



4 Spate of drownings blamed on COVID travel restrictions



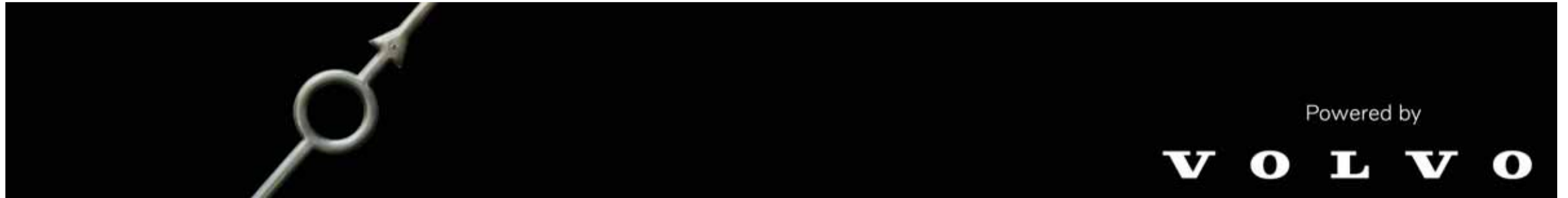
5 Heritage struggles after Iraq Jews fled long ago



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Tribes elect candidates in outlawed 'primaries'

Lack of action by authorities slammed • Assembly to debate budgets this week

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A number of Kuwaiti tribes over the weekend publicly held so-called "consultations" to elect their representatives for the forthcoming general elections, expected to be held in late November. Unlike in previous years, authorities did not intervene in the tribal "primaries", where hundreds of voters, all men, cast their votes amid intense competition.

Various tribes held primaries in the first and fourth districts. Other tribes are expected to hold their primaries in the fourth and fifth constituencies, which are overwhelmingly tribal, in a week's time. Tribes hold primaries to boost their chances to win seats in the National Assembly by reducing the number of hopefuls.

The National Assembly had issued legislation in 2003 declaring tribal primaries as illegal, and police have referred dozens of violators to court. But

almost all defendants have been acquitted for lack of evidence. Kuwait Progressive Movement blamed the government's inaction and its obstruction to building a modern state for the holding of tribal primaries in public, saying that allowing tribal, family and sectarian sentiments to grow prevents the formation of a national state where all are equal.

Kuwait's political landscape is segmented along various lines including tribal, urban (also called hadhar), as well as sometimes sectarian - these segmen-

tations often play out in parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile, the Assembly starts today debating the state budget and budgets of independent departments and agencies for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, which started on April 1. The state budget is projecting a huge deficit of KD 14 billion. Spending is projected at KD 21.5 billion, while revenues are estimated at KD 7.5 billion, among the lowest in the past two decades after calculating the price of oil at \$30 a barrel, almost two thirds of the current price.

Blaze doused on oil tanker off Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: A massive fire on a stricken oil tanker off Sri Lanka's coast has been extinguished, the island nation's navy said yesterday, as international salvage experts began to assess the damage over fears of an environmental disaster if there is a leak. The Panamanian-registered New Diamond, carrying over 270,000 tons of crude and diesel, was en-route from Kuwait to the Indian port of Paradip when it issued a distress call Thursday after an engine room explosion that killed a Filipino crewmember.

Sri Lanka's navy chief Nishantha Ulugutenna said the fire on the tanker, which

the navy chief and the Indian coastguard got under control on Friday - had finally been put out. "The fire has been completely doused," the vice admiral told reporters in Colombo. "The tanker's (steel) plates are still very hot so there is a risk of reigniting new fires." The Indian coastguard tweeted that "no flame & smoke" was visible from the vessel.

The announcement came as Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre said foreign salvage experts and insurance assessors had started examining the ship some 75 km from the coast. Ten British and Netherlands professionals with expertise in rescue operations, disaster evaluation and legal consultation arrived earlier yesterday, the navy said. Dutch firm Smit Salvage had commissioned the experts and was also sending two tug boats from Singapore and Mauritius, the navy added.

The Indian coastguard, which deployed six ships, an aircraft and a helicopter, added yes-

terday that its pollution control vessel had arrived at the site in the Indian Ocean. The rescue vessels are still dousing the tanker with water to prevent fresh fires being ignited in heavy winds lashing the hot steel plates near the burnt engine room. The tanker had suffered a crack of its hull some 10 m above the waterline as a result of intense heat from the fire, officials said.

Authorities said there has been no oil slick and the crack was not considered a catastrophic structural failure. Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Agency has said that legal action could be taken against the owners, Liberian-registered Porto Emporios Shipping Inc, "should the worst happen and the ship breaks up". The vessel is larger than the Japanese bulk carrier MV Wakashio, which crashed into a reef in Mauritius in July leaking more than 1,000 tons of oil into the island nation's pristine waters. — AFP



This handout photograph taken yesterday shows fireboats battling to extinguish a fire on the Panamanian-registered crude oil tanker New Diamond, some 60 km off Sri Lanka's eastern coast. — AFP

Tunisian officer stabbed to death; 3 assailants killed

SOUSSE, Tunisia: Attackers with knives killed a Tunisian National Guard officer and wounded another yesterday before three assailants were later shot dead in a firefight, the military force said, labeling it a "terrorist" act. The stabbing attack took place in the tourist district of Sousse, the coastal city hit by the worst of Tunisia's jihadist attacks of recent years, when 38 people, most of them Britons, were killed in a 2015 beachside shooting rampage.

A patrol of two National Guard officers was targeted in the knife attack in Sousse, 140 km south of the capital Tunis, said National Guard spokesman Houcem Eddine Jebabli. "One died as a martyr and the other was wounded and is hospitalized," he said, adding that "this was a terrorist attack". The attackers had first rammed the gendarmes with a vehicle at about 6:40 am (0540 GMT).

After the knife attack, security forces pursued the assailants, who had taken the officers' guns and vehicle, through the Akouda district of the city's tourist area of El-Kantaoui, said Jebabli. "In a firefight three terrorists were killed," he said, adding that security forces "managed to recover" the car and two pistols the assailants had stolen.

President Kais Saied, on a visit hours later to the sealed-off scene of the knife attack, said police were investigating whether the attack was planned "by individuals or an organization". British ambassador to Tunisia Louise de Sousa tweeted she was "appalled to hear of the attack on a National Guard patrol in #Sousse this morning. My sincere condolences to the family of the murdered officer & I wish a swift recovery to the injured. #UKsupportTunisia"

Tunisia, since its 2011 popular revolution, has been hit by a string of jihadist attacks that have

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Portland police use teargas as firebombs fly

PORTLAND, United States: Police arrested dozens of people and used teargas against hundreds of demonstrators in Portland late Saturday as the western US city marked 100 days since Black Lives Matter protests erupted against racism and police brutality. Police quickly declared the rally a "riot" after protesters hurled Molotov cocktails at them, and they responded with a barrage of tear gas to disperse the crowd. At least one person was injured by the firebombs, police said.

Officers arrested dozens of protesters in an ensuing game of cat-and-mouse through a residential district of east Portland. "It was Day 100 for Black Lives Matter protests in Portland since George Floyd's murder and they wanted to prevent

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PORTLAND: A policeman arrests a protestor injured in the face on Sept 4, 2020 during a march to denounce police brutality and racism. — AFP

Hezb, Hamas chiefs meet to discuss Israel-Arab ties

BEIRUT: Leaders of Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas movement, both enemies of Israel, have met to discuss diplomatic normalization between the Jewish state and Arab countries, a report said yesterday. They stressed the "stability" of the "axis of resistance" against Israel, the Hezbollah-run Al-Manar TV channel reported, without saying where or when the meeting took place.

Hassan Nasrallah, head of the Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement, was pictured meeting Ismail Haniya, who heads the political bureau of Hamas, the Islamist movement that control the Gaza Strip. They discussed "political and military devel-

opments in Palestine, Lebanon and the region" and "the dangers to the Palestinian cause" including "Arab plans for normalization" with Israel, Al-Manar said.

The meeting comes after an Aug 13 announcement that the Jewish state and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to normalize ties. While the US-backed diplomatic drive aims to boost a regional alliance against Iran, Palestinians have condemned it as a "stab in the back" as they remain under occupation and don't have their own state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said his country is in

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A handout picture released yesterday shows head of Lebanon's Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah (right) meeting with Hamas' political bureau chief Ismail Haniya at an undisclosed location. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Deputy Amir receives Speaker, Premier

Sheikh Nawaf condoles with Bangladesh President over blast victims



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh

Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In addition, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Bangladesh's President Mohammad Abdul Hamid, expressing his deepest condolences over the victims of a mosque blast south of Dhaka. In the cable, His Highness the

Deputy Amir and Crown Prince prayed to Allah Almighty for the victims to rest in peace and hoped for a swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah sent a similar cable. — KUNA

Australian Academy collaborates with ACK to organize e-camp

KUWAIT: The Australian Academy (AA), in collaboration with the School of Engineering at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), organized an electronic camp for high school students, which covered subjects including engineering, mathematics and interior design, as a part of its efforts to help the youth of Kuwait reach their full potential.

The camp was held to give high school students

an opportunity to delve into the world of engineering and design while staying safe at home and exploring major disciplines such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, math and interior design, in an easy and unconventional way. The main aim was to help students build confidence and excitement by participating in activities and real-life applications through a rich online platform.

Students who took part in the mechanical engineering e-camp were introduced to basic concepts of the mechanical engineering discipline. During the camp, the students experienced a journey from deep sea to outer space through vehicles designed with the help of mechanical engineering. The difference between science and engineering was also explicated and mechanical engineering was explored in a fun and hands-on way.

With regards to the electrical engineering e-camp, participants were able to design electric circuits using an advanced software. The participants were able to design a filter to detect a desired radio frequency, a gas detector, an electric piano, potato/lemon battery, simple vending machine for four slots and traffic light simulator. Participants were also able to design using one of the top simulation software: a security system, a circuit that controls a buzzer, a football game, and an anti-theft system all using basic logic gates. In the topic of Programming, participants were able to design and write programs using one of the most famous compilers.

