



5 Health experts puzzled as Pakistan virus cases drop



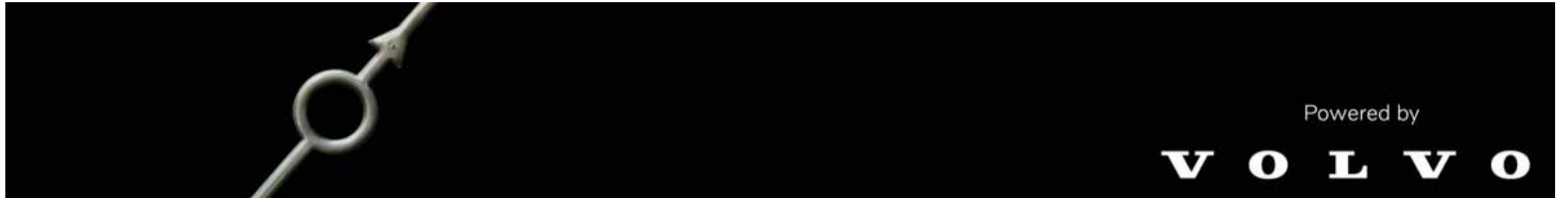
6 Macron supports 'sovereignty' of Iraq on first Baghdad visit



10 Will trade for food: Online barter soars in Philippines

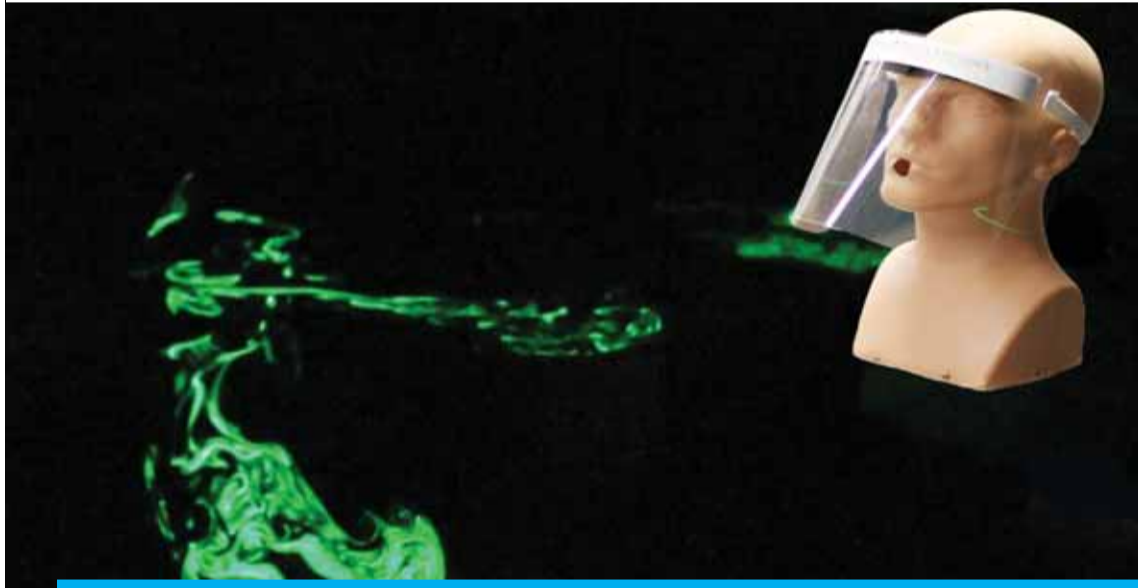


15 Malaysia eSports player wins citizenship battle



Steroids cut death rates in critical COVID-19 patients

Study shows how masks with valves, face shields allow spread of virus



This handout picture shows a far-field view of a droplet spread when a face shield is used to impede the jet, 2.97 seconds after the initiation of the emulated cough. — AFP

LONDON: Treating critically ill COVID-19 patients with corticosteroid drugs reduces the risk of death by 20 percent, an analysis of seven international trials found yesterday, prompting the World Health Organization to update its advice on treatment. The analysis - which pooled data from separate trials of low dose hydrocortisone, dexamethasone and methylprednisolone - found that steroids improve survival rates of COVID-19 patients sick enough to be in intensive care in hospital.

"This is equivalent to around 68 percent of (the sickest COVID-19) patients surviving after treatment with corticosteroids, compared to around 60 percent surviving in the absence of corticosteroids," the researchers said in a statement. "Steroids are a cheap and readily available medication, and our analysis has confirmed that they are effective in reducing deaths amongst the people most severely affected by COVID-19," Jonathan Sterne, a professor of medical statistics and epidemiology at Britain's Bristol University who worked on the analysis, told the briefing.

He said the trials - conducted by researchers in Britain, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Spain, and

the United States - gave a consistent message throughout, showing the drugs were beneficial in the sickest patients regardless of age or sex or how long patients had been ill. The findings, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, reinforce results that were hailed as a major breakthrough and announced in June, when dexamethasone became the first drug shown to be able to reduce death rates among severely sick COVID-19 patients.

Dexamethasone has been in widespread use in intensive care wards treating COVID-19 patients in some countries since then. Martin Landray, a professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Oxford who worked on the dexamethasone trial that was a key part of the pooled analysis published yesterday, said the results mean doctors in hospitals across the world can safely switch to using the drugs to save lives. "These results are clear, and instantly usable in clinical practice," he told reporters. "Among critically ill patients with COVID-19, low-dose corticosteroids...significantly reduce the risk of death."

Continued on Page 2

MPs support Saleh, Harbi after grillings

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly agreed to start debating the budgets for 2020/2021 including the state budget, which is projecting a massive KD 14 billion deficit, one of the biggest in several years. The decision came following a marathon session on Tuesday during which lawmakers filed no-confidence motions against Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh following two grillings.

But several MPs were quick to renew their confidence in the two ministers, especially the interior minister, who will be facing a second confidence vote in two weeks. The Assembly however agreed to delay the debate of two grillings against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah filed separately by MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kandari and

Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei. Voting on the two no-confidence motions is scheduled to take place on Sept 10. Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said after the grillings.

During the interior minister's grilling, MP Mohammad Hayef accused the minister of not acting over the alleged leaks of a meeting at the state security agency that included the main suspect in the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund scandal. He also accused the minister of not taking any legal action against officers and people involved in misleading thousands of bedoons or stateless people to buy passports of some countries which turned out to be fake.

Saleh categorically denied the allegations and insisted that he is being questioned because he took action and for seeking reforms. He said all the allegations in the grilling relate to events that had taken place before he was appointed interior minister and wondered why he was being grilled for the second time in two weeks. The minister said the cases that have been highlighted in the grilling were referred to the public prosecution and asked why he is being questioned for that.



KUWAIT: Lawmakers are seen during a session of National Assembly late Tuesday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

When cars fly: Japan firm says day is nearing



TOYOTA CITY, Japan: This handout picture obtained yesterday shows the SD-03 manned flying car during a test flight at Toyota test field. — AFP

TOKYO: It might seem like a flight of fancy, but a Japanese firm says it is one step closer to making flying cars a reality after testing a drone-like prototype. Video from engineering company SkyDrive shows its manned compact vehicle using eight propellers to hover into the air and make its way - with a few wobbles - around a test field. But while the clip

may excite fans of "Blade Runner" and "Back to the Future", the test run leaves mankind far from a future of airborne vehicles whizzing into the sky to avoid traffic.

The company hailed "the first public demonstration of a flying car in Japan" and said the aircraft, around the size of two parked

Continued on Page 2

Volunteers in Bahrain sign up for vaccine trial

MANAMA: In a Bahrain exhibition center that used to hold jewelry shows and book fairs before the coronavirus pandemic, Mohammed Al-Blooshi and other masked volunteers wait for a dose of a Chinese trial vaccine. "It is a service to humanity," says Blooshi, one of thousands in the wealthy Gulf country set to participate in the study. Chinese drug giant Sinopharm began testing a COVID-19 vaccine in Bahrain in August after starting a similar trial on 15,000 subjects in the nearby United Arab Emirates a month earlier.

The randomised, double-blind trial of 6,000 people is still recruiting healthy men and women as volunteers

Continued on Page 2



MANAMA: A man participates in a large-scale trial of a Chinese-sponsored vaccine for the coronavirus on Aug 27, 2020. — AFP

Iraq's dead fish kicking up a stink

AL-DELMAJ MARSHES, Iraq: Poisoned water, illegal dams and even armed clashes: These days, fishing for precious barbels in Iraq's majestic river marshes involves navigating precarious waters. For centuries, civilizations in southern Iraq have made a liv-

ing from farming and fishing the whiskered, carp-like fish native to the twin Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Hussein Serhan is a proud descendant of one such family. Like his father and grandfather before him, the 70-year-old has spent his life on the riverbeds of Diwaniyah province.

Season after season, he carefully scoured vast stretches of water for schools of the ray-finned barbels he calls his "children". This year, he didn't have to look far. Thousands of tons floated up to the surface of the wetland - dead. "It's an ecological disaster," Serhan told AFP. "We lost all our

revenues. We need years to recover."

The causes of the mass premature deaths remain unclear, but marsh-based fishermen have some theories. "Gangs," said Hussein Ali, 37, who fishes on another bank of the 325-sq-km Al-Delma marsh, in neighboring Wasit province. Ali and others blame groups with alleged links to fish importers for poisoning local supplies, although they did not specify what substance may have been used.

"They have also installed dams along rivulets that feed the marshes, which means

Continued on Page 2

Local

Three dead, five injured in Jahra Road crash

Dump truck lands on top of vehicle



KUWAIT: Firefighters working on the scene of the accident.

KUWAIT: Three people were killed and five others were injured in a horrific accident reported on Jahra Road Tuesday night. The accident reportedly happened near the Jahra Governorate's building, where a dump truck crashed into two vehicles, overturned and landed on top of one of them. Firefighters from three fire stations rushed to the scene as soon as the accident was reported, and they immediately worked on freeing the victims from the wrecked vehicle. Two men and one girl were pronounced dead on the scene, and their bodies were recovered by the coroner,

while five persons were rushed to hospital, some of whom in critical condition, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) said in a statement to the press. Police then helped restore traffic which was paralyzed completely by the accident. An investigation was opened into the accident.

Assault charges

A police officer and a citizen assaulted each other inside the Interior Ministry's headquarters in Subhan after they argued at the ministry's gate, Al-Rai reported yesterday quoting security

sources. Case papers indicate that the checkpoint at the building's gate reported controlling a Kuwaiti civilian who assaulted a police major, and referred them both to a police station for further investigations. A case was filed pending further investigations. However, the police officer also filed a case, accusing the citizen of assaulting and insulting a security agent.

Influencer released

The court of misdemeanor Tuesday suspended a two-week jail verdict issued

against social media influencer Abdullah Al-Jasser (aka Abboudka), Al-Rai reported. The court set a hearing to be held on Sept 15 to discuss accusations against him of mobile phone misuse.

KD 60,000 claims

Hawally patrols stopped a Kuwaiti man wanted over KD 60,000 in claims in various cases, security sources told Al-Rai. Case papers indicate that on suspecting the man driving along Taawon Street, they stopped him, and found he is wanted over several cases.

Brewery stormed

Ahmadi security forces raided a local liquor brewery in Mahboula, where dozens of liquor barrels and equipment were found, Al-Rai reported, quoting security sources. Case papers indicate that a police patrol suspected someone holding a bag, and on stopping him, policemen found the bag contained homemade liquor bottles. The suspect confessed that he runs a liquor distillery in Mahboula and led policemen to it, where the second suspect, full liquor barrels and the tools used were found.

When cars fly: Japan firm...

Continued from Page 1

cars, had circled the testing field for four minutes. "We want to realize a society where flying cars are an accessible and convenient means of transportation in the skies," SkyDrive CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa said in a statement Friday. The firm said it wanted the vehicle to be available to buy in Japan by 2023, with reports suggesting it could cost upwards of \$300,000.

The car is not the first step humans have taken towards a brave new world of airborne vehicles. A German company tested a flying taxi in Singapore in October, saying it hoped its invention - also shaped like a big drone - would revolutionize travel in traffic-choked cities. Volocopter had already tested its battery-operated, two-seater taxi elsewhere around the globe but the Singapore trial was the first in the heart of a city. Several other companies are working on similar projects, including Boeing, Airbus, Toyota and Hyundai. — AFP

Iraq's dead fish kicking...

Continued from Page 1

water levels drop," Ali added. He said anyone who tries to remove the dams, installed to hoard water levels and fish stocks, is threatened. "More than 2,000 families live off fishing in Al-Delmaj. We don't know how to do anything else," Ali said.

It's not Iraq's first riverine disaster: In 2018, fish farmers alleged their stocks were poisoned after millions of carp, used in the national dish masgouf, died. In March 2019, a United Nations probe put the cause down to the Koi Herpes Virus, saying overstocking and low-quality river water likely furthered its spread. This year, a preliminary study by the agriculture ministry ruled out any viral or bacterial cause, so allegations of foul play are again floating to the surface.

In June, Iraq's water ministry said its employees were shot at as they tried to remove illegal dams. Then, in early August, a local fishing tribe clashed

with an armed group that had allegedly erected some dams. Furious locals accuse both federal and provincial authorities of failing to secure the marshes. "Where is the state in all this? Where are they as these disasters threaten to annihilate our fish?" said Ali.

Iraq's Agriculture Minister Mohammed Al-Khafaji said an investigation had begun. "We are determined to reveal the perpetrators to the public," he said. One speculative theory swirling among Iraqis is that Turkish and Iranian companies that usually import seafood stocks into Iraq had paid people to deliberately poison the marshes or disrupt water flows.

The alleged motive? Concerns that Iraqi consumers were opting for increasingly cheap barbels, squeezing the imported seafood out of the market. Barbels are typically sold to neighboring Gulf countries but this year, with borders closed for months due to COVID-19, the whiskered fish flooded local markets. Iraqis have opted for these affordable domestic catches, stacked high in wooden stalls, instead of imported fish. "We were self-sufficient this year and imports stopped, which frustrated others. That's why they did this," said Khafaji, declining to be more specific. — AFP

Volunteers in Bahrain sign up...

Continued from Page 1

to test the vaccine's efficacy and safety in a large cross-section of the population. The trial is due to finish next July, while the overall study is forecast to be completed by September 2021, according to the US National Library of Medicine. "It's a very small thing to give back to the country," Blooshi says, as other volunteers give blood or fill out forms.

More than 30 potential vaccines are currently being tested on humans across the globe in the hope of ending a pandemic that has now killed more than 850,000 people, according to an AFP tally.

Steroids cut death rates in critical...

Continued from Page 1

Researchers said the benefit was shown regardless of whether patients were on ventilation at the time they started treatment. They said the WHO would update its guidelines immediately to reflect the fresh results. Until the June findings on dexamethasone, no effective treatment had been shown to reduce death rates in patients with COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

More than 25 million people have been infected with COVID-19 and 856,876 have died, according to a Reuters tally. Gilead Sciences Inc's remde-

Researcher in the Bahrain study will look at how many patients contract the virus after receiving two doses of the vaccine, as well as examine any adverse reactions. Novel coronavirus patients are excluded from the trial, as are pregnant women and those with suppressed immune systems.

Health ministry official Jaleela Sayed Jawad said roughly one-third of the final number of participants had received shots so far. "Between doses, we will continue to monitor them either by calling them over the phone or, if needed, direct visits," she said. Bahrain, home to some 1.5 million people, half of them expats, has recorded almost 52,000 novel coronavirus cases, including 190 deaths.

Mohammed Abdulbaqi, another volunteer, said he signed up for the trial "to give something back". "We hope this pandemic ends and we return to our normal lives," the 25-year-old said as medical teams bustled around the repurposed convention center in the capital Manama. Sinopharm executive Liu

sivir was authorized by United States regulators in May for use in patients with severe COVID-19 after trial data showed the antiviral drug helped shorten hospital recovery time.

Anthony Gordon, an Imperial College London professor who also worked on the analysis, said its results were good news for patients who become critically ill with COVID-19, but would not be enough to end outbreaks or ease infection control measures. "Impressive as these results are, this is not a cure. We now have something that will help, but it is not a cure, so it's vital that we keep up all the prevention strategies."

Meanwhile, people wearing plastic face shields or masks fitted with a valve can spray invisible droplets over a very wide area when they sneeze or cough, making the devices ineffective at preventing the spread of coronavirus when used on their own, a simulation model shows. In a report published Tuesday in the US journal Physics of

Jingzhen told Chinese state broadcaster CCTV in July that he had personally been injected with the vaccine. "We are making smooth progress," he told CCTV, adding that the vaccine "should be available on the market before the end of the year."

In addition to the potential vaccines undergoing clinical trials worldwide, the World Health Organization is monitoring a further 143 others that are still in the stage of pre-clinical laboratory evaluation. Upping the ante, Russia on Aug 11 said it had developed the world's first vaccine offering "sustainable immunity", and was in the final stage of human testing.

In Bahrain, a doctor involved in the trial urged more volunteers to come forward. "The long hours we have spent treating and testing people all over the country would go to waste if we did not have a vaccination to protect us and the next generation," Haneen Al-Boosta told AFP. "We encourage everyone to stay safe... and to be part of a trial." — AFP

Fluids, researchers at Florida Atlantic University used vertical and horizontal laser sheets to track tiny droplets of distilled water and glycerin as they spread from a hollow mannequin head fitted with a plastic face shield or a mask with a breathing valve on it.

The face shield initially blocks the passage of the droplets as they move forwards, but "the expelled droplets can move around the visor with relative ease and spread out over a large area," the researchers said. As for a mask with a valve fitted to make breathing easier, "a large number of droplets pass through the exhale valve unfiltered, which make it ineffective in stopping the spread of the COVID-19 virus if the person wearing the mask is infected". The researchers concluded that despite the comfort that both types of protection offer, high-quality cloth or medical masks of plain design are preferential in helping prevent the spread of the virus. — Agencies

Honesty means everything

By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com



When Cain killed his brother Abel, he realized that his act was something unforgivable and he should not even have thought about it, but of course it was too late. While sitting next to his brother's body, he realized how ignorant he was when he saw a crow kill another crow, then dug a hole and buried its victim in it, as if he was being told what to do with his brother!

