote on Twitter, adding: "Greece will learn we will have a strong answer to every step it takes." The Turkish foreign ministry on Sunday pointed out that the island was "under a demilitarized status established with the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty". "Such provocative actions will prove useless for Greece," the Turkish ministry said. Greece has issued no official comment on the two neighbors' latest dispute.

Relations between the two neighbors have been souring for months, after Turkey encouraged migrants to flee to Europe by opening its border with Greece in February, and converting some Byzantine churches into mosques this year. Tensions are also growing between Turkey France, another NATO ally, which has opted to throw its full weight of support behind Greece. French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday that Paris had adopted a "red-line policy" for Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean, though he also called for dialogue. — Agencies

Thousands march in Belarus capital despite crackdown

MINSK: Tens of thousands of opposition supporters marched through Minsk Sunday, calling for an end to strongman Alexander Lukashenko's rule amid a heavy security presence and despite dozens of arrests. Belarus protests have entered a third week since the disputed presidential election on August 9 in which Lukashenko claimed victory.

Opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya says she was the true winner, meanwhile. An AFP journalist and local media estimated that more than 100,000 people attended Sunday's protest, equalling the scale of rallies on previous weekends, the largest in the country since independence from the former USSR. A crowd gathered outside Lukashenko's official residence, the Palace of Independence, which was guarded by riot police and special forces personnel backed up by rooftop snipers.

Sunday's rally came on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and protesters carried quirky handmade "gifts" including a cardboard toilet with a sign urging the strongman to flush himself away, a coffin marked "Political corpse" and a picture of a cockroach, the opposition's nickname for the president. Some laid flowers

and symbolic gifts on the ground in front of a tall barrier manned by riot police equipped with helmets and shields. This was the "boldest show of civil disobedience in three weeks of protests," opposition newspaper Nasha Niva reported.

Lukashenko refuses to negotiate

Activist Maria Kolesnikova, Tikhanovskaya's campaign partner, asked in vain to enter the residence for talks. Presidential aide Nikolai Latysheuk came out to speak to protesters, but insisted Lukashenko would not negotiate with the opposition. A Telegram messenger channel linked to Lukashenko's press service posted a picture of him in a bullet-proof vest holding a gun, and said it was taken at the palace as protesters were outside.

The protests began breaking up towards evening as heavy rain fell and people began leaving. Riot police also began to push protesters away from the palace. Thousands of people attended similar rallies in other Belarusian cities, local media reported. The Minsk Peace March started at 2:00 pm local time (1100 GMT) and police began to detain protesters almost immediately as people attempted to reach the central



MINSK: Opposition supporters rally to protest against disputed presidential elections results in Minsk. —AFP

Independence Square.

Columns of protesters walked through the centre, carrying placards and the country's historic red-and-white flag as drivers honked car horns in support. Some linked arms to march down a main street, while women took black-clad riot police to task or lay on the street in front of them. One demonstrator, 33-year-old Nikolai, said he had already been detained after one demonstration and was still recovering from the beating he had received. "Everything hurts," he said. "But I came out again for our Belarus to be free." "We need to gather strength and come out like this every week until Lukashenko leaves," said another

demonstrator, 70-year-old Maria.

The Belarusian interior ministry said police detained 125 people within the first two hours, Belta state news agency reported, most accused of taking part in illegal mass protests. Three were detained for damaging a police car, the ministry said. Protesters faced off against armed interior troops and riot police using their shields to block them. Other protesters tried to bypass the police blockades. Despite the heavy security, the atmosphere remained relaxed and festive. Meanwhile, more than 360 Belarusian sports figures including Olympic athletes signed an open letter calling for new elections and condemning police violence. —AFP

Qatar crisis returns to UN's top court

THE HAGUE: The three-year-old crisis pitting Qatar against several Middle East nations returns to the UN's top court this week with hearings in a case between Doha and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt and several other allies severed ties with Qatar in a shock move in 2017, accusing Doha of backing terrorism and siding with their regional rival Iran.

A year later Qatar dragged the UAE to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, accusing Abu Dhabi of "discriminatory" behavior including the expulsion of Qataris, and a maritime and air blockade. The ICJ ordered the UAE in 2018 to take emergency measures to protect the rights of Qatari citizens, pending the start of the full hearings in the case which started yesterday and last one week.

The hearings will be "devoted to the preliminary objections raised by the United Arab Emirates" against Qatar's case, with the UAE speaking first at 1300 GMT, and Qatar responding on Wednesday, the ICJ said. The hearings are taking place by video link because of the coronavirus pandemic. The ICJ was set up in 1946 after World War II to rule in disputes between member states of the United Nations. The court's judgments are binding, but it has no means of enforcing them. Any final ruling in the Qatar case could take years.

'Climate of fear'

The crisis between Qatar and the Saudi-led blockading nations shows no sign of relenting despite rising international pressure to end the feud. The alliance has issued a raft of terms Qatar must accept before it will lift the embargo that includes a ban on direct air, land or sea trade.



DOHA: Men wearing protective masks walk on a plastic pier at Katara beach in the Qatari capital Doha. —AFP

Doha strongly denies the allegations and has refused to meet the demands that also stipulate the closure of its flagship state-run broadcaster Al Jazeera. Qatar's case at the ICJ says that the UAE's actions breached the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In its case, Qatar accused the UAE of creating a "climate of fear" for Qataris living there. The ICJ ruled in its emergency measures in 2018 that the UAE "must ensure" that families with a Qatari member would be reunited if separated by the blockade.

The legal ping-pong continued when the United Arab Emirates last year filed its own case seeking emergency measures to stop Qatar "aggravating" the dispute, only to have the court reject it. Qatar meanwhile has won several of its first legal steps. In July the ICJ backed Qatar in a separate but related case that is specifically about the air blockade. Its rivals had appealed a decision by the world civil aviation body in favour of Qatar over sovereign airspace. — AFP

Trump presses law and order message; protest turns deadly

PORTLAND: President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden traded pre-election barbs Sunday as violent clashes continued to roil the US city of Portland following the fatal shooting of a protestor. While the US leader tried to characterize Biden as weak on crime, his opponent accused Trump of fanning the flames of violence in a polarized and tense nation. Saturday's shooting during a pro-Trump rally in the Oregon city followed a week of country-wide protests-including the cancellation of numerous sporting events-over the police shooting in Kenosha, Wisconsin of African American Jacob Blake.

The violence in Portland erupted during a rally involving hundreds of vehicles "caravanning throughout downtown Portland," police said. OregonLive reported "clashes" and "tense moments" between demonstrators and counter-protestors. Photographs from the scene showed the victim wearing a hat with a logo for "Patriot Prayer," described by local media as a far-right group at the center of multiple Portland demonstrations that have ended in violence.

By 10 pm Sunday, about 100 to 150 anti-racism protesters had gathered outside a police building to the east of the city centre, waving signs and occasionally throwing projectiles. Police declared the gathering an illegal assembly and in a tweet ordered people to leave the scene, warning of arrests and the use of tear gas. Videos posted online showed about 20 officers rushing from the building to clear the area, and arresting a handful of protesters. — AFP

News in brief

Sudan signs historic peace deal

JUBA: Sudan's power-sharing government signed a peace agreement with the country's five key rebel groups yesterday, a significant step towards resolving deep-rooted conflicts that raged under former leader Omar Al-Bashir. The civilian and military leaders sharing power following Bashir's overthrow in April 2019 say ending decades-long internal conflicts is a top priority of a 39-month transition. The deal, signed in the South Sudanese capital Juba, offers rebel groups political representation and divided powers, integration into the security forces, economic and land rights and the chance of return for displaced people. — Reuters

2 separate explosions in UAE

DUBAI: One person was killed and several people were injured yesterday in two separate explosions in the United Arab Emirates' capital Abu Dhabi and its tourism hub Dubai, the police and local media said. A gas cylinder exploded in a Dubai restaurant early on Monday and killed one person, local media reported. Abu Dhabi-owned The National newspaper, quoting a Dubai Civil Defense spokesperson, said the blast had caused a blaze that damaged the ground floor of the building. The fire was controlled within 33 minutes, it added. In Abu Dhabi, the blast hit KFC and Hardees restaurants on the city's Rashid bin Saeed Street, the National reported, adding that other retail outlets were also damaged. Abu Dhabi police said the explosion caused several minor and moderate injuries, and residents of the building and surrounding areas were evacuated. — Reuters

10 killed in southern Chad

N'DJAMENA: At least ten people have been killed in fresh fighting between nomadic herders and farmers in southern Chad, a local prosecutor said Sunday, with the most of the deaths happening during a funeral. The herders claimed to have lost a cow and tracked it down to a farm, said Ibrahim Ali Kolla, prosecutor in Moundou, Chad's second-largest city and capital of the southwest province. The herders sent a representative to reclaim the animal on Thursday but he was killed and the farmers attacked the herders at his funeral the same day, he added. Clashes between settled farmers and the nomadic Arab herders, many of them armed, are a worsening problem in the arid Sahel, where tensions over access to land are frequent. — AFP

Egypt army kills 70 jihadists

CAIRO: Egypt's army announced Sunday that more than 70 alleged jihadists have been killed in recent military operations in North Sinai, the location of an insurrection affiliated to the Islamic State group. A statement by the Egyptian army said that the operations had targeted alleged "homes of terrorists" and "takfiri elements" leading to "the deaths of 73 takfiris in northern Sinai" between July 22 and August 30. Four other "takfiris" were killed, the statement added, without elaborating. The term "takfiri" is used by Egyptian security officials to refer to jihadists. During the clashes "three officers and four soldiers were killed or wounded," the statement said, without providing further details. — AFP

International

Japan's Suga hopes to succeed prime minister; race heats up

Suga appears to have backing of LDP heavyweight

TOKYO: Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga will join the race to succeed his boss Shinzo Abe as prime minister, local media said, as the competition heats up to succeed Japan's longest-serving leader. Suga, a longtime lieutenant of Abe's in a key supporting role, had denied interest in the top job but attracted attention with a series of interviews, to Reuters and other news organizations, in the days before Abe's abrupt resignation for health reasons. A Suga government would extend the fiscal and monetary stimulus that defined Abe's nearly eight years in office.

Abe's announcement on Friday, citing a worsening of a chronic illness, set the stage for a leadership election within his Liberal Democratic Party. The LDP president is virtually assured of being prime minister because of the party's majority in the lower house of parliament. Suga decided to join the LDP race judging that he should play a leading role, given expectations for his ability to manage crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Japan's deepest postwar economic dive, Kyodo news agency said, citing an unnamed source. Calls to Suga's parliamentary office seeking comment on Sunday went unanswered.

Suga would join such candidates as former foreign minister Fumio Kishida and former defense minister Shigeru Ishiba. Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, 39, the son of charismatic former premier Junichiro Koizumi and considered a future premier, has decided not to run, but he would back Defense Minister Taro Kono if he joins the race, NHK said. Former internal affairs minister Seiko Noda and former defense minister Tomomi Inada, who is known as a fiscal hawk, are interested in seeking to become Japan's first

female premier, media reported. Calls to their offices went unanswered.

Bandwagon

Suga, a self-made politician in a country of political dynasties, was chosen by Abe in 2012 for the pivotal role of chief cabinet secretary, acting as top government spokesman, coordinating policies and riding herd on bureaucrats. "I'm thinking of running in the LDP leadership race. I'd like you to support me," Suga told LDP secretary-general Toshihiro Nikai in a secret meeting on Saturday, TV Tokyo reported.

Nikai's faction will likely support Suga if he runs, Takeo Kawamura, a senior faction official, told reporters after a meeting of the group's leaders. "Everyone wants to be on the winning side, so if Nikai is supporting Suga, they will jump on the bandwagon," said Koichi Nakano, political science professor at Sophia University. LDP heavyweights aim to hold a slimmed-down leadership contest around Sept. 13 to 15, public broadcaster NHK said on Sunday. The party is likely to decide on the scaled-down version on Tuesday, Kawamura said.

Usually, a leadership vote is held by LDP members of parliament along with grassroots party members in a month-long process. But in the event of a sudden resignation, an extraordinary vote can be called with participants narrowed to MPs and representatives of the LDP local chapters. The scaled-down version may disadvantage Ishiba, a longtime Abe critic who promotes boosting regional economies in Japan's depopulating hinterlands. He is popular with the public but less so among party MPs.