As for the math wizard e-camp, students worked on developing the required skills in mathematics for engineering and business students through e-learning via the Microsoft Teams platform. Lastly, when it

came to the interior design e-camp, participants were taught to read floor plans, understand the importance of standards and space planning, and received the opportunity to explore design styles, colors, and furniture.

At the end of the camp, participants were able to get introduced to different fields of engineering that opened their insights to a field of study they may decide to enroll in the future. Moreover, participants learned hard and soft skills that will be useful to them in their current studies at high school. As a result of the turnout of many students who took the initiative to register, and what was seen from the enthusiasm of the students and their positive interaction during the e-camp, AA and ACK are currently studying the option of proposing future summer camps to a larger target segment.

LAPA concludes script writing online workshop

KUWAIT: Syrian script writer Dr Mamdouh Hamadeh recently concluded a script writing workshop held within the 'Theater Sanctuary 2' festival organized by LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA). The workshop was held for ten days via the Zoom app, and focused on script writing concepts. "At first, I was worried about online teaching without directly interacting with trainees, but then I started by brainstorming with them on how to write a script using various techniques such as quotation, authorship and creation," Hamadeh said, noting that the outcome was outstanding and most of the scripts trainees have created reflect high levels of skill and talent. "I am sure that many of the participants' names will be seen soon on movie or theater brochures as authors,"

he stressed.

Speaking on the occasion, participating artist Essam Al-Kathemi expressed his pride to be apprenticed by veteran script writer Hamadeh "who has a long career in writing several successful drama works such as 'Spotlight.'" Participant, Hameed Al-Bloushi said that the workshop was "a magnificent experience during which participants learned many writing techniques." Participant, Reem Marzouq also thanked LAPA for providing her the opportunity to develop her skills, adding that she underwent two workshops within the same event: one on documentary theater and another on script writing. "Despite writing for theater for over 15 years, I still enjoyed the information presented through this workshop," she underlined.



Hezb, Hamas chiefs meet...

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talks with other Arab and Muslim leaders now about normalizing relations, following the deals with UAE and, decades ago, Egypt and Jordan. Haniya has been in Lebanon since Wednesday, on his first visit to the country in nearly 30 years, for direct and

video-conference talks with other Palestinian groups that oppose Israel's diplomatic initiative.

Israel's military has in recent weeks targeted Hamas in the Gaza Strip and what it says have been Hezbollah gunmen along its northern border with Lebanon. It also regularly launches air strikes in war-torn Syria against what it says are Hezbollah and other pro-Iranian militants fighting on the side of President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. Nasrallah has been living in a secret location for years and makes very few public appearances. He said in 2014 that he often changes his place of residence. — AFP

Portland police use teargas as...

Continued from Page 1

us from marching," said 20-year-old protester Jay, her eyes red from the teargas. "It's our constitutional right to be here and to express ourselves."

Police said people were "engaging in tumultuous and violent conduct thereby intentionally or recklessly creating a grave risk of causing public alarm". "This is a riot. Police are giving announcements to disperse. People are throwing Molotov cocktails," Portland Police said on Twitter. The nightly protests were sparked by the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis in May.

Floyd's death triggered similar protests nationwide, but it is in Portland - a city of 650,000 that is more than 70 percent white - that activists have remained on the streets practically every night, demanding racial justice and police accountability. President Donald Trump has cast the city as being under siege by "thugs" engaged in "domestic terrorism", though the demonstrations have been peaceful for the most part.

Tensions escalated again last weekend after a man identified as a supporter of a rightwing group was shot and killed. Earlier Saturday, hundreds of people gathered in a park near Portland in a memorial for Aaron "Jay" Danielson, a supporter of the far-right group Patriot Prayer. The 39-year-old was fatally shot after he joined pro-Trump supporters who descended on Portland, sparking confrontations with Black Lives Matter counter-protesters.

The suspect in the shooting, Michael Reinoehl, 48, was killed in neighboring Washington state as police tried to arrest him. The circumstances of Danielson's death are still under investigation but Reinoehl appeared to acknowledge shooting him in an interview with Vice News.

"We are in the midst of a civil war between good and evil, the good, the good is all the folks you see here," said Dann, 50, who knew Danielson through Patriot Prayer, pointing to the families lined up near an imposing barbecue among camping chairs and numerous American flags displayed for the occasion. "The evil is the liberals who are letting these cities be destroyed by Antifa, BLM, whoever you want to call them," he said.

Apart from the homage to the victim and the groups of men with assault rifles or pistols, the atmosphere at the park in Vancouver, just north of Portland, was almost party-like. But Dann was gloomy about the run-up to the presidential election. "The next two months are going to be terrible. There's going to be more violence. There's going to be more atrocities. There's going to be more name calling," he predicted.

Carrying a skateboard and with a pistol on his belt, Daparu De Crusha, 51, said BLM protesters were trying to destroy the American family. The former publicist was convinced that Danielson was not killed by chance. "I believe it was orchestrated, it was a hunting," he said. "There was going to be a human sacrifice that night and Jay Danielson was their victim," he said.

After citing conspiracy theories about China and Bill Gates, De Crusha said Trump's victory or defeat on Nov 3 would not change the country's problems. "It's not going to end with the election," Dann agreed. "The only thing that's going to stop it is if we the people stand up for our rights and are not intimidated," he said, wearing a "Make America Great Again" cap and sporting a "We the people" tattoo on his arm.

In his tribute to Danielson, Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson, who denies advocating white supremacy, insisted they rejected hatred and violence. "I don't want to see anybody encourage any acts of violence in the name of Jay," he said. Elsewhere on Saturday, armed police supporters and anti-racism demonstrators clashed in Louisville before the Kentucky Derby horse race, while Rochester police also used tear gas to disperse protesters. — Agencies

Tunisian officer stabbed to death...

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killed dozens of security personnel, civilians and foreign tourists. A suicide attack against security forces protecting the US Embassy in Tunis killed a Tunisian police officer and left several others wounded in March. 2015 was a particularly bloody year, with three major deadly attacks claimed by the Islamic State group.

An attack at the capital's Bardo museum in March killed 21 foreign tourists and a security guard. Just three months later, the 38 tourists were killed in the shooting rampage at Sousse. And in November of that year, a bomb blast on a bus in central Tunis killed 12 presidential guards. While the situation has significantly improved since then, Tunisia has maintained a state of emergency.

Assaults on security forces have persisted, mainly in remote areas along the border with Algeria. Tunisia has been praised as a rare success story among the 2011 Arab Spring revolts that swept the region and brought down many autocrats, among them Tunisia's long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. But the small Mediterranean country of



Forensic police investigate at the site of an attack on Tunisian National Guard officers yesterday. — AFP

about 11 million people is mired in an economic crisis, with the official unemployment rate at 18 percent, and in need of new assistance from the International Monetary Fund.

Last week Tunisia's parliament approved a new technocratic government led by Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi, which faces the task of tackling deep social and economic woes in the North African country. The 46-year-old premier pledged to revitalize the economy, including the crucial tourism sector, which had rebounded after the jihadist attacks but has been hit hard this year by the coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

Local

Expats aged 60 without degrees to be removed from workforce

More than 100,000 expatriates expected to be affected

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait will stop issuing work permits for expats aged over 60 without a university degree from Jan 1, 2021. Domestic helpers, however, are exempt from the decision. The decision will impact more than 100,000 expatriates living and working in Kuwait.

Marina came to Kuwait in 1985, and works as a beauty consultant at a salon. She is now 62 years old and is ready to leave if the government will not renew her iqama. Marina has been with the salon for the last nine years.

"I came from Saudi Arabia in 1983, and at the end of my contract, I went back to the Philippines. While still at the airport, I met an employer from Kuwait. She asked me if I wanted to come back and work in Kuwait. I said yes, so she told me to hand a copy of my passport so they can process the visa, and indeed after a month, I got the visa. That woman was my employer from 1985 to 1990. I went back to the Philippines at the height of the Gulf War," Marina told Kuwait Times.

"The same employer told me to come back in 1992. When she died in 1995, I asked them if they could release me, and they did. I then worked at a bakery from 1996 until 2011. After working with them for almost 15 years, I transferred to a salon and spa as a beautician because I heard they were giving a good salary. So from 2011 until now, I am with the salon working as a beautician," she said. "I have experience and I am sharing it with others. I like the work and will do it until God says enough," she said.

'Accept fate'

But Marina will soon be out of a job, as she is now 62. "I heard the bad news. As you see, I am still able to work - I feel like I'm 40 only. I haven't even been to a hospital in the past, so I know my health is still good. I know I can work maybe until I am 80, but they already passed this rule, so I

will respect and accept my fate come January," she said.

Her visa expires in February next year. "My employer will try to use wasta, but she told me she doesn't know if she will succeed. If not, I am ready to pack my bags and leave. My daughter wants me home. I told her until my health is okay and Kuwait is allowing me to stay, I will stay. But we all have to face reality - I am now 62 and if they say go, I will go," Marina said.

"I will miss this country terribly! I was able to stand alone as a single parent for my child and raised her as good child, and now she has a family of her own. Thank God I am okay, and I can say that I succeeded in life," she said. "My only request to Kuwait is to help me get a visa when I want to come back. Maybe a visit visa so I can come and hug Kuwait again," she said.

'Not ready to leave'

Annie, a guard at a huge shopping mall in Salmiya, has barely two years to go before she reaches the age of 60. "I am afraid - my visa will expire next year. I am 58 now and next year when my employer will apply for a new visa, I will be 59. I am afraid I will not be able to get another visa when they apply for it. As you can see, I am okay - I have no issues with regards to health," she said.

Annie came to Kuwait as a domestic helper, but was hired by an American subcontractor to work at a US base in 2003. However, her company closed in 2007, prompting her to transfer to a new job at a mall as a guard. "I am not ready to go home. I still want to stay, but if they tell me to go, I will have to leave Kuwait," she said resignedly.