This was man's start on this earth from day one, as good and evil were introduced and the fight between them commenced, and it will continue until the end of life as we know it. People have since introduced the words honor, honesty, trust and so on. We have seen throughout history that the lack of honesty by some people does not take them too far, and at some point they will be exposed and find themselves in shame because of their bad acts, and in some cases it will be too late to correct the mistakes. I am sure you can imagine how they will be looked at by others, especially by friends and associates.

The following is a story that took place few years earlier and shows what dishonesty can do to a person. A man said his father was a major trader of sheep and its byproducts, and used to buy and sell them in retail in his city. The man said he took over the job from his father when he was old enough. He said one day he went to a supplier to get some wool and fat. When he was weighing the wool, the man said that he was giving the supplier figures in kilos and grams, such as 25 kilos and 700 grams and so on, and this made the supplier happy because of the accuracy. Now the man said he was not telling the supplier the truth and was cutting 10 kilos out.

He said that after totaling the weights, the supplier felt something was wrong because he estimated the weight should be around 20,000 kilos, but the man told him it was 12,000, ie 8,000 kilos short. Here the supplier said: "If you are cheating, I pray that may Allah punish you!"

The man said he was somewhat scared and struggled within himself while on his way back to the city and was debating whether to return to the supplier and pay the difference or just let it go. He finally decided to just let it go. He added that not long after his decision, he was involved in an accident that confined him to a hospital and the goods he had went to waste. He said that as he recovered, he realized this was a message from Allah, so he went to the supplier to pay him, but the supplier refused to take the money and forgave me.

This story tells us that we must always be honest and true to ourselves first and others in general. Believe me - what goes around comes around sooner or later!

Local

PreK, nurseries suffer from extended closure in Kuwait

Some teachers paid only half salaries since March

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Private preschools and nurseries in Kuwait are suffering the extended closure required by the government due to the coronavirus pandemic. Serving children from as young as one year old to four or five years old, many of these nurseries and preschools have opened virtual learning for their young charges but most of the nurseries have seen low enrollment. An English nursery school told Kuwait Times it doesn't have enough students to cover expenses - from the villa's rent to salaries of teachers.

"We are struggling, but we cannot blame anyone for this. We are facing a crisis: students who are enrolled in our online classes are not enough to cover our expenses - the enrolment rate is less than 10 percent. We hope the crisis will be over soon," said Nadine, founder and owner of a preschool in Hawally. "We cannot blame the parents, because our primary concern is the safety of our children," she said.

There are nearly 700 private preschools and nurseries in Kuwait. Most offer a mix of educational and play classes for children, essentially a

preschool environment for those too young to enroll in Kuwait. Children within this age range also find it difficult to engage via online classes and many nurseries aren't even offering online options. Some are doing limited online, with par-



Fears of 'impending terminations'

ents and children at home, such as painting, art and other craft or story times and basics such as phonics. But overall, online learning is limited for such young ages. The result is that most nurseries and preschools are effectively closed at least until November, when the ministry of health will reassess the decision closing on campus learning.

In the meantime, nurseries and preschools have no revenue as few children are enrolled. Kuwait Times asked Nadine if her school is able to pay teachers conducting online classes: "So far, all those who are working fulltime are being paid accordingly, but we have some staff who are receiving 50 percent of their salaries because we cannot pay them all. They understand the situation and according to them, so long as they have a job, they are okay," she said. "Some nurseries are not operating until now so their teachers aren't getting paid, while some have fired their teachers - at least we are trying our best to give them a salary," Nadine added.

Impending terminations

A private nursery teacher who spoke to Kuwait Times shared her thoughts about impending terminations at her school. "At our school, we are not sure if we will be the next to get a termination letter. We could lose our jobs just like the first batch of teachers who were told to stop working," said the teacher, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"Retrenchment continues, and we are all aware

of the fact that many children have left the country and many parents have lost their jobs. So economically speaking, many parents cannot provide for their children's education in private schools. Many parents are looking for cheaper options - they cannot continue to enroll them in schools like ours, which is expensive for many. Some of our primary teachers were terminated in April," she noted.

Her school promised to send the teachers home with air plane tickets and after paying all their indemnities. "Affected teachers are those receiving higher salaries - teachers from the US, UK, Jamaica and Africa. They are the first targeted to be retrenched, but they said we are also not safe. I heard some of our schools will be closed too," she added.

"This is really very tough times for all of us and we hope that everyone survives. Since March, we are only getting half of our salaries. We have several bank loans in Kuwait and our countries, so if we are only receiving half of our salary, how can we overcome the challenges ahead? Really, we are in great trouble," the teacher said.

Govt could eye emergency decree for debt bill

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources told Kuwait local daily Al-Rai that the government has placed passing the general debt bill in an emergency decree on top of its priorities if it fails to get it passed by the parliament during the current term due to wrap up by the end of September. The sources explained that the government had passed the first general debt law in 1987 and the second in 1998 using emergency decrees. "Passing the current bill using an emergency decree as well has wide-scale legal support, especially as the lack of liquidity in the general budget poses a threat to payment of government salaries for December," the sources highlighted.

The sources pointed out that the option of having the future generations fund purchase more assets from the general reserves fund is no longer possible because the listed stocks balance is already consumed and that asset liquidation would harm state revenues in view of the pressure on local and global markets because of

COVID-19. "Kuwait cannot bet on oil price increases in the coming three months, and this is another reason why the general debt bill must be passed using an emergency decree," the sources said, adding that the government's options are very limited and the law must be passed to avoid payroll deficit.

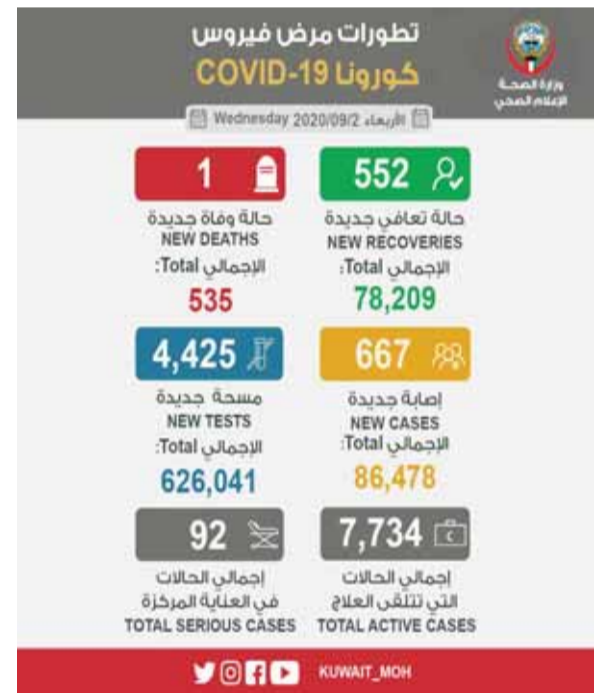
3D scanners

In other news, Al-Rai reported that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation is mulling the use of 3D body scanners gates, as part of its efforts to enhance security measures at Kuwait International Airport. Informed sources said the Civil Aviation had contacted relevant government bodies to get approval to offer for public bidding a tender to supply, install, operate and maintain new body scanners using millimeter wave technology at Kuwait airport.

"The devices to be contracted will use full-body scanning technology, which is a technology used for inspection purposes at airports and in other places that require high security control," the sources explained, asserting the importance of the new devices to secure the airport, facilitate passenger inspection and discover illegal objects without resorting to manual searches. "This technology is already used in several Arab and Western airports," the sources concluded.

Kuwait COVID-19 cases rise by 667 to 86,478

KUWAIT: Kuwait recorded 667 confirmed coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, raising the tally to 86,478, with one death case, raising the death toll to 535, a health ministry official said yesterday. The figures include people who have come into contact with infected individuals, and others whose source of infection is currently being investigated, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. In terms of health zones, 183 cases were reported in Al-Ahmadi, 93 in Jahra, 136 in Hawally, 130 in the Capital and 125 in Farwaniya, added the official. Earlier, the ministry said 552 people have recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 78,209. There are 92 patients currently receiving intensive care out of a total 7,734 patients currently hospitalized, Dr Sanad said. Some 4,425 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, raising the total to 626,041 so far, added the spokesman. The official reiterated the strict need to abide by health precautions, urging nationals and expatriates alike that following social distancing rules is the only way to keep the virus at bay. — KUNA



News in brief

Ten teachers tested positive

KUWAIT: Ten teachers in one school were told not to report to work after they tested positive to COVID-19, Al-Anbaa reported yesterday. The teachers reportedly sent medical reports to the school administration on the first day back to work on September 1, showing that they have contracted the virus, after which they were informed to avoid reporting to school unless they provide medical reports showing that they have recovered completely.

Medicine showing positive results

KUWAIT: The Japanese medicine 'Avigan' has shown positive results in Kuwait after being tested on 20 COVID 19 patients, including some senior citizens, Al-Qabas daily reported. As a result, the medicine will be tested on a larger number of COVID 19 patients of various ages, it added. The Ministry of Health had announced on June 5 importing the first shipment of Avigan after it showed positive results in clinical trials conducted by many countries to treat the novel coronavirus.

Old curriculum

KUWAIT: Primary and intermediate school students who are scheduled to start the new 2020-2021 school year on Oct 4 will study under the old integrated curriculum system, Educational sources told Al-Rai. This is because the coronavirus pandemic postponed the curriculum change plan - previously scheduled to start this September - to the following academic year due to start in September 2021.

'Illegal' temporary passports

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's General Department of Citizenship and Passports is investigating cases in which bedoons (stateless residents) allegedly obtained 'article 17' temporary passports illegally, Al-Jarida reported. The department plans to withdraw passports from those proven guilty of misconduct, said sources quoted in the report, noting that the temporary passports' office at the department has been linked with the Central Agency for Illegal Residents for easier coordination.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Tower cranes at a major government construction project in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait urges Arab economic, social integration

CAIRO: A Kuwaiti official called on Arab countries yesterday to unite efforts to achieve economic and social integration amidst spread of the coronavirus pandemic, which he described as "difficult." Abdulmohsen Al-Tayyar, Kuwait Finance Ministry's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, made the remarks while chairing a virtual meeting of the Arab League Economic and Social Council. He said the council played a major role in transforming projects and programs into reality.

Tayyar said the meeting would touch upon cooperation with partners to address economic ramifications of COVID-19 and achieve the Arab food security. He said they would also discuss providing economic and social support for Lebanon to help the people recover from last month's huge explosion at Beirut port, in addition to providing social support for Palestine. He hoped the participants would approve the draft resolutions to be referred to the virtual ministerial meeting, due today. —KUNA

Kuwait oil price drops to \$45.83 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil dropped 28 cents during Tuesday's trading session to close at \$45.83 per barrel (pb) compared with \$46.11 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Benchmark Brent crude edged 30 cents higher to \$45.58 and the West Texas Intermediate gained 15 cents to \$42.76 pb. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality teams issued 17 warnings during a recent crackdown in which they inspected 17 women's salons, spas, and shops.

Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

WhatsApp

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

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

LOYAC concludes second phase of 'KON Social Entrepreneurship'



KUWAIT: LOYAC recently concluded the second phase of its 'KON Social Entrepreneurship' program organized in collaboration with Babson College; the leading American college in social entrepreneurship, with platinum sponsorship from NBK, golden sponsorship from Zain and co-sponsorship from Agility. Due to health restrictions, the program was held online via the Zoom app. In this regard, LOYAC's Deputy Chairperson Fadia Al-Marzooq stressed the significance of entrepreneurship in developing national economy, adding that the importance of such projects lies in the social value they add to societies.

Meanwhile, LOYAC's Social Creativity Manager Eman Al-Omar explained that the six-week program targeted children aged 12-16, and that it was designed

to develop their talents and skills to prepare them for the labor market. Also speaking on the occasion, NBK's Public Relations Manager Yaaqoub Al-Baqer stressed that NBK is proud of the program's outcome held for the fourth year in a row despite the current circumstances related to the spread of COVID-19. He added that NBK's participation is part of its community service activities.

Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti also expressed his pride for taking part in KON as LOYAC's partners. Finally, Agility's Board Chairperson Hanadi Al-Saleh said that vocational training is one of the most important skills future generations need in order to operate successfully in the labor market.



Teacher turned Khmer Rouge 'torturer' dies

End of a dynasty? Joe Kennedy defeated in US Senate primary

Page 6

Page 7



LAHORE: People visit a mobile phone market in Lahore. Six months after the coronavirus arrived in Pakistan, the country appears to have dodged the worst of the pandemic, baffling public health experts and dampening fears its crowded urban areas and ramshackle hospitals will be overrun. — AFP

Pakistan puzzles health experts

Virus cases drop as Pakistan dodges the worst of the pandemic

LAHORE: Six months after the coronavirus arrived in Pakistan, the country appears to have dodged the worst of the pandemic, baffling health experts and dampening fears its crowded urban areas and ramshackle hospitals will be overrun. Following an initial surge, the number of infections has plummeted in recent weeks, with Covid-19 deaths hovering in the single digits each day, while neighboring India tallies hundreds of fatalities.

Pakistan has a long history of failing to contain myriad infectious diseases such as polio, tuberculosis and hepatitis, while successive governments have underfunded its healthcare sector for decades. Added to that, many Pakistanis live in crowded, multi-generational homes or packed apartment buildings that favour rampant virus transmission.

"No one has been able to explain this decline... We don't have any concrete explanation," said Salman Haseeb, a doctor at Services Hospital in the eastern city of Lahore. Pakistanis have proposed numerous hypotheses for their country's seeming ability to weather the pandemic, crediting everything from the young population and the hot and humid climate to unproven claims of natural immunity. Its median age is only 22 and the coronavirus is known to disproportionately impact older people with prior health complications.

In comparison, Italy, with a median age of 46.5, has recorded more than 35,000 deaths, while Pakistan's official toll is about 6,300. To date, the South Asian nation has confirmed more than 295,000 infections and currently is recording a few hundred new cases per day. Observers say that with only limited testing the true number of infections is likely considerably higher. One testing exercise in Lahore suggested as many as seven percent of the city's population had been exposed to the virus.



'No one has been able to explain this decline'

But anecdotal evidence from hospitals across Pakistan supports the downward trend. While healthcare facilities were initially swamped, doctors across Pakistan told AFP they are now no longer seeing a coronavirus-related rush on emergency services.

sailing at the US Open, where one player was sent home after testing positive and other players are grappling with eerie empty arenas.

"It's a little bit weird to play without fans and without the support and the atmosphere on the centre courts," said former champion Angelique Kerber. The Italian city of Venice is also gearing up for the annual film festival, with about half the usual number of visitors expected and no Hollywood A-listers prepared to accept invitations from the organizers. "It's a festival without stars because Hollywood is still in lockdown," Festival Director Alberto Barbera told AFP. "Will there be less glamour? Yes. Will there be fewer stars on the red carpet? Certainly."

Blow for Sanofi

Tuesday also brought bad news for everyone hoping for a swift medical breakthrough that could bring an end to the pandemic. French pharma giant Sanofi announced that a drug in testing as a treatment for serious Covid-19 cases had proved disappointing and trials will be halted. The drug "did not give us the results we were hoping for", said the firm's research chief John Reed. Sanofi is also part of the global race to develop a vaccine against coronavirus, with more than two dozen different products being trialled around the world according to the World Health Organization. In Hong Kong, health authorities are focusing on rolling out a mass testing scheme but have seen their efforts hampered by distrust of officials following China's crushing of the city's democracy movement. Doctors and testing firms from mainland China are involved in the program, fuelling public fears that their DNA and data will be harvested to create a system of control underpinned by biometrics. "I think it's a waste of time," local resident Emily Li told AFP. "The government can't convince me in terms of the effectiveness of the testing program."

'Bubble within a bubble'

Elsewhere, fresh economic data for the second quarter further revealed the extent of the economic devastation caused by the virus's march around the globe. Brazil's economy, the biggest in Latin America, contracted by a record 9.7 percent in the second quarter of 2020, the official statistics agency said Tuesday. There is uncertainty about whether the economy will recover strongly over the rest of the year because the virus is still wreaking havoc and room is running out to continue the huge government stimulus spending that has softened the blow so far. On Monday, India said its economy had collapsed by 23.9 percent. Only China, where the outbreak was first reported, has escaped a recession in the period, according to official data. —AFP

"Regardless of the reasons, the good thing is the first wave of the virus is almost over in Pakistan," said Khizer Hayat, a doctor at Nishtar hospital in the central city of Multan. "The situation is now under control and the number of coronavirus cases is dropping, the wards are emptying. It's hard to know why."

'Smart' lockdowns

A flattening curve is all the more curious considering how the coronavirus has hit India, which with a median age of 26 and crowded cities has a somewhat similar demographic. Over the weekend, India set a new global record for the highest number of daily cases, with 78,761 new infections recorded in 24 hours, though Delhi is testing at a far higher rate than Islamabad. India has also reported more than 64,000 deaths—the third-highest globally after the United States and Brazil.

Since recording its first case in late February, Pakistan has responded in fits and bursts to the pandemic, rolling out loose lockdowns that were later reversed, while crowds shunned social distancing guidelines and continued to flock to markets and mosques. Still, the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan has been quick to bask in the progress, crediting

itself with "smart" lockdown policies and other measures, even though these were often not enforced. Last month, Pakistani authorities lifted most of the country's remaining coronavirus restrictions after new cases dropped for several weeks.

Restaurants and parks have reopened while people have flocked to theatres, malls, and crowded back onto public transport. Schools and universities are set to reopen later in September. Masks have become an increasingly rare sight, spurring warnings from experts for the public to remain vigilant over fears of a second wave. "People think we have defeated Covid-19 but my belief is that the chances of the second wave are still there," warned Hassan Waseem, a microbiologist based in Pakistan.

However, other doctors suspect the country has experienced the peak of the pandemic. "I would reluctantly say that there won't be a second wave in Pakistan. Most urban centres in Pakistan like Lahore and Karachi have already seen the worst when it comes to coronavirus," said Waheed Uz Zaman Tariq, head of the department of virology and infectious diseases at Chughtai Lab. "People must also understand that (the virus) is not completely gone," he added. "Precautions must be taken still." —AFP

Millions go back to school in Europe as cases pass 4 million

PARIS: Millions of mask-wearing European children returned to school on Tuesday with governments determined to get pupils back in class despite still-rising coronavirus infections which surged over four million across the continent for the first time. Schools reopened in Russia, Ukraine, Belgium and France, where teachers and children aged 11 and older were obliged to wear face coverings, echoing regulations in place across the continent.