TOKYO: Japan's chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga leaves after a press conference at the Prime Minister's office in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

A call to his parliamentary office went unanswered. Suga ranks low in voter polls of preferred next premier. He projects the image of a behind-the-scenes operator, more than frontline leader, so some analysts doubt he would be best to lead the LDP into a general election that must

be held by late October 2021. LDP factions will play a dominant role in the election, Sophia's Nakano said. There might be media criticism that this is not a real contest, which might give Ishiba a bump up, but "not enough to change the momentum," he said. — Reuters

News in brief

'Virus-related crimes' in China

BEIJING: Nearly 5,800 people suspected of killing health workers, selling defective medical equipment and lying about their travel history have been arrested in China for epidemic-related crimes since January, the state prosecutor's office said. One case involved a shopper that beat to death another customer who reminded him to wear a mask in a supermarket. Other cases included a person who deliberately mowed down medical workers with a car, and another was arrested for stabbing a health inspector with a dagger when monitoring temperatures. Some have also been accused of embezzling money collected from fundraisers to help coronavirus patients, selling defective medical equipment and lying about their travel history or health condition. "From January to July, 5,797 people were arrested and 6,755 were prosecuted," the Supreme People's Procuratorate said in a statement Thursday. — AFP

Controversial UAE-Israel cartoon

AMMAN: Jordanian authorities on Sunday released a prominent cartoonist detained and charged for publishing a drawing critical of the Israel-UAE deal to establish diplomatic ties, a case that sparked outrage from rights groups. But Emad Hajjaj, who was arrested Wednesday and charged with "undermining relations with a friendly country", will still face trial for "slander and libel", a judicial source told AFP. The initial charge carried a sentence of up to five years in jail, but now he faces between six months and two years if found guilty. "The decision to release Hajjaj came after the state security court prosecutor decided to change the accusation against him to slander and libel, and his case has been sent back to the Amman state prosecutor," the judicial source said. Rakan Saaydeh, the head of the country's journalists' union, confirmed the release and the new charges as took custody of Hajjaj from the Balqa jail just northwest of Amman on Sunday. — AFP

'Naked' woman apologizes

NEW DELHI: A French woman arrested for allegedly making a video of herself without clothes on a holy bridge in India apologized Sunday, but denied being completely naked and said she carried out the stunt to bring attention to sexual harassment. Indian police said Saturday that the 27-year-old - identified as Marie-Helene - faced charges under the country's internet laws after posting footage of herself on the Lakshman Jhula, a footbridge over the Ganges river made famous by the Beatles in the 1960s and which remains a draw for backpackers and yoga practitioners. "She told us she sells bead necklaces online and the shoot was aimed at promoting her business," said R.K. Saklani, head of the local police station. But in a statement to AFP, Marie-Helene said no-one was around when she carried out the stunt, and she did it to raise awareness about harassment in India. — AFP

Off the air: Top Philippines broadcaster shuts stations

BAGUIO: Anchor Dhubie de Guzman has been the face of a popular news show in the northern Philippines for more than a decade. Now the closure of his regional station - and dozens of others nationwide - has left him out of work. He is among hundreds of journalists to lose their jobs at ABS-CBN as the broadcasting giant - a critic of President Rodrigo Duterte - slashes its operations after advertising revenues were ravaged by the loss of its free-to-air licence in May.

The closure of 53 regional television and radio stations that broadcast in six languages will deprive millions of Filipinos of their main source of local news and entertainment. "It's painful," de Guzman, 43, told AFP last Friday after presenting the final "TV Patrol North Luzon" in a studio 240 kilometers from the capital Manila. "You do your job responsibly, you do your share to change the life of ordinary people, then at the end of the day you lose your platform to do that."

Congress last month rejected ABS-CBN's application for a new 25-year franchise and a Supreme Court petition over the issue was dismissed. ABS-CBN, which is owned by the wealthy Lopez family,



BAGUIO: ABS-CBN employees watch a pre-taped newscast during their last day of work at the regional studio in Baguio, north of Manila. — AFP

has broadcast continuously since 1953 except between 1972 and 1986 when it was seized by dictator Ferdinand Marcos - who Duterte admires. Duterte has a history of clashing with media outlets critical of his policies, including his controversial drug war that has killed thousands of people.

While he has denied any involvement in Congress's decision to reject ABS-CBN's application, he had previously pledged to block its licence renewal. In the months since losing its free-to-air permit, ABS-CBN has kept showing many of its popular news and drama programs on cable TV and online. But much of the advertising revenue it used to rake in has been wiped out, forcing the broadcaster to dramatically cut costs.

"Unfortunately, (digital advertising revenue) is not at the same level as broadcast, so that's where

the challenge is nowadays," said ABS-CBN news and current affairs boss Regina Reyes. After the closure of the regional stations on Friday, more parts of the network will be shuttered on Monday and many of its stars are expected to move on. Thousands of jobs - including staff and contractors - could be lost, ABS-CBN warned previously.

'Black day'

For decades, ABS-CBN's regional network has played a vital role in broadcasting information on natural disasters, such as typhoons, and health crises - including the coronavirus pandemic - to isolated communities that have little or no internet access. For many, it is their only source of news. Fishermen in some regions have long relied on their local broadcaster to know if it was safe to go out to sea, said Reyes.

"Not everyone has access to the internet, to radio or newspapers," said Micaella Iao, a TV reporter in Baguio. "Removing (TV broadcasters) deprives the people of the privilege to receive proper information." The Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines has described the closure of ABS-CBN's regional stations as a "black day for independent media" in the country. "It's an avoidable national tragedy, inflicted by the very people who should protect Filipinos from all adversity," it said.

ABS-CBN is allowed to file a fresh petition, but its success would require members of Congress, dominated by Duterte allies and whose terms expire in 2022, to change their minds. For now, they are mourning the loss of their network. "It's not just a channel... it's a relationship, a connection that has been lost," said Stanley Palisada, who was head of the regional news group. — AFP



CHENNAI: A health worker checks the oxygen saturation level of a woman using a pulse oximeter at a COVID-19 testing camp in a residential area in Chennai. — AFP

How \$13 device is helping Delhi fight the coronavirus

NEW DELHI: Twice a day, New Delhi health worker Kamal Kumari receives a flurry of WhatsApp messages from coronavirus patients, containing either a two-digit reading from a tiny medical device or a photo of its glowing display. She scans the numbers from the 1,000 rupee (\$13) oxygen monitor, known as pulse oximeter, checking to ensure they are all above the prescribed 95 mark and then notes them down in her logbook.

"When we didn't have this, we wouldn't know about their oxygen levels," said Kumari, explaining how her team would worry about patients' conditions rapidly worsening when India's capital was badly short of hospital beds. "Now we can find out in time and safely refer patients to the hospital." Delhi's government has so far distributed pulse oximeters to more than 32,000 people for free, putting them at the heart of a plan to isolate most asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic coronavirus patients in their homes.

The program was devised in May, when coron-

avirus cases started surging in the densely populated city of 20 million, sending panicked residents rushing to hospitals. "If we hadn't done this, there would've been no room to even stand in our hospitals," Delhi's health minister, Satyendar Jain, told Reuters. With more than 3.5 million infections, India has reported the world's third-highest number of coronavirus cases, and states across the country have deployed a variety of measures to fight the pandemic.

In Delhi, health authorities started noticing "happy hypoxemia" - low blood oxygen levels without any breathlessness - that was leading to complications in coronavirus patients isolated at home, Jain said. For regular monitoring, doctors told Jain that patients would either have to visit hospitals or use the inexpensive oxygen monitors, many of which are made in China. Delhi has recorded around 173,000 infections with a little over 4,400 deaths. Only 14,700 cases remain active and many hospital beds are now empty.

Other cities across the world have also deployed the device. In May, at the height of its outbreak, Singapore distributed several thousand oximeters to migrant workers isolated in cramped dormitories, which had become an epicentre for the virus's spread. Singapore's health ministry said oximeters allowed workers "to proactively monitor their own health status and reach out for medical assistance if needed". — Reuters

Indian lawyer found guilty of contempt, fined one rupee

NEW DELHI: India's top court yesterday imposed a symbolic fine of one rupee (\$0.0136) on a prominent lawyer found guilty of criminal contempt for posts on Twitter that were critical of senior judges, which he declined to apologize for. A three-member bench of the Supreme Court said that lawyer Prashant Bhushan must pay the fine by Sept. 15, failing which he could be imprisoned for three months and barred from practice for three years.

The case sparked a debate around free speech and the judiciary's openness to criticism, with thousands of lawyers backing Bhushan and arguing that the court was being too harsh. "Freedom of expression is there but rights of others should also be respected," the court said while imposing the fine on Bhushan. Bhushan and his lawyers were not immediately available for comment.

In June, Bhushan posted a photograph that he said showed Chief Justice SA Bobde astride a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, saying he was riding a 5 million rupee (\$67,000) bike without a mask or a helmet while citizens were being denied justice as the court was in lockdown. Bobde has not commented publicly on the photograph. In another post on Twitter the same month, Bhushan said that when historians looked at how democracy had been destroyed in India in the past six years, they would note the role of the Supreme Court and the past four top justices.

Twitter blocked both of the posts. In an 108-page order holding him guilty of criminal contempt earlier in August, the court had said the first post was "patently false". The same order said that the second had the "effect of destabilizing the very foundation of this important pillar of the Indian democracy", referring to the judiciary. The court then asked Bhushan, who has championed public interest litigation, to issue an "unconditional apology", which he declined to do, leading to the sentence yesterday. — Reuters

Business

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

KFH Capital lists first REIT on Boursa Kuwait

Investing in income-generating real estate: Al-Marzouq

KUWAIT: KFH Capital, the investment arm of Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH), has announced the listing of "KFH Capital REIT Fund", the first local real estate investment trust, that will be listed on Boursa Kuwait.

The listing confirms the integrity and distinction of KFH Capital's investment products as well as the added value it provides by launching investment tools with healthy returns and an appropriate structure to meet the market needs and customers' aspirations.

Chief Executive Officer at KFH Capital, Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq said that due to the outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown in Kuwait and the world, the listing has been postponed from March to September 1, 2020 as per the applicable procedures. The company had previously completed the fund's capital and obtained its final license in October 2019.

He added: "Praise to be Allah Almighty and to the fruitful efforts and cooperation with CMA and



REIT fund closed with record participation

Boursa Kuwait, we completed the listing requirement on the official stock exchange. KFH Capital REIT is the first licensed and listed fund on Boursa Kuwait to invest in income-generating real estate



Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq

assets." Al-Marzouq confirmed that Listing would provide the unitholders with more flexibility and liquidity, exit option and trading (buy and sell) opportunities as well as healthy returns through the monthly distributions. Al-Marzouq added that: "The fund aims to achieve cash returns by investing in leased and income-generating real estate assets in Kuwait excluding the land and real estate development projects, ensuring limited risk and sustainable cash flows from these assets. The fund distributes no less than 90 per-

cent of net collected income after deducting the expenses and provisions. "Equipped with professional team with long experience in the local real estate market, the listing followed a successful subscription with more than 300 subscribers and raised KD 23.6 million within two weeks," he said. Al-Marzouq indicated that this success confirms the investors' confidence in the method and scope of the fund which is expected to achieve profitable returns and high liquidity for its unitholders and strengthen KFH Capital's position as the best investment destination in the region.

The fund focuses on the diversified income-generating real estate assets in various sectors in Kuwait. It also seeks the investment, commercial, industrial and other sectors that are legally permitted to invest in, taking advantages of the benefits and developments of various real estate sectors in the local market.

Turkey's economy shrinks nearly 10% in Q2

ISTANBUL: Turkey's economy contracted by 9.9 percent in the second quarter as a coronavirus lockdown brought activity to a near standstill, according to data yesterday that showed its worst year-over-year performance in a decade.

While less precipitous than expected, the drop in gross domestic product (GDP) was still historic compared to the first quarter at a seasonally and calendar-adjusted 11.0 percent, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute. Turkey's \$770 billion economy is used to more than 5 percent growth driven by booming construction financed by cheap foreign credit. But a 2018 currency crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and new lira weakness has brought two sharp slumps in as many years.

Many larger economies, however, fared worse in the second quarter than Turkey and it also outpaced some peers including Mexico and Poland, whose economies shrank on a quarterly basis of over 20 percent and over 12 percent respectively. The data had little impact on the lira, which was slightly weaker at 7.3400 against the dollar.

In the first quarter, Turkey's economy grew by 4.4 percent year-on-year, according to a slight revision from the initial figure. It was boosted by a lending spree just before the pandemic struck Turkey in March. The financial sector stood out with 28 percent growth in the second quarter, while the large industry and services sectors shrank 16 percent and 25 percent respectively.