The new law was agreed upon during the pandemic as part of the government's plan to cut the overall number of expatriates in the country by as many as 360,000 workers. According to the plan, 150,000 of these will be expats aged over 60. Expats currently make up around 70 percent of Kuwait's population.

“We all have to face reality”

New cases' numbers still within average

KUWAIT: Despite the beginning of signs of a "second wave" of the novel coronavirus pandemic in several Arab and Western countries, as a result of which the authorities of some countries were forced to re-impose preventive measures, Kuwaiti health sources told Al-Rai that the "health situation in Kuwait is good and reassuring, and that the number of new infected cases is within expected figures."

Nonetheless, the health authorities warned of "negligence and laxity in applying preventive measures" and stressed the need that all citizens and residents display the social responsibility and awareness needed to prevent the spread of infection. The sources added that the growing number of new cases detected recently was the result of increasing and intensifying the number of tests in various health zones, but remarked that the percentage of new cases versus the number of tests maintained a good average last week - recording 16.5 percent last Sunday, 13.5 percent on Monday, 17.5 percent on Tuesday, 15 percent on Wednesday, 16.5 percent on Thursday, 18.2 percent on Friday and 16.3 percent on Saturday.

"The increasing number of new cases over the past few days does not mean a second wave, as the percentage of daily tests is still between 13 and 16 percent," the sources said. The sources stressed that allowing certain activities, such as sport clubs, spas and personal care outlets to move from phase five to phase four on Aug 18 and cancelling the partial curfew has contributed to cutting short the time needed to resume activities.

"At the same time, this does not mean the pandemic is

over or less dangerous. It means the society's comprehension of the need to coexist and cope with the pandemic by adhering to health conditions and preventive measures," the sources said. They added that "health indicators during shifts between normal life resumption phases basically depend on measuring the rate of infections, the steadiness of case numbers and the percentage of ICU bed occupancy." Finally, the sources said health authorities are still assessing the situation concerning resuming commercial flights and reviewing the list of the 32 countries from which passengers are banned from entering Kuwait.

Classes back in Nov?

Meanwhile, Al-Rai quoted 'official educational sources' who noted that it is likely that students could be allowed back to schools in November. The sources added that the Ministry of Education (MoE) had accordingly contacted the Ministry of Health (MoH) reminding that some GCC states are preparing to reopen their schools. "MoH replied that the issue will be discussed then in view of the health situation, the number of cases and vaccine availability," the sources said, pointing out that MoE had already set a plan to make grade 12 second-session students give paper tests upon MoH approval and respecting preventive measures and social distancing.

Separately, and following the inclusion of information about AIDS in school curriculums, informed educational sources predicted that MoE might in the future include some information about viruses, including COVID-19, in curriculums with the aim of educating students and providing them with the latest studies on these diseases and their health and economic impacts worldwide. The sources told Al-Rai that a joint committee had been formed between MoE and MoH to work jointly similar to what happened during the swine flu crisis in 2010, adding that the committee had then decided to update curriculums by adding information about diseases as per modern studies and WHO and UNESCO recommendations.

Kuwait registers four deaths, 619 COVID-19 cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health said yesterday 619 people tested positive for the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours while four persons died of COVID-19. Ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad announced that total deaths reached 544 and registered infections increased to 89,582. He said distribution of cases over health zones was as follows: 182 in Hawally, 128 in Ahmadi, 128 in the Capital, 108 in Farwaniya and 73 in Jahra. The ministry had announced earlier the recovery of 618 COVID-19 patients in the past 24 hours to reach a total of 80,521 recoveries. Dr Sanad said 94 people were in the intensive care units, while the number of people receiving treatment reached 8,517. Dr Sanad said health care workers conducted 3,093 swab tests in the past 24 hours to increase the number of tests since the outbreak to 643,727. The health ministry official called on the public to remain vigilant and to abide by social distancing and hygienic rules. — KUNA



News in brief

Military training postponed

KUWAIT: Kuwait Army announced yesterday postponing until further notice summoning citizens for military service training, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, citizens eligible for conscription are still required to register through the 'Kuwait National Service' portal at www.kns.gov.kw within 60 days after reaching the age of 18, the army said in a press statement.

Pakistan doctors to stay six months

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health is looking to extend the stay of a medical team recruited from Pakistan to help with Kuwait's measures against COVID-19 for a maximum of six months. Al-Jarida reported yesterday. Around 500 doctors, nurses and technicians are set to arrive soon to Kuwait where they are as signed to assist local medical staff for a period of three months, with an option to extend for three more months which the health ministry is likely to use, sources said, adding that the ministry could hire some of the Pakistani medical staff members when their contracts expire.

KD 62 million for plot of land

KUWAIT: A Qatari businessman offered KD 62 million to a Kuwaiti businessman to purchase a 75,000 square meter plot of land located south of the country, Al-Rai reported yesterday quoting sources. If the deal is done, the Qatari investor is likely to use the area, located at a strategic space on the southern coastline, to build a mall or hotel on it, the sources said.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.



Local

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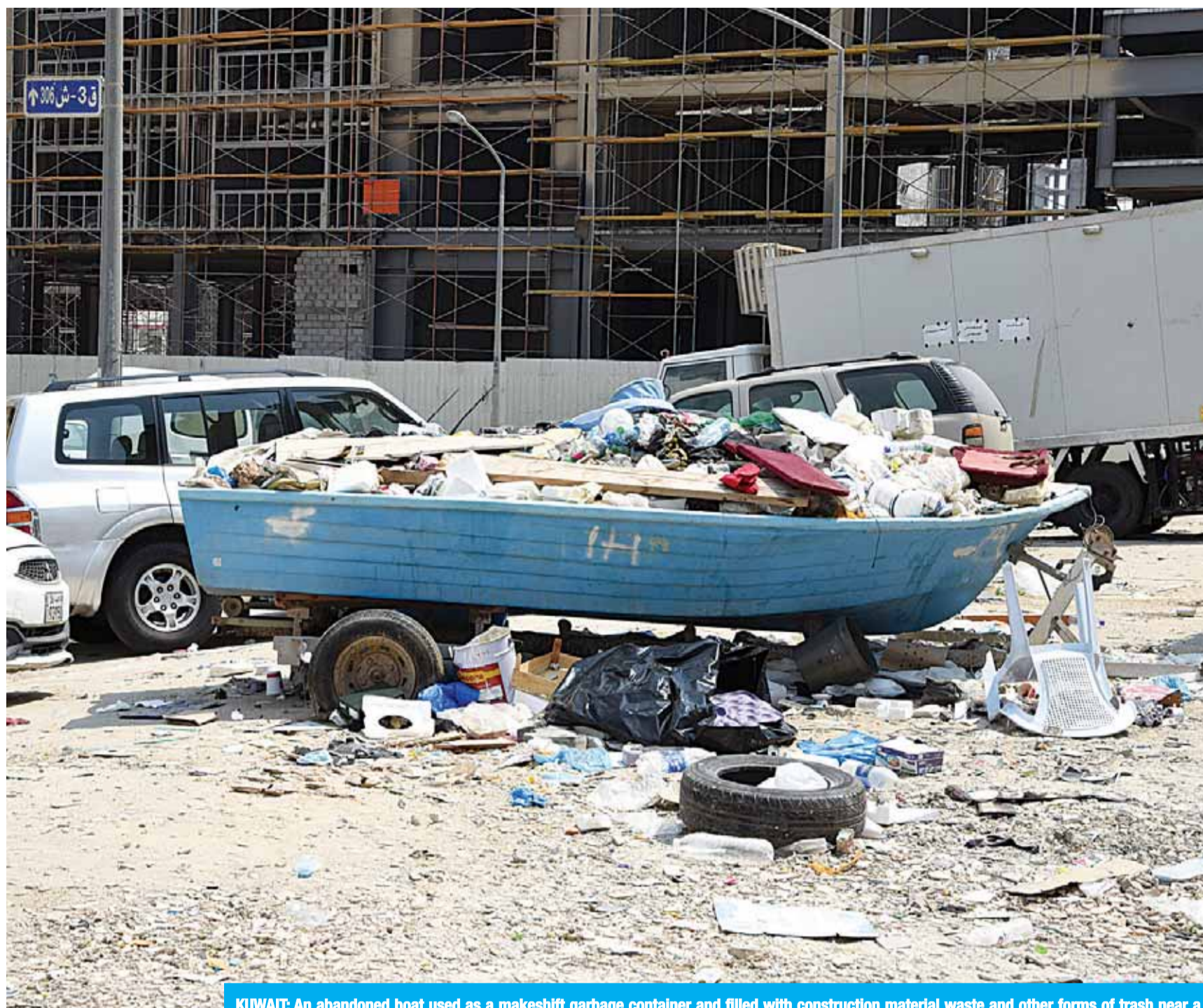
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YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

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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: An abandoned boat used as a makeshift garbage container and filled with construction material waste and other forms of trash near a construction site in Mahboula. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Three kids rescued on boat off Khairan

KUWAIT: Coastguards rescued three children whose boat had drifted into the sea at Khairan resort. Security sources said the children's mother called the police to save her kids, reporting that they had been playing in a rubber boat when it drifted away into the sea. The sources added that coastguard officers were immediately notified, who rushed to the scene and rescued the children.

Work mishap

A Pakistani construction worker was instantly killed when a metal bar fell on his head at a Sulaiybiya farm, said security sources, noting that the bar almost smashed the man's skull. He was already dead when he was taken to Farwaniya Hospital. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Gun possession

A Kuwaiti man was arrested in Sharq with an unlicensed gun hidden in his vehicle's glove compartment, said security sources. Case papers indicate that Capital detectives suspected a person who seemed nervous on stopping at a checkpoint. A case was filed and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities pending further investigations.

Assault

A Kuwaiti woman filed a complaint against an acquaintance accusing him of assaulting her in Sabah Al-Salem. The woman provided detectives with medical reports from Adan Hospital of injuries she claimed that she had sustained in the assault. A case was filed and the suspect is being summoned pending further investigations.