Lockdowns imposed from March meant many children have missed months of education, as well as time with their friends. "I've been waiting for this moment for a long time!" 12-year-old Chahda told AFP excitedly as she arrived with her friend at school in the southern French city of Marseille. However, the largest school district in the United States—New York City—announced a delay to in-person classes at public institutions until September 21, after reaching a deal with a prominent teachers' union that had threatened a strike over health concerns it felt had gone unaddressed. In Europe, the decision to forge ahead with school reopenings comes as the virus is spreading rapidly again in many countries, raising fears that more lockdowns and disruption are to come in autumn and winter. "I am convinced that we can and will prevent a second general shutdown," Germany's Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said, unveiling figures to suggest his country has passed the worst of its recession. An AFP tally of infections, using official data from across Europe, showed that more than four million people have contracted the illness, with Russia accounting for almost a quarter of infections. The virus emerged late last year in China and has now infected more than 25 million people globally and killed almost 850,000. The Chinese city at the centre of the initial outbreak, Wuhan, took another leap back to normality on Tuesday when its almost 1.4 million youngsters also returned to schools and kindergartens. State media broadcast images of thousands of students hoisting the Chinese flag—a daily routine at all public schools—despite warnings to avoid mass gatherings.

'Weird' tennis returns

While schools attempt to get back to normal, the virus continues to play havoc with cultural and sporting events. The US is hosting the world's first major tennis tournament since Covid-19 emerged, but it has not been plain



JAKARTA: Workers wearing protective suits carry a mock coffin as part of an awareness drive against the COVID-19 coronavirus in Jakarta. — AFP

Indonesia stages coffin parade

JAKARTA: Officials in hazmat suits paraded empty coffins through the streets of Jakarta Tuesday to remind residents that coronavirus cases are still surging in one of Asia's worst-hit nations. A convoy of truck trailers and pallbearers snaked its way through crowded neighborhoods, with some participants also donning headpieces depicting ghost-like figures known as pocong.

"We're hoping this coffin parade will remind people to be more aware of the risk of disobeying health safety rules," said Mundari, the head of south Jakarta's Cilandak district, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "They can picture how things would be if they died of Covid-19," he added. The mock coffins got the attention of Cilandak resident Ahmad Soleh Suzany. "It's very scary because this shows the huge dangers we're facing," he told AFP.

The move comes as Indonesia's coronavirus toll mounts, with the deadly respiratory disease killing more than 100 frontline doctors and possibly hundreds of children. The world's fourth most populous nation has reported over 177,000 confirmed cases and 7,505 deaths, but with some of the world's lowest testing rates the true scale is widely believed to be much

greater. Hospital ICU units are straining to keep up in the archipelago of nearly 270 million, where the government has been sharply criticized for its response, including officials touting herbal and other unproven cures. Indonesia relaxed movement restrictions in July to head off a collapse of Southeast Asia's biggest economy. Authorities are fining people for not wearing masks or failing to practise social distancing, but it's not enough. "So besides sanctions we're trying to raise awareness," Cilandak district's Mundari said. "This helps to convey the message. It's our way of trying to maximize the spread of information." This is not the first time Indonesia has turned to unconventional methods to get the word out about the dangers of coronavirus.

Earlier this year, a conservative region in the Muslim-majority nation forced social distancing violators to recite Koranic verses, while another made offenders wear placards admitting their infraction. Java's Sragen regency tossed offenders into repurposed abandoned houses that local residents believe are haunted as it tapped widespread beliefs in the supernatural, which play a key role in Indonesian folklore. The country's medical association applauded the "creative" coffin parade. "We appreciate efforts to educate and spread information in different ways so the public's crisis awareness stays high," said association spokesman Halik Malik. "This kind of thing leaves an impression." —AFP

International

After UAE-Israel deal, Kushner pushes other Arabs to go next

White House adviser heads to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar

AL-DHAFRA AIR BASE: After accompanying an Israeli delegation to the UAE for historic normalization talks, White House adviser Jared Kushner set off on a tour of other Gulf capitals, looking for more Arab support. Israel and the United Arab Emirates set up a joint committee to cooperate on financial services at the talks in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi.

Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, accompanied the Israeli delegation on Monday on what was billed as the first Israeli commercial flight to the influential Gulf monarchy, which agreed in August to normalize relations. Israel exchanged embassies with neighbors Egypt and Jordan under peace deals decades ago. But until now, all other Arab states had demanded it first cede more land to the Palestinians.

In remarks reported by the UAE state news agency WAM, Kushner suggested other Arab states could follow quickly. Asked when the next would normalize ties with Israel, he was quoted as saying: "Let's hope it's months." Kushner later flew to Bahrain and then Saudi Arabia and is expected also to visit Qatar. While no other Arab country has yet indicated a willingness to follow the UAE, the richest, Saudi Arabia, allowed the El Al charter flight carrying Kushner and the Israelis to use its air space.

In Bahrain, which houses the US naval headquarters for the region, the state news agency reported that during his meeting with Kushner, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa had praised the role the UAE has played in defending Arab and Islamic interests. In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Kushner discussed the need for the Palestinians and the Israelis to resume negotiations and reach a lasting peace, state news agency SPA reported. The UAE, United States and Israel on Monday urged the Palestinians to "re-engage" with the Israelis,

according to a joint statement carried by the Emirati state news agency.

'Disgraced forever'

The Palestinians have denounced the UAE agreement with Israel, which they say violates a longstanding pan-Arab position that Israel could normalize



Iran fumes, slams UAE-Israel deal

relations only in return for land. The UAE says it obtained a major concession from Israel to halt plans to annex territory on the occupied West Bank. The Gulf Arab states are mainly ruled by Sunni Muslim monarchs who consider their biggest foe to be Shiite Iran, and Israel has long held out the promise that their common enemy could bring them together.

In a fiery speech on Tuesday, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said: "The Emiratis will be disgraced forever for this treachery against the Islamic world, Arab nations and Palestine." "The UAE, along with Israelis and evil Americans like the Jewish member of Trump's family, are working together against the interests of the Islamic world," Khamenei said, referring to Kushner, who is Jewish.

Asked about Khamenei's remarks, UAE Foreign



MANAMA: A handout picture released by Bahrain's official news agency (BNA) shows US Presidential Adviser Jared Kushner (left) meeting with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa in the capital Manama. — AFP

Ministry official Jamal Al-Musharakh told reporters in Abu Dhabi: "The path to peace and prosperity is not paved with incitement and hate speech." Israeli officials have played up the economic benefits of the UAE deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said representatives of the two countries had signed an agreement on cooperation in financial services. The state-run Abu Dhabi Investment Office and Invest in Israel, part of Israel's economy ministry, issued a joint statement saying they had agreed to set out a plan to establish formal cooperation.

The Gulf state's biggest lender First Abu Dhabi Bank later said it would open discussions with Israel lenders Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi. Amid the historic normalization talks, Kushner spent a morning meeting UAE military officials at an Abu Dhabi air base that houses US military F-35 jets, advanced stealth aircraft which the Gulf state has long sought to buy despite Israeli objections. The UAE has said normalization should remove any hurdle blocking the sale, Netanyahu said on Monday Israel still opposes selling the jets to the UAE. — Reuters

News in brief

Two Koreas on high alert

SEOUL: Flights were grounded in South Korea and storm warnings issued on both sides of the Korean peninsula as a typhoon forecast to be one of the most powerful in years made its approach yesterday. More than 300 domestic departures were cancelled as Typhoon Maysak churned across waters south of the resort island of Jeju packing gusts of up to 162 kilometers per hour. South Korean Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said the storm was forecast to be similar in strength to 2003's Typhoon Maemi, which left 131 people dead and more than 4 trillion won (\$3 billion) in damage. "We are especially concerned," he added. Maysak - named after a Cambodian tree - was predicted to make landfall west of Busan on the southern coast, then make its way up the eastern side of the peninsula before heading northwards into the Sea of Japan, known as the East Sea in Korea. — AFP

Biking surges in Mexico City

MEXICO CITY: Cycling is undergoing a renaissance in the congested Mexican capital, North America's largest metropolis and home to over 20 million, as residents seek to social distance and avoid public transportation amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. A chaotic network of metro trains and buses form the backbone of Mexico City's public transport system and was used on a daily basis prior to the pandemic by millions of commuters, often cramped elbow to elbow. "Many people have opted to buy a bike and use it, out of fear of public transport, to get to work, to go out and about, to be active," said Valentin Najera, a capital bike shop owner. He says business is booming. "There has been an increase in sales since the pandemic." — Reuters

Toxic leaks into Paris river

PARIS: Hundreds of liters of toxic wastewater have leaked into Paris' Seine River from a plant belonging to Franco-Swiss cement giant Lafarge-Holcim, local reports said, sparking outrage from French officials. Lafarge acknowledged the spillage but insisted it had been the result of sabotage, rather than an intentional act by the company. The contaminated liquid is composed of a mixture of cement, wastewater treatment liquid and plastic microfibres and comes from a Lafarge site in the east of the city, Europe 1 radio said. "It's a complete environmental scandal, as we have been working with our partners for a long time to improve the quality of the River Seine," Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said on Twitter. — AFP

Man faces trial for blackmail

CAIRO: Egypt's public prosecution said it had referred a man for criminal trial on charges of sexually assaulting three girls and attempting to blackmail them. "The public prosecutor ... has referred Ahmed Bassam Zaki to the criminal court for trial over assaulting and threatening three girls under the age of 18," the prosecutor's office said in a statement. The statement said his threats related to requests that the girls keep up a "sexual relationship" with him, otherwise he would "reveal matters that violated their honor". Claims against 22-year-old Zaki erupted online in July in the form of testimonies including an alleged rape and instances of assault against dozens of girls and women, some involving blackmail. — AFP

Macron backs Iraq 'sovereignty' on first Baghdad visit

BAGHDAD: French President Emmanuel Macron met his Iraqi counterpart yesterday on his first official visit to Baghdad, where he insisted the war-torn country should reassert its "sovereignty" despite simmering US-Iran tensions. Coming straight from a two-day trip to crisis-hit Lebanon, Macron is the most prominent world leader to visit Iraq since Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi came to power in May. The trip aims to "launch an initiative alongside the United Nations to support a process of sovereignty," Macron announced on his final night in Beirut.

In Baghdad, he voiced his support for his Iraqi counterpart Barham Saleh to help Iraq fight Islamic State sleeper cells and resist foreign interference. "Iraq has been going through a challenging time for several years, with war and terrorism," Macron said. "You have a transition to lead. France



BAGHDAD: Iraqi President Barham Saleh (right) and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron greet each other with an elbow bump as they hold a joint press conference at Baghdad's Al-Salam Palace yesterday. — AFP

will be by your side so the international community can help," he added. But there were few details on the much-vaunted "sovereignty" initiative, and Iraqi officials told AFP they were not expecting announcements of new financial or military aid.

Saleh thanked Macron for France's support in the anti-IS fight and said he hoped Macron would pay a longer visit to Iraq in 2021. After dictator Saddam Hussein was toppled by a 2003 US-led invasion - in which France did not take part-Iraq was ravaged by

waves of sectarian conflict. That culminated in IS capturing swathes of the country six years ago, before the jihadists were beaten back with international support including a US-led coalition that did include French forces.

'Essential sovereignty'

Iraq has been caught for years between its two main allies Iran and the US, a balancing act that has become increasingly tortured since Washington's withdrawal in 2018 from a multilateral nuclear deal with Tehran. France, one of the key remaining backers of the 2015 agreement, called for de-escalation after a US strike on Baghdad in January killed top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and prompted Iran to launch missiles against US troops in Iraq. France has doubled down on its signs of support in recent tumultuous months.

Top diplomat Jean-Yves Le Drian, who was the only minister to accompany Macron from Lebanon, visited Iraq in July and urged Baghdad to "dissociate itself from regional tensions". Macron last week insisted that "the fight for Iraq's sovereignty is essential." He said Iraqis, who had "suffered so much", deserved options besides domination by regional powers or Islamist extremists. — AFP



KENOSHA: US President Donald Trump tours an area affected by civil unrest in Kenosha, Wisconsin. — AFP

Trump denies suffering 'series of mini-strokes'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday denied unfounded rumors that a series of mini-strokes were behind an unscheduled hospital visit last year, calling the claims "fake news." Trump made the surprise visit to Walter Reed Medical Center in November. The fact that it was not scheduled, a departure from established protocols, had ignited speculation of a serious health issue-though the White House insisted he was just doing parts of his annual health exam ahead of time.

However CNN reported Tuesday that a new book by a New York Times journalist claims Vice President Mike Pence was put "on standby to take over the powers of the presidency temporarily" if Trump had to undergo anesthesia during the visit. CNN, which obtained a copy of the as-yet-unreleased book by Michael Schmidt, said the author did not specify the sourcing for the claim. If

true, it raises fresh questions about the visit. The report quickly ignited claims on social media-made without any evidence-that Trump had suffered a stroke and had to be rushed to hospital, prompting the president to take to Twitter Tuesday.

"It never ends! Now they are trying to say that your favorite President, me, went to Walter Reed Medical Center, having suffered a series of mini-strokes. Never happened to THIS candidate - FAKE NEWS," Trump tweeted. In what appeared to be a dig at the man challenging him for the presidency in November, Joe Biden, he added: "Perhaps they are referring to another candidate from another Party!" Trump's personal physician Sean Conley-who insisted last year the visit was nothing serious-also issued a new statement rebuffing the speculation.

"I can confirm that President Trump has not experienced nor been evaluated for a cerebrovascular accident (stroke), transient ischemic attack (mini stroke), or any acute cardiovascular emergencies, as have been incorrectly reported in the media," Conley wrote. "The president remains healthy and I have no concerns about his ability to maintain the rigorous schedule ahead of him. As stated in my last report, I expect him to remain fit to execute the duties of the presidency." — AFP

End of a dynasty? Joe Kennedy defeated in US Senate primary

BOSTON: Congressman Joe Kennedy, long seen as a rising star, crashed to defeat Tuesday in his bid for a US Senate seat, the first time the storied American political dynasty lost a state election in Massachusetts. Incumbent Senator Ed Markey, a political veteran who re-cast himself as the fiery liberal in the race, harnessed the state's progressive energy to handily turn back a primary challenge from Joseph Kennedy III, the grandnephew of assassinated president John F. Kennedy.

The 39-year-old Kennedy said he called Markey "to congratulate him and to pledge my support" in the months ahead." With votes still being counted, Markey was leading around 55 percent to 44 percent. The race pitted two well-liked progressives against each another, but it was Markey's organizational energy and appeal to the ascendant left that won out over Kennedy. "Tonight is more than just a celebration of an election, it is a celebration of a movement," Markey wrote on Twitter. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a figurehead of the party's progressive wing, congratulated Markey on the win. "Yours is a victory for the progressive movement, for 21st century policy, and for the Green New Deal," she wrote on Twitter. The Green New Deal, an economic plan to tackle climate change, was co-authored by Markey and Ocasio-Cortez. Since he is not allowed to be on the ballot as a candidate for both the House and Senate, Kennedy is not running for re-election to his House seat. Come January, there will be no one from the Kennedy clan in elected office.

The grandson of slain attorney general Robert F. Kennedy is part of the family's fourth generation to carry the political torch, entering the House of Representatives in 2013. "Every race I've ever run, I've made it clear it's me on the ballot," Kennedy told AFP as he stamped for 11th-hour votes Tuesday in Boston. After his loss he told supporters that together they "built a campaign for working folks of every color and creed, who carry the economic injustice of this country on their backs." At 74, his rival Markey is a generation apart, a progressive political workhorse who spent 37 years in the House before rising to the Senate in 2013. He led Kennedy in recent polling and was able to seal the deal with strong support in Boston and college towns such as Amherst. — AFP

International

Everyone 'could be a carrier': Covering COVID in rural India

Infections in India now total over 3.5 million

BHAGALPUR: "Every person you meet is a potential carrier of the disease," a doctor said to me when I visited the town of Bhagalpur and its nearby villages to cover the raging coronavirus pandemic in India's countryside. Dr Kumar Gaurav, a psychiatrist who conveyed that warning, was put in charge of the main hospital in Bhagalpur after the epidemic struck down some of his colleagues and others refused the job. Infections in India now total over 3.5 million, rising from two million in just over three weeks - the third highest number of coronavirus infections in the world. The disease is rampant in rural India, where people often have to rely on the most basic health facilities.

We wanted to show the human toll of the disease in the countryside, home to two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people. So, I headed out to one of the country's most poverty-stricken regions - Bihar state in eastern India. The area I went to was not easy to reach. Wary of the risk of infection from using public transport, I and a driver travelled for four days by car across India's northern plains from New Delhi, through floods and along rutted roads.

We carried full personal protection suits, masks, goggles and sanitisers - which was far more than hospital staff I encountered had. In Bhagalpur, I found patients and their families desperate for help and medical staff struggling with a shortage of manpower and equipment that left them at risk of infection. Often, even the equipment they did have did not work. Gaurav's hospital was dedicated to treating patients with COVID-19, serving a popu-

lation of about 10 million people, and it still received other patients.

Most COVID-19 patients came in with relatives, who accompanied them to the intensive care wards. After trying to care of the sick - sitting with them, massaging and feeding them, these relatives would go home for the night. Gaurav said the healthcare system was close to breaking point. One of the points of constant strain, he said, was trying to limit the visits from relatives to patients in the ICU given the risk that they could spread



Third highest
number in the
world

the infection. That underlined his warning to me that everyone I meet could be carrying the disease - it wasn't a casual comment.

The town was under a strict lockdown, but most of the residents were not wearing masks or following any social distancing rules. Traffic was frenetic. After four days in Bihar, we were on the road back to New Delhi. Gaurav remained behind, the last



AMRITSAR: Students come out after taking their Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission to engineering colleges at an examination centre in Amritsar yesterday. —AFP

doctor standing in his hospital on the banks of the Ganges River. When we saw him, he was making the rounds with armed guards to try to enforce rules in

the hospital. He told me he felt compelled to step up to take charge. "A lot of my colleagues refused," he said. "I had to take up the responsibility." — Reuters

Teacher-turned-Khmer Rouge 'torturer' dies

PHNOM PENH: The chief torturer behind Cambodia's genocidal Khmer Rouge died yesterday while serving a life sentence for crimes against humanity, leaving just one surviving leader of the regime that killed an estimated two million people in the 1970s. Kaing Guek Eav, 77, better known by his alias Duch, served as the head of the infamous Tuol Sleng prison in the late 1970s and was convicted of crimes against humanity in 2012 by a UN-backed tribunal for his role in the "Killing Fields" regime.