Beginning in March, Ankara shut schools and some businesses including many factories, closed borders and adopted weekend stay-home orders. Much of the economy was reopened in June, though new virus cases have edged back up in recent weeks. "The rest of the year will depend on the pandemic (and) especially the recovery of demand in private consumption," said Tera Yatirim economist Enver Erkan. "Positive growth this year looks difficult."

In a Reuters poll of 14 economists, the median estimate was for a 11.8 percent year-over-year contraction in GDP, with estimates ranging from declines of 7.1 percent to 13.1 percent. Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, who has forecast between 2 percent contraction and 1 percent growth this year, said on Twitter the GDP data was good compared with other countries, and Turkey was determined to wipe out the coronavirus effects going into 2021. A severe hit to the key tourism sector means the economy is also expected to shrink for the full year. Turkey's economy last contracted on an annual basis in the midst of the global great recession in 2009, by 4.7 percent.

The central bank cut rates aggressively from mid-2019 but has held policy steady the last few months as the lira dropped to record lows, threatening bigger problems for the economy. — Reuters



ISTANBUL: Turkey's economy contracted by 9.9 percent in the second quarter as a coronavirus lockdown brought activity to a near standstill, according to data yesterday. — Reuters

Captainless WTO in troubled water with no land in sight

GENEVA: As Roberto Azevedo leaves the World Trade Organization today, the institution faces multiple crises without a captain—a situation experts warn could drag on for months. Any future WTO leader will head an organization mired in stalled trade talks and struggling to curb trade tensions between the United States and China. It must also help member countries navigate a devastating global economic slump sparked by the coronavirus pandemic.

The global trade body faces relentless attacks from Washington, which has crippled the WTO dispute settlement appeal system and threatened to leave altogether. Many observers fear that intransigent US positions could paralyze the WTO process of designating a new director general, leaving the organization leaderless for the foreseeable future.

"The US demands that the new DG shares US concerns, many of which are about addressing concerns related to China," Manfred Elsig, a professor of international relations at the World Trade Institute in Bern told AFP. "Given that the DG is chosen by consensus, this tough stance complicates the selection."

The WTO has already presented a timeline for selecting one of eight candidates in the running to replace Azevedo within a few months. But Elsig warned that "the process is already torpedoed."

"It could well be that many WTO members want to wait until after the (US) election, hoping that the administration changes," Azevedo's surprise announcement in May that he would end his second WTO term 12 months early forced the organization to speed up its usually lengthy process of selecting a new leader. Three Africans, two Europeans, two Asians and one Latin American quickly threw their hats in the ring.

In Belarus, currency plunges and IT giants eye exit

MINSK, Belarus: The Belarusian currency is tumbling in value and companies in its crucial IT sector are threatening to pull out after weeks of unprecedented protests against authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko. Belarusians are desperately trawling banks and bureaux de change for foreign currency to salvage at least some of the value of their savings.

"The banks don't have any foreign currency. Staff tell you to wait, that a customer might bring some," said one customer at the country's largest lender, Belarusbank, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The national currency is falling at a record rate, losing more than 10 percent of its value against the euro and the dollar in the last month due to uncertainty over the deepening political standoff and fears of an economic crisis. Over the last year, it has fallen 27 percent against the dollar and 33 percent against the euro.

'Scoundrels'

In recent days, numerous Telegram accounts widely followed by the opposition have urged people to buy foreign currency to destabilize the ruble and therefore Lukashenko's regime. They have also encouraged people to boycott the giant state enterprises that are the bulwarks of Lukashenko's Soviet-style economy and buy from private companies.

The president, re-elected in disputed polls on August 9, on Thursday condemned "scoundrels" who are "calling for destabilizing the financial market." "We will not allow the national currency to collapse," he vowed at a meeting on state enterprises, in comments reported by his press service.

Independent analyst Alexander Vasilyev acknowledged that some people were selling rubles "as a sign of protest" but said the amount involved was not enough "to significantly affect the exchange



This combination of file pictures (from left to right) shows Nigeria's Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Foreign Minister Tudor Ulianosvchi, Kenya's Foreign Minister Amina Chawahir Mohamed, Candidate for WTO Hamid Mamdough, South Korean Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee and Undersecretary for North America for the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs Jesus Seade. — AFP

'Confessionals'

The organization is due next month to begin three rounds of consultations — dubbed "confessionals"—in which all member states confidentially voice their preferences, gradually whittling down the list. The process, based on consensus, is expected to last until mid-November. But soaring international tensions and growing politicization of picks to head UN agencies and other international organizations could trip up the tentative timeline.

Members failed last month to pick an acting chief from among four deputy directors—something that is normally a straightforward process. Brussels and Washington butted heads over whether German Karl Brauner, or American Alan Wolff, should get the job, in what observers say was unprecedented politicization of an administrative decision. Elvire Fabry, a researcher at the Jacques Delors institute, said that "the US veto" of widely-backed Brauner was first and foremost linked to President Donald Trump's wish to "increase the power play towards the European Union ... ahead of the elections."

"Making such a concession, even for an interim (chief), would have been too much for him," she said, adding that Washington might also expect the interim period "to be longer than predicted, and does not want to allow a European to settle into the position." A Western trade diplomat who asked not to be named said there was concern over how far some might be willing to go to prevail. The candidates themselves appear to be taking the turmoil in

stride. "I have confidence in the selection process and look forward to this concluding in good time," Liam Fox of Britain told AFP in an email. Kenyan candidate Amina Mohamed insisted in an interview that she saw "no reason to doubt that the timetable (announced for the selection process) won't be realised."

'Harmful power'

"It is difficult to measure the harmful power the US is exerting on this process, to know how far they can and want to go to interfere and disrupt things," remarked Sebastien Jean, head of the French research centre Cepii. "I think that is the great unknown. "There is a feeling that the United States will probably remain fairly passive and show little good will until November 3," he said. Some think the wait could last until January 20, when the next US president is sworn in, before things will move forward.

Many say the process has never been so politicized, and some suggest the organization might be forced to ditch its long-held policy of consensus and ask members to vote. That would mark a big shift. In 1999, when members were unable to unanimously choose who should be given four years at the helm, they opted to hand the two top picks a three-year mandate each instead of resorting to a vote. But professor Elsig said such a decision would be unfortunate in the current climate. "Someone with a short three-year tenure might likely be perceived as a lame duck from the beginning." — AFP



MINSK: A man holds a historical Belarus flag at an opposition rally in Minsk amid growing protests against President Lukashenko leading to the tumbling of local. — AFP

rate." The mood of dissatisfaction has also extended to the country's strong IT sector, one of Belarus's few success stories. It is angry that the government has attempted to quell protests by repeatedly cutting off online access and raiding offices of internet giants, seen by Lukashenko as playing a role in the protest movement. More than 2,000 people working in the IT sector have signed an open letter calling for new elections and an end to political violence and internet shutdowns, even threatening to move out of the country.

Closed offices

Russian internet giant Yandex had its Minsk offices searched by armed law enforcement officers in mid-August. It responded by closing its work space in the capital and transferring all of its approximately 300 staff to remote working.

Yandex has said that some employees have left Minsk but has not confirmed reports that it is beginning to move staff out of the country. The Viber messaging app said on Twitter that it temporarily closed its office in Minsk earlier in the

month due to "the safety concerns of our staff" and "internet issues." The office reopened last week, it said. The political crisis caused by Lukashenko's re-election amid accusations of vote-rigging has also hit sectors of the economy with a high level of state intervention.

This comes as Russia has cut down on its largesse towards its smaller neighbor reliant on subsidized energy. "Strikes in key sectors could further erode growth prospects, which were already weakened by oil supply disruptions and the pandemic," Fitch analysts said in a note.

They estimated that GDP would contract by five percent in 2020. Workers at tractor, heavy machinery and potash plants—seen as Lukashenko's political heartland—have downed tools and joined protests, shaking the authorities. The walk-outs have died down in recent days as workers have been threatened with dismissal and strike leaders have been detained. But Fitch said last week that strikes at the potash mines of Belaruskali, the world's largest producer, could lead to a reduction in the country's exports. — AFP

Business

China's slower factory growth eclipsed by robust services

Production growth eases but new orders rise

BEIJING: China's factory activity grew at a slower pace in August as floods across southwestern China disrupts production, but the services sector expanded at a solid rate in a boost to the economy as it continues to recover from the coronavirus shock. The world's second-biggest economy has largely managed to bounce back from the health crisis, though intensifying Sino-US tensions over a range of issues and the global demand outlook remain a risk factor.

The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) fell slightly to 51 in August from 51.1 in July, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed yesterday. It remained above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction on a monthly basis.

Analysts had expected it to pick up a touch to 51.2. China's vast industrial sector is steadily returning to the levels seen before the pandemic paralyzed huge swathes of the economy, as pent-up demand, stimulus-driven infrastructure expansion and surprisingly resilient exports propel a recovery, but the recovery remains uneven. A sub-index for the activity of small firms stood, however, at 47.7 in August, down from July's 48.6, with over half of them reporting a lack of market demand and more than 40 percent of them reporting financial strains, Zhao Qinghe, a senior statistician with the NBS, said in a separate statement.

"In addition, some companies in Chongqing and Sichuan reported an impact from the heavy rains and floods, resulting in a prolonged procurement cycle for raw materials, reduced orders and a pull-back in factory production." The official PMI, which largely focuses on big and state-owned firms, also showed the sub-index for new export orders stood

at 49.1 in August, improving from 48.4 a month earlier and suggesting a bottoming out in the contractionary trend after COVID hit.

"The growth engine is now clear. Overseas demand will only pick up slowly and travel restrictions will only be relaxed if COVID-19 cases subside overseas. Until then China will rely more on its own for economic growth," said Iris Pang, Greater China chief economist at ING.

Economic indicators ranging from trade to producer prices all suggest a further pick up in the industrial sector. Profits at China's industrial firms



Small firms continue to suffer

last month grew at the fastest pace since June 2018, data showed on Thursday.

Services shine

Activity in the construction sector, a powerful domestic growth driver, also eased in August, likely due to the floods in Southern China. But analysts are confident that as the torrential rains recede, Beijing's infrastructure push - on the back of accommodative policies - would further bolster growth. The official non-manufacturing PMI, which



Employees working on a new energy vehicle (NEV) assembly line at a BYD Auto factory in Huaian in China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

includes services and construction sectors, rose to 55.2 from 54.2 in July, the NBS survey showed.

Investment bank HSBC expects China's economy would grow by 5.4 percent in the third quarter year-on-year, followed by a 6.2 percent expansion in the fourth quarter, returning China's growth to pre-COVID levels. But some analysts fear that the recovery could stall, hurt by rising tensions between Washington and Beijing and as another wave of local infections returns in the winter. Moreover, the continued rise in the number of COVID-19 cases across many countries, led by India and the United

States, remain a risk to the outlook. The economy, which grew 3.2 percent in the second quarter year-on-year, is set to expand 2.2 percent this year - the weakest in over three decades.

Capital Economics senior China economist Julian Evans-Pritchard said the services sector uptick suggested an encouraging broadening out of the recovery. "This is consistent with our view that an investment-led rebound would eventually also shore up consumer sentiment and household spending, keeping the overall economic recovery on track." — Reuters

ABK congratulates winners of salary transfer draw

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the names of two winners for the month of August for the "Transfer your Salary and Find Reasons to Smile" monthly draw campaign, held on August 24th 2020, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The lucky winners who will each receive the equivalent of their monthly salaries were:

Kalpesh Parsotambhai Sardhara and Bindu James.

The next draw will be on the 17th September 2020, with the last draw taking place on the 10th December 2020. To be eligible to enter the draw, customers must have their salaries transferred to the bank at least one month prior to the draw date. The draw is open to both Kuwaiti and expatriate customers who hold Elite, Prestige or Al-Raed Salary Transfer Accounts.

In addition to the draw, the salary campaign offers ABK salary account customers a range of exceptional rewards. Kuwaiti salary account holders will receive cash gifts up to KD 1,000 provided they transfer a salary equivalent to/or higher than KD 500. Moreover, Kuwaiti customers are eligible for a 0 percent interest loan of up to KD 10,000 and expatriates up to KD 5,000. These loans are subject to ABK's terms and conditions, as well as the Central Bank of Kuwait's regulations and policies.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Ahmad Khalifah Rashed Al-Shahoumi
2. Adel Hamdan Mohammed Asmaeil
3. Talal Mohammed Abdulrazzaq Al-Mutawa
4. Ata Awad Masoud
5. Fouzeyah Ali Taher Alfaiakawi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Nestle to snap up US allergy specialist Aimmune

ZURICH: Swiss food giant Nestle said yesterday it would acquire US allergy treatment company Aimmune Therapeutics in a deal valued at \$2.6 billion (2.1 billion euros). Nestle Health Science (NHS), the Swiss company's nutritional medicine subsidiary, already has over a 25-percent stake in the Californian firm and said it planned to buy up the rest in a bid to extend its food allergy portfolio.