Robbery

An Indian man working in a restaurant reported that an unidentified dishdasha-clad assailant assaulted him while he was driving back home in Jahra and robbed KD 200 before fleeing the scene. A case was filed and a search is on for the suspect.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Drownings due to inexperienced swimmers, COVID-19 travel restrictions

Five deaths, 47 rescue reports between Jan 1 and June 30

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait witnessed a troubling trend in drowning and near drowning cases over the spring and summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as fewer people traveled and more spent leisure time at the beach. "As many people didn't travel this year due to the pandemic, a large number rented chalets in the south, even though they are not familiar with the sea and have never owned a chalet or stayed in it," Col Bader Al-Kdem, Chief of the Search and Rescue Department at the Kuwait Marine Fire Department explained to Kuwait Times. "Parents there just leave the kids without watching them, and they drown due to their negligence. Also, those who are not experienced should not go on boat trips alone or without an experienced captain. Moreover, many boat owners used their boats without maintenance, as during the curfew the shops were closed."

According to official statistics for the period between Jan 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020, five people died at sea, while the rescue brigade received 47 rescue reports and two fire reports at sea. Drowning cases were much higher during the past two months (July and August), but official statistics are not available yet. A total of 28 people drowned in 2018, the last year for which confirmed statistics was available.

According to Col Bader Al-Kdem, Chief of the Search and Rescue Department at the Kuwait Marine Fire Department, many people cannot swim adequately, and risk their lives when swimming in dangerous areas or depths. "When the swimmer is not experienced, he gets muscle cramps while swimming. He keeps moving his hands and feet trying to swim, which makes his body heavier and he drowns. The swimmer should always relax his body, so he can float," Kdem told Kuwait Times.

Dangerous currents

Dangerous water currents and rip tides near the seashore also pose a hazard for inexperienced swimmers. "There are currents in Khairan and Ras Al-Ardh in Salmiya. Many drowning cases have taken place in these areas. In some cases, the water current pulls the swimmer near the rocks, and they hit their head and drown. Also in Khairan, there are artificial creeks - a water current once pulled a swimmer to the confluence of the creek and the sea," explained Kdem.

Many swimmers ignore signs posted in various spots along the seaside, warning against swimming. "But for many it's not ignorance, they just cannot read - especially those who don't read Arabic or English. So we are planning to put up signboards

in different languages in cooperation with the Municipality," he noted.

There have been some strange incidents too. "Once we pulled an Arab national from a sewage outfall from which wastewater is discharged to the sea. He was swimming to get inside it and got stuck. He was lucky that we rescued him before the high tide, otherwise he would've died. Also, a Kuwaiti rented a boat and went on a sea trip, then got lost in the middle of the sea. He called us for help, and it was really difficult to reach him as he didn't even have a navigation system," he pointed out.

Swimmers and those spending time on the sea should also be aware of changing tides and currents. "One of the strangest cases that took place was over 10 years ago that I won't forget - of three brothers, out of whom only one survived. They went to catch crabs in Doha during low tide. It took them a while, so the rising water covered deep holes. When they were going back, the water in these holes pulled them in. After we arrived, we rescued one of them, but the other two drowned - one of them was missing in the sea for 15 days till we found his body," explained Kdem.

"Another strange drowning case was many years back, when a worker at the Entertainment City drowned in one of the water games. He got stuck in the mesh near the engine and drowned, although the water was less than a meter high," he recalled.

Rescue teams

Col Kdem is the representative of Kuwait at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). He explained that the marine search and rescue department, which was founded in 1956, is primarily responsible for accidents and rescue cases in the sea. But coastguards also undertake rescue operations, especially since they have more boats. But the main role of the coastguard is preserving security, as they are armed to deal with criminals at sea.

"The rescue department has three kinds of boats - large, medium and small. We have a total of 40 boats, and the big ones include four marine hospital beds. These usually deal with cruise ships, while the medium vessels are for firefighting, and finally the small ones are speedboats for emergency calls," Kdem said. There are many search and rescue centers along the coast of Kuwait. "We have centers in the north, south, in Salmiya and the islands. New centers will be added under Jaber Causeway and Boubyan Port. The majority of accidents take place in the south. Having a marine fire department at the port is very important, as makes it attractive for ships, as their insurance premiums will drop due to safety at the port," he concluded.

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'It hurts to breathe,' black man shot by white police says

Powerful typhoon slams Japan with violent winds, heavy rain

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BIRMINGHAM: A police officer stands near to a small forensics tent as he mans a cordon at the junction of Church Street and Barwick Street, following a major stabbing incident in the centre of Birmingham, central England yesterday. — AFP

Multiple stabbings in Birmingham

One man killed, several injured in 'major incident'

BIRMINGHAM: British police yesterday declared a "major incident" after several people were stabbed in the centre of the country's second city, Birmingham. Violence broke out at about 12:30 am in and around the Arcadian Centre, a popular venue filled with restaurants, nightclubs and bars. West Midlands Police confirmed "a number" of stabbings but said it had no information on reports that shots had been fired.

Meanwhile, one man was killed and seven people were injured, two of them seriously, in a series of stabbings in the city of Birmingham, central England. "We can now confirm that we have launched a murder investigation following last night's events," West Midlands Police said. "A man has died and another man and a woman have suffered serious injuries. Five others have also been injured." Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said he had no information to indicate the incidents were terrorism related but the public should stay "very vigilant".

The incident comes after several previous mass casualty stabbings, including one in the Scottish city of Glasgow on June 26, in which six people were injured, including a police officer. A man was charged with murder after three people were killed in a park in Reading, west of London, the previous week in an attack investigated by counter-terrorism police. Britain has been on high alert after two mass stabbings in London in the last year, which saw both perpetrators-convicted extremists released early from prison-shot dead by armed officers.

Knife crime in England and Wales increased six percent in the year to the end of March, according to the Office for National Statistics. Birmingham, one of Britain's most ethnically diverse cities with a population of more than one million, has had an explosive recent history of gang violence. In January 2003, one gang opened fire with an illegal semi-automatic sub-machine gun at a rival group. Two teenage girls who were bystanders were killed in the hail of bullets.

'Groups upon groups'

Cara Curran, a nightclub promoter who was working at the Arcadian Centre on Saturday night said she saw "groups upon groups" of people fighting in and around the venue and heard the use of "racial slurs". "I had seen a lot of tensions building through the night, which wasn't quite like what I've seen before," she said. "I had left with my boyfriend. I heard a commotion and saw multiple police coming towards our direction. I headed towards where I saw them coming and it all just unfurled in front of me."

"It was quite a street fight. It didn't really look like fighting. It was just multiple people on top of each other, not one on one." She added: "There was every ethnicity there, there was Asian, Black, White. It wasn't just this ethnicity against this ethnicity, it was a group of ethnicities with another group, and they sort of just went at it." Passers-by fled the violence, as police and other emergency services arrived quickly and cordoned off the area. Forensic specialists were poring over the scene mid-morning.

Social exclusion

Shabana Mahmood, who represents the area in the UK parliament for the main opposition Labor Party, described the events as "deeply concerning". Local councillor Yvonne Mosquito, also of Labor, said the violence was "traumatic" for everyone involved. Mosquito, a former city lord mayor, praised police for tackling so-called "black on black" violence in Birmingham in the early 2000s.

But she said there remained a real issue with social

exclusion among younger people, including "county lines" drug dealing. The Arcadian centre, where Birmingham Gay Village and Chinese Quarter meet, was vibrant and popular although there had been "a bit of trouble" previously, she said. "Work is still going on to establish what has happened, and could take some time before we are in a position to confirm anything," West Midlands Police added. "At this early stage it would not be appropriate to speculate on the causes of the incident."—Agencies



BIRMINGHAM: A police forensic officer takes photographs as he gathers evidence inside a cordon on Irving Street, following a major stabbing incident in the centre of Birmingham yesterday. — AFP

Iraq's Jews fled long ago, heritage struggles on

ARBIL: Growing up in Iraq, Omar Farhadi would heat up dinner for his Jewish neighbors when they rested on the Sabbath. Few are left, and their heritage risks fading away too. Across Iraq, Jewish roots run deep: Abraham was born in Ur in the southern plains, and the Babylonian Talmud, the central text of Judaism, was compiled in the town of the same name in the present-day Arab state. Jews once comprised 40 percent of Baghdad's population, according to a 1917 Ottoman census.

But after the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, regional tensions skyrocketed and anti-Semitic campaigns took hold, pushing most of Iraq's Jews to flee. In the north, the Kurdish regional capital of Arbil was once the heart of the ancient kingdom of Adiabene, which converted to Judaism in the 1st century and helped fund the building of the Temple of Jerusalem. Today, Iraqis have fond memories of Jewish friends and neighbors, including 82-year-old Farhadi, whose father owned a shop in a Jewish-majority district of Arbil.

Farhadi himself had several Jewish classmates at school and learnt English from a Jewish teacher, Benhaz Isra Salim. "One day in

early 1950, Professor Benhaz came to say goodbye to our Arabic teacher. They hugged and began to cry because Benhaz was travelling to Israel," he recalled. "All of us students started to cry as well. That was the end of Jews in Arbil."

Fading ties

The roughly 150,000 Jews still in Iraq in 1948 fled fast: by 1951, 96 percent were gone. Staying meant defying growing discrimination and property expropriation. Following the US-led invasion of 2003, some Jews were flown to Israel on special evacuation flights while others left during the ensuing years of sectarian warfare. By 2009, there were only eight Jews left in Baghdad, according to diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks. The interecine violence did not grip the Kurdish region. A 2015 law in the zone recognised Judaism as a protected religion and created an official representative, a post now held by 58-year-old Sherko Abdallah.

The law, and the lack of sectarian bloodshed in the zone, created an environment of "more coexistence" compared to federally-run areas in the south, he told AFP. Still, of the estimated 400 families of Jewish descent in the Kurdish zone, some have converted to Islam in recent years. "Most others practice in secret, because admitting you're Jewish is still a sensitive issue in Iraq," said Abdallah, adding that his "connections" within the Muslim-majority community had helped keep him safe.