His death leaves Khieu Samphan, the head of state and de facto public face of the regime, as the sole surviving Khmer Rouge member convicted by the tribunal. "The souls of the victims and my parents have received justice," Norng Chan Phal, who survived internment at Tuol Sleng as a child, told AFP outside what is now a memorial centre.

Duch had been in and out of hospital for years and was admitted again this week, tribunal spokesman Neth Pheaktra told AFP. According to a doctor's letter confirming his death shown to AFP, Duch had symptoms of "acute respiratory distress". Journalists saw his body taken to a local temple where it was cremated yesterday afternoon. The first member of the Khmer Rouge to stand trial, Duch's testimony served as an important milestone for millions

of Cambodians who suffered under the brutal regime.

Some two million people were believed to have died during the four-year rule due to starvation, forced labour and mass executions in detention centers across the country. At Tuol Sleng Duch had maintained a huge archive of photos, confessions and other documents which UN prosecutors used to trace the final desperate months of thousands of inmates. It revealed facets of the regime's secretive workings—such as the repeated purges driven by paranoia from the leadership that its enemies were within its ranks.

Milestone of justice

Born in 1942, Duch, a former mathematics teacher, became the Khmer Rouge's top interrogator when the ultra-Maoist regime was in power from 1975-1979. He oversaw the torture of thousands of men, women and children in a neighborhood high school that was converted into a detention centre, extracting false confessions from his victims and sending them to their deaths on the outskirts of the capital.

He told the UN-backed court that he joined the Khmer Rouge in 1970 "in order to transform society, to oppose the government, to oppose torture", and helped to oversee a series of jungle prisons. After the regime seized



PHNOM PENH: A Cambodian civil party member observes skulls displayed at the Tuol Sleng genocide museum in Phnom Penh. Kaing Guek Eav, the former chief interrogator and torturer for Cambodia's genocidal Khmer Rouge regime died yesterday in hospital in Phnom Penh. — AFP

power in 1975, he was installed as head of Tuol Sleng—referred to as S-21 by the Khmer Rouge—which he staffed with uneducated teenage boys. He said they could be easily indoctrinated because they were "like a blank piece of paper".

He maintained posts within the communist movement even as it battled Vietnam-backed troops after it fell from power in January 1979. He turned to Christianity in his later years and was working for an aid agency under a false name at the time of his arrest in 1999, when many had long assumed he was already dead. While he had

begged for forgiveness for his crimes, he later dismayed survivors by asking to be acquitted on the grounds that he was not a senior member of the Khmer Rouge hierarchy. "I respectfully and strictly followed the orders," Duch said in one of his final public statements to the court. His death was "a reminder that justice is a long and difficult" process, said Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, which conducts research on the Khmer Rouge regime. "Perhaps it can bring some satisfaction to the living, and the fallen can now rest in peace," Youk told AFP. — AFP

Amnesty accuses Iran of 'widespread torture'

NICOSIA: Amnesty International yesterday accused Iran's security forces of using torture to extract confessions, saying hundreds of people have been jailed since a sweeping crackdown against protests last year. Demonstrations erupted across Iran in November 2019 after a major petrol price hike, but they were put down by security forces with mass arrests amid a near-total internet blackout.

Amnesty said it had gathered dozens of testimonies from the 7,000 people it estimated were arrested, which included children as young as 10. The accounts reveal "a catalogue of shocking human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment", the London-based human rights group said.

Those arrested were tortured into "confessions" of involvement in the protests, membership of opposition groups or contact with foreign governments and media, it added. Torture and other ill-treatment by police, intelligence operatives and others "was widespread", the rights group said. Amnesty said it had recorded the names of more than 500 people "subjected to unfair criminal proceedings in connection with the protests".

"Hundreds have since been sentenced to prison terms and flogging and several to the death penalty following grossly unfair trials which were presided over by biased judges behind closed doors," Amnesty said. Prison sentences ranged from one month to 10



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided by the office of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei shows him speaking with education ministry officials during a video conference in Tehran. — AFP

years, the report said. Torture techniques included water boarding, beating, electric shocks, pepper spraying genitals, sexual violence, mock executions and pulling out finger and toe nails, Amnesty reported. "It felt like my entire body was being pierced with millions of needles," one man allegedly tortured with electricity told Amnesty.

Another man said he was suspended from his hands and feet from a pole—a method reportedly called "chicken kebab" by his interrogators—the report read. In May, Iran's interior minister suggested that up to 225 people were killed during the November protests, when petrol pumps were torched, police stations attacked and shops looted. A group of independent UN rights experts said in December that more than 400 people could have been killed in the crackdown, based on unconfirmed reports. Iran blamed the violence that broke out during the protests on "thugs" backed by its foes the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia. —AFP

Taiwan to change its passport, fed up with confusion with China

TAIPEI: Fed up with being confused for China amid the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's stepped-up efforts to assert sovereignty, Taiwan said yesterday it would redesign its passport to give greater prominence to the island's name. Taiwan has complained during the outbreak that its nationals have encountered problems entering other countries, as Taiwanese passports have the words "Republic of China", its formal name, written in large English font at the top, with "Taiwan" printed at the bottom.

The new passport, to roll out in January, enlarges the word "Taiwan" in English and removes the large English words "Republic of China", though that name in Chinese and in small English font around the national emblem will remain. Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said new passports were needed to prevent their nationals being mistaken for Chinese citizens, especially with the stepped up entry checks many countries have begun since the pandemic began. "Since the beginning of the Wuhan pneumonia outbreak this year our people have kept hoping that we can give more prominence to Taiwan's visibility, avoiding people mistakenly thinking they are from China," Wu told reporters.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said it did not matter what "petty moves" Taiwan made, it could not change the fact that Taiwan was an inseparable part of China. China claims democratic Taiwan as its sovereign territory, and says only it has the right to speak for the island internationally, a position it has pushed strongly during the pandemic, especially at the World Health Organization.

Taipei says this has confused countries and led them to impose the same restrictions on Taiwanese travelers as on Chinese, and that Taiwan has never been run by the People's Republic of China. Taiwan has been debating its identity for years, including its name. But the pandemic has shot the issue back into the spotlight. The government is also considering a name change - or at least a full redesign - for Taiwan's largest carrier, China Airlines, again to avoid confusion with China. — Reuters

News in brief

Pakistan blocks dating apps

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday blocked access to Tinder and several other dating apps in a bid to control "immoral" and "indecent" content, just days after regulators threatened to shut down YouTube for similar reasons. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) said it had barred users from accessing Tinder, Grindr, SayHi, Tagged and Skout after the social networking apps failed to "moderate... content in accordance" with Pakistan's laws. The PTA said the ban addressed the "negative effects of immoral/indecent content". Shahzad Ahmad, director of digital rights group Bytes For All, slammed the PTA's "moral policing". "If adults choose to be on an app, it is not for the state to dictate whether they should use it or not," Ahmad said. — AFP

India minister blasts Facebook

NEW DELHI: India's communications minister has accused Facebook of bias against right-wing politics, even after fresh reports about claims that a high-ranking staffer at the social media giant supported the country's Hindu-nationalist ruling party. The row erupted after The Wall Street Journal published two reports alleging that Ankhil Das, Facebook's top public policy executive in India, had expressed support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party and disparaged the opposition in internal posts. The Journal reported that Facebook also failed to take action against posts containing hate speech against Muslims by a Hindu nationalist lawmaker out of concern for its business interests in India - the firm's largest market in terms of users. Time magazine also published an article last week with similar allegations. — AFP

Kabul frees Taliban prisoners

KABUL: The Afghan government released nearly 200 Taliban prisoners to spur the start of long-delayed peace negotiations, senior Afghan officials said yesterday. The fresh releases are from a group of 400 "hardcore" Taliban prisoners, the fate of which has stalled peace negotiations between the government and insurgent group to end nearly two decades of war in Afghanistan. This group of prisoners were released from the main jail in the capital Kabul on Monday evening and Tuesday at the same time six Afghan special forces members held by the Taliban were freed, the officials said. "We want to finish the prisoner swap so we could start the peace process as soon as possible," said a senior government official, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. A source close to the process said the prisoner swap could be finished by today. — Reuters

India-China border showdown

NEW DELHI: A Tibetan-origin soldier with India's special forces was killed in the latest border showdown with Chinese troops on their contested Himalayan border, a Tibetan representative said Tuesday. The death is the first reported from two incidents in 48 hours on the border which has heightened tensions between the giant nations just two months after a battle that left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead. India and China, which fought a border war in 1962, have accused each other of seeking to cross their unofficial frontier in the Ladakh region in a bid to gain territory on Saturday night, and then again on Monday. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Australia recession adds to global woes

China only major nation still recording growth during pandemic

SYDNEY: Australia has fallen into recession for the first time in three decades and Brazil's economy shrank by almost 10 percent because of the coronavirus, leaving China as the only major nation still recording economic growth during the pandemic. A raft of bleak data from India to Europe in recent days has laid bare the toll from lockdowns as nations try to keep a lid on an illness that has killed more than 850,000 people and infected over 25 million.

The challenges were further highlighted yesterday when Australia announced a record contraction of seven percent despite authorities providing billions of dollars in support to struggling firms. "Today's national accounts confirm the devastating impact on the Australian economy from COVID-19," said Treasurer Josh Frydenberg.

"Our record run of 28 consecutive years of economic growth has now officially come to an end. The cause: a once-in-a-century pandemic." Australia has confirmed almost 26,000 cases of coronavirus and 663 deaths, but had successfully contained the illness in most of the country by July.

A recent outbreak in Melbourne, however, forced a new lockdown covering five million people that has dragged on any economic recovery.

'Depressing feeling'

Shutdowns have taken a toll on livelihoods across the globe as business revenues plunge and millions are forced out of work. New Delhi reported Monday that growth in Asia's third-largest economy suffered a historic 23.9 percent decline between April and June as the manufacturing sector was battered by restrictions on businesses.

In the Philippines, meanwhile, there has been a resurgence of barter trade as cash incomes dry up, with people flocking to Facebook groups to exchange everyday possessions for food. "People are realizing that while they have no money, they have accumulated a lot of material things," said Charles Ramirez, who runs a 14,000-member bar-

tering website in the capital Manila. "It's a depressing feeling, of course, having to let go of things you have accumulated just to be able to survive."

The site is one of dozens that have sprouted up to provide a lifeline to Filipinos hit hard by the country's recession.



Bleak data from India to Europe

'Changed everything'

Brazil's economy, the biggest in Latin America, contracted by a record 9.7 percent in the second quarter of the year, plunging the nation into a virus-induced recession. "GDP is now at the same level as in late 2009, at the height of the global financial crisis," the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics said. The drop in the April-June period was the biggest for any quarter since the current system of records began in 1996, it added. The only major economy to have avoided a recession is China — where the coronavirus first emerged last year — thanks to strict lockdowns that have seen Covid-19 all but disappear in the country. In the second quarter the Chinese economy rebounded by 11.5 percent, having fallen by 10 percent in the first quarter. The Chinese city at the center of the initial outbreak, Wuhan, took another step back to normality on Tuesday when almost 1.4 million children returned to schools and kindergartens.

In Europe, where GDP plunged 12.1 percent in



MELBOURNE: A pedestrian walk past a shop display in a deserted Burke Street Mall in Melbourne's central business district yesterday. Australia has entered its first recession since 1991 after the economy shrank 7 percent in the second quarter, official figures showed. — AFP

the three months to June, fears are growing of more lockdowns and disruption this autumn and winter as the virus refuses to die. "The pandemic has changed everything," said Gema Perez Barea, who runs a firm offering tours of wineries in southern Spain that are highly dependent on tourists.

She said there were "far fewer visitors" than before the pandemic and "now all the tourists we have are from Spain". The country is the world's third-largest wine producer by value after France

and Italy, but sales have been battered by the virus crisis. The virus has failed to put the brakes on the Venice film festival in Italy, however, which on Wednesday was gearing up for the movie industry's first post-Covid-19 international competition. Still, only about half the usual number of visitors are expected to attend. "It's a festival without stars because Hollywood is still in lockdown," festival director Alberto Barbera said. "Will there be less glamour? Yes." — AFP

Deutsche Bank chief warns of 'zombie' firms in pandemic

FARNKFURT: Deutsche Bank's chief executive yesterday warned that government aid to ailing firms to cope with the coronavirus pandemic may lead to "zombie" companies that end up weighing on the German economy. A large number of so-called zombie firms in Germany would have "a serious impact on the productivity of our economy," Christian Sewing said in a speech in Frankfurt.

"Zombie" companies are businesses that survive on the back of government subsidies or bailouts, avoiding the insolvency they might otherwise suffer, and are seen as a driver of inefficiencies in an economy. The government of Chancellor Angela Merkel has pledged over one trillion euros (\$1.2 trillion) in aid to shield companies and citizens in Europe's top economy from the virus fallout, including through loans, grants and subsidized shorter-hours programs.

Sewing cited a study by credit agency Creditreform, which said that the number of these zombie companies in Germany could double to one in six as a result of bailouts related to the pandemic. This would be detrimental, he said, "at a time when Covid-19 is accelerating many structural upheavals — from digitization to the pressure to operate more sustainably — when the economy must therefore adapt exceptionally quickly." The bank's chief argued that this process of restructuring in the economy is held up "when companies are primarily waiting for everything to go back to the way it was before." Sewing's warning comes a day after former European Central Bank president Mario Draghi said that governments should use stimulus funds to create jobs for young people rather than prop up jobs for those that already have them.

"Subsidies will have to go down but at the same time jobs will be created," Draghi said, Bloomberg News reported. "It's very good if the government succeeds in giving jobs and taking out subsidies, and again it's especially good for young people." The ECB is providing 1.35 trillion euros to support the economy through the pandemic. — AFP



FRANKFURT: Christian Sewing, CEO of German company Deutsche Bank, addresses journalists at the group's headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP

Rolls-Royce rolls out new Ghost amid virus worries

LONDON: Rolls-Royce launched its eagerly-awaited new "Ghost" model on Tuesday, even as the luxury carmaker's chief warned that coronavirus would impact the automotive market for several years.

The new model, complete with a 6.75-litre twin-turbo V12 engine, minimalist design, and even a branded umbrella, will cost some £222,000 (250,000 euros, \$298,000). Nevertheless, the lure of a new status symbol car for the super-rich would not be enough to soften the blow of the pandemic in the short-term, the group warned. "We expect COVID-19 to remain (a difficulty) for some time, until a vaccine is available," said Rolls-Royce Managing Director Torsten Mueller-Oetvoes in a telephone interview with AFP. "In the medium term, I would say within three years, we should be back to normal, and even better than normal."

Like the rest of the car market, luxury brands have suffered during the pandemic, and Rolls-Royce is no exception.

"Of course we have been affected," said Mueller-Oetvoes. "On the one hand, many of our partners around the world, our dealers, have been forced to close", while at the same time "we have seen a large number of potential customers reconsider their purchasing decision", he said.

Rating agency Moody's has forecast a fall of 14 percent in the global automotive market this year.

A rebound was "likely" in 2021, but Moody's cautions that that depends on how quickly the pandemic reaches its peak.

'Cautiously optimistic'

In the first half of this year, Rolls-Royce's sales fell

Stocks climb as recovery hopes gather strength

LONDON: Shares gained strongly yesterday as investors bet that improving economic data and more policy stimulus from Washington would add momentum for equities. European stocks gathered steam through morning trading, gaining 2.1 percent and were set to snap four straight days of losses. London, Frankfurt and Paris indexes were all up between 1.7 percent-2.4 percent.

Tech shares jumped 2.7 percent to their highest in more than 19 years, while the chemical sector also started, adding 3 percent.

The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 49 countries, rose 0.2 percent. Wall Street futures gauges pointed to gains of 0.7 percent. Fuelling the optimism were bets that the world's major economies were recovering from the damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Economic data over recent days has fuelled such expectations, buoying stocks and helping the dol-



Rolls-Royce CEO Torsten Muller-Otvoes poses for a photograph inside the new Rolls-Royce Ghost. — Reuters

by 30 percent compared with the same period in 2019, said Mueller-Oetvoes, but pointed out that last year was a "record" year. However, he noted that Rolls-Royce had not implemented any lay-offs during the pandemic and remained "cautiously optimistic" for next year.

The launch comes at an interesting time for Rolls-Royce, which has sought in recent years to reposition itself in the market. "We have massively rejuvenated the brand over the past 10 years and the average age of our customers is 43," said Mueller-Oetvoes. Founded at the beginning of the 20th century, the

emblematic British brand was bought by German car giant BMW in 1998.

And as well as the coronavirus, Rolls-Royce faces another immediate challenge-Brexit. As fears over a potential "no deal" between Britain and the European Union increase, Mueller-Oetvoes also voiced concern about the prospect of a British exit from the EU without an agreement. With 600 suppliers worldwide, "my greatest concern is to see a disrupted supply chain," he said. Despite that, he said Rolls-Royce was "fully prepared" for any eventuality. — AFP

Apple leading the charge. Tech giants have been among the winners in the emerging recovery.

Waiting for Washington

Also feeding the positive mood were signs that Washington was moving closer to offering some fiscal stimulus support to counter damage from the coronavirus. White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said on Tuesday that Republicans in the Senate were likely to take up a COVID-19 relief bill next week offering \$500 billion in additional federal aid. The administration was still weighing help for U.S. airlines, he added.

Yet congressional negotiations on further federal intervention remain at a standstill after the Democratic-led US House of Representatives passed its \$3.4 trillion measure in May. With the dollar faltering in recent weeks over fears that the US recovery may lag that of China and the eurozone, the factory data was welcomed by currency traders.

The dollar index added 0.4 percent at 92.612, rising on Tuesday its lowest since April 2018 at 91.737. In commodities, oil rose towards \$46 a barrel, gaining for a third day. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was up 1 cents at \$45.68 a barrel. — Reuters

Business

Weak German retail sales dash hopes for strong recovery in Q3

Retail sales fall 0.9% m/m in real terms in July

BERLIN: German retail sales fell unexpectedly in July, data showed yesterday, dashing hopes that household spending in Europe's largest economy can drive a strong recovery in the third quarter from the coronavirus shock. Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has since March unleashed an array of rescue and stimulus measures, financed with record borrowing of 217.8 billion euros, to help companies and consumers get out of the crisis.