Nestle said it was especially eager to acquire Aimmune's Palforzia, which it said was the only treatment approved by the US Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to help reduce the frequency and severity of peanut allergies in children aged 4 through 17. It said it would offer shareholders \$34.50 per share — 174 percent above Aimmune's closing price on Friday — and would finance the purchase "with cash on hand". NHS chief

Greg Behar hailed the deal, saying in a statement that the acquisition would make it possible to "offer a wide range of solutions that can transform the lives of people suffering from food allergies around the world."

"Food allergies are not only disruptive to everyday life, they can be life threatening," Nestle stressed, pointing out that up to 240 million people worldwide have them, with peanut allergy being the most common. The transaction is expected to be completed during the final three months of the year.

Following the announcement, Nestle saw its share price rise nearly one percent in midday trading while the Swiss stock exchange's main SMI index rose 0.75 percent. Analysts were positive, with Jean-Philippe Bertschy of Vontobel describing the deal as a "milestone", adding though



The logo of Nestle, the Swiss food giant, is seen on the company's Headquarters in Vevey. — AFP

that it came as only "half a surprise". Nestle, which in 2018 swallowed Canadian vitamin maker Atrium Innovations at a similar price, has made no secret of its intention to strengthen its presence in the health

and nutrition sector. Bertschy pointed out that Nestle, which knows Aimmune well, had seized the "opportunity" just as the Californian company's share price was at one of its lowest points since July 2016. — AFP

Japan investors bet on Suga's Abenomics 2.0

TOKYO: Japanese investors are putting their money on Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga taking over as Japan's next prime minister, and extending the economic policies that defined his predecessor's nearly eight years in office. They are betting Suga, the longtime lieutenant of outgoing prime minister Shinzo Abe who is stepping down for health reasons, will be able to secure enough votes among ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers when they hold a leadership vote on Sept. 14.

A Suga government will mean the economic, fiscal and reform policies of Abe, dubbed "Abenomics", will likely continue. Telecom shares fell as Suga has a long-standing position of wanting to reduce mobile phone tariffs while travel-related shares soared as he said last week that he wanted to promote tourism to get the economy back on its feet.

The Nikkei bounced back and the yen regained some stability as investors expect Suga to continue policies with a focus on supporting stock prices. "Markets are starting to price in a Suga government. He will be a successor to Abe's policies and there won't be a political vacuum," said Takashi Hiroki, chief strategist at Monex Securities. The Nikkei rose 1.12 percent to 23,139.76, wiping out all of its losses on Friday following the surprise news of Abe's resignation. The yen also steadied at 105.62 per dollar.

The three mobile phone carriers were among the worst hit on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. KDDI dropped 4.7 percent and NTT Docomo lost 3.4 percent. SoftBank, subsidiary of SoftBank Group, shed 2.7 percent. Some market players also said airlines and railways gained on hopes of further measures to help revive the economy.

Suga had told Reuters last week Japan wants to avert another state of emergency and needs to consider more stimulus to revive the pandemic-hit economy. West Japan Railway gained 3.6 percent, Central Japan Railway rose 3.3 percent and ANA Holdings added 2.6 percent.



TOKYO: A pedestrian walks past an electronic quotation board displaying share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (left) and foreign exchange rate against the US dollar (right) in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

"Suga's stance will be to support the economy as much as possible while trying to avoid the collapse of the medical system," said Tetsuro Ii, president of Commons Asset Management. "It's not that the stock market hugely likes him but he is well accepted." Suga, who joins the race to take over from the country's longest-serving prime minister, will likely face off against former defense minister Shigeru Ishiba, which media polls show is the most popular choice among the public.

But the LDP is likely to use a voting method that limits the votes from rural party members, domestic media have reported, effectively blocking Ishiba's path to the prime minister's office. Analysts say Ishiba, a rare critic of Abe within the LDP, would likely try to rein in the Bank of Japan's aggressive monetary easing, which could limit or end the central bank's exchange traded fund buying program.

Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund, the world's largest, bought more overseas assets during Abe's administration than it did previously, including boosting purchases of Japanese equities.

These purchases could slow if the new prime minister is not committed to keeping Abe's policies in place, analysts say. "Ishiba would try to overhaul Abenomics," said Norihiro Fujita, chief investment strategist, Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities. — Reuters

United Airlines bids farewell to change fees

CHICAGO: United Airlines said on Sunday it is permanently eliminating change fees on tickets for US travel effective immediately, the latest effort by a US airline to try to stimulate bookings hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Chicago-based United is among the major US airlines that began implementing temporary waivers of change fees this year to give passengers more flexibility with their travel plans given the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

Now it is making the policy permanent for all standard Economy and Premium cabin tickets and also applying it to any ticket already booked through the end of the year. The standard change fee - charged to passengers who change their tickets - for domestic flights was \$200.

In a video message to customers, Chief Executive Scott Kirby said getting rid of fees is often a top request from passengers. The move matches Southwest Airlines' long-standing policy of not charging fees for ticket changes.

Rivals American Airlines and Delta Air Lines traditionally do charge for changes. Along with United, they were booking record revenues before the pandemic crushed demand, thanks largely to fees for things like checking luggage or choosing a seat. In another change, beginning Jan. 1 United will allow customers to list for stand-by for free on a different flight on the same day of travel with the same departure and arrival cities if a seat is available.

Kirby called the moves a departure from decisions airlines had made in the past to survive difficult times, sometimes at the expense of customer service, saying United "won't be following that same playbook as we come out of this crisis." Airlines are burning through millions of dollars daily because of the pandemic, but agree that restoring customer confidence and providing travel flexibility will be key to encouraging people to start traveling again and pave the path back to profitability. — Reuters

GCC banking sector net profits reach 8.5-year low in Q2 2020

GCC banks continue to show resilient asset growth during 1H 2020

KUWAIT: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt across the GCC and across large-cap sectors that resulted in a historic decline in net profits. The GCC banking sector was no exception as the sector reported lowest net profits since Q1-2012 at \$4.3 billion (excluding Bahraini banks due to lack of quarterly data). This was a q-o-q decline of 42.6 percent and a y-o-y decline of 53.2 percent. The decline came mainly on the back of a quarterly loss of \$1.83 billion reported by Saudi Arabia's SABB during Q2-2020 on the back of goodwill impairment charge it took during the quarter. Excluding SABB's losses, profit for the GCC Banking sector reached a six-quarter low of \$6.1 billion. Profits during the quarter were affected by falling topline for the sector in addition to higher loan loss provisions as banks took covid-19 related provisions.

In terms of balance sheet, GCC banks continued to show resilient asset growth during 1H-2020 with a growth of 4.3 percent reaching \$2.5 trillion as compared to \$2.4 trillion at the end of last year. In terms of y-o-y growth, total assets increased by 10.8 percent during Q2-2020.

Listed banks in Saudi Arabia once again reported the biggest increase in assets during 1H-2020 with a growth of 7.7 percent followed by UAE at 5.0 percent. The only exception were Omani banks as they reported an aggregate contraction in balance sheet size by 0.3 percent in 1H-2020 to reach \$77 billion.

Asset growth during the quarter was once again supported mainly by Islamic banks that grew assets at 7.2 percent during 1H-2020 as compared to 3.4 percent for conventional banks. In terms of y-o-y growth, Islamic banks once again showed higher asset growth of 12.8 percent as compared to 10.1 percent growth for conventional banks. Meanwhile, 1H-2020 growth in earning assets were in line with total asset growth of 4.3 percent to reach \$2.1 trillion at the end of 1H-2020 as compared to \$1.97 trillion at the end of 2019.

Banks showed continued growth in lending with both gross loans and net loans showing growth since the start of the year. Gross loans (excluding Kuwaiti banks) increased by 3.5 percent during 1H-2020 to reach \$1.38 trillion. Net loans (including Kuwaiti banks) also increased by 3.5 percent to reach \$1.49 trillion as of 30-June-2020. Saudi Arabian banks reported the biggest 1H-2020 increase in net loans at 7.2 percent followed by Kuwaiti banks at 3.8 percent growth. Banks in Qatar and UAE also showed growth of 2.2 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively. Customer deposits also reported growth of 4.6 percent during 1H-

2020 to reach \$1.87 trillion, resulting in an aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio of 79.7 percent for the GCC banking sector.

Net income contracts

Aggregate net income for GCC listed banks reached \$4.3 billion (excluding Bahraini banks), the lowest since Q1-2012. As highlighted earlier, the decline was led mainly by SABB's goodwill impairment charge that resulted in the bank's quarterly loss of \$1.83 billion in Q2-2020. Saudi Arabia and Kuwaiti banks reported the biggest q-o-q percentage decline in net income during Q2-2020. Net income for Saudi Arabian banks reached \$0.5 billion, one of the lowest on record due to the losses reported by SABB. Excluding SABB's net loss, the aggregate q-o-q net profits decline for Saudi Arabian banks was 14.1 percent.

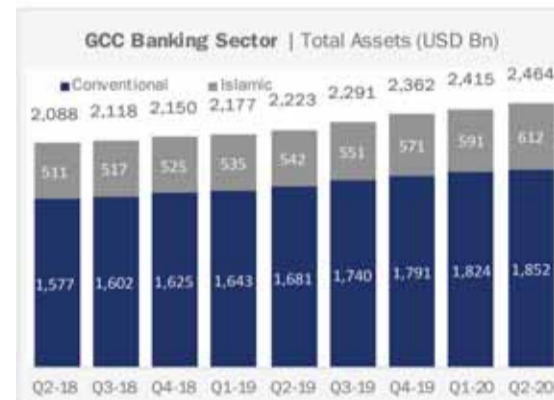
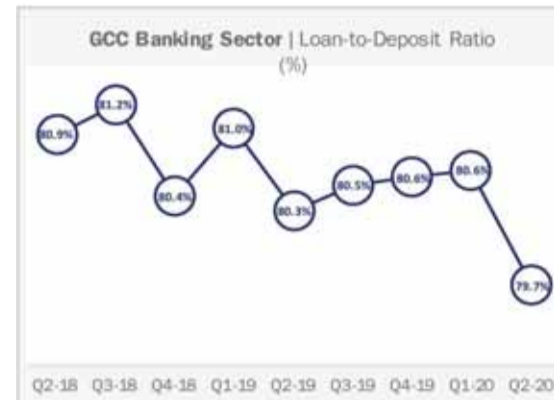
Within Saudi Arabia, NCB reported a q-o-q profit decline of 26.1 percent that reached \$556.6 million, the lowest since Q3-2016. Meanwhile, net profits for Kuwaiti banks plunged during Q2-2020 by 81.2 percent to reach \$110.8 million as compared to \$590.5 million during Q1-2020. The decline was even higher in terms of y-o-y performance at 86.4 percent. In Kuwait, 3 out of 10 listed banks reported losses during the quarter during Q2-2020 as compared to profits during Q1-2020, whereas the remaining 7 banks reported steep q-o-q decline in profits.

Qatari banks also reported a q-o-q slide in profits, but it was relatively smaller at 13.4 percent. On the other hand, UAE and Omani banks reported a sequential growth in profits during Q2-2020. Aggregate profits for Omani banks increased by 3.3 percent q-o-q to reach \$170.0 million mainly led by higher profits reported by Bank Muscat (+9.2 percent), Bank Sohar (13.3 percent) and profits reported by HSBC Bank Oman during Q2-2020, as compared to losses during Q1-2020. In the UAE, aggregate net income increased marginally to \$2.01 billion during Q2-2020.