A real sense of identity, however, was still

missing. He applied for official permission to build a Jewish community centre but had not received official approval. "I want a Jewish leader to come teach us the proper customs, but that's not possible under the current conditions," Abdallah added. And the link between the few families left and the roughly 219,000 Jews of Iraqi origins in Israel - the largest contingent from Asian origins - is fraying. "Now, the Iraqi Jews who left to Israel in the 1950s still find ways back into the Kurdish region with their Iraqi ID cards," Abdallah said. "But within five years, they will pass away and the whole relationship will be severed."

History in ruins

There is already little to see. Many Jewish homes were seized by the Iraqi state before 2003, and Jewish schools, shops and synagogues across the country are mostly crumbling from lack of maintenance. In the north, heritage is faring slightly better. Arbil's Museum of Education, housed in the city's oldest primary school, includes a room dedicated to Daniel Kassab, a well-known Jewish Kurdish art teacher and painter. Residents of Halabja, Zakho, Koysinjaq and other parts of Kurdistan still refer to old "Jewish neighbourhoods" when giving directions in their hometowns.

In Al-Qosh, the Jewish prophet Nahum's tomb is being restored through a \$1-million grant from the US as well as funds from local authorities and private donations. Baghdad and Washington are in talks to return the Iraqi Jewish Archives, over 2,700 books and tens of thousands of documents whisked away to the US after the invasion. Such initiatives could save Jewish heritage across the country, including the Baghdad home of Sassoon Eskell, Iraq's first finance minister under British mandate.

Eskell established Iraq's first financial system and indexed its currency to gold. "He was one of the columns in Iraq's history. You don't get two men like that," said Rifaat Abderrazzaq, an expert on Baghdad's Jewish heritage. But today, Eskell's home on the banks of the Tigris River in the capital lies abandoned and partly ruined. "Almost none of the beautiful, widespread Jewish heritage of Baghdad is left," lamented Abderrazzaq. "There is hardly anything but memories."—AFP

Trump team pushes social media limits

WASHINGTON: A message saying you "won't be safe" in Joe Biden's America. The former vice president shown "sleeping" during a television interview. Biden "hiding"-alone-in his basement. All three videos featured in social media of President Donald Trump and his team as recently as the past week as he sought to close the gap on his Democratic rival. And each was labeled as false or manipulated content by social media giants and fact checkers.

While negative campaigning has long been a fixture of American politics, the open use of digitally-altered images by Trump and other candidates in 2020 has tech giants worried. Twitter has cracked down by removing or labeling several of the president's tweets. Facebook, citing the risk of civil unrest, announced Thursday that it would not allow new political ads on its platform in the last week of the November 3 race.

There remain questions whether such messages-almost impossible to stop once they become viral-are working on voters but a line has already been crossed. "There's a long tradition in politics of competing politicians presenting their opponents' words or beliefs in edited ways, right? That's part of politics," Ethan Porter, assistant professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, told AFP.

"On the other hand, the Trump campaign is in part running a campaign entirely detached from reality, in ways that have little to no precedent in American political history." Biden's campaign has yet to receive the same kind of censure as Trump's. But can a willingness to manipulate highly visible political ads and videos produce results? The Real Clear Politics poll average barely changed after the Republican Convention, where Trump ramped up his attacks on Biden who is seven points

ahead nationally. But swing states remain a toss-up.

'One-sided'

"Manipulated media for the most part has been used by the Trump campaign to try and have more, let's say, 'tactile-looking' evidence, for the claims that they're making. Because there's not actual evidence," said Shannon McGregor, an assistant professor at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. It's similar to the approach used in 2016, but technology has made manipulations easier and more sophisticated.

The Trump campaign accused tech companies of double standards over the Biden videos. "Big tech is in Joe Biden's pocket but the liberal coastal elites in Silicon Valley are blatantly one-sided when it comes to how they define manipulated media," Samantha Zager, deputy national press secretary said. However, McGregor, who studies the role of social media in political processes, said that rather than aiming to attract different constituencies, "the rhetoric is really polarizing and it's sort of digging into Trump's base of supporters and trying to activate them to vote."

An example came in an August 30 Facebook post by Donald Trump Jr. after the shooting death of Aaron Danielson, 39, in Portland. "WARNING, HORROR: Antifa Targets And Executes Trump Supporter," the president's eldest son said in his post, which included video that was viewed more than 780,000 times, and liked almost 50,000 times. A suspect said to be a supporter of the Antifa anti-fascist movement was shot and killed on Thursday night as police tried to arrest him.

The violence in Portland came just before Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg announced the restrictions on political ads, saying misinformation about mail-in voting, and concerns about delayed counting of ballots, meant the 2020 election is not business as usual. Porter said the Trump team is convinced its approach is a winner. "In some ways they seem to have drunk their own Kool-Aid.—AFP



ARBIL: Ranj Abderrahman Cohen, an Iraqi Kurdish Jewish man, walks next to a ruined Jewish synagogue in Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. — AFP

International

Belarus protesters keep pressure on Lukashenko with new march

Masked men arrest protesting Belarus students

MINSK: Belarusian protesters yesterday prepared a new mass demonstration against strongman Alexander Lukashenko who has refused to quit after a disputed re-election and turned to Russia for help. Unprecedented protests broke out in the ex-Soviet country after Lukashenko, who has ruled the ex-Soviet state for 26 years, claimed re-election with 80 percent of the vote on August 9. Opposition rival Svetlana Tikhonovskaya says she has won the vote but Lukashenko's security forces have detained thousands of protesters, many of whom accused police of beatings and torture.

Several people have died in the crackdown but Belarusians have been demonstrating across the country for nearly a month, with more than 100,000 people flooding the streets of the capital Minsk for three straight weekends. Dozens of people including student protesters and journalists covering rallies were detained this week. On Saturday, around 4,000 people took to the streets and more than 90 people were detained, the interior ministry said.

'Strong when united'

Tikhonovskaya, a 37-year-old political novice, urged supporters to turn up for yesterday's "March of Unity" set to begin at 1100 GMT. "Remember we are strong as long as we are united," she said in a short video address. Tikhonovskaya contested the election after her blogger husband was jailed and barred from running along with several other prominent Lukashenko critics.

She left Belarus under pressure from authorities and took shelter in EU member Lithuania. On Friday, Tikhonovskaya addressed a meeting of the UN Security Council by video link, calling for sanctions against those responsible for the alleged electoral fraud and rights violations. The Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have blacklisted Lukashenko and 29 high-ranking officials in his administration but other members of the EU bloc appear reluctant to target the Belarus strongman personally.

Russia has said it will respond to any Western

attempts to "sway the situation" and President Vladimir Putin has raised the possibility of sending military support. Putin has been keen to unify Russia and Belarus, and Moscow has accompanied its recent offers of economic and military aid with calls for tighter integration. Lukashenko has in the past ruled out outright unification and sought to



Several people die in the crackdown

play Moscow against the West but his options now are limited. On Thursday, Lukashenko hosted Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and replaced the chief of the KGB security service in what some analysts said might have been done under pressure from Moscow.

The mustachioed leader said Russia and Belarus had agreed on issues they "could not agree earlier" and he planned to "dot all the i's" with Putin in Moscow in the next few weeks. Lukashenko made headlines when he claimed during a meeting with Mishustin that his security forces had intercepted German calls showing that Putin foe Alexei Navalny's poisoning with a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent had been faked. Belarusian state television broadcast the "intercept" in which a Mike in Warsaw and Nick in Berlin discuss Navalny's materials and call Lukashenko a "tough nut to crack."

Masked men

Masked security agents dragged students off the streets and bundled them into vans as new protests broke out against Belarusian President Alexander



MINSK: Belarus opposition supporters hold signs as they attend a rally to protest against the August 9 disputed presidential elections results in Minsk. — AFP

Lukashenko on Saturday on the fourth weekend since his disputed re-election. Up to 30 people were detained for taking part in unsanctioned protests, Russian news agency TASS quoted the Minsk police as saying.

Draped in red-and-white opposition flags, students staged protests in several places in the capital, including outside the Minsk State Linguistic Institute where police had arrested five people on Friday, local media footage showed. Elsewhere masked men dragged away students who had gathered at an eatery in Karl Marx Street in the centre of Minsk, while some of the protesters shouted "tribunal!", according to footage shown by news outlet

TUT.BY. Thousands of women later held a separate march through Minsk in the afternoon, shouting "hands off the children" as one of their slogans.

One woman went up to masked security forces standing in a line, showing them pictures of protesters with bruises on their bodies. The government has previously denied abusing detainees after many come out of prison following the election complaining of punishment beatings. Protesters later converged on a Catholic church in Independence Square, with hundreds crammed inside for a service, in solidarity with Minsk's archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz who was barred from re-entering Belarus on Monday. — Agencies

News in brief

India and China trade blames

NEW DELHI: India and China traded blame for rising tensions over their disputed Himalayan border on Saturday following their highest level meeting since a deadly clash in June. India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe released rival statements accusing each other of inflaming the showdown after talks late Friday on the sidelines of an international meeting in Moscow. Singh said they had "frank" discussions on the dispute and the strained relations between the world's two most populous countries. Their troops have had a number of showdowns since a clash in the Ladakh region on June 15 in which 20 Indian troops died. China has also acknowledged suffering casualties but not given figures. Both sides have since sent tens of thousands of troops to the remote, inhospitable region which sits at an altitude of more than 4,000 meters. — AFP

Turkey blasts Kosovo-Israel deal

ISTANBUL: Turkey yesterday voiced disappointment over majority-Muslim Kosovo's decision to recognize Israel and set up its mission in Jerusalem. A vocal advocate of the Palestinian cause, Turkey became one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. "Even the thought by Kosovo officials of taking such a step - which is a clear violation of international law - is disappointing," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement. The ministry called on the Kosovo leadership to avoid such steps that would harm the legal status of Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday Serbia will become the first European country to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem. Kosovo will also set up its Israel mission in Jerusalem and in exchange earn Israel's recognition, as it seeks to further legitimize its statehood. — AFP

Mexico 'excess deaths' study

MEXICO CITY: Mexico has recorded 122,765 deaths more than would be expected during the pandemic up to August, the health ministry said in a report on excess mortality rates, suggesting Mexico's true coronavirus toll could be much higher. Mexico has recorded 67,326 confirmed coronavirus deaths and 629,409 cases, the world's fourth highest death toll from the virus that has infected more than 26 million people around the globe. Mexico's government has often said the real number of infected people is likely to be significantly higher than the confirmed cases due to the low levels of testing. In its latest nationwide study about excess mortality rates, a globally recognized means of determining the impact of a pandemic, Mexico's ministry said 122,765 more people had died than expected between mid-March and Aug 1. Mexico's reported coronavirus deaths at the start of August stood at just over 47,000, suggesting more people may have been dying from the virus than originally reported. — Reuters

'It hurts to breathe,' black man shot by white police says

WASHINGTON: Jacob Blake, the young black man shot in the back multiple times by a white police officer in Wisconsin, said "it hurts to breathe" and that he was in constant pain in a video message from his hospital bed. Despite his injuries, which will likely leave him paralyzed from the waist down, Blake told his supporters "there's a lot more life to live."