The stimulus package includes a temporary cut in value-added tax (VAT) from July 1 until Dec. 31, worth up to 20 billion euros, to give domestic demand an additional push. But the retail sales figures released by the Federal Statistics Office cast some doubt on whether the measure is working. Some companies are not passing on the tax cut to consumers and shoppers generally seem to be holding back. Retail sales were down by 0.9 percent on the month in real terms in July after a revised drop of 1.9 percent in June and a 13.2 percent jump in May, when authorities eased lockdown measures.

This missed a Reuters forecast for a 0.5 percent increase, though retail sales are a volatile indicator often subject to revision. "The disappointment among German retailers is likely to have been great: The VAT cut on July 1 did not lead to the

hoped-for increase in sales, at least in the first month," DZ bank economist Michael Holstein said.

But Holstein warned that it was too early to write off the tax cut as ineffective—it could still help in the coming months.

V-shaped recovery

The retail picture was a bit brighter over the past 12 months. On the year, retail sales rose by 4.2 percent in real terms after an upwardly revised increase of 6.7 percent the previous month, the data showed. Compared with February, the month before the outbreak of the pandemic, retail sales were 0.9 percent higher in real terms in July, the office said, suggesting they managed to recover relatively quickly. In the first seven months of the year, retailers increased their sales by 2.6 percent in real terms despite the crisis.

The data revealed huge gaps within the sector. Sales in goods selling textiles, clothes, shoes and leather goods collapsed by more than a quarter in the January-July period. Online retailers increased their sales by a fifth. The German economy contracted by a record 9.7 percent in the second quarter as household spending, company investment and trade all collapsed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whiteside said. "We have always been a champion for the right item at the right price, but now it's more than that. We have the right shopping solutions at the right time, too."

The launch of Walmart+ comes as the global retail giant has teamed with Microsoft in an effort to acquire TikTok, the Chinese-owned short-form video app that has come under fire from President Donald Trump. The app has been at the center of a diplomatic storm between Washington and Beijing since Trump signed an executive order on August 6 giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance.

Big e-commerce push

Shares of Walmart jumped 6.3 percent to \$147.59 to become the biggest gainer in the Dow. Walmart+ replaces the retail giant's "Delivery Unlimited" subscription service that offered home delivery of more than 160,000 items. It is the latest step in the major ramp-up into e-commerce, propelled by Walmart's 2016 purchase of Jet.com for \$3.3 billion, and billions of dollars in additional investment to develop smartphone applications, revamp supply chains and roll out curbside pickup of groceries and other items at thousands of US stores.

The new service also will provide members with discounts of up to five cents a gallon at Walmart gasoline stations. And it offers a "scan and go" feature that lets consumers pay for items by scanning

Affairs, said the appointment of a team of auditors followed a probe ordered by President Muhammadu Buhari in October.

Akpabio, himself under parliamentary scrutiny for alleged graft, said the auditors would examine projects approved by the NDDC over the last 19 years. "Through this exercise, we will know the amount of monies that have gone into the region in the last 19 years and whether the value we have received so far are commensurate with the monies that have entered into NDDC," he said.

In a public hearing last month, NDDC head Kemebradikumo Pondei fainted while being questioned by lawmakers. Despite sitting on Nigeria's multi-billion-dollar oil and gas riches, the Niger delta remains impoverished and under-developed, sparking militant unrest in the early 2000s.

At the time, attacks on oil facilities reduced Nigeria's oil output to one-third, hurting revenue. Africa's largest crude producer and exporter depends on the oil sector for a huge chunk of government revenues and about 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings.

Abandoned projects

In southern Bayelsa state, broken promises are clear to see as construction sites abandoned by NDDC contractors litter the landscape. Partially-finished projects to protect the shoreline and build link roads to remote communities are deserted.

An eight-kilometer (five-mile) route was supposed to reach Ogbia, the home area of former

the pandemic was having on research and development spending, but there were clear indications that "money to fund innovation is drying up around the world." The impact will be felt very unevenly, he said. Fresh start-ups and start-up companies requiring long-term research and development investment, or based in developing countries, were likely to suffer the worst.

"This is not a very good scene at all," Gurry said. He called on governments to broaden their support, urging them to recognize that innovative and new ideas will be vital to exiting the pandemic and recovering through the post-Covid-19 era. Gurry's comments came as the UN agency published its annual ranking of the world's most innovative countries, with Switzerland topping the list for the 10th year running. But the data in the Global Innovation Index 2020, which WIPO compiles along with Cornell University and the INSEAD business school, was gathered before the onset of the pandemic. —AFP



BERLIN: German retail sales fell unexpectedly in July, data showed yesterday, dashing hopes that household spending in Europe's largest economy can drive a strong recovery in the third quarter from the coronavirus shock. —Reuters

The government on Tuesday revised upwards its 2020 forecast for the economy to shrink by 5.8 percent this year from a previous estimate

of -6.3 percent. But this would still represent the biggest economic slump since World War Two. —Reuters

Walmart unveils subscription plan to challenge Amazon

NEW YORK: The battle for online supremacy is on as Walmart announced Tuesday the coming launch of a membership program that provides free delivery as the world's biggest retailer takes direct aim at e-commerce behemoth Amazon. The long-discussed Walmart+ will start September 15, charging \$98 annually or \$12.95 a month to provide free delivery as soon as the same day along with discounts on fuel and other features.

The service will compete with Amazon's "Prime" program, which offers free delivery within two days with a comparably-priced subscription that also provides free and premium-priced video and entertainment offerings. Walmart's announcement highlighted the need to meet consumer needs in a fast-evolving economy especially amid the upheaval caused by the coronavirus pandemic that has fueled a surge in tech adaptations for the work- and shop-at-home world.

"Life feels more complicated than ever. Walmart+ is designed to make it easier-giving customers an option not to have to sacrifice on cost or convenience," Walmart chief customer officer Janey

Nigerian oil agency under scrutiny

WARRI, Nigeria: Investigators are looking for billions of dollars in missing or stolen funds from a Nigerian agency created to develop the oil-rich but impoverished Niger delta. Like the rest of the nation's opaque oil sector, officials say the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), based in the southern oil city of Port Harcourt, has been a pit of corruption and mismanagement since its establishment 20 years ago. Nine states in the oil region rake in trillions of naira (billions of dollars) every year thanks to huge payments mandated from the central government and oil majors.

To date, over 12,000 projects have been approved for the commission, but only a fraction have been executed, a recent parliamentary probe revealed. This year alone, more than \$1 billion naira (\$215 million, 180 million euros) have been allegedly misappropriated by officials and contractors, with some believed to have been spent on international flights and training while the nation's airspace was shut due to the coronavirus pandemic. Last month, the government approved auditors led by Ernst & Young to examine the finances of the agency.

Godswill Akpabio, the minister for Niger Delta

Pandemic 'drying up' innovation funds: UN

GENEVA: The coronavirus pandemic is expected to take a heavy toll on funding for innovation and may well accelerate the shift in research towards Asia, the United Nations said yesterday.

"The great risk... is that innovation expenditures and the means to finance innovation will spiral downwards as the global economy grinds to something of a halt," Francis Gurry, the head of the UN's World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), told reporters in a virtual briefing.

He said no figures were available yet on the impact



In this file photo a Walmart logo is seen outside a store in Washington, DC. Walmart said it will soon launch a long-discussed membership program to provide free delivery and compete directly with Amazon's popular "Prime" service. —AFP

them with a smartphone application for a "quick, easy, touch-free payment experience," Walmart said on its website.

A successful acquisition of TikTok with Microsoft could open up additional possibilities, allowing Walmart a marketing platform with TikTok users, who tend to be younger shoppers who turn to the internet for lifestyle trends and are not generally big Walmart consumers. —AFP



Nine Nigerian states in the oil region rake in trillions of naira (billions of dollars) every year thanks to huge payments mandated from the central government and oil majors.

president Goodluck Jonathan. The project was awarded in 2013 to a company owned by a cousin of the former president but never completed.

Community leaders are upset that well-connected contractors, mostly from the region, are abandoning sites after collecting huge sums. "I cannot tell of a project that has been completed by NDDC in this community even though we have a series of such projects," Duateki Oriango-Oruwari told AFP.

"For those of us residing in the riverine regions, we experience coastal erosion every day." —AFP

Nigeria says can tap mineral wealth despite virus, unrest

ABUJA: Nigeria aims to have 50 mines in operation by 2023 and can make up for time lost because of the impact of COVID-19 on development of the nascent sector, the country's mining minister said in an interview. Africa's largest oil producer is banking on mining to diversify its income and revive its finances following a collapse in crude prices, which earlier this year hit two-decade lows.

"The pandemic has slowed things down, but we can still catch up," Minister of Mines Olamilekan Adegbite said. Nigeria hopes mining will grow tenfold in five years

Trump still wants US to get piece of any TikTok sale

SAN FRANCISCO: President Donald Trump on Tuesday repeated his demand for a piece of the action from any sale of TikTok's US operations for forcing such a deal. TikTok has been at the center of a diplomatic storm between Washington and Beijing, and Trump gave Americans a deadline to stop doing business with TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance—effectively compelling a sale of the app to a US company.

"Well, I told them that they have until September 15th to make a deal: after that, we close it up in this country," Trump told journalists. "And I said that the United States has to be compensated—well compensated—because we are the ones that are making it possible, and so we should be compensated."

Critics have slammed Trump's call for the US government to get a cut of the deal, contending that it appears unconstitutional and akin to extortion. The owner of popular video app TikTok vowed to "strictly abide" by new export rules in China which could potentially complicate a sale of the business as demanded by Trump.

New Chinese rules

China's commerce ministry last week published new rules that added "civilian use" to a list of technologies that are restricted for export. The move marked the first time China has adjusted its list of technologies subject to export bans or restrictions since 2008, adding 23 new items.

The new regulations could make it more difficult for ByteDance to sell the wildly popular video app, which features clips of everything from dance routines and hair-dye tutorials to jokes about daily life and politics. Walmart has confirmed joined forces with Microsoft in negotiations to buy TikTok. Oracle is also reported to be interested in TikTok.

CEO Kevin Mayer last week quit the company, days after TikTok filed a lawsuit challenging the crackdown by the US government. TikTok—which has been downloaded 175 million times in the US and more than a billion times around the world—argued in the suit that Trump's order was a misuse of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act because the platform is not "an unusual and extraordinary threat."

Trump claims that TikTok could be used by China to track the locations of federal employees, build dossiers on people for blackmail and conduct corporate espionage. TikTok—used by as many as a billion people worldwide to make quirky, short-form videos on their cellphones—has repeatedly denied sharing data with Beijing. —AFP

to account for 3 percent of the economy and that Nigeria can process as well as mine, which generates increased profits compared with shipping raw minerals. In particular, he said Nigeria aimed to process barite, used in drilling for oil and gas, and sell it to countries such as Ghana and South Africa, which need the mineral to exploit new oil discoveries. In common with other African countries, Nigeria is also seeking to formalize artisanal mining, which could generate tax and royalties from gold. Adegbite said Nigeria was encouraging small-scale miners to form cooperatives and sell at government-buying centres, where prices are closer to global values than those illegal buyers offer. While oil prices have been weak because of the impact of the pandemic on movement and industry, which has curbed fuel demand, gold in August hit record highs. A problem for Nigeria is that its gold lies mostly in the northwest, where, humanitarian organizations say it has helped to fuel violence attributed to armed groups. —Reuters

Business

Trading for food: Online bartering soars in lockdown-hit Philippines

Virus curbs send economy plunging into a deep recession

MANILA: Struggling to make ends meet, Lorraine Imperio swapped a pair of Nike slip-on shoes for a whole dressed chicken on an online bartering site, one of dozens that have sprouted up during the Philippines' virus lockdowns. With millions stripped of their jobs and many forced to stay home to slow the coronavirus spread, Filipinos have flocked to Facebook groups to exchange their possessions, including kitchen appliances, children's toys and designer handbags—mostly for food.

"It's so difficult nowadays. You don't know where you'll get the money to settle the bills for groceries," said Imperio, a mother of two whose husband works part-time at a doughnut shop in Manila.

His hours have been slashed because of the pandemic and he now only earns about 9,000 pesos (\$185) a month, half of which is used to pay the rent for the family's apartment. Online bartering groups have provided a lifeline to the Imperios and other Filipinos hit hard by the country's months-long virus restrictions that started in March and have sent the economy plunging into a deep recession.

At least 98 groups, some with tens of thousands of members, are operating across the archipelago, according to an AFP tally. Nearly all of them started during the pandemic as many Filipinos resorted to the ancient trading practice to feed their families.

Google search volume in the Philippines for the keywords "barter food" soared 300 percent in May from April, iPrice Group found in a recent study, as lockdowns squeezed household budgets and made travelling about difficult. Its analysis of 85 popular Facebook barter groups, with more than two million

members in total, found food and other groceries were among the most sought-after items. People post photos and specifications of the goods they want to swap, indicate what they want in return and then negotiate via the comments section.

After successfully bartering baby bottles that she no longer needed, Imperio swapped a baby's down jacket and a Ralph Lauren hoodie for six kilograms (13 pounds) of rice. While the Nike slip-on shoes were traded for a chicken, a second pair has not had any takers after three weeks. "Old items are more difficult to sell," the 28-year-old said. "With bartering, it's easier to convert them into food."

Swapping to survive

Jocelle Batapa Sigue launched Bacolod Barter Community four months ago out of frustration at not being able to go shopping and a desire to help others. Her husband held the family's only quarantine travel pass, which people were required to carry when they left their homes during the lockdown.

"It's difficult for me to get what I want when I tell my husband to buy it," said Sigue, who is a lawyer in the central city of Bacolod. The group has more than 230,000 members with more joining every day, she said. Sigue estimates thousands of items—from shampoo and birthday cakes to mobile phones and eyeliner—change hands on her site daily.

"Without the pandemic, I don't think the barter community would be popular," she said. An estimated 5.2 million Filipino families had experienced "hunger due to lack of food to eat" at least once in the previous three months—the highest in nearly six years, a



MANILA: Lorraine Ann Imperio browsing her computer as she prepares to barter goods online in Las Pinas City, suburban Manila.—AFP

survey in early July by pollster Social Weather Stations showed. But it is not just cash-strapped people bartering their belongings. Others are taking the chance to dispose of goods they no longer need after quarantine measures upended normal life.

Chona de Vega, 57, traded her hair-straightener and electric kettle for a bag of groceries and now plans to dispose of her iron. "I have no use for it," said de Vega, who lives in Manila and spends most of her time at home because of travel restrictions.

Charles Ramirez, who runs a 14,000-member bartering site in the capital, said a "big percentage" of his group live in poverty and mostly ask for groceries. "People are realizing that while they have no money, they have accumulated a lot of material things (they can swap)," said Ramirez, who set up his group in May after losing his job as a grocery wholesaler. "It's a depressing feeling, of course, having to let go of things you have accumulated just to be able to survive." —AFP



Millions stripped of jobs

UK house prices surge to new high, Nationwide says

LONDON: British house prices leapt to hit an all-time high in August, mortgage lender Nationwide said yesterday, adding to signs of a sharp rebound in the country's housing market after the coronavirus lockdown. Prices jumped by 2.0 percent from July, the biggest month-on-month increase since 2004 and far outstripping the median forecast for an increase of 0.5 percent in a Reuters poll of economists.

Nationwide said prices were 3.7 percent higher than a year earlier. The Reuters poll had pointed to a 2.0 percent annual increase. "House prices have now reversed the losses recorded in May and June and are at a new all-time high," Robert Gardner, Nationwide's chief economist, said.

The COVID-19 lockdown had prompted people to rethink the kind of home they want to live in as well as creating pent-up demand, Gardner said. Home-buyers have also been given an incentive by British finance minister Rishi Sunak, who cut a tax for house purchases in July as he sought to spark the broader economy which shrank by a record 20.4 percent in the April-June period.

Other measures of the housing market have pointed to bounce-back too. Data published on Tuesday by the Bank of England showed mortgage approvals rose unexpectedly strongly in July. "However, most forecasters expect labour market conditions to weaken significantly in the quarters ahead as a result of the after-effects of the pandemic and as government support schemes wind down," Gardner said.

"If this comes to pass, it would likely dampen housing activity once again in the quarters ahead."

Sunak has shunned calls to extend his huge, state-funded job retention scheme which is being wound down and is due to expire at the end of October. Economists expect a sharp rise in unemployment in the coming months. Nationwide said the average price of a home hit 224,123 pounds (\$299,876) in August, up from just under 170,000 pounds 10 years ago. —Reuters

Global reforestation drive grows fast as govts grasp benefits

KUALA LUMPUR: The world's largest reforestation push, now almost a decade old, has beaten its 2020 target, as countries use their pledges to tackle national priorities including job creation, food security and cli-

Jazeera Airways: 10 destinations to India from KD 30 one way

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways yesterday announced its lowest fares yet to 10 destinations in India, starting from KD 30 one way. The fares are valid to fly anytime between September 4 and 30, and to Kochi, Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Jaipur, Vijayawada,

Amritsar, Mangalore.

Customers can book from September 1 on the website jazeeraairways.com, the Jazeera App or by calling the customer service at 177. Jazeera Airways has taken every safety and precautionary measure on its aircraft and Terminal 5 to ensure passengers fly safely.

Passengers must check-in online and download their boarding pass on the Jazeera App or print it from the website, and are mandated to wear face masks and gloves at all times throughout their journey. Social distancing is in operation throughout Jazeera Terminal 5.



The future of racing eSports: From safety car to cybersecurity

By Alexander Moiseev

Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the overall economic downturn, a number of industries have managed to thrive - one of them is eSports. While all the major live sporting events have been postponed in the interest of public safety, and most likely will not be held anytime soon, for millions of sports fans online tournaments have become the only way to get their fix. Even the world's fastest and most expensive spectator sport, Formula 1, went online to replace the postponed Grand Prix Series with virtual races. These digital competitions, where the F1 stars are competing alongside special guests, are being broadcast live on multiple platforms - from Facebook to Twitch, attracting hundreds of thousands of viewers.

Some rightly say that without traditional elements of racing - like the smell of burning rubber or champagne celebrations, it's not the same real-life Formula 1. Nevertheless, the growing popularity of virtual races shows that it's not a deal breaker of any sort.