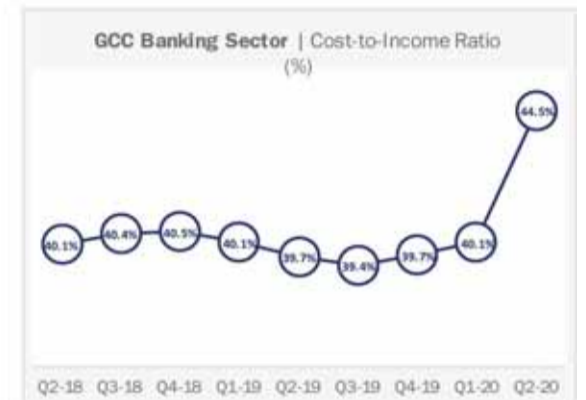
Quarterly LLPs soar

Loan loss provisions (LLP) continued to rise during Q2-2020 to reach a new record of \$4.6 billion for the GCC banking sector (excluding Bahraini banks), an increase of 10.3 percent as compared to the previous quarter. The sector has taken total provisions of \$9.1 billion in the first two quarters of 2020 as compared to \$12.6 billion provisions during full year 2019.

Kuwaiti banks booked the biggest percentage increase in provisions during the quarter aggregate



Source: Reuters, Company Financials, KAMCO Research



Revival steps amid easing virus lockdown

gating at \$1.0 billion, an increase of 78.3 percent as compared to Q1-2020. Saudi and Qatari banks closely followed with growth of 37.6 percent and 37.5 percent, respectively, with provisions totaling \$1.7 billion for the two countries. UAE banks continued to report the highest absolute provisions in Q2-2020 at \$1.7 billion despite recording a q-o-q decline of 22.8 percent.

Total bank revenue drops

Total bank revenue for listed banks in the GCC (excluding Bahraini Banks) reached \$18.7 billion during Q2-2020 as compared to \$20.7 billion during Q1-2020, a q-o-q decline 9.5 percent. This was one of the steepest declines seen over the last few years that came on the back of a broad-based decline in sector profits. UAE banks reported the biggest q-o-q drop in banking revenues during Q2-2020 at 15.0 percent followed by Kuwaiti banks at 12.2 percent while Qatari and Saudi Banks reported a drop of 5.7 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. The decline in revenues came as a result of a decline in both interest income as well as non-interest income.

Revival measures

Almost all the six economies in the GCC have restarted to ease COVID-19 lockdowns. The

process of opening was gradual and it took almost two months for the lockdowns to be completely lifted across the region. We believe that the lifting of lockdowns and the restart of economic activity would support a banking sector revival in the region. However, sector profits are expected to remain subdued during Q3-2020 reflecting partial economic activity and show full recovery only by the end of the year. In addition, the huge SME sector base is expected to see continued policy support from the government in the form of relaxed requirements from the banks with the support of the regulators, as the sector holds the key to employment generation in the region. Key sectors like real estate is expected to see the effects of the lockdowns wane by the end of Q3-2020 and other vulnerable sectors like oil and gas and construction are expected to follow that would support lending activity.

Further stress to the banking sector is expected to be more than offset by continued strong lending capacity in terms of adequate liquidity and one of the lowest loan-to-deposit ratios. The low loan-to-deposit ratio is expected to be gradually addressed as lending picks up in the region led by higher participation from the private sector and a government backed emergence from the pandemic.

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma account campaign

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draws on Al-Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign on August 30, 2020. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ahmad Al-Basman.

The results of the draws were as follows:

- 1- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 went to the winner Shereen Mostafa Mahmoud Ali Abu Fayed
- 2- Salary account campaign - the prize of up to KD 1,000 went to the winner Fadheelah Abdullah Abdullah Bo Zaid

The bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the Bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 250 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan of five times the salary and a maximum of KD 10,000, in addition retired Kuwaiti customers and residents who transfer their debts amounting KD 10,000 and above to the Bank can get a cash gift of 1 percent of the value of the transferred debt.

The Bank stated that Al-Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy. The Bank revealed that Al-Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al-Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Use NBK's mobile app to win GAC cars or smartwatches

KUWAIT: As part of its constant efforts to reward its customers with exclusive offers and promotions all year round, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the launch of a new campaign starting this September and continuing until end of February 2021. The campaign qualifies customers to win new GAC cars, as well as smartwatches, when downloading or using the NBK mobile banking app.

This campaign gives NBK customers the opportunity to win a car from Mutawa Alkazi, the dealer of GAC Motor, as customers will have the chance to enter a monthly draw on GAC GS3, GS4 and GS5 models, as well as a weekly draw on Apple, Android, Fitbit and Garmin smartwatches.

Customers will be eligible for one entry to the draw upon making transfers to other local or international accounts, applying for a credit card or increasing transfer/credit card limit, or applying for a loan using NBK Mobile Banking. Meanwhile, customers will be eligible for 2 entries to the draw upon download-

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 30th August 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 23 - 27 August 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Rimas Fahad Sayyah Al-Aazmi
Khaled Adnan Mohammed Al-Bazaz
Hussain Sadeq Mohammed Aadeq
Rashid Maan Mubarak Farhan
Mariam Abdulla Ali Alqattan
Al-Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet,

ing NBK Mobile Banking App, using NBK Quick Pay, opening NBK Term Deposit. In view of the current circumstances that required taking precautionary and preventive measures, NBK is keen on staying closer to customers and providing them with banking services around the clock, in order to enable them to do their banking quickly and easily from the comfort of their homes, through the NBK mobile banking app.

Commenting on this new campaign, Hala Al-Shoabi, Head of Digital Service Quality Management, National Bank of Kuwait said: "We are pleased to announce the launch of this new campaign aiming at rewarding our customers and encouraging them to use the NBK Mobile Banking App, which allows them to do their banking quite easily and safely, without the need to visit the branch."

Al-Shoabi indicated: "We always strive to provide rewards and special offers that are in line with our customers' interests. Additionally, we are always keen on upgrading the NBK Mobile Banking App in order to provide top-notch banking service around the clock. At the same time, we provide tutorials on how to use the service on the bank's social media accounts as well as official website nbk.com."

"From the weekly draws on smartwatches, we aim to encourage our customers to use

with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to deposit into an Al-Danah account to participate is 30 September 2020.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous

contactless payment solutions using Fitbit and Garmin smartwatches, being a quick and secure method of making daily payments, as well as a means of maintaining social distancing," she added. Al-Shoabi noted: "Coronavirus crisis brought about radical changes in banking services, and contributed to increasing the demand for digital channels, as well as limiting the use of cash. Therefore, we encourage our customers to do their banking through NBK Mobile Banking, being an easy and secure way to bank that ensures their safety." Using NBK Mobile Banking, NBK Customers can make a variety of banking transactions quite easily and conveniently, including the following key features:

- Transfers both locally and internationally
- NBK Quick Pay
- e-Payments
- Adding beneficiaries
- Increasing monthly transfer limit
- Viewing transactions
- Making credit card payments



Hala Al-Shoabi

year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2020 quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

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- ◆ 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.
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- ◆ 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



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Lifestyle | Awards



This handout image released courtesy of MTV shows US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga accepting the TriCon Award during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards, being held virtually amid the coronavirus pandemic, broadcast on Sunday in New York.



This handout image shows the Black Eyed Peas performing during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards.— AFP photos

LADY GAGA WINS BIG AT SOCIALLY DISTANCED – AND SOCIALLY AWARE – VMAS



Canadian singer-songwriter The Weeknd accepting the award for Video of the Year for "Blinding Lights".

Lady Gaga cleaned up at MTV's Video Music Awards Sunday, an unorthodox show that paid socially distanced homage to New York City as themes of voting and racial justice punctuated the night. The 2020 VMAs—a show known more for ostentatious performances, made-for-TV moments and wild costumes than the actual awards—was scaled back due to the coronavirus pandemic, with performances held at outdoor spaces and many celebrities accepting prizes via video. Host Keke Palmer, known for her role in last year's film "Hustlers," opened the show with an emotional cold-open paying tribute to actor Chadwick Boseman, who just died after of cancer. "We dedicate tonight's show to a man whose spirit touched so many," she said of the performer who portrayed James Brown and Jackie Robinson, and was the first Black superhero in "Black Panther."

Canadian R&B singer The Weeknd—whose wins included the coveted Video of the Year—then launched into a performance of the hit "Blinding Lights" atop a viewing deck protruding off a Manhattan skyscraper, 1,000 feet in the air. "It's really hard for me to celebrate right now," he said in accepting his moon man trophy for Best R&B. "I'm just going to say justice for Jacob Blake and justice for Breonna Taylor," he continued, referring to recent black victims of police violence.

It was one of many nods to the Black Lives Matter movement, acknowledging a year that has seen months of anti-racism protests. Several stars also encouraged voting during the show where the Joe Biden campaign bought a number of advertisements in a bid to reach youth in his campaign against President Donald Trump. Lady Gaga took home trophies including Artist of the Year and Song of the Year for "Rain on Me," her collaboration with Ariana Grande. The pair staged a futuristic performance atop the Empire State Building, both masked, with Gaga in a BDSM-esque corseted get-up, one of her many eccentric costumes of the night.

The 34-year-old—who famously wore a dress crafted of raw flank steak to the 2010



US singer Doja Cat accepting the award for Best New Artist.

VMAs—also won the show's inaugural "Tricon Award," which recognizes an artist who is highly accomplished across three or more disciplines. "This has not been an easy year for a lot of people, but what I see in the world is a massive triumph of courage," she said. "Stay safe. Speak your mind and, I might sound like a broken record, but wear a mask. It's a sign of respect."

Exempt from quarantine

The show featured sweeping pans of New York, a city devastated in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic and that originally was meant to host the VMAs at Brooklyn's Barclays Center. In addition to the Empire State Building, performances were also held at the waterfront Skyline Drive-in theater, with an audience watching from spaced-out cars. Performers and crew at this year's VMAs were exempt from New York's statewide mandatory two-week quarantine imposed on travelers coming from areas with high rates of Covid-19.

The state's Department of Health said those involved with the show were required to quarantine when not working and submit to "rigorous testing." This year's edition

included new awards recognizing the tumultuous year in music, with the pandemic halting tours and festivals worldwide in a devastating blow to the industry. The show also honored healthcare workers with a tribute to doctors and nurses singing and dancing in crowd-sourced videos. Grande and fellow pop star Justin Bieber won Best Music Video From Home for "Stuck With You," while Latin boy band CNCO won Best Quarantine Performance for "Unplugged At Home." And while American pop regulars including Gaga, Grande and Taylor Swift all took home trophies, they were upset in their genre's primary category by Korean megastars BTS, which won for Best Pop for "On." The group held a green-screen performance that placed them in front of the Brooklyn Bridge in a shot recalling the classic film "Once Upon A Time in America" that starred Robert DeNiro.

Miley Cyrus meanwhile performed "Midnight Sky" while swinging on a disco ball, recalling her "Wrecking Ball" music video. Colombian singer Maluma won Best Latin for "Que Pena" featuring J Balvin, as R&B prodigy H.E.R. won MTV's Video For Good, which honors work with a social message, for "I Can't Breathe."



Colombian singer Maluma accepting the award for Best Latin for "Que Pena".

Rapper Megan Thee Stallion—currently basking in the glow of her recent success with Cardi B for their raunchy hit "WAP"—won Best Hip Hop for "Savage." The star accepted her award from home, popping champagne wearing spandex shorts and a T-shirt.— AFP



US singer and actress Keke Palmer hosting the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards.



This handout image shows the Black Eyed Peas performing during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards.



US singer Gabriella Wilson, aka H.E.R., accepting the Video For Good award.



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga (right) and US singer-songwriter Ariana Grande performing during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards.



US rapper Megan Thee Stallion accepting the award for Best Hip Hop.



South Korean boy band BTS performing from South Korea.



US rapper DaBaby performing during the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards.

Lifestyle | Features

The 2020 VMA winners

MTV Tricon Award
Lady Gaga

Video of the Year
The Weeknd, "Blinding Lights"

Artist of the Year
Lady Gaga

Song of the Year
Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande, "Rain On Me"

Push Best New Artist
Doja Cat

Best Pop
BTS, "On"

Best R&B
The Weeknd, "Blinding Lights"

Best Hip-Hop
Megan Thee Stallion, "Savage"

Best Music Video From Home
Ariana Grande & Justin Bieber, "Stuck with U"

Best Collaboration
Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande, "Rain On Me"

Best Direction
Taylor Swift, "The Man": Directed by Taylor Swift

Best Latin
Maluma ft. J Balvin, "Que? Pena"

Best Alternative
Machine Gun Kelly, "Bloody Valentine"

Best Rock
Coldplay, "Orphans"

Best Group
BTS

Best K-Pop
BTS, "On"

Video for Good
H.E.R., "I Can't Breathe"

Song of the Summer
Blackpink, "How You Like That"

Best Visual Effects
Dua Lipa, "Physical": Visual Effects by EIGHTY4

Best Choreography
BTS, "On": Choreography by Son Sung Deuk, Lee Ga Hun, Lee Byung Eun

Best Cinematography
Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande, "Rain On Me": Cinematography by Thomas Kloss

Best Art Direction
Miley Cyrus, "Mother's Daughter": Art Direction by Christian Stone

Best Quarantine Performance
CNCO, Unplugged at Home

Best Editing
Miley Cyrus, "Mother's Daughter": Edited by Alexandre Moors, Nuno Xico.