"Your life, and not only just your life, your legs - something that you need to move around and forward in life - can be taken from you like this, man," Blake said, snapping his fingers, in the video released Saturday by his lawyer Ben Crump.



KENOSHA: Jacob Blake delivers a message from a hospital bed in Kenosha, Wisconsin on September 5, 2020. — AFP

Wearing a hospital gown, Blake said he had staples in his back and stomach. "Twenty-four hours, every 24 hours it's pain, it's nothing but pain," he said.

"It hurts to breathe, it hurts to sleep, it hurts to move from side-to-side, it hurts to eat," he said in the video, which has more than 400,000 views on

Twitter. "Please, I'm telling you, change your lives out there. We can stick together, make some money, make everything easier for our people out there, man, because there's so much time that's been wasted." The 29-year-old was gravely wounded when a policeman fired seven or eight shots at him as he tried to get into his car on August 23 in Kenosha, in the Midwestern state of Wisconsin. Three of his children were in the car at the time.

The scene was filmed by bystanders and the two police officers who were trying to stop or arrest Blake have been suspended. Coming three months after the death of George Floyd, Blake's shooting has touched off a new round of demonstrations in several cities. Protests in Kenosha began peacefully the night Blake was shot, but descended into violence for several nights running. It culminated August 25 when two people were shot dead. A 17-year-old white Trump supporter has been arrested and charged with murder. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden spoke with Blake by phone on Thursday and met with his family. — AFP



DIJON: Alain Cocq, suffering from an orphan disease of the blood, rests on his medical bed in his flat in Dijon, northeastern France. — AFP

Facebook blocks ill Frenchman from streaming his death

DIJON: Facebook said Saturday it would block the livestream of a Frenchman suffering from an incurable condition who wanted to broadcast his death on the social media platform. Earlier, Alain Cocq announced that he was now refusing all food, drink and medicine after President Emmanuel Macron turned down his request for euthanasia. Cocq, 57, who suffers from a rare condition which causes the walls of his arteries to stick together, said he believed he had less than a week to live and would broadcast his death from Saturday morning.

"The road to deliverance begins and believe me, I am happy," he wrote on Facebook shortly after midnight in a post announcing he had "finished his last meal". "I know the days ahead are going to be difficult but I have made my decision and I am calm," he added. Facebook has been increasingly criticized over the way it polices the content it carries and said Saturday its rules did not allow it to portray suicide. "Although we respect (Cocq's)

decision to want to draw attention to this complex question, following expert advice we have taken measures to prevent the live broadcast on Alain's account," a Facebook spokesman said. "Our rules do not allow us to show suicide attempts."

Calls on supporters

Cocq had been trying to post another video earlier Saturday when he messaged: "Facebook is blocking my video broadcast until September 8." "It is up to you now," he said in a message to supporters before giving out Facebook's French address "so you can let them know what you think about their methods of restricting free speech". "There will be a back-up within 24 hours" to run the video, he added.

Cocq had written to Macron asking to be given a substance that would allow him to die in peace but the president wrote back to him explaining this was not allowed under French law. Cocq has used his plight to draw attention to the situation of terminally ill patients in France who are unable to be allowed to die in line with their wishes. "Because I am not above the law, I am not able to comply with your request," Macron said in a letter to Cocq, which the patient published on his Facebook page. "I cannot ask anyone to go beyond our current legal framework... Your wish is to request active assistance in dying which is not currently permitted in our country." — AFP

Germany threatens sanctions over Alexei Navalny's poisoning

BERLIN: Germany, the current head of the European Union, will discuss possible sanctions against Russia over the poisoning of Alexei Navalny if the Kremlin does not provide an explanation soon, its foreign minister said yesterday. Russian opposition leader and anti-corruption campaigner Navalny fell ill on a flight last month and was treated in a Siberian hospital before being evacuated to Berlin. Germany said last week there was "unequivocal evidence" that President Vladimir Putin's top foe had been poisoned using Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok.

"We have high expectations of the Russian government to solve this serious crime," Heiko Maas told German daily Bild. "If the government has nothing to do with the attack, then it is in its own interest to back this up with facts." If Russia does not help clarify what happened "in the coming days", Germany will be compelled to "discuss a response with our allies," Maas said. The crime against Navalny was a violation of the international Chemical Weapons Convention and there must be an appropriate response, he said. "When we think about sanctions, they should be as targeted as possible."

Western leaders and many Russians have expressed horror at what Navalny's allies say is the first known use of chemical weapons against a high-profile opposition leader on Russian soil. The Kremlin has denied responsibility for the attack and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Germany is yet to share any findings with Moscow's prosecutors. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova yesterday accused Germany of stalling efforts to probe the Navalny case. "Berlin is stalling the process of investigation for which it's calling. On purpose?" she said on Facebook. Maas said there were "several indications" that Russia was behind the poisoning, in the strongest accusations yet from Germany. "The deadly substance with which Navalny was poisoned has in the past been found in the hands of Russian authorities. — AFP

International

Iran new school year begins amid concerns and criticism

Parents voicing concerns despite health protocols

TEHRAN: The school year in Iran began on Saturday after a near six-month shutdown due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, with parents voicing concerns despite authorities pledging to enforce health protocols. Some 15 million pupils in the Islamic republic returned to class, mostly remotely, as the country continues to battle its Covid-19 outbreak, the deadliest in the Middle East with over 22,000 killed and more than 384,000 infected since the first cases were confirmed in February.

The first day of classes at Nojavanan high school in northeastern Tehran was attended by a slew of officials and journalists, as well as students. President Hassan Rouhani appeared in a video to inaugurate the new academic year at the school—a break with tradition that drew fire from some Iranians online who thought he should have come in person if students were required to be present. Education Minister Mohsen Hajji-Mirzaei looked to assuage parents' concerns in a speech after he rang the bell to launch the new school year.

"I hope that families trust us and rest assured that the ministry will exercise utmost vigilance" regarding health protocols, he said. Pupils and other attendees wore masks and were required to pass through a disinfection tunnel, have their temperatures checked and sit socially distanced in the schoolyard. Other anti-virus measures at schools include keeping classes to 35 minutes and requiring students and staff to stay one meter (three feet) apart and wear masks, according to Iran's anti-virus taskforce.

Rouhani under fire

During his video address, Rouhani emphasised the need for students to observe health protocols, calling for the "utmost discipline" in respecting measures. Rouhani's choice not to attend the

opening ceremony in person drew criticism from some. "Rouhani rang the bell (to start the school year) remotely, then he expects me to send my son in person?" reformist journalist Maziar Khosravi wrote on Twitter.

Conservative film producer Mahmoud Razavi echoed Khosravi in a tweet, saying, "how can they expect people to trust protocols when the president himself does not, and send their loved ones to school?" Rouhani's government had come under fire before schools reopened, with the head of Iran's



Iran battles Covid; over 22,000 killed, 384,000 infected

medical council, Mohammadreza Zafarghandi, writing an open letter in which he called proposed health protocols counterproductive, as students could spread the virus if they were infected but asymptomatic.

'Stressful'

This concern was shared by some teachers, parents and students at Nojavanan high school. "Controlling (Covid-19's spread) is very difficult... as is teaching kids how to follow health protocols and social distancing," school principal, Nasrin Mobini said. "We are all concerned—my colleagues, the parents, everyone." Literature teacher Amiri, 60, said



TEHRAN: School children sit together in a classroom while mask-clad and distanced apart from each other (new COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic school precautions) with Iranian national flags on the first day of schools reopening at Nojavanan school. — AFP

the return of students to school was "stressful", but that it was important that the first classes be held in person so teachers and students can get to know each other. One parent, only giving her surname as Azaraksh, said she brought her son for the opening day with "concern", but she preferred in-person education if health protocols were "really" observed.

Many students shared their parents' worries, but were pleased to be back at school. "We're happy

that schools have reopened, but... it's still dangerous for us and others," said 14-year-old Askhan. Most classes are expected to be held remotely, though some pupils, including those in preschool and elementary school will attend classes in person intermittently. Ava Golkar, 33, the English department head at Soroush elementary school in northern Tehran, told AFP that only five pupils attended the opening day in person, while the rest watched via video streaming. — AFP

Powerful typhoon slams Japan with violent winds, rain

KAGOSHIMA: A powerful typhoon began to lash southern Japan yesterday, with officials warning it could bring record rainfall and winds strong enough to snap power line poles and flip cars. Typhoon Haishen, categorized as "large" and "extremely strong", has prompted evacuation advisories for more than three million residents, particularly in Kyushu—one of Japan's main islands—while the storm is expected to affect overnight.

The storm has weakened somewhat, shifting west from earlier forecasts, away from the mainland, and Japan's weather agency said it was no longer likely to issue its top-level typhoon warning. But it urged residents to exercise "most serious caution" for possible record rain, violent winds, high waves and surging tides. "Record-level rainfall is expected (where the typhoon approaches). It may cause landslides or it could cause even large rivers to flood," Yoshihisa Nakamoto, director of the forecast division at the Japan Meteorological Agency, said during a televised briefing.