In general, the eSports industry has been booming for years anyway, cementing itself in popular culture. The total eSports viewership in 2019 was estimated to be around 454 million people. It is expected to grow at a nine percent compound annual growth rate and to double within the next six years. But the current pandemic can help the audience numbers surge even faster than expected.

eMotorsport

Meanwhile, motorsport is one of a very limited number of sports with a truly global appeal - for instance, the fanbase of Formula 1 exceeds half a billion people, representing all corners of the planet. At the same time, offline and virtual motorsport is now more interconnected than ever - F1 racers are competing in online challenges and eSportsmen are becoming legitimate

mate change, researchers said yesterday.

The Bonn Challenge - launched in 2011 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Germany - aims for 150 million hectares (371 million acres) of degraded forest land to be under restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. Already, 61 nations, eight states in Brazil, Mexico and Pakistan, and five environmental groups have made non-binding commitments to restore more than 210 million hectares, about six times the size of Germany, according to an IUCN progress report.

Stewart Maginnis, global director of IUCN's

stars with a solid fan base and sponsorship contracts.

Just some 10 years ago, if someone said they considered a career in eSports, no one would have taken them seriously. Now, however, stories of people earning millions of dollars in virtual competitions are not uncommon. It's difficult to tell what races, classic or virtual, will eventually be more popular - all options are on the table. But the popularity of online races will continue to grow, attracting new followers and luring existing racing fans. According to a Nielsen survey, 43 percent of motorsport fans are "interested or very interested" in eSports. Moreover, the appeal of virtual motorsport is being supported by the generational change and the way youngsters consume information. Both Millennials and Generation Z surely appreciate the playful side of the experience offered by tech.

Nevertheless, the growing popularity of eSports doesn't just open up the entertainment sector but also leads to new challenges as the ecosystem of virtual competitions relies on a huge IT infrastructure. The question of immunity for eSport networks is crucial for both players and eSport organizations. And the more the industry thrives - the more vital these questions will become.

Where is the safety car?

Ten years ago Kaspersky entered Formula 1. A first in the industry, we partnered with a leader of racing - Scuderia Ferrari, and we've since built a strong and proven partnership with the legendary carmaker. Since then we have provided Ferrari with cyber-immunity and Kaspersky's world-class infrastructure protection. This reaches more than 5,000 Ferrari endpoints and systems globally, including the factory in Maranello and Ferrari's infrastructure at F1 circuits around the world.

And cybersecurity is not new for the gaming industry. Alongside widespread threats online, gamers are also exposed to specific risks. The latter can include character and inventory theft via password-stealing malware or targeted phishing - the better your game character or account, the greater the chance that criminals will target you specifically to sell your valuable stuff on the gray market or demand a ransom. This is especially relevant for well-developed games with a ready-to-pay audience. As a reminder, the most expensive item ever sold in a game (that we know about) cost \$635,000.

Nature-based Solutions Group, said the challenge had proved successful because it was about "problem-solving", not just tree-planting. "Part of the secret sauce is that it has got a relevance to other parts of the economy and other sectors at national level." Swiss-based Maginnis told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

For every \$1 spent on forest restoration, at least \$9 of economic benefits are generated, said the report, estimating that nearly \$76 trillion could be gained each year from addressing land degradation. In 2019, tropical rainforests - whose preservation is considered crucial to curbing climate change - disappeared

Hackers often target gamers with fake game updates or utilities claiming to customize your game or help speed up your progress. Malicious apps can be spread through in-game communication, as attachments on gamers' forums or chat rooms, and in exceptional cases even through legitimate game update mechanisms.

Some of that malware is game-oriented, stealing gamers' credentials or in-game goods, but some steal bank accounts; add the user's PC, Mac, or smartphone to a botnet; or even mines cryptocurrency.

eSafety first

The cases mentioned above are just a few varieties, which is why gamers should never forget about cyber-immunity for their devices. Time-proven and up-to-date security solutions are always the answer. Don't be afraid of the stereotype that "antiviruses affect PC processing capabilities" and, therefore, ruin the overall gaming experience. Of course, no one wants to lose momentum on their way to victory.

To avoid such sour situations Kaspersky's major household products have been updated to include Gaming Mode. When enabled, the application does not run scans and updates, nor does it show any notifications when another application is opened in full screen.

Yet there is more space for solutions to help gamers with continuous performance as well as protection of their profiles and whole gaming experience: from securing mobile broadcasting and streaming tools, to anti-cheat and VR/AR control management.

In March, within the Kaspersky Innovation Hub, we announced a global call for gaming startups, inviting all teams and individual projects to develop solutions on the edge of cybersecurity and eSports to participate in the challenge. With this project, we are looking forward to working jointly with the best tech-based initiatives on pilot projects, so we can enhance our technology and address security needs together with higher accuracy and efficiency. Nowadays, with the technological advances and growing interest from the public, global investors, brands and media, the future of eSports looks brighter than ever. But just like on the race track, safety rules in cyberspace must be taken really seriously to ensure that virtual competitions don't take an unexpected turn.

— Alexander Moiseev is Chief Business Officer of Kaspersky

at a rate of one football pitch every six seconds, according to data from monitoring service Global Forest Watch. Environmentalists say conserving existing forests and restoring damaged ones reduces the risk of flooding, stores more planet-warming carbon and protects biodiversity. Worldwide, there are about 5.5 billion hectares of forest. Countries that have pushed forward with their Bonn pledges recognize that natural solutions like forest restoration are key to meeting national policy goals such as cutting carbon emissions, and boosting land productivity and food security, said Maginnis.—Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

INTERNAL MEDICINE

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

- Diabetes Mellitus & thyroid dysfunction
- Stomach, colon & gastroenteritis
- Hypertension & high blood lipids
- High fever
- Asthma & chronic breathing conditions
- Chronic cough, rhinitis & sinusitis
- Diagnosing & treating sleep apnea
- Lung tumors & pulmonary tuberculosis
- Pulmonary fibrosis & sarcoidosis
- Urinary tract infections
- Blood conditions such as blood clot anemia & thrombocytopenia



1808088 taibahospital.com
@taibahospital

INTERNAL MEDICINE



Dr. Mohamed Bahzad
Consultant of Internal Medicine,
Respiratory & Intensive Care



Dr. Abdelsalam Al Najjar
Consultant of Internal Medicine,
Hematology & Medical Oncology



Dr. Walid Al Salim
Consultant of Internal Medicine



Dr. Michel Morris
Consultant of Internal Medicine



Dr. Yousif Bahbahani
Consultant of Internal Medicine,
Nephrology & Hypertension



Prof. Dr. Nabila Abdella
Consultant of Internal Medicine
& Diabetes



Dr. Hussain Bahbahani
Specialist of Internal Medicine
& Rheumatology



Dr. Naglaa Elwan
Internal Medicine Doctor



Dr. Abdelrahman Younis
Internal Medicine Doctor



1808088 taibahospital.com
@taibahospital

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abu Ali
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck,
Facial Plastic Surgeon.

Fellowship of the royal college
of surgeons in UK and Ireland.
10 years work experience in
Zain Hospital MOH Kuwait.
Is Head of ENT department in
Farsiyah Hospital MOH Kuwait.
10 years work experience in
UK and Ireland.

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



1 888 883
www.qmc-kuwait.com

qmcckuwait



Telephone: 1830003 Ext: 2400

alsalam.int.hospital

DR KHALED ALMERRI

Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

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



To advertise on this Page

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

HADI CLINIC
Ophthalmology Services

Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Cataract Surgery, Glaucoma, Retina, General Ophthalmology, Follow-Up All Treatments

Follow us on social media @hadclinicw

Tel: 1828282
Whatsapp Ua
+965-6000 2184

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

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

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

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

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

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

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

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

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

SHARQ, Ahmad Allaber st., Building 6a, Floor 13.
Tel.: (+965) 22060777
@fahadbuhaimeed, @renovabb, @dardonsabb
Email: drfahad@beautybeyond.com.kw
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

DR. WALEED S. BUHAIMEED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele: 1802 555

daralshifa



French counterpart Emmanuel Macron (left) and Lebanese diva Fairuz



Unmasked Macron meets legendary Lebanese singer **Fairuz**

French President Emmanuel Macron met the legendary Lebanese singer Fairuz on Monday on his second visit to Lebanon after the devastating explosion at the Beirut port last month. Fairuz, born Nouhad Haddad, is one of the most celebrated singers in the Middle East, and has sung of love, of Lebanon, and of the Palestinian cause. Many see the 85-year-old artist as a symbol of unity, amidst the disastrous aftermath of the 4 August port blast which claimed the lives of at least 190 people and left over 300,000 displaced.

Macron awarded the iconic singer with the Legion of Honor, the highest official honor in France, as a tribute to her from the French people

and to commemorate her commitment to Lebanon. Macron's second visit to Beirut comes as he presses for a new government and rebuilding of the city following the deadly blast. After his visit, Macron told the press that he is committed to ensuring that reforms and change take place. "I made a commitment to her, as I make a commitment to you here tonight, to do everything so that reforms are implemented and that Lebanon receives better. I promise you. I won't leave you," he said. Following the visit, many people took to social media to share photos of the meeting. For some, it represented hope, whereas others were more cynical of the meeting.

Many also drew attention to the French president not wearing a mask, particularly as the meeting comes at a time where Lebanon is struggling to deal with a surge in coronavirus cases. Fairuz wore a face shield during the meeting. After meeting with UN representatives and aid groups, Macron said that he is ready to host an aid conference for Lebanon next month, after visiting the country and meeting with survivors. —www.middleeasteye.com



Lebanese diva Fairuz

Venice Film Festival opens despite pandemic

The Venice Film Festival opened yesterday with strict safety measures in place for the industry's first international competition since the coronavirus hit, with 18 films vying to grab the top prize and help movie buffs forget the pandemic for a while. At yesterday's opening film, "Lacri" by Italian director Daniele Luchetti, the theatre was just half full with journalists, whose temperatures were taken before being allowed inside.

Film Festival. "We feel a responsibility to be the first. We knew Venice will be sort of a test for everyone," he said. For the past few months across the globe, most film production remained on hold and movie theatres dark due to the coronavirus.

Fewer stars, less glitz

About 6,000 people are expected to turn out this year-about half the festival's usual number-as border restrictions around the globe have limited the ability of many to travel. Most of Hollywood's A-list will be no-shows, with Australian actress Cate Blanchett supplying this year's star power as president of the jury. "It's a festival without stars because Hollywood is still in lockdown," Barbera told AFP. "Will there be less glamour? Yes. Will there be fewer stars on the red carpet? Certainly. "But there will be so many good films, 65 from 50 different countries, a sign of the richness and variety of contemporary cinema."

Eighteen films in the main competition will vie for the festival's top prize, the prestigious Golden Lion. Provided it was done safely, it was now time for film lovers to be back in theatre seats, Barbera said. "We're tired of seeing films in streaming," he said. Organizers are hoping they can safely run the festival-due to go on until September 12 — despite coronavirus cases on the rise in Italy and neighboring European countries. In one of the most radical changes, fans will no longer be allowed on the red carpet, where in past years they've pressed behind barriers hoping to get a photo or autograph from their favorite celebrities. — AFP



Master of Ceremonies and sponsor of the 77th Venice Film Festival, Italian actress Anna Foglietta waves outside the Excelsior Hotel on the opening day of the festival yesterday.

On the eve of the annual high-profile competition on the Lido, dozens of red safety signs were unloaded and installed throughout the venue attested to the peculiarity of this year's event. "Anti-Covid-19 rules of conduct," read the bright, vertical signs. "Wear a face mask. Keep a safe distance. Wash your hands." The sound of drills pierced the warm beach-front air as workers went about their last-minute preparations and journalists-all in masks-wandered the freshly laid red carpet, their festival badges suspended from their necks. "This year in Venice, they've confused the festival with the Carnival. We're at a masked ball," one Italian journalist quipped to his colleagues.

One exception was Festival Director Alberto Barbera, tanned and mask-free, as he gave interviews on the red carpet about the importance of this year's festival. "I'm excited and I'm a little bit anxious," acknowledged Barbera, neatly turned out in a pressed blue suit despite the heat. In May, Barbera made the high-stakes decision to go ahead with "La Mostra"-now in its 77th year-despite film festivals around the world opting to cancel, including Venice's French rival, the Cannes



US model Taylor Marie Hill poses at the pier of the Excelsior Hotel on the opening day of the 77th Venice Film Festival, yesterday.



(From left) Director of the International Film Festival Karlovy Vary, Karel Och, Director of the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Vanja Kaludjercic, Director of the San Sebastian International Film Festival, Jose Luis Rebordinos, Director of the Locarno Film Festival, Lili Hinstin, Director of the Cannes International Film Festival, Thierry Fremaux and Director of the Venice Film Festival, Alberto Barbera pose during a photocall of artistic directors of the principal European film festivals, yesterday on the opening day of the 77th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido, during the COVID-19 infection, caused by the novel coronavirus. — AFP photos



This handout photo taken in Seoul yesterday and provided by Big Hit Entertainment shows K-pop group BTS members posing for a photo as they hold an online global media day. — AFP

After blowing up Billboard chart, K-pop colossus BTS eyes Grammys 'Dynamite'

Fresh from scoring Korea's first-ever no. 1 hit on the main U.S. Billboard music chart, K-pop juggernaut BTS yesterday set its sights on a standalone performance at next year's Grammy Awards - and maybe a trophy or two. Since its 2013 debut, the seven-member South Korean boy band has surfed the global K-pop craze to dizzying heights. On Monday it landed top spot in the Billboard Hot 100 chart with breezy disco hit "Dynamite", a first all-English language single that's been lapped up by mainstream U.S. pop fans. For BTS, the global smash - with a YouTube video that's already racked up 275 million views - raises hopes of glory at the Grammys - the band performed there earlier this year alongside rapper Lil Nas X, but has never been nominated for an award.

"The Grammys is the place that all artists would dream of, and we're hoping that we will be able to stage our own performance, secure nominations and if possible, win an award," said band leader and rapper RM, 25, speaking alongside his bandmates during an online news conference yesterday. Members said the Billboard achievement still didn't "feel real", lamenting being unable to celebrate it with fans as the coronavirus pandemic prompted them to cancel a scheduled world tour.

"All the performances and concerts we had always held have now become a dream," said RM, whose real name is Kim Nam-joon. "But we still want to do an outdoor show some day, inviting many

people and throwing a festival at a big square." BTS boasts an extensive global fanbase, collectively called 'ARMY', who together with the band have been active on social media supporting social and humanitarian campaigns, as well as raising more than \$1 million in funds for the Black Lives Matter movement.

"Dynamite" notched 33.9 million U.S. streams and 300,000 sales in its first week, according to Nielsen Music data. BTS also scored the biggest digital sales week in nearly three years, the numbers showed. While the group's introspective 2018 album "Love Yourself: Tear" was aimed at showing fans how the young stars dealt with and overcame doubts and fears, the new single was designed to give energy to fans who might be grappling with coronavirus gloom, the band said.

"Everyone should join hands to help fight the pandemic, in which lifting people's spirits is vital," said vocalist Jimin. "What we should and can do is to give a bit of comfort and refresh them, that's another goal of ours," the 24-year-old said. As BTS basks in its success, the group's management label, Big Hit Entertainment, meanwhile said later yesterday it plans to raise up to 962.6 billion won (\$811 million) in an initial public offering of shares expected in October. — Reuters

Erick Morillo, DJ behind the hit 'I Like to Move It,' dies at 49

Erick Morillo, the DJ known for the nineties-era smash "I Like to Move It," was found dead Tuesday in Miami Beach. He was 49 years old. Police responded to a 911 call Tuesday morning, a spokesperson told AFP, who said detectives did not observe "apparent signs of foul play." Morillo died just days before he was due in court for a sexual battery charge. The Miami-Dade Medical Examiner's Office will determine the cause of death, police said.

Born in 1971 in New York and raised between Colombia and New Jersey, Morillo became known under the pseudonym Reel 2 Real and dropped the hit "I Like to Move It" in 1993. The song was a collaboration with the Trinidadian singer The Mad Stuntman-born Mark Quashie-and became an iconic Eurodance song with ragga vocals, a sub-



In this file photo taken on April 15, 2011, DJ Erick Morillo performs during Day 1 of the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival 2011 held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California. — AFP

genre of dancehall and reggae. A massive hit particularly across Europe, the song had a resurgence in 2005 when it was featured in the animated film "Madagascar" featuring Ben Stiller, Chris Rock and Jada Pinkett Smith. Following the dissolution of Reel 2 Real, Morillo had a successful DJ career under a number of pseudonyms, and was known particularly for his contributions to the house genre.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features



This photo shows performer Kanta Nakamori (left) and his son Kennosuke Nakamori putting on masks as they take part in a rehearsal at the Kamakura Noh Theatre in the town of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, about one hour southwest of Tokyo.



Masks displayed at the Kamakura Noh Theatre in the town of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, about one hour southwest of Tokyo. — AFP Photos

CAN JAPAN'S ANCIENT NOH THEATRE SURVIVE CORONAVIRUS?

Kennosuke Nakamori's sonorous voice fills a small room as he practices the lines of a traditional Japanese Noh play, even though he hasn't performed before a live audience in months. He moves gracefully as he rehearses the studied movements associated with the ancient art, but his serene exterior belies deep worries about the future of Noh. The coronavirus pandemic has shuttered theatres across Japan, and while other traditional art forms can rely on generous private backers or state subsidies, Noh depends heavily on staging shows.



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori posing for a photo after an interview with AFP.

dies for performances, but Nakamori says social distancing measures mean theatres must be half-empty for shows, so even with subsidies staging performances is a losing financial prospect. "The more you perform on stage, the bigger the losses will be," he said. "We need subsidies that compensate us when we cannot hold shows."

Ancient roots

Noh's roots date back as far as the eighth century, but the plays performed today were largely developed around Japan's Muromachi period from 1336-1573. The art, which is on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, combines dance, music and drama in a minimalist approach that sets it apart from the more elaborate sets, makeup and costumes of Kabuki. Actors wear wooden masks and traditional kimonos, sliding along the stage in white split-toe tabi socks. The plays are performed almost exclusively by male actors, who deliver lines in low, extended tones that can be difficult for modern audiences to understand.