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga accepting the award for Best Collaboration for "Rain On Me".



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga accepting the award for Song of the Year for "Rain On Me".



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga accepting the award for Artist of the Year.



Latin American boy band CNCO performing.

James sombre after losing Black Panther and Black Mamba in 2020

LeBron James described 2020 as the worst year of his life on Saturday, with the Los Angeles Lakers superstar losing two of his black heroes just seven months apart. James honored actor Chadwick Boseman prior to the Lakers game five first-round play-off contest against Portland by folding his arms across his chest in the Wakanda salute from the Black Panther movie. Boseman, star of the groundbreaking superhero blockbuster, died at the age of 43 this week after a battle with cancer. His death comes seven months after former Laker icon Kobe Bryant died in a helicopter crash.



LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers crosses his arms for the Wakanda salute during a moment of silence to honor the death of actor Chadwick Boseman before the start of Game Five of the Western Conference First Round against the Portland Trail Blazers. — AFP

"To lose the Black Panther and the Black Mamba in the same year, we can all agree that 2020 is the (expletive) year ... in my 35 years, there is no question," said James. James also talked Saturday about stepping up his leadership both on and off the court in the NBA's pandemic bubble, using his platform to ignite social justice change in communities across the United States. "It is great to be back on the floor. But more important it is good to have a (social justice) plan and execute it and put into action right away," said James, who scored 36 points as the Lakers reached the second round of the playoffs with a 131-122 win in over the Trail Blazers.

James this week helped negotiate the NBA's restart after the players decided to boycott three days of playoff games following the shooting of Jacob Blake by police in Wisconsin. He was part of an initiative Saturday to get Staples Center and other NBA arenas designated as polling stations for the US presidential election this year. James, who is no fan of US President Donald Trump, has spoken out numerous times since the Black Lives Matter protests started that change can happen when Americans use their right to vote. — AFP

Digging up graves: An Indonesian community honors its dead

Families in a mountainous community on Indonesia's Sulawesi island dig up their mummified relatives every three years, clean them and dress them in their favorite clothes to honor their spirits. The "Manene" ritual is carried out by the Torajan people, either before or after the August harvest, when deceased family members are unearthed and their graves cleaned. "Sometimes we even have a conversation with them, asking them to wish us health, prosperity and health," Rony Pasang, whose family carried out the tradition on Saturday, told AFP.

Pasang dug up several dead family members including his grandmother and great aunt-with his children and grandchildren paying respect to the shriveled, mummified corpses. The family members in the village of Panggala were unearthed and laid out to dry in the sun, before

being dressed. A feast was also held and a pig slaughtered for the occasion. The death of a relative involves many intricate ceremonial steps for the Torajan people, who number about a million. The deceased are mummified through an embalming process that used to involve sour vinegar and tea leaves. These days though families usually inject a formaldehyde solution into the corpse. After many months, the souls of the dead are freed and immortality assured-with an elaborate multi-day funeral ceremony called Rambu Solo. A majority of Torajans are Christians but they retain many animist rituals and beliefs. — AFP

This picture shows family members cleaning the preserved corpses of relatives during a traditional ritual called "Manene" in Panggala, North Toraja. — AFP photos



FAIRUZ: THE ARAB WORLD'S MOST CELEBRATED LIVING VOICE

The Arab world's last living music legend Fairuz, who French president Emmanuel Macron was to visit yesterday in Beirut, is a rare symbol of national unity in crisis-hit Lebanon. Since the death of Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum in 1975, no Arab singer has been so profoundly venerated as 85-year-old Fairuz-a stage name that means "turquoise" in Arabic. For decades, she captivated audiences everywhere from her native Beirut to Las Vegas, including the grand Olympia in Paris and the Royal Albert Hall in London.

She has sung of love, Lebanon and the Palestinian cause, in ballads that have revolutionized Middle Eastern music. Fairuz is "certainly one of the greatest Arab singers of the 20th century," expert in Middle Eastern music Virginia Danielson told the New York Times in 1999. When she sang, she appeared as if in a trance: eyes glazed over, expression stoic, small smiles flashing quickly across her face. "If you look at my face while I am singing, you will see that I am not there, I am not in the place," she told the New York Times in a rare interview. "I feel art is like prayer." Fairuz has been dubbed "our ambassador to the stars" by her compatriots-not just for her celestial voice, but because she is a rare symbol of unity for a country bitterly divided by a 15-year civil war.

'I love you, oh Lebanon'

Born Nouhad Haddad in 1934 to a working class Christian family, she studied at the national music conservatory as a teenager. During her time with the Lebanese state radio choir, com-

poser Halim al-Roumi nicknamed her Fairuz and introduced her to composer Assi Rahbani, whom she married in 1955. Fairuz, Assi, and his brother Mansour revolutionized traditional Arabic music by merging classical Western, Russian and Latin elements with eastern rhythms and a modern orchestra.

Fairuz shot to fame after her first performance at the Baalbeck International Festival in 1957. Her reign as the queen of Arabic music was partly thanks to her championing the Palestinian cause, including "Sanarjaou Yawman" or "We Shall Return One Day", an elegy to Palestinians exiled by the creation of Israel in 1948. The star is an immortal icon in her native Lebanon. Many of her most popular songs are nostalgic odes to pastoral times. Others are poems by the likes of Lebanese legends Gibran Khalil Gibran and Said Aql that are set to music. She has largely disappeared from public life in recent years, but her soaring voice remains ubiquitous, blaring every morning from radios in street cafes and taxis.

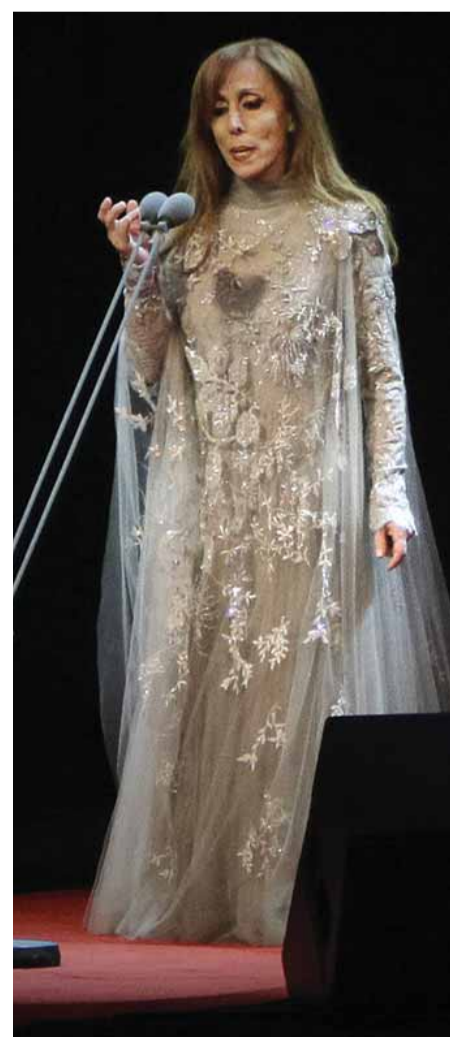
"When you look at Lebanon now, you see that it bears no resemblance to the Lebanon I sing about, so when we miss it, we look for it through the songs," the diva told the New York Times. Fairuz also won national acclaim for remaining in Lebanon throughout the country's civil war from 1975 to 1990, and for refusing to side with one faction over another. Tens of thousands of people swarmed her first post-war concert, in 1994 in Beirut's downtown. "I love you, oh Lebanon, my country, I love you. Your north, your south, your valley, I

love you," she croons in one of her most well-known songs.

Political, family controversies

Fairuz is famously protective of her personal life. "When she wants to, she can be really funny. She's also a distinguished chef. Very humble, she loves serving her guests herself," journalist Doha Chams, her press officer, told AFP. But she hates "the invasion of her private life". Fairuz had four children with husband Assi Rahbani, who died in 1986. Their daughter Layal died at a young age of a brain haemorrhage, their son Hali is disabled, and Rima, the youngest, films and produces her mother's concerts. Her eldest son, Ziad, followed in the footsteps of his father and uncle as a musician and composer.

Fairuz worked closely with Ziad-known as a troubled, but talented artist-to compose songs with a jazz influence. The Lebanese star's recent past has been marked by a string of family and political controversies. In 2008, when Lebanese political factions were fiercely divided over support for the regime in neighboring Syria, Fairuz performed in Damascus. Two years later, the Lebanese judiciary prevented her from singing tunes co-written by the Rahbani brothers without the authorization of the sons of her brother-in-law Mansour. Fairuz spent several years without new material until 2017, when her daughter Rima produced her last album, "Bibali". — AFP



A file photo taken on October 7, 2010 shows Lebanese diva Fairuz (Fairouz) performing during a rare concert in the Lebanese capital Beirut. — AFP

Photo of the Day



Mariana Pajon riding around at San Felipe Castle in Cartagena, Colombia. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Blues' Eklund ready for North-South game

WELLINGTON: Auckland Blues hooker Kurt Eklund said being locked down over the last two weeks had made for some "interesting times" but he was looking forward to getting back onto the pitch for this weekend's North-South rugby match in Wellington.

Eklund was named in the 'North' squad for Saturday's match between composite teams representing the country's two main islands, but has not been able to do any real training for more than two weeks.

New Zealand's largest city was placed into lockdown on Aug. 12 after a fresh outbreak of the novel coronavirus, while social distancing measures were also introduced for the rest of the country.

The lockdown was lifted on Sunday, allowing Auckland-based players to travel to Wellington, although social distancing measures remain in place until Sept. 6, ensuring the match will be played without a crowd.

"It has made for interesting times," Eklund told reporters on Monday after the teams assembled in Wellington. "But it's exciting to get down here and start rubbing shoulders with the boys that we'll play with on Saturday. The boys are still in pretty good condition. We've had a bit of a rest so I'm looking forward to getting into a good training week."

New Zealand Rugby had originally scheduled the match for Aug. 29 in Auckland but postponed it for a week once the lockdown was imposed and placed Wellington Regional Stadium on standby.

They decided last week to shift the game to Wellington due to the uncertainty of the lockdown being relaxed in Auckland as cases of community transmission continued to be discovered.

The game, which was an annual fixture on the New Zealand rugby calendar for much of the 20th century, should be the final chance for players to impress All Blacks coach Ian Foster before he names his first squad on Sunday. — Reuters

Birdie bomb lifts Rahm to BMW playoff triumph over Johnson

Rahm powered to the top of the leaderboard with six birdies

WASHINGTON: Jon Rahm drained a swinging 60-foot birdie putt at the first playoff hole Sunday to win the US PGA Tour BMW Championship over world number one Dustin Johnson.

Spain's Rahm, ranked second in the world behind Johnson, was in the right rough off the tee at the first playoff hole, the 18th at Olympia Fields near Chicago.

His second shot rolled to the back of the green, leaving him what could have been a tough two-putt for par. "Never did I think I'd be making another 50-, 60-footer — couple of breaks in there, too — to end up winning it," said Rahm, who gave a roaring fist pump as the putt dropped.

Johnson's tee shot was also off course, but ricocheted off a tree to settle in the fairway. The American found the middle of the green, but after Rahm's miraculous birdie effort, Johnson's birdie attempt settled inches from the cup.

Johnson had snaked in a 43-foot birdie at the same hole to force the playoff, joining Rahm on four-under par 276 in the second event of the US tour's FedEx Cup playoffs. Rahm had powered to the top of the leaderboard with six birdies in an impressive six-under par 64 — the lowest round of the week.

"I still can't believe what just happened, what happened the last hour of play," Rahm said. "That stretch of waiting for DJ, him making the putt, going in the playoff, me making the putt, then trying to stay mentally in it just in case he made the last putt — it's been a roller coaster but so much fun."

Johnson, seeking a second straight win and 23rd tour title, started the day tied for the lead with Hideki Matsuyama with Rahm three adrift.

He birdied three of his first four holes, but bogeys

at eight and 10 saw him fall out of the lead before he picked up strokes at 15 and 18 to sign for a three-under 67. Johnson's solo second place means he'll stay atop the rankings.