He added that surging tides could cause widespread flooding in low-lying areas, particularly around river mouths. The storm passed over a string

of small islands near Kyushu yesterday afternoon, and footage showed strong gusts bending trees as walls of rain came down. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called an emergency cabinet meeting to coordinate the government's response to the storm, and warned of flooding and landslides. "Maximum caution is needed as record rain, violent winds, high waves and high tides are possible," he said.

"I ask the Japanese people, including those who live in high-risk areas for flooding rivers or high tides to stay informed and take action immediately to ensure their safety." At 3 pm, Haishen was located about 110 kilometers south-southwest of Yakushima island, packing gusts up to 216 km per hour—strong enough to overturn vehicles and snap wooden power line poles. The storm was forecast to move north-northwest and travel off the western coast of Kyushu from the evening through early Monday before reaching South Korea, according to the weather agency.

Evacuation orders, blackouts

Authorities across Japan's southern Kyushu island have issued evacuation advisories for nearly 2.5 million



KAGOSHIMA: Women walk in heavy rain as Typhoon Haishen hits Kagoshima, Kagoshima prefecture yesterday. — AFP

residents, particularly in Kagoshima and neighboring Miyazaki, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Across the country, non-compulsory evacuation orders and advisories covered some 3.5 million residents, according to national broadcaster NHK. Evacuation orders in Japan are not compulsory, though authorities strongly urge people to follow them. Local officials have asked people, however, to avoid crowded shelters if possible to reduce the risk of coronavirus infections, so in many places residents have checked into hotels.

"I live near a river, and I wanted to

go to a safe place and thought about the coronavirus too," a woman in Miyazaki told NHK after bringing her family to a local hotel. The storm has forced the cancellation of nearly 550 flights and disrupted train services, NHK said. And power outages were reported in parts of Okinawa, as well as Kagoshima, where some 30,000 homes were without electricity even before the storm arrived. Toyota said it would suspend operations at three plants in Kyushu until Monday evening, while other companies, including Canon and Mitsubishi Electric, reportedly planned to take similar measures. — AFP

Mali ill-equipped army in spotlight after coup

BAMAKO: Mali's army, which staged last month's coup in the war-torn nation, is taking on a role in politics despite being hamstrung by a crippling lack of resources. The August 18 putsch came after months of protests against ousted leader Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and sent shockwaves across a region beset by jihadist attacks and grinding poverty.

The country's neighbors, and its ally and former colonial ruler France, called for a swift transfer of power over fears of even more instability as Mali grapples with an Islamist insurgency, ethnic violence and economic malaise. Its fourth coup in 60 years as an independent nation came with the army intervening to seize control of a situation that was becoming increasingly unmanageable. Junta leader Colonel Assimi Goita is a taciturn man whose statements have been brief and not revealed much.

The 37-year-old son of a former military police official served in the main cities of the sprawling country's volatile north which has been ravaged by insurgency since 2012. He rose rapidly through the ranks and headed an elite unit. He also underwent training in Germany, Gabon and the United

States and is a highly competent military man. "He is a young man who is very hands-on but not loquacious," said Kissima Gakou, a former strategic adviser to the defense ministry for 12 years.

However, the 13,000-strong military is fighting an uphill battle against the insurgency and jihadist attacks that have claimed thousands of lives. A soldier from an elite unit, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, recalled a deadly ambush in the country's centre in September which killed four of his comrades when armed

men on motorbikes attacked their convoy. "After that I wanted to quit the army," he said. "But I'm still here, because there is no work. What else can I do?"

Military camps without water

The force has the Herculean task of securing an area two-and-a-half times the size of France from different groups allied to Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State and various militia groups, some fighting for the government and others against. Troop rotations are not fixed and soldiers can remain on hostile terrain in barracks susceptible to attacks for up to nine months at a stretch. "The state of the army is catastrophic," said former security adviser Gakou. — AFP



BAMAKO: A soldier stands next to supporters of the CNSP (National Committee for the Salvation of the People) as they celebrate during a gathering at the start of two days of talks aimed at validating the terms of reference for a transitional government in Mali. — AFP

Bangladesh mosque death toll rises to 24

NARAYANGANJ: The death toll from a gas explosion that tore through a Bangladesh mosque has risen to 24, officials said yesterday, as rescuers described how survivors jumped into a nearby open sewer to escape the flames. Worshippers were at Friday evening prayers when the blast sent a ball of fire through the mosque in the central district of Narayanganj near the capital Dhaka, emergency services said. Eight more people - including the mosque's imam and muezzin, who led prayers - died overnight taking the toll to 24, said Samanta Lal Sen, a spokesman for a specialist burns hospital in Dhaka.

"The conditions of 13 injured people were critical. Bodies of some of the injured were 70-80 percent burnt," he told AFP, adding there were fears the toll could climb higher. "It is tough to survive if anyone has more than 30 percent of his body burnt." Forty-five people in total were injured, police said. Mohammad Salim said he rushed to the mosque after the explosion, adding the blast's shock waves shook the neighborhood.

He said burnt worshippers threw themselves into an open sewer next to the mosque. "They wailed 'save, save us' as they rolled in the sewer water to cool their burnt bodies. Their faces were charred and were beyond recognition," Salim, who lost two cousins and a brother-in-law in the explosion said. "I lifted three of them out of water. As I touched them, their skin peeled out from their bodies. We took them to a hospital on rickshaws." There has been growing anger over the incident after the committee running the mosque alleged the state-run gas transmission firm had earlier demanded a bribe to fix the leaks quickly. — AFP

Australia virus epicenter extends hard lockdown

MELBOURNE: Australia's coronavirus hot spot state of Victoria yesterday extended a hard lockdown in its capital Melbourne until Sept. 28, as the infection rate has declined more slowly than hoped. "We cannot open up at this time. If we were to we would lose control very quickly," State Premier Daniel Andrews told a televised media conference yesterday. The hard lockdown was ordered on Aug. 2 in response to a second wave of infections, that erupted in Melbourne.

Australia's second most populous state has been the epicenter of a second wave of the novel coronavirus, now accounting for about 75% of the country's 26,282 cases and 90% of its 753 deaths. Victoria yesterday reported 63 new COVID-19 infections and five deaths, down from a peak of 725 new cases on Aug. 5. By contrast, Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, has had no more than 13 cases a day since early August.

Melbourne's stage 4 restrictions, which had been due to end on Sept. 13, shut most of the economy, limited people's movements to a tight zone around their homes for one hour a day and imposed a night time curfew. From Sept. 14, the rules won't be quite as tough, as the curfew will begin an hour later at 9 pm, and people can go outdoors for two hours instead of one, while those living alone will be allowed to have a visitor.

If the infection rate subsides as hoped by the end of September, Andrews said restrictions would be relaxed gradually over the subsequent two months, though some businesses would have to remain shut through late November. Andrews said modeling showed cases would continue to average around 60 a day by next weekend, and if the state opened up too quickly it would be on track for a third wave by mid-November. "You've got to defeat the second wave and do it properly. Otherwise you just begin a third wave. A third wave will mean we can't do the economic repair that people desperately want us to do," Andrews said.

The federal government has blamed the lockdown in Victoria for dragging Australia deeper into its first recession in nearly 30 years, while other states have largely reopened their economies. "Today's announcement from the Victorian government to extend lockdown arrangements will be hard and crushing news for the people of Victoria and a further reminder of the impact and costs that result from not being able to contain outbreaks of COVID-19," Prime Minister Scott Morrison said in a statement. The pandemic has resulted in the loss of around 500,000 jobs in Victoria, including 250,000 under the stage 4 restrictions.

Business groups were disappointed with the slow reopening outlined by Andrews. "We can't continue to let business and jobs be decimated on the way to controlling the spread of the virus," Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief Paul Guerra told reporters. After Sept. 28, if daily infection rates have dropped to between 30 and 50 for 14 days, child care, construction sites, manufacturing plants, and warehouses, will go back to normal, allowing 101,000 workers to return to their jobs. Schools will also partially reopen and outdoor gatherings of up to five people would be allowed. — Reuters

Business

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

‘Made in Hong Kong’ brand suffers amid crisis Economic consequences ripple through the recession-hit hub

HONG KONG: At the Koon Chun Sauce Factory workers are scrambling to cover hundreds of thousands of bottles with new “Made in China” labels as the popular Hong Kong brand falls victim to spiralling diplomatic tensions.

Founded nearly a century ago, the family-owned factory has survived a world war, multiple economic crises and the slow withering of Hong Kong’s manufacturing base as companies looked for cheaper labor in mainland China.

It remains one of the financial hub’s most enduring brands, churning out culinary staples such as soy, hoisin and oyster sauces found in Chinese restaurants and kitchens around the world. But from November it can no longer place the words “Made in Hong Kong” on any products exported to the United States—part of Washington’s response to Beijing imposing a tough new security law on the restless city. The new rules, announced by US Customs in July, came just two days before a Koon Chun shipment of 1,300 boxes was about to set sail for Atlanta. The factory suddenly had to re-label the entire shipment and all other cargo the firm planned to ship to the US this summer.

“It was a mission impossible,” Daniel Chan told AFP from the factory his great-grandfather founded in 1928. China blanketed Hong Kong in a new security law to stamp out huge and often violent pro-democracy protests that convulsed the city last year. Both Beijing and local authorities said it would have no impact on businesses and would restore stability.

Impossible situation

But economic consequences have rippled through the recession-hit hub as authorities use the new powers to pursue political opponents.

Rattled tech firms have declined to share data with local police while some companies and universities are struggling to attract international talent.

Banks have found themselves caught in an impossible situation. The US has sanctioned key Chinese and Hong Kong officials in response to the law. But that same security law also forbids companies from complying with any foreign sanctions regime.

Another victim has been the “Made in Hong Kong” brand, a label that companies can place on products made exclusively in the city.