They are accompanied by drummers and flutists on stages traditionally made from cypress wood and adorned with a single painted pine tree on the back wall. Even before the pandemic, audiences for Noh were shrinking and fewer young people undertook the intensive training required. Japan's other major theatre form Kabuki can count on backing from

major entertainment and film company Shochiku, which began running all major Kabuki shows in 1929. And other art forms, like Bunraku puppetry, are heavily funded by the government. "We work as individual freelancers so it's a problem that there's no funding for us," said Nakamori's father Kanta, 59, who passed the art down to his son.

Genjiro Okura, who plays the small kotsuzumi drum used in Noh, has been hailed a national treasure by the government in recognition of his talents. But that hasn't protected the 62-year-old from the crisis. "We've been pushed into a tough situation," said Okura, who went four months without a single performance. Noh artists often supplement their income by teaching amateurs, but that too has dried up. "There are older people who learn Noh as a hobby but many quit due to the virus," Okura said.

Attracting new fans

While some artists have tried to adapt to lockdowns by streaming performances online, Nakamori fears Noh doesn't lend itself well to the medium because of its stripped-back nature. "If it's live, with chants from musicians and powerful songs from performers, the audience doesn't get bored," he said. "But it's hard to feel that with videos." Concerned about the future of Noh, Nakamori and his father have launched a crowdfunding campaign to cover their expected losses for shows they hope to stage in the autumn. They are also raising ticket prices and soliciting donations in return for Noh-related gifts.

And despite some reservations, they plan to try streaming some performances and charging for them. Noh performers need to "think of ways to make their shows profitable," Kanta said. "We'll need to create new attractions and make efforts to attract new fans," he said. He hopes that online interest might even bring in new fans, though he remains wary about the virus, particularly the risks of an infection cluster at a theatre. Given Noh's century's of history, he is hopeful "its charm won't wane that easily." His son worries nonetheless that economic downturn may push arts down the list of priorities for the government. "But Noh is part of Japanese traditional arts and we have to protect it," he said. — AFP



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori posing with a red wig, or "akagashira", after an interview with AFP.



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori taking part in a rehearsal at the Kamakura Noh Theatre.



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori posing for a photo with a costume after an interview with AFP.

With audiences and performers already dwindling even before the pandemic, some in the industry fear the virus may sound the death knell for an art considered one of the oldest extant theatre forms in the world. "There are many performers who have stopped doing shows" due to the coronavirus, 33-year-old Nakamori told AFP at his family's theatre in the coastal city of Kamakura, near Tokyo. "How many shows can we do during the pandemic... and can we earn a living? This is a big problem," he sighed. In some ways, Noh faces the same crisis as other arts around the world affected by coronavirus.

But while some governments are pumping money into performing arts, Noh actors say they are seeing little state support and what they have been offered is impractical. There are government subsi-



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori taking part in a rehearsal at the Kamakura Noh Theatre in the town of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, about one hour southwest of Tokyo.



Performer Kanta Nakamori (left) and his son Kennosuke Nakamori putting on masks as they take part in a rehearsal.



Performer Kennosuke Nakamori putting on the "hannya" mask as he takes part in a rehearsal.

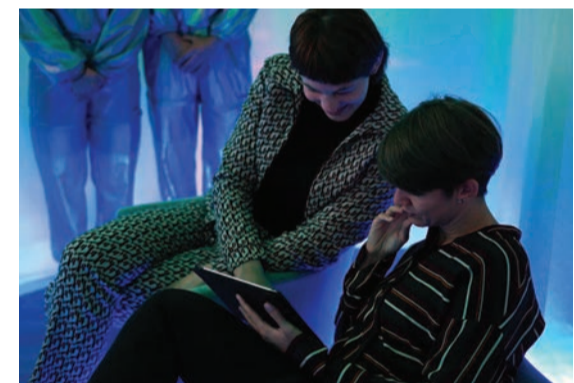
'Fake' Rembrandt might be real, says UK museum

A painting dismissed as a Rembrandt copy and kept in storage at a British university museum, does come from the Dutch master's studio, the institution said on Monday. "Head of a Bearded Man" was bequeathed to the Ashmolean in Oxford in 1951 and was originally classified as one of the 17th century painter's early works. But experts rejected it as a copy in 1982 and it was put into storage. The museum, which is running a "Young Rembrandt" exhibition until November 1, called in tree-ring dating expert Peter Klein to determine the date of the wood used on the panel. The dendrochronologist established it came from the same tree used for Rembrandt's "Andromeda Chained to the Rocks" and Jan Lievens' "Portrait of Rembrandt's Mother".



An undated handout photograph released by Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford shows the painting 'Head of a Bearded Man'. — AFP

Both were painted in about 1630 when they were working in Leiden, in the Netherlands. "The Ashmolean's 'Head of a Bearded Man' was painted on a panel which came from an oak tree in the Baltic region felled between 1618 and 1628," said Klein. "Allowing a minimum of two years for the seasoning of the wood, we can firmly date the portrait to 1620-30." Museum curator An Van Camp called the discovery "incredibly exciting" and said the work would now go on display alongside other works from the same period. Further investigation will be carried out after the show ends to determine whether Rembrandt himself painted it, as touches of paint had been added by an unknown hand. —AFP



Jennifer van Exel and her partner Frouke Engel use a tablet to select the characteristics of their cyborg baby as part of the "IVF-X: Become a digital parent now!" art installation by Dutch visual artist Victorine van Alphen in VondelCS Cultural Centre, Amsterdam. — AFP

Couples design their own 'virtual babies' at Dutch art exhibit

Couples who want children of their own got a brief taste of parenthood by creating their own "digital babies" during a virtual reality art exhibit in the Netherlands. Visitors selected the baby's character traits, physical appearance and other features by answering questions on a computer tablet. They sat in sofas in a futuristic room with soft lighting and flowing drapes, which was all part of an installation called "IVFX: posthuman parenting in hybrid reality," created by Dutch visual artist Victorine van Alphen. "I had lots of deep, personal conversations that inspired me," Van Alphen said, including with people who wanted to have children but couldn't, someone who had lost a child and neighbours considering artificial insemination.

"There were lots of beautiful, inspiring conversations, anecdotes and background discussions that formed this strange, futuristic project," she said. "I kind of gave myself the 'mission impossible' to create a presence in virtual reality." Among the question was whether you would allow your artificial creation to reproduce. "It's definitely smart," said Jennifer van Exel, discussing the options with her partner Frouke Engel. Their choices were then used to form a computer generated infant - a pulsating pink creature in an incubator, which squealed and had a red glowing heartbeat. "I don't know if you can say it has a head. I am not sure other people will be able to relate to it," said van Exel, peering at the new life form through 3D goggles while singing a lullaby. "We're the parents, so obviously we created it and you want to be compassionate and loving, but it's nothing human so it's really hard to actually relate to it." — Reuters

Sports

Photo of the Day



Nasser Al-Attyyah races at the Qatar Cross Country Rally in Qatar. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Black Caps coach gets chance to avenge WCup loss in 2023

WELLINGTON: Black Caps coach Gary Stead's contract was extended to the 2023 World Cup yesterday giving the former Test batsman a chance to improve on his teams' "gut-wrenching" loss in the 2019 tournament.

New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White said Stead's reappointment followed a successful period for the Black Caps which has seen them reach number two in the Test rankings and three in one-dayers. "Winning an away Test series against Pakistan and a Test in Sri Lanka was a tremendous effort, as were the home Test series wins against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, England and India," he said.

"We had no hesitation, after going through quite a process, in extending his contract."

White also praised the conduct of the team under Stead, particularly after they reached the 2019 World Cup final but lost to England on a technicality after the scores were tied.

"To tie the World Cup final and miss out on winning the trophy through a countback was a gut-wrenching experience," he said. "But I think we can all agree on how well the team played during that campaign and, equally, how well they conducted themselves afterwards." Stead said it was "an honour and privilege" to be involved with the team.

"I was motivated to keep working with the team, I've still got a lot of energy and feel I can continue to offer something," he said.

White confirmed the New Zealanders expect to host a full season of cricket during the Kiwi summer, with tours involving Pakistan, the West Indies, Australia and Bangladesh. He said discussions were underway with health officials regarding quarantine arrangements and a fixture list should be finalised in the next fortnight. — AFP

Hafeez hails debutant Haider as Pakistan beat England

Moeen is a joy to watch, very elegant: Morgan

MANCHESTER: Veteran all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez praised teenage debutant Haider Ali's composure after the pair combined to set up Pakistan's five-run victory over England in their tour-ending third Twenty20 international at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

It was Pakistan's first victory in 66 days of being in a bio-secure bubble in England amid the coronavirus and meant they squared this three-match series at 1-1 after a 1-0 loss in last month's three-Test series.

Hafeez made 86 not out and Haider 54 in Pakistan's 190-4. There was a 20-year age gap between the 39-year-old Hafeez and the 19-year-old Haider but you would not have known it while they shared a stand of exactly 100 after coming together at 32-2.

Hafeez's knock followed his 69 in England's five-wicket win at Old Trafford on Sunday and was his fourth fifty in his last five T20 international innings. Haider came in at 2-1 after opener Fakhar Zaman was out for one but demonstrated a maturity well beyond his years during a 28-ball fifty featuring five fours and two sixes.

"He was good under pressure and just expressed himself," said player of the series Hafeez of Haider in a post-match interview with Sky Sports.

"I was just trying to back him every time, tell him 'you are playing well, continue like that,'" he added. "It is great to see youngsters coming from our system and performing well."

England were 69-4 in their chase before Moeen Ali, who should have been stumped by former Pak-

istan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed on seven, revived their hopes with 61. But when veteran paceman Wahab Riaz, in for the injured Mohammad Amir, ran out Chris Jordan and then caught and bowled Moeen, England were 174-8 with seven balls left.

They needed 12 off two balls when Tom Curran hit a six. But Curran could not repeat the shot when paceman Haris Rauf bowled a last-ball yorker.

"We had a plan and achieved a total and then bowled very well," said Pakistan captain Babar Azam, the world's top-ranked Twenty20 batsman, who was out for 21 on Tuesday.

"Moeen played a superb knock but our bowlers did well to win the match," added Babar, who will remain in England to play for Somerset in the Twenty20 Blast.

Turning to the final over, Babar said: "I told the bowler (Rauf) to bowl yorkers. 'One ball he bowled a really bad ball (the one hit for six by Curran) but that is part of the game!'"

Meanwhile England captain Eoin Morgan was pleased by Moeen's return to form after the left-handed batsman had managed just 10 runs in his previous four white-ball international innings.

"Moeen is a joy to watch, very elegant," said Morgan. "For him to come out and almost be the cornerstone at the back-end of a victory was great." England suffered a setback just four balls into their chase when Jonny Bairstow was bowled for a duck by a superb yorker from left-arm quick Shaheen Afridi. Morgan, fresh from his 66 on Sunday, was run-

out for just 10 after a mix-up with Tom Banton. And when Banton was lbw for 46 to Rauf, England were 69-4 before Moeen threatened to deny Pakistan.

Haider, in after Moeen bowled Zaman, slog-swept his second ball in international cricket for six. Haider struck Lewis Gregory's first ball for an elegant, soaring, legside six before pulling him for four to become the first Pakistan batsman to score a fifty on his T20 international debut.

Hafeez's swept four off leg-spinner Adil Rashid saw him to a 31-ball fifty, including four sixes, before Haider was bowled by Jordan. — AFP



MANCHESTER: England's Adil Rashid (R) makes his ground during the international Twenty20 cricket match between England and Pakistan at Old Trafford cricket ground in Manchester, north-west England. —AFP

Australia's Smith taken aback by Root's T20 absence

SOUTHAMPTON: Australia star batsman Steve Smith believes England's "surprising" decision to omit Joe Root from the upcoming Twenty20 series between the two sides is a sign the hosts want to play an "all-out power" game.

Test captain Root has been left out of the squad for a three-match contest starting at Southampton on Friday even though the likes of Jason Roy and Ben Stokes are unavailable.

He has not featured, however, in the ongoing T20 series against Pakistan, where the likes of white-ball captain Eoin Morgan and Dawid Malan have been leading the way with the bat for the 50-over world champions. England national selector Ed Smith made clear Monday that Root was not currently in the country's best XI when it came to cricket's shortest international format, although he held out the hope the accomplished batsman could make his way into the squad

for next year's T20 World Cup in India.

There are those who believe there is still a place for Root's traditional batting skills even amid the power and innovation of T20 cricket and Australia have now recalled Smith, their leading Test batsman, into the Twenty20 side after a three-year absence from 2016-2019.

"It's a surprise. Joe is a terrific player across all formats of the game," Smith told Britain's Press Association news agency on Tuesday.

"I guess England are opting for all-out power and are continuing to go that way. Everyone's got different game-plans and different ways to go. If everyone played the same it would be a pretty boring game."

Smith was clear about his role in Australia's T20 top order. "I know if I'm batting with someone like Glenn Maxwell or Aaron Finch my role is to get them on strike and let them smack it," he said.

"For me it's about hitting gaps, sort of playing an anchor role and fixing things up if the big boys don't get out there and smack it." But Smith was adamant one role he was not coveting was that of Australia captain.

The former skipper is now eligible for the post again after completing a two-year ban from leadership positions imposed for his part in a 2018 ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

Smith, however, insisted he was happy to serve under Test captain Tim Paine and white-ball counterpart Aaron Finch. "The guys we've got are doing great jobs across the formats," he said.

"I'm pretty chilled at the moment doing what I'm doing, scoring as many runs as I can, fielding as well as I can and giving bits of advice here and there. I'm just enjoying it so there's no real thought from me (on captaincy)."

Smith was jeered relentlessly by home crowds during last year's World Cup and Ashes in England, but the advent of behind closed doors cricket in response to the coronavirus means there won't be any barrackers present during the T20s and the three one-day internationals that follow later in September.

"It's just a shame there's no crowds because we love entertaining and playing in front of people," said Smith. "We'll just do our bit, coming here to play some cricket, and hopefully there's plenty of viewers on TV, yelling abuse at it!"

"Sport, and particularly cricket, is such a big part of our culture in Australia and England. It's great we were able to get the pieces of the puzzle together for us to come over here and play this series to get our cricket up and running again... I'm certainly itching to get back into it." — AFP

UFC teams up with China to prepare athletes for Olympics

SHANGHAI: The Ultimate Fighting Championship will help train a range of Chinese Olympic athletes to get them in shape for next summer's delayed Tokyo Games and the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics under a deal announced yesterday. Although UFC-style mixed martial arts is not an Olympic sport, the US-based promotion has reached a "multi-year" agreement with the Chinese Olympic Committee allowing the country's best athletes to draw on UFC expertise and use its multimillion-dollar performance institute in Shanghai.

Zhang Weili, China's first and only UFC champion, is among those who have been using the facility since it opened in June 2019. China is a major growth market for the UFC.

Chinese Olympic athletes in a number of sports including swimming, cycling, speed skating and track and field have already been working with the UFC for the past 18 months, it said.

Chinese competitors will be able to tap into UFC's knowledge of strength and

conditioning, sports science, physical therapy and nutrition.

"UFC is proud to partner with the Chinese Olympic Committee and be a valuable resource for their athletes," said Kevin Chang, its Asia-Pacific senior vice-president. "UFC built this (Shanghai) facility to demonstrate its strong commitment to China and to serve elite-level athletes who want to develop their skills and achieve excellence in their respective sports." The Tokyo 2020 Games were shifted from this summer to next because of the coronavirus pandemic, meaning the Beijing Winter Games will come just six months later.

"We are delighted to work with the UFC and send elite athletes to the UFC Performance Institute Shanghai to take part in physical and recovery training," the Chinese Olympic committee said.

"We hope UFC's scientific training system provides help for Chinese athletes to prepare for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics and 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics." —AFP

Sports

Alex Dickerson's three homers help Giants rout Rockies 23-5

Plesac strong in return as Indians shred Royals

DENVER: Alex Dickerson had three home runs among his five hits and added six RBIs, and Brandon Crawford and Donovan Solano also drove in six runs each to lead the San Francisco Giants to a 23-5 win over the Colorado Rockies in Denver on Tuesday night. Dickerson tied Willie Mays' modern-day franchise record for total bases in a game with 16, as he added two doubles to his homer haul. Crawford finished with three hits, including a homer, and Solano had four hits in the rout. Brandon Belt and Joey Bart had three hits each, and Mauricio Dubon, Evan Longoria and Mike Yastrzemski each had two of the Giants' 27. San Francisco scored at least one run in the first eight innings, then was shut out in the ninth with Rockies catcher Drew Butera on the mound. Garrett Hampson hit two home runs for Colorado, which has lost four of five on its homestand.

TIGERS 12, BREWERS 1

Victor Reyes drove in a career-high five runs, including a two-run homer, and Detroit stretched its winning streak to six games by thrashing host Milwaukee. Christin Stewart smacked a solo homer and Willi Castro supplied two hits, two runs scored and an RBI. Grayson Greiner hit a two-run homer against position player Orlando Arcia, who pitched the ninth. Detroit has won eight of 10 to exceed the .500 mark. Tigers starter Michael Fulmer, who is on an innings limit, held the Brewers scoreless in three innings while striking out a season-high six batters. Daniel Norris (3-1) struck out five in 2 1/3 innings to get the victory.

MARLINS 3, BLUE JAYS 2

Starling Marte, making his Miami debut, slugged a solo homer to break a tie in the eighth inning, leading his new team to a victory over visiting Toronto, helping Miami — which still has the worst home record in the majors at 2-8 — get its first win at Marlins Park since Aug. 14. Marte, who was acquired from the Arizona Diamondbacks on Monday, homered on a 91 mph fastball from reliever Shun Yamaguchi (1-3). The drive traveled 438 feet to left center. James Hoyt (1-0) earned the win in relief for Miami. It was his third career victory and his first since 2017 with the Houston Astros. Marlins stand-out shortstop Miguel Rojas left the game in the seventh inning due to an apparent leg injury. He was replaced by Jazz Chisholm, who made his major league debut.