Rahm was tied for sixth starting the day after a third round marred by a bad mistake at the fifth hole, where he absentmindedly picked up his ball on the green without marking it and was assessed a penalty.

He said it wasn't hard to put the blunder behind him. "Once I teed off today, in the good weather and

how I started striping it the first few holes, I knew I had a chance," said Rahm, who claimed his fifth tour title and his second in his last five starts.

Rahm had two birdies on the front side, but picked up the pace with a 16-foot birdie putt at the 10th. He followed that with a five-foot birdie at the 12th and a nine-footer at 15 before he rolled in a 30-foot birdie at 16. He wasn't surprised, however, to find himself in a playoff, and went straight to the range to keep warm with Johnson still on the course and just one back.

The reserved Johnson pointed to the sky then swung a fist as his playoff-forcing putt crested a hill, accelerated down and curled in.

"Obviously I knew I needed to make birdie to get into the playoff," he said. "I played an unbelievable putt, got in the playoff and then Jon made an even more ridiculous putt on top of me."

Rising Chilean star Joaquin Niemann got off to a hot start with three birdies in his first five holes. A birdie at the eighth gave him a share of the lead, but he slowed with a bogey at 14 and finished with a 67 that left him tied for third on 278 alongside Matsuyama, who signed for a 69. — AFP

How I started striping



Sydney FC win A-League final

SYDNEY: Soccerer Rhyen Grant was the hero Sunday as Sydney FC beat Melbourne City 1-0 in extra-time to win the A-League Grand Final and etch their name in the history books.

The tireless defender timed his run perfectly to meet a cross from Luke Brattan and chest the ball home after the sides went scoreless over 90 minutes. In front of 7,500 fans at Sydney's Bankwest Stadium — the most allowed under coronavirus restrictions — it was enough to earn Steve Corica's team back-to-back titles.

It also handed them their fifth overall — a feat no other team has achieved in the league's 15-year history.

"It's nice, I maybe got a little bit lucky (with the goal) but happy days," said Grant after crushing City's dreams of a maiden crown. "It was a Grand Final and a bit end-to-end at times,

and a bit cagey. We just had to ride that out and make sure when we got chances we took them. Despite the disappointment of defeat, it was City's best-ever season.

With French tactician Erick Mombaerts at the helm they amassed their biggest points tally, enjoyed their highest finish on the ladder, made the final and qualified for the AFC Champions League.

Sydney had the clear advantage on paper — it was their sixth final to City's first and they came into the game having won the coronavirus-affected regular season premiership.

Under A-League rules, the teams that finished the season first (Sydney) and second (Melbourne City) progressed straight to the semi-finals. Sydney beat Perth Glory 2-0 while City eased past Western United by the same scoreline.

"It is not easy going back-to-back, only one team has ever done it before in the history of the league, so it really means a lot to the team," said manager Steve Corica. "We set out sights at the start of the year to win the premiership

and do the double, so full credit to the boys. They were sensational all year."

City were sharper early in the game and they thought they'd opened their account when Harrison Delbridge drilled the ball into the net. But the VAR showed teammate Lachlan Wales was offside and obstructed the goalkeeper.

It was a fortunate escape for Sydney, with Melbourne enjoying their own slice of luck when an Adam Le Fondre penalty appeal was ignored by the referee. Replays showed it was a questionable decision. Englishman Le Fondre and former Serbia international Milos Ninkovic both had opportunities early in the second stanza, but City goalkeeper Tom Glover did well to keep them out. Scott Galloway produced City's best chance, forcing a diving save from Andrew Redmayne, but despite pressure from both sides it went to extra time. Sydney proved hungrier and Grant finally got the breakthrough on 100 minutes with Glover pulling off some fine saves as they pressed hard for a second. — AFP

Ernst rallies to win LPGA's Championship

LOS ANGELES: Austin Ernst rallied to win the NW Arkansas Championship on Sunday for her second LPGA Tour title, closing with an 8-under 63 for a two-stroke victory over Anna Nordqvist.

Ernst, 28 and ranked 58th in the world, had 10 birdies in an eight-under par 63 that gave her a 54-hole total of 20-under par 193. Nordqvist, a two-time major champion from Sweden, had taken a three-shot lead into the final round after a second-round 62.

Nordqvist kept her nose in front with back-to-back birdies at the fifth and sixth and another at the 11th, but her first bogeys of the week at the 12th and 14th saw her fall two adrift of the surging Ernst and a birdie at 16 wasn't enough.

Ernst, meanwhile, notched the round of the day, opening with birdies at her first three holes and bouncing back from a bogey at the fourth with birdies at the sixth and seventh. Another birdie at the ninth was followed by birdies at 11 and 12

and she answered a bogey at 13 with a birdie at 14 — which gave her a two-shot lead after Nordqvist bogeyed the same hole. She capped her round with her 10th birdie of the day at the last for the final margin of victory. "I knew I needed a really low score," Ernst said. "You knew that out here you needed to attack and you couldn't be afraid and couldn't just kind of middle-the-green it all day."

"I didn't officially know where I stood, but I assumed I got the lead pretty early on in the back nine. I just knew I needed to attack and make a lot of birdies coming in." Ernst notched her first victory since the 2014 Portland Classic.

"It was long," Ernst said of the gap between the victories. "A lot longer than I thought it would be. Oh, man, it feels good. I have worked really hard." Nordqvist said she'll come away from the event feeling positive. "I played great this week," she said. "On the back nine, (I) hit a lot of good putts, they just didn't go in."

"Two bad drives that kind of killed me a little bit. (But I) felt like I did a lot of good things today, too."

Americans Angela Stanford and Nelly Korda shared third on 197, Stanford carded a 65 and Korda signed for a 67. It was a further stroke back to South Korean Jenny Shin (68) and Kim Sei-Young (69) on 198. — AFP



OLYMPIA FIELDS: Jon Rahm of Spain celebrates with the BMW trophy after winning on the first sudden-death playoff hole against Dustin Johnson (not pictured) during the final round of the BMW Championship on the North Course at Olympia Fields Country Club in Olympia Fields, Illinois. — AFP

Sports

Clippers eliminate Mavericks, Celtics rout Raptors 112-94

Clippers forward Marcus Morris ejected for a flagrant foul

MIAMI: Kawhi Leonard finished with 33 points and 14 rebounds as the Los Angeles Clippers advanced to the second round of the NBA playoffs with a 111-97 victory over the injury-hampered Dallas Mavericks on Sunday.

Leonard, last year's NBA Finals Most Valuable Player while with the Toronto Raptors, also had seven assists and five steals for the Clippers, who clinched the series four games to two.

"Just got to my spots and put up the shot with confidence and it went in," Leonard said after his fifth 30-point game in a row. "Just kept giving it to me and it went in with confidence."

The Clippers will face either Utah or the Jamal Murray-led Denver Nuggets, who forced a winner-take-all game seven on Tuesday night by beating the Jazz 119-107. Luka Doncic scored 38 points in a losing cause in the spectator-free quarantine bubble at Disney World resort in Orlando, Florida. The Clippers opened the second half with a 20-3 run for a 77-54 edge, and saw the lead trimmed to 88-82 early in the fourth in a Doncic-led fightback only to pull away again down the stretch. Dallas was sorely missing starting centre Kristaps Porzingis, who was out with a knee injury.

"Momentum, it can switch real easily," Leonard said. "You have to keep fighting when you're up and when you're down stay focused." Clippers forward Marcus Morris was ejected late in the first quarter after being whistled for a flagrant foul on the 21-year-old Doncic. Morris grabbed then hit Doncic with a forearm slam on the head as the Slovenian star drove to the bucket with the ball. "It was a terrible play,"

said Doncic. In the Eastern Conference, Jayson Tatum and Marcus Smart each scored 21 points to lead the Boston Celtics over defending champion Raptors 112-94 in the opening game of their second-round series.

Kemba Walker added 18 points and 10 assists for the Celtics, who also had 17 points from Jaylen Brown plus 13 points and 15 rebounds from Daniel Theis.

"Marcus today was unbelievable on both ends," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "All our guys played with great purpose, great enthusiasm. We just have to clean some stuff up."

Game two of the best-of-seven series comes Tuesday. Boston frustrated Toronto shooters, as the Raptors went 31-of-84 from the floor and 10-of-40 from 3-point range — the most 3-point misses ever by Toronto in a playoff contest.

"We just didn't play well enough to win," said guard Kyle Lowry, who led Toronto with 17 points despite a sore left ankle. "We've got to do our coverages harder, execute better."

The games were the first for each club since last Sunday after a walkout shut down the NBA playoffs for three days until team owners and players agreed on league measures to support voting, social justice and racial equality programs.

"We needed a chance to catch our breath as players and black men and get some things handled. It was a really emotional week. It was up and down. It was hard," Lowry said.

"Basketball always matters but in this situation, in this time, it's taking a back seat. We're going to perform at the highest level we can perform at, no excuses, but we have an obligation because we have this



ORLANDO: Lou Williams of the LA Clippers game shoots against the Dallas Mavericks for Game six of the first round of the 2020 Playoffs as part of the NBA Restart 2020 at AdventHealth Arena in Orlando, Florida. —AFP

platform and can reach out to the world."

Said Canadian Murray of the Nuggets, "It is not just America, it happens everywhere." The Celtics were without Gordon Hayward, who is out until late September with a right ankle injury. In the late game, Murray posted his second 50-point game of the series

to power the Nuggets to a win over Utah which tied the series at 3-3.

Donovan Mitchell finished with a team high 44 points for the Jazz. Denver is trying to become the 12th team to rally from a 3-1 deficit to win a series and the first in four years. —AFP



Al-Arabi, Al-Nasser and Al-Sahel win in STC Football League

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait STC Football League's 17th round saw Al-Arabi Sports Club beat its Yarmouk counterpart by the score of 3-1. Al-Arabi now has 28 points in fourth place while Yarmouk remained at the bottom with a mere 8 points.

Al-Hadi Al-Sanousi of Al-Arabi scored his first goal in the 28th minute, and his second in the 78th,

while Cedric Henry scored in the 32nd minute. Hashim Adnan scored Yarmouk's only goal in the 45th minute.

Al-Arabi started strong and had several chances but Yarmouk defence thwarted all attempts at the start of the match.

Al-Yarmouk began the second half in a better shape, but its attacks lacked any significance and started to fade away, while Al-Arabi maintained its vigor and effectiveness.

The referee awarded Henry a penalty kick after a foul by Ahmad Hani and Al-Sanousi was able to get the ball at the back of the net in the 78th minute.

The Farwaniya derby was won by Al-Nasser with the score of 2-1 against Tadhamon. Al-Nasser moved to 7th place with 18 points, while Tadhamon remained second to last with 13 points.

Al-Nasser goals were scored by Mohammad Diham the 12th and Mohammad Shabib in the 75th



minutes, while Yarmouk's lonely goal was scored by Abdelaziz Wadi in the 22nd minute.

Al-Nasser's performance improved as the match progressed with the movement of Ahmad Al-Riyahi with Khalid Shaman, Humoud Ayedh and Mohammad Diham who scored in the 12th minute with an assist from Al-Riyahi.

Despite being a goal behind, Tadhamon was able to attack, but Al-Nasser had a solid defence, until the 22nd minute when Abdelaziz Wadi was able to score. In the second half, Al-Nasser wasted a penalty kick then in the 75th minute Al-Nasser converted a penalty kick by Mohammad Shabib which proved to be the winning goal.

Al-Sahel Sports Club overcame Al-Shabab with the score of 2-0. Al-Sahel is in sixth place with 18 points while Al-Shabab has 17 points and dropped to 18th place.

IPL franchises see glass half-full despite financial hit

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League's eight teams are counting the cost of COVID-19's impact on their finances but having faced the prospect of the tournament being wiped out by the pandemic this year they are taking a 'glass half-full' view of the situation.

The IPL's original March start was scuppered by the first wave of the novel coronavirus and India's cricket board (BCCI) had to pull out all the stops to rescue the Twenty20 league, which has an estimated \$6.8 billion brand value.

The tournament has been shifted to the United Arab Emirates, will be played under a hastily-arranged title sponsor and will start on Sept. 19 — nearly six months later than scheduled.

After Vivo paused its title sponsorship for this year's edition, fantasy gaming company Dream11 took it up for 2.22 billion Indian rupees (\$30.36 million), roughly half of the 4.4 billion the Chinese smartphone maker paid annually.

"The discount provided to Dream11 would be a major (financial) hit for the BCCI, along with making arrangements for bio-secure bubble which will be an additional cost burden on the board," Santosh N, an external advisor at financial consultancy firm Duff & Phelps, told Reuters.

The league shares 50% of the title sponsorship money with the eight franchisees, who will also miss out on gate receipts and in-stadium revenue this year while existing sponsors demand discounts in the absence of fan initiatives.

The switch has seen Delhi Capitals lose shirt sponsor Daikin, with the air-conditioning equipment maker saying the new dates did not work for them.

"The reason being the business scenario and the timing, which earlier, being the summer, would call for advertising efforts to create awareness and recall for the AC category," a Daikin spokesman told Reuters.—Reuters

Morgan stars as England beat Pakistan in T20

MANCHESTER: England captain Eoin Morgan said he was playing "better than ever" as he led from the front in a five-wicket win over Pakistan in the second Twenty20 international at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Morgan came in on a hat-trick after leg-spinner Shadab Khan had reduced England, who were chasing a stiff victory target of 196, to 66-2. But the Irishman made a blistering 66 off just 33 balls and with fellow left-hander Dawid Malan (54 not out) took the game away from Pakistan during a third-wicket stand of 112. Victory, achieved with five balls to spare on a sunny afternoon, saw the 50-over world champions go 1-0 up in a three-match series following Friday's rain-marred no result in Manchester.

The 33-year-old Morgan considered his international future after leading England to World Cup glory with a dramatic Super Over win in last year's final at Lord's.

But it now looks as if he will lead England at the 2021 T20 World Cup in India.

Asked if he was playing better than ever, Morgan told Sky Sports: "I think I am and that is backed up by stats over the last couple of years, they've been the most productive of my whole career which is great."

"If I can combine a little of that form with experience, then hopefully it will contribute to more wins," the player of the match added.

This was the highest successful chase

against Pakistan in a Twenty20 international, surpassing Australia's 199-7 in a thrilling 2010 World Twenty20 semi-final in St Lucia.

Veteran batsman Mohammad Hafeez made 69 in Pakistan's 195-4 that also featured 56 from captain Babar Azam, the world's number one-ranked Twenty20 batsman.

"Our total was good but we didn't bowl well, we struggled with our bowling," said Babar. "Credit goes to Malan and Morgan for how well they played."

"We'll learn a lot from this series. Under pressure, I need to handle the bowlers and tell them a few things," added the 25-year-old novice skipper.

Pakistan's cause was not helped when they had to reshuffle their attack after left-arm quick Mohammad Amir limped off having bowled just two overs.

"He's feeling pain in his right hamstring, it's been iced and they (Pakistan's medical staff) will see him tomorrow (Monday)," a team spokesman told AFP when asked if Amir would be fit for Tuesday's series finale, also at Old Trafford.

Jonny Bairstow and Tom Banton got England's chase off to a sound start. But a partnership of 66 ended when Bairstow, on 44, miscued Shadab to short fine leg. Next ball, with the batsmen having crossed, Banton — fresh from 71 on Friday, his maiden T20 international fifty, was lbw for 20.

Morgan survived the hat-trick delivery but could have been lbw for a second-ball duck to Shadab, only for a tight umpire's call verdict to fall in the batsman's favour.

Shadab finished with fine figures of 3-34. Morgan's fourth six, off left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi, saw him to a 27-ball fifty before he holed out in sight of victory. —AFP

Stars hold off Avalanche in NHL playoffs

LOS ANGELES: Radek Faksa finished with a goal and two assists and Anton Khudobin stopped 33 shots as the Dallas Stars beat the Colorado Avalanche 5-4 in game four of their second-round NHL playoff series.

Dallas dominated the opening period, scoring three goals. They then traded goals with the Avalanche in a four-goal third period but managed to hold on to win their sixth game in their last seven.

It was almost reminiscent of game three when Colorado squandered a 3-1 lead but rallied to win 6-4. "It just seems like when one team gets one goal it kind of gives them a boost," Stars Jamie Benn said. "I'm not sure why it's going back and forth like this, but it is. And you've just got to handle the momentum as it comes."

John Klingberg and Roope Hintz, of Finland, each added a goal and an assist and Denis Gurianov and Benn also scored for Dallas who seized a commanding 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference series.

The Stars can clinch a spot in the NHL final four with a win in game five on Monday at Rogers Place arena in Edmonton, Alberta.

The two teams have had a three-day break thanks to the postponement of games on Thursday and Friday to protest the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

If a game six is necessary, it's scheduled for Wednesday night meaning they would play a stretch of three games in four nights.

Valeri Nichushkin scored two goals, Cale Makar had a goal and an assist and Vladislav Namestnikov also scored a goal for Colorado. Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon also had an assist, extending his franchise record to 12 straight playoff games with a point.

Canadian forward MacKinnon, who broke the previous mark of 10 games held by Joe Sakic (1996) and Marian Stastny (1982), has scored seven goals to go with 14 assists in the playoffs.

Pavel Francouz had 21 saves before being pulled with 11:58 remaining in the third period. Michael Hutchinson had three saves in his NHL playoff debut.

Dallas dominated the first period while building a 3-0 lead, holding the Avalanche without a shot for the first 18:26.

In the Eastern Conference, Brock Nelson scored twice as the New York Islanders put the Philadelphia Flyers on the brink of elimination with a 3-2 win in their second-round series.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored in the third period to break the tie for the Islanders, who seized a 3-1 lead.

New York will attempt to close it on Tuesday and advance to the NHL semi-finals for first time since 1993.

In the late game, Max Pacioretty had two goals and an assist and Marc-Andre Fleury made several key saves in the final period as the Vegas Golden Knights beat the Vancouver Canucks 5-3 to take a 3-1 series lead.

Nate Schmidt had a goal and an assist and Shea Theodore tallied two assists as the Knights used a five-man attack, getting six points from their defencemen. Fleury finished with 28 saves.

Swede Elias Pettersson, Bo Horvat, and Tyler Toffoli scored for Vancouver, who will try to climb out of a deep hole with a win in game five on Tuesday. —AFP

14 Birdie bomb lifts Rahm to BMW playoff triumph over Johnson



15 Clippers eliminate Mavericks, Celtics rout Raptors 112-94



15 Al-Arabi, Al-Nasser and Al-Sahel win in STC Football League



SAN SEBASTIAN: Lyon's players celebrate with the trophy winning the UEFA Women's Champions League final football match between VfL Wolfsburg and Lyon at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian. —AFP

Lyon claims Women's Champions League title

French President Macron tweeted his congratulations at the end of the game

SAN SEBASTIAN: Lyon continued their reign as Europe's dominant women's team on Sunday, beating Wolfsburg 3-1 in the Champions League final to win the trophy for the fifth year running with Japan star Saki Kumagai's goal proving crucial.

Kumagai netted after Eugenie Le Sommer had handed the French outfit the lead in San Sebastian, giving Lyon a 2-0 half-time advantage and leaving Wolfsburg with too much to do even if Alexandra Popp pulled one back in the second half.

Icelandic midfielder Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir's late effort made sure of the victory for Lyon, whose fifth consecutive Champions League crown is their seventh overall, comfortably a record.

Five in a row sees them equal the feat achieved by the Real Madrid men's team between 1956 and 1960, in the early days of the European Cup, French President Emmanuel Macron even tweeted his congratulations at the end of the game.

"Now we need to win a sixth in a row to beat the record," said captain Wendie Renard, who along with Le Sommer and goalkeeper Sarah Bouhaddi has featured in all seven final wins.

"It is hard to win this trophy but we give everything to win it every year."

Lyon's latest triumph confirms their status as the finest club team around even as rivals across Europe step up their investment in the women's game.

Jean-Luc Vasseur's team had previously edged out Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain in the 'Final Eight' in Spain's Basque Country, played out behind closed doors because of the coronavirus pandemic.

They also pipped PSG to claim a 14th successive French title this year and defeated the same team on penalties in the French Cup final. This victory, against a side who won a German domestic double and were unbeaten in 40 games before the final, showcased the depth of their squad.

Lyon were missing four leading stars, with France duo

Griedge Mbock and Amandine Henry injured and Norway's 2018 Ballon d'Or winner Ada Hegerberg not fully fit. England forward Nikita Parris was suspended.

But Lyon's long-serving president Jean-Michel Aulas continues to be rewarded for his heavy investment in a women's team, despite the prize money for winning the Champions League being a mere 450,000 euros (\$535,000), a tiny fraction of that on offer in the men's competition.

"It is the stuff of legend because we have had to rebuild and innovate every year, but the team showed great resilience and to win a fifth Champions League in a row is absolutely incredible."

Aulas told Canal Plus.

Here, Lyon were still able to call upon a host of French internationals and foreign stars like Kumagai, Germany's Dzsener Marozsan and England right-back Lucy

Bronze, who is now expected to return to her home country.

They are now unbeaten in 65 matches stretching back over two years, and this is also the third time in which Lyon have beaten Wolfsburg in the final, leaving the Germans still searching for a third Champions League crown to go with their titles in 2013, when they beat OL, and 2014. Previous finals between these sides have been close affairs, although on this occasion the holders started strongly and were rewarded with the opening goal in the 25th minute.

Delphine Cascarino cut the ball back for Le Sommer, and she pounced to convert the rebound after her first shot was blocked by goalkeeper Friederike Abt.

The second goal came in the 44th minute. Ingrid Engen stopped Amel Majri shooting but only succeeded in setting up Kumagai, who scored with a terrific left-foot strike from 23 yards.

Wolfsburg pulled one back just before the hour as Ewa Pajor set up Popp to head in from close range, but Lyon made it 3-1 in the 88th minute. When a corner was not properly cleared, Le Sommer went for goal and her wayward shot was deflected in by Gunnarsdottir. —AFP



Unbeaten in 65 games

Djokovic in action on day one at US Open bubble

NEW YORK: Overwhelming favorite Novak Djokovic begins his quest for an 18th Grand Slam title as a unique, spectator-free 2020 US Open gets underway in a COVID-19 quarantine bubble at Flushing Meadows.

The world number one headlines the opening day of a tennis major that promises to be unlike any other and which is missing several top players due to coronavirus fears.

Djokovic takes on unheralded Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a round-one evening match at an Arthur Ashe Stadium that in normal years buzzes with 23,000 screaming fans.

But due to strict measures aimed at keeping

COVID-19 out of the US National Tennis Center, only players, officials and a handful of media will be watching in-person this year.

"It is strange to see," said Djokovic, crediting his love of playing on the New York hardcourts to Ashe, which he described as "the most dynamic and explosive court" in the game.

"The circumstances are very unusual but we have to deal with it and try to embrace it," the Serbian superstar added.

The US Open marks the first Grand Slam of the coronavirus era, and the first since the Australian Open in January and February, after the global pandemic wiped out much of the season, including Wimbledon. Players are being kept in a tightly controlled environment to minimize the risk of infection and are being tested for coronavirus regularly throughout the tournament.

The men's draw was disrupted on the eve of the tournament Sunday when France's Benoit Paire was removed after organizers announced that an unidentified player had been withdrawn after test-

ing positive for COVID-19. Under New York state rules, any player that tests positive is immediately withdrawn and must self-isolate for at least 10 days.

Most competitors are staying at specific hotels and are not allowed to travel anywhere other than to and from the tournament site and their accommodation.

Some players, including Djokovic, have rented private houses that must be guarded 24 hours by security to safeguard the quarantine bubble.

Parts of the tennis center grounds were turned into makeshift hospital rooms during the worst of the pandemic in New York in April.

NO NADAL, FEDERER

Intense cleaning and safety protocols were put in place before the US Open allowed players into the bubble. And the number of support personnel for each competitor is limited, as is the number of players allowed into the locker room at any one time.

Players are advised to wear masks when they are not on court and must wash their hands regularly.

The absence of defending champion Rafael Nadal and Swiss legend Roger Federer gives Djokovic a prime opportunity to gain ground on his rivals in the chase for the all-time men's Grand Slam singles title record. Top seed and three-time US Open winner Djokovic — who has won five of the past seven Grand Slam crowns — has 17 slams, behind Nadal on 19 and Federer on 20.

Also on Ashe Monday is top-seeded woman Karolina Pliskova, who goes up against 145th ranked Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine. Two-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka is scheduled to play as well, but her status is in doubt due to a left hamstring injury that forced her to pull out of Saturday's WTA New York final.

Serena Williams starts her bid for a 24th career Grand Slam women's singles crown to match the all-time record set by Margaret Court on Tuesday.

Women's number one Ashleigh Barty and reigning champion Bianca Andreescu are among high-profile women skipping the event because of concerns about coronavirus. —AFP