CARDINALS 16, REDS 2

Brad Miller homered twice and recorded a career-high seven RBIs as St. Louis didn't allow ace Sonny Gray to make it out of the first inning in the rout of the host Reds. Miller and Kolten Wong each had four of the Cardinals' 23 hits en route to their highest-scoring contest since a 17-4 win over Pittsburgh on May 9, 2019. St. Louis scored six times in the first inning off Gray (5-2, 3.19 ERA), who entered with a 1.94 ERA, but allowed five hits and walked three of the 10 batters he faced over 38 pitches and a career-low two-thirds of an inning as a starter. Meanwhile, Cardinals starter Kwang Hyun Kim (2-0, 0.83 ERA) gave up three hits over five scoreless

innings. It was the second time this year he did not yield a run against Cincinnati, which has dropped three in a row. St. Louis has won three in a row.

YANKEES 5, RAYS 3

Gio Urshela hit a tiebreaking two-run double and scored another run on an error on the same play with one out in the sixth inning and host New York snapped a six-game losing streak to Tampa Bay. The Yankees beat Tampa Bay for only the second time in nine meetings in the abbreviated 10-game series and posted their first home win over the AL East leaders. DJ LeMahieu homered in his first two at-bats off Trevor Richards, and Masahiro Tanaka (1-1) allowed two runs on three hits in a season-high six innings. Tanaka struck out a season-high seven, walked one and threw 88 pitches.

INDIANS 10, ROYALS 1

Zach Plesac returned to action and allowed just one run on four hits in six innings, walking none and striking out six as Cleveland won at Kansas City. Plesac (2-1) had not pitched for the parent club since being optioned to the alternative site Aug. 8 after breaking COVID-19 protocol. He was replaced in the Tuesday game after a 16-minute rain delay in the top of the seventh. Franmil Reyes, who had never had a four-hit game, went 5-for-5 with two doubles and a homer. Francisco Lindor and Reyes homered in the first, and Roberto Perez homered in the second, all off Royals starter Matt Harvey (0-2).

BRAVES 10, RED SOX 3

Marcell Ozuna hit three long home runs and rookie right-hander Ian Anderson pitched six strong innings to lead Atlanta over host Boston as Ozuna drove in six. He tallied the first three-homer game of his career — and the first ever by a National League player at Fenway Park — and recorded his second multi-homer game of the season. Anderson (2-0) made his major league debut last week by beating the New York Yankees and followed it by beating the Red Sox, the team he idolized while growing up.

CUBS 8, PIRATES 7 (11 INNINGS)

Ian Happ's RBI single in the 11th inning gave Chicago the win over host Pittsburgh. Nico Hoerner opened at second in the 11th and came home on Happ's base hit to center off reliever Kyle Crick (0-1) to help the Cubs atone for blowing a 6-1 lead. Kyle Schwarber hit a two-run homer and Happ a solo homer for Chicago. Javy Baez added an RBI double, and Jason Kipnis an RBI single. Ke'Bryan Hayes had a stunning major league debut for Pittsburgh, hitting a tying home run and an RBI double. Jose Osuna added an RBI double, and Adam Frazier hit an RBI single.

TWINS 3, WHITE SOX 2

Byron Buxton returned from the injured list to go 2-for-4 with the game-winning RBI and also made a homer-saving catch as Minnesota rallied to snap its six-game losing streak with a victory over Chicago in Min-

neapolis. Buxton, activated earlier Tuesday after recovering from left shoulder soreness, reached above the fence in left-center to rob Edwin Encarnacion of a home run in the sixth inning. An inning later, he drove in Nelson Cruz with a two-out single to break a 2-2 tie. Cruz went 3-for-3 with a double, while Jorge Polanco and Eddie Rosario each added two hits for Minnesota. Caleb Thielbar (1-0) picked up the win with a scoreless inning of relief. Matt Wisler struck out two of the three batters he faced in a perfect ninth for his first save.

RANGERS 6, ASTROS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Scott Heineman scored on a balk and Isiah Kiner-Falefa followed him home on a throwing error in the top of the 10th inning as Texas capitalized on a trio of mistakes to defeat host Houston. The Rangers, who snapped an eight-game losing streak to the Astros, forced extras when shortstop Elvis Andrus smacked a leadoff home run off Houston closer Ryan Pressly in the ninth. It marked the first home run for Andrus, activated off the injured list on Monday. Jonathan Hernandez (5-0) earned the win for Texas. Rafael Montero notched his seventh save.

PHILLIES 6, NATIONALS 0

Alec Bohm homered, doubled and drove in two runs and Aaron Nola (4-2) threw eight shutout innings to lift host Philadelphia past Washington. Andrew McCutchen hit a three-run home run and Rhys Hoskins walked and added two hits for his fourth consecutive multi-hit game for the Phillies. Bryce Harper reached base four times with a single and three walks. Phillies starter Aaron Nola

(4-2) tossed eight shutout innings and gave up only two hits. Nola, who threw 113 pitches, struck out nine and walked three. The skidding Nationals have dropped four in a row to fall to 12-21, in last place in the National League East.

DODGERS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Chris Taylor drove in four runs and Julio Urias threw six innings of one-run ball as Los Angeles downed visiting Arizona. Enrique Hernandez and Edwin Rios each drove in a run with a sacrifice fly in the fifth inning as the Dodgers improved their baseball-best record to 27-10 on the opening day of the final month of the regular season. The Dodgers have won nine of their past 11 and eight consecutive at home. Carson Kelly and Nick Ahmed hit home runs for the Diamondbacks, who had just five hits. Arizona took its 11th loss in the past 12 games.

ORIOLES 9, METS 5

Renato Nunez recorded his second two-homer performance of the season to lift host Baltimore over New York for its second straight win after losing 11 of 13 games. Nunez belted a three-run homer in the first inning and added a solo shot in the seventh. Nunez launched a pair of solo shots in Baltimore's 8-7 loss to Miami on Aug. 6. Anthony Santander also went deep and drove in three runs, and Pat Valaika had an RBI double to highlight his first career four-hit performance. Andres Gimenez had a first-run homer and Robinson Cano went deep for the second time in as many days for the Mets, who have lost five in a row. — Reuters

Messi unlikely to change mind on Barca exit

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi is unlikely to change his mind about leaving Barcelona, the club's presidential candidate Victor Font has said.

Messi rocked Barcelona last month when his lawyers told the club he wanted to activate a clause in his contract that would allow him to leave for free before the 2020-21 season.

The club disputed the claim saying the clause expired on June 10 — with La Liga also releasing a statement saying his contract was still valid — but Font is not optimistic about convincing Messi to stay another year.

"I really hope the decision can be changed," Font told Sky Sports. "It doesn't seem likely, though... if that's the case, the focus should be on making the transition as smooth as possible.

"Messi loves the club and he wants to win, he wants to compete. He has been saying this for many, many years, it's not just been for a few weeks.

"Unfortunately the club has not been able to deliver on the promise of building a competitive team."

Messi, 33, last won the Champions League with Barcelona in 2015 and an 8-2 humiliation at the hands of Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals last month was the final straw for the six-times world player of the year.

Messi, who failed to turn up for pre-season training on Monday, had previously labelled his side "weak" and "inconsistent" after surrendering the league title to rivals Real Madrid.

The club has spent millions on players in the transfer market who have not come good in recent years and transfer strategy is something Font hopes to change if he is elected president.

"Currently you have the president, the chairman of the board and even some directors making decisions about signings, about selling players and that needs to be changed," Font, who hopes to succeed president Josep Maria Bartomeu in the election next March, added.

"That's why we've been working on a project and we need people to lead that who come from the world of football."

Lionel Messi's father and agent headed to Barcelona on Tuesday for what Argentine media said was a meeting with club president Josep Maria Bartomeu. TV pictures showed Jorge Messi boarding a

private plane in Rosario.

The plane was destined for the United States, from where he would proceed to Spain, local newspapers Ole and Capital de Rosario reported. — Reuters

At least 290,000 stateless children live in Malaysia, many with parents from Indonesia, Philippines and Myanmar, according to media reports citing officials. There are believed to be many stateless adults as well, although the overall figure is not clear.

Malaysia's constitution says the government can choose to register anyone under the age of 21 as a citizen. But Aiman's lawyer, New Sin Yew, said the process was "quite opaque and takes a very long time". "The fastest (application) can take about three years and the government often rejects applications without reasons," he told AFP.

He added: "I think if this case was not brought to the attention by the media, it would have been much more difficult, because there would not have been public support."

Aiman's parents first tried to register him as a citizen when he was 12, but the application was refused. He got into gaming by playing on his phone, and then discovered PUBG.

Aiman, who now lives outside the capital Kuala Lumpur, then started playing in PUBG competitions and joined a team, and hones his skills by practising four to five hours a day.

And he is hopeful for a bright future in eSports. "I want to make my family proud and my country too," he said. "That is my dream." — AFP

Malaysian eSports player wins citizenship battle

PUTRAJAYA: A rising eSports player has won a years-long battle for Malaysian citizenship, a victory that allows him to compete internationally and highlights problems faced by hundreds of thousands of stateless children in the country.

Muhammad Aiman Hafizi Ahmad was part of a team competing in the popular PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), which pits participants against each other in a virtual fight to the death.

But when they won the chance to take part in two tournaments in China last year, the 20-year-old had to skip them — he could not travel overseas, as he was officially stateless.

Aiman was born in Malaysia to an Indonesian mother and adopted by local parents, but he had never been recognised as a Malaysian citizen and could not get a passport.

He had applied to become Malaysian years earlier and was refused. But after being forced to miss



DENVER: Starting pitcher Kevin Gausman #34 of the San Francisco Giants delivers to home plate during the first inning against Raimel Tapia #15 of the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field Tuesday in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

International football returns at last as Nations League starts

PARIS: After the postponement of Euro 2020 by a year, international football comes out of a long hibernation this week in Europe with the start of the latest UEFA Nations League, which is being crammed into the autumn despite the ongoing coronavirus concerns and will see Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal defend their title.

In normal times, the continent's leading international teams would have been returning to action less than eight weeks after the final of the European Championship, but instead they will be playing for the first time since completing Euro qualifying last November, a hiatus of 10 months.

"We are delighted to have our team back out on the pitch, and to be able to play international matches again," said Germany coach Joachim Loew. "The past few months have been difficult for everybody."

While such a long break is unheard of in the modern era, this is also confirmation of how crammed the calendar will be in the year ahead, with almost all nations playing back-to-back fixtures this month just before Europe's major leagues start the 2020/21 season.

"I think across the board there's got to be a look at the football calendar, and that's everyone's responsibility," warned England manager Gareth Southgate last week.

"Everybody is trying to put their competitions in and the calendar is growing and the spaces are getting smaller." The demands on the players will be enormous. Six rounds of Nations League matches will take place in total between September and November, with the top four nations coming together for the finals.

Initially planned for June 2021, these are now set to go ahead later in the year, once the European Championship has finally been completed.

In the meantime, this Nations League will start with all games behind closed doors, a sad new reality for football in a pandemic and which already applied to the latter stages of the Champions League and Europa League last month.

Another reality of the health crisis is that coaches must be prepared for the possibility of losing players to positive Covid-19 tests, and so France have lost midfield duo Paul Pogba and Houssem Auar for their matches against Sweden and Croatia. — AFP

14 Hafeez hails debutant Haider as Pakistan beat England



15 Alex Dickerson's three homers help Giants rout Rockies 23-5



15 Messi unlikely to change mind on Barca exit



NEW YORK: Garbine Muguruza of Spain returns the ball during her Women's Singles first round match against Nao Hibino of Japan on Day Two of the 2020 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in the Queens borough of New York City. — AFP

Serena, Murray advance at US Open

Muguruza moves on, Venus and Clijsters fall

NEW YORK: Serena Williams' quest for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam got off the mark as Andy Murray rolled back the years with a vintage comeback at the US Open Tuesday.

Six-time winner Williams powered past 96th-ranked Kristie Ahn after Murray came from two sets down to win a five-set thriller in his first singles Slam match in 18 months.

The pair both progressed to the second round on day two of a US Open that is unrecognizable from previous tournaments, without spectators and with stringent measures to prevent Covid-19 infections.

Williams defeated Ahn 7-5, 6-3 as she started the latest bid of her protracted pursuit to match Margaret Court's Grand Slam title with a straight-sets win at Flushing Meadows.

The 38-year-old overcame the loss of her first service game in the opening set to advance at a virtually empty Arthur Ashe Stadium, where artwork by black artists is displayed in honor of the Black Lives Matter movement against racial injustice.

"I was really happy with how I just fought for every point no matter how I was playing," said Williams. It has been more than three years since Williams won her 23rd Grand Slam title at the 2017 Australian Open — when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia.

She has come close since, reaching four major finals only to come away empty-handed, but should

have a better chance this time around with several top players absent because of coronavirus concerns or injury.

World number one Ashleigh Barty, the second-ranked Simona Halep and Canadian Bianca Andreescu — who stunned Williams in last year's final — are all absent from the behind-closed-doors tournament.

A title win for Williams would also see her become the most decorated women's player at the US Open in the modern era. She is currently tied with Chris Evert on six.

NAVARRO TRIBUTE

Murray secured a stunning 4-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 come-from-behind victory in a bruising 4 hr and 39 min encounter against Japan's 49th-ranked Yoshihito Nishioka.

The Scotsman, who who has barely played in 2020, said he had earned a lot about his physical condition and the metal hip he received during surgery last year. "I've just played a four-and-a-half hour match when I never thought I'd be able to," he told reporters. "I'm not sitting here with my hip throbbing and aching. I'll be able to sleep fine tonight," Murray added.

Tenth seed Garbine Muguruza, the 2016 French Open champion and 2017 Wimbledon winner, advanced to round two with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over

Japan's Nao Havino.

She dedicated the win to compatriot Carla Suarez Navarro, who revealed Tuesday that she had been diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma and will require six months of chemotherapy.

"You know, she's such a nice woman, so sweet, so kind, so humble. When these things happen to these good people, I feel, like, so sad about it," said Muguruza.

Also in the women's draw, second seed American Sofia Kenin needed just over an hour to score a 6-2, 6-2 win over unseeded Belgian Yanina Wickmayer at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

And ninth seed Johanna Konta beat compatriot Heather Watson 7-6 (9/7), 6-1 in a tie dubbed the "Battle of Britain." There was disappointment for 40-year-old Venus Williams though who bowed out in the first round for the first time in her career, losing in straight sets to Karolina Muchova.

Another veteran, Belgium's 37-year-old Kim Clijsters, also fell at the first hurdle. Clijsters making a comeback for the second time in her career and playing in her first Grand Slam draw since 2012, was beaten in three sets by Ekaterina Alexandrova, losing 3-6, 7-5, 6-1.

THIEM ADVANCES

In the men's competition, number two seed Dominic Thiem progressed to round two when oppo-

nent Jaume Munar retired after the second set at Louis Armstrong Stadium. Munar abandoned before the start of the third set, with Austria's Thiem leading 7-6 (8/6), 6-3.

Thiem now faces India's Sumit Nagal, who became the first Indian man since 2013 to reach the second round of a Grand Slam event with a 6-1, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 win over Bradley Klahn of the United States.

The US Open is taking place in a spectator-free bubble at the US National Tennis Center in New York. Players movements are tightly controlled and everyone onsite is being tested regularly to minimize the risk of infection.

Argentina's Guido Pella accused tennis chiefs of operating a double-standard over the handling of French player Benoit Paire's positive COVID-19 case.

Paire was withdrawn on Sunday but several French players who had been in contact with him were allowed to remain in the tournament under enhanced safety protocols.

Pella was excluded from last week's Western & Southern Open, a US Open tuneup, despite testing negative after his trainer contracted the virus.

"I am mad at them because of that, because they change the rules when Benoit tested positive. So I want to know why," he said after being knocked out in the first round. — AFP

Nuggets rally from 3-1 deficit to beat Jazz in seven games

LOS ANGELES: Nikola Jokic had 30 points as the Denver Nuggets reached the Eastern Conference semi-finals with a thrilling 80-78 game seven victory over the Utah Jazz on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old Serbian star, who also had 14 rebounds and four assists, had been taking a back seat to Canadian scoring phenom Jamal Murray in the series, but Jokic busted out in the winner-takes-all showdown in Orlando, Florida.

"We didn't quit. We just didn't want to quit. I am glad we won the game," said Jokic.

Murray scored 17 points and Michael Porter finished with 10 points and nine rebounds for the

Nuggets, who advanced in a series for the first time in franchise history after being 3-1 down, becoming just the 12th team in league history to achieve such a comeback.

"A lot of teams would have just given in, especially when you consider we've been here 57 days away from our families," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. The Nuggets will face the Los Angeles Clippers in the Eastern Conference semi-finals. The first game is Thursday in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Florida. Tuesday's game finished with a wild sequence that included Utah's Mike Conley throwing up a desperation shot at the buzzer that ringed the basket but failed to drop.

"It looked good, man. Sometimes, it's just the way it works," Jazz star Donovan Mitchell said.

"We fought hard and came back. I'd go to war with any one of these guys in the locker room, any one of these coaches. We could've easy chalked it up in the first half. We have grit and fight. That's all you can really ask for."

Mitchell also had a chance to tie it on Utah's previous possession but he lost the ball on a drive to the basket. Denver immediately went down to the other end but they missed an easy layup on their final possession of the game that would have sealed it.

Mitchell led the Jazz with 22 points and nine rebounds.

CELTICS STRETCH LEAD

In the Eastern Conference, Jayson Tatum scored a career playoff high 34 points and Marcus Smart drained five three-pointers in the fourth quarter as the Boston Celtics rallied to beat Toronto 102-99 in game two of their series.

Kemba Walker finished with 17 points and Jaylen Brown had 16 points and eight rebounds for the Celtics, who grabbed a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final. Game three is Thursday.

"Marcus Smart has been a winner since he's gotten here," said Celtics coach Brad Stevens of Smart,

who finished with 19 points and six threes. "We've been in the playoffs every year since he's been here and that's not a coincidence."

The teams were tied 28-28 at the end of the first quarter but the defending NBA champion Raptors led 78-70 heading into the fourth.

O.G. Anunoby scored 20 points, Fred VanVleet finished with 19 points and seven assists and Pascal Siakam tallied 17 points for the Raptors, who had chances to pull even but made some uncharacteristic mistakes down the stretch.

Kyle Lowry made a pair of free throws with 61 seconds remaining to cut the Celtics lead to just one, 100-99, but that was as close as Toronto would get. Losing has been an unfamiliar feeling for the Raptors in the NBA bubble. Toronto had only lost one game during the seeding round, a 122-100 setback to the Celtics.

Toronto had an eight-game winning streak heading into the start of this series but have now lost both games to Boston. — AFP