Donald Trump has turned increasingly hawkish towards China as he seeks re-election, and the crackdown on democracy supporters in Hong Kong has given him fresh ammunition. This summer his administration declared Hong Kong no longer sufficiently autonomous to justify special trading status. Instead it would be treated like any other Chinese city. Chan, who studied at Harvard in the US, said he expected the political landscape would shift in Hong Kong. But he never thought it would come so fast.

“I envisioned something closer to 2047, when Hong Kong is officially without One Country Two Systems,” Chan said, referring to the China promise to let Hong Kong keep key liberties and autonomy for 50 years after the 1997 handover from Britain. The past few weeks have been a blur of activity at the sauce factory as its 90 employees try to adjust to the new reality.

Political fiasco

On top of the stop-gap stickers, new labels are being drawn up for US exports—the large “Made in Hong Kong” lettering replaced with a much smaller “Made in China” declaration. Much time has been spent rearranging storage for now-delayed cargo shipments. Companies were given a reprieve when Hong Kong’s commerce minister Edward Yau said Washington had postponed the label rule until early November, after the presidential election. “This buys us a little bit of time,” Chan said.

But he described it as “a short-term solution to



HONG KONG: Workers sort bottles of soy sauce on a production line at the Koon Chun Sauce Factory in Hong Kong, which produces soy, hoisin and oyster sauces found in Chinese restaurants and kitchens around the world. — AFP

this whole politically inspired fiasco”. Yau has slammed the labeling change and threatened to take the US to the World Trade Organization.

He also stressed that Hong Kong-made shipments to the US were worth just HK\$3.7 billion (\$480 million) in 2019, less than 0.1 percent of the city’s gross exports. But that is little consolation for Chan who says around half his products go to the US, where the brand is especially popular with

the large Chinese diaspora in North America. “I would say we are the only company which is only based in Hong Kong and still doing this kind of mass production and shipping it to US,” he said. Looking ahead, Chan fears more international markets may follow America. “In 20 years, 30 years from now, people will only have ‘Made in China’ and forget about Hong Kong,” Chan said. “That’s very sad.” — AFP

News in brief

Kuwait ETF launched

KUWAIT: Kuwait saw the launch of its first MSCI-listed exchange traded fund, KWT, this past week. The ETF will track equities listed on the local bourse. The index is designed to “represent the performance of the broad Kuwait equity universe,” according to the MSCI fact sheet. Kuwait equity universe includes securities that are classified in Kuwait according to the MSCI Global Investable Market Index Methodology, together with companies that are headquartered or listed in Kuwait and carry out the majority of their operations in Kuwait. The top 10 constituents of the index are: National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House, Ahli United Bank, Mobile Telecom co, Agility, Mabane Co, Gulf Bank, Human Soft Holdings, Boubyan Petrochemicals and Warba Bank.

Kuwait to award LNG import tender soon

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is expected to select a winner for an estimated \$100 million tender to run the liquefied natural gas import facility, Reuters reported. The tender would award a five-year contract for the operation and maintenance of an LNG import plant at the Al-Zour petrochemicals complex in south Kuwait, the third largest LNG facility in the world. An Italian, Greek and Spanish consortium of energy firms is competing for the tender.

Israeli business delegations to visit UAE

TEL AVIV: The heads of Israel’s two biggest banks will travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this month, the first such visits since the two countries agreed to normalize relations. One delegation led by Bank Hapoalim will leave on Sept. 8 and visit Abu Dhabi and Dubai, where it will meet with government and trade officials as well as the heads of the largest banks in the UAE.

Hapoalim CEO Dov Kottler on Sunday called it “a unique opportunity to establish economic relations and cooperation between our countries and their financial systems, which will yield economic growth for both parties.” He added there was an “immediate bilateral desire” to establish strong economic ties. The chairman and CEO of Bank Leumi will head a second delegation on Sept. 14. Leumi said it hoped to build on the diplomatic accord by kick-starting cooperation in finance, technology, health, tourism, agriculture and industry. Israel and the UAE announced in August they would normalize diplomatic ties and forge a broad new relationship in a U.S.-brokered deal. Last week, they agreed to set up a joint committee to cooperate on financial services, aiming to promote investment between the two countries. — Reuters

TikTok narrows gap between Beijing, Yiming

BEIJING/HONG KONG: ByteDance founder Zhang Yiming has long positioned himself as a global internet entrepreneur, largely eschewing Chinese government involvement, but US demands to sell his crown jewel TikTok are testing the boundaries with Beijing. A year ago, ByteDance was approached by the Chinese government with offers of help when TikTok, a short-video app with a huge following among young people globally, faced political heat in India, a source familiar with the situation told Reuters. But the company sent only mid-level staff to meet with government officials, signalling that the company wanted to go it alone.

The 38-year-old Zhang, who has trodden a different path to other high-profile Chinese tech tycoons, shifted tack in August when President Donald Trump threatened to ban TikTok in the United States unless it was sold to a US firm. Zhang’s team sought a meeting on its behalf with China’s ambassador in Washington, Cui Tiankai, two sources familiar with the matter said.

While Zhang was only hoping for an informal chat with Cui to seek advice, his approach was seen as a turning point, government and industry sources told Reuters. The embassy directed the ByteDance team to the foreign ministry in Beijing. Although no further talks took place, and Cui and Zhang did not speak, the Chinese government interpreted the approach as a signal that ByteDance was open to assistance.

China entered the fray on August 28, by revising a tech export control list that experts said would give them regulatory oversight over any TikTok deal. Reuters could not determine if Beijing’s interpretation of Zhang’s approach and the Chinese government move were linked.

One of the sources said that by standing up for

UK warns EU on Brexit: We won’t blink first

LONDON: Britain will not blink first in Brexit trade negotiations with the European Union and is not scared of a no-deal exit at the end of the year, the country’s top Brexit negotiator warned the bloc yesterday. Britain left the EU on Jan. 31 but talks have so far made little headway on agreeing a new trade deal for when a status-quo transition arrangement ends in December.

“We came in after a government and negotiating team that had blinked and had its bluff called at critical moments and the EU had learned not to take our word seriously,” negotiator David Frost told the Mail yesterday. “So a lot of what we are trying to do this year is to get them to realize that we mean what we say and they should take our position seriously,” he was quoted as saying.

Talks are due to resume in London on Tuesday but they have stalled over Britain’s insistence that it



Zhang Yiming, founder and global CEO of ByteDance, poses in Palo Alto, California. — Reuters

ByteDance, Beijing wanted to demonstrate to private companies caught in the crossfire of China-US strategic competition that the country is firmly behind them. “We want to show all other countries that this is what the Chinese government will do if you bully any of our companies, so don’t follow what the US is doing,” the source said.

The diplomatic dance taking place around TikTok follows years of acrimony between Washington and Beijing over the role of China’s Huawei Technologies, which the US has alleged is effectively a Trojan horse for Chinese espionage. Huawei and Beijing have repeatedly denied any such activity.

Asked about its engagement with ByteDance, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said he was not aware of the specifics of the situation, adding that the United States was over-generalizing the concept of national security and abusing its power. “Not only does it go against market principles and international rules, it is a mockery to the principles of market economy and fair competition that the US prides itself on,” he added.

A senior US administration official said China had blocked U.S. tech companies such as Facebook and Twitter for years and the United States’ actions were designed to protect the private information of its citizens. “We’re just very concerned that, essentially, anything that could be done on that platform

have full autonomy over state aid and its demands over fishing. Britain says the EU is dragging its feet in talks and has failed to fully accept that it is now an independent country.

“We are not going to be a client state. We are not going to compromise on the fundamentals of having control over our own laws,” Frost told the Mail. “We are not going to accept level playing field provisions that lock us in to the way the EU do things.” “That’s what being an independent country is about, that’s what the British people voted for and that’s what will happen at the end of the year, come what may,” Frost said.

At heart, Britain is pressing one of the EU’s most sensitive buttons – the fear that a post-Brexit Britain could become a much more agile, deregulated free-market competitor on its border by using selective state aid. “We cannot have a situation where the UK essentially is allowed to deregulate its economy to create competitive advantage in terms of reducing the cost base of doing business or indeed providing more state aid than is available in the EU single market and therefore creates competitive advantage that it’s looking to trade into tariff-free and quota-free,” Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said.

would be subject to the Chinese Communist Party’s algorithmic attempts to control human behavior worldwide.” The Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. ByteDance declined to comment. TikTok has said it would not comply with any request to share user data with the Chinese authorities.

Political football

China had originally considered speeding up the launch of an “entity list” to punish foreign companies, groups and individuals deemed harmful to its interests, a government source with direct knowledge of the matter said. But this was dropped as a countermeasure to the Trump administration’s move to ban transactions with ByteDance and Tencent’s WeChat because it would have escalated tensions and was replaced instead by the rules published last week.

Zhang did not know of the tech export rule revisions ahead of time, two sources told Reuters, and the company’s view is that it ultimately prefers to be free to make its own decisions, according to one of the sources. Others close to the TikTok sale talks say the move threw a spanner in the works of already-complicated negotiations and could scupper any deal.

China’s commerce ministry, which published revisions to the tech export control list, did not respond to a request for comment. ByteDance is negotiating with a Microsoft-Walmart coalition, and a competing investor consortium led by software firm Oracle, on a sale of TikTok that could be worth as much as \$30 billion. ByteDance is still keen not to become a “political football” and prefers to use legal means rather than rely on government backing to resolve the issue, the source said. The company is suing to block one of Trump’s orders.

“I doubt having the government speak up for this company can do much in helping it gain market access into another country,” said Chu Yin, a Chinese scholar with the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think-tank.

“ByteDance might fare better if it can share some interests with its competitors in the U.S.,” he added. — Reuters



EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker (right) shakes hands with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (left) prior to their meeting in this file photo on September 16, 2019 in Luxembourg. — AFP

“Why would the EU ever facilitate that?” he said. Frost said a lot of preparation had been done for a possible exit without a trade deal.

“I don’t think that we are scared of this at all,” Frost said. “If we can reach an agreement that regulates trade like Canada’s, great. If we can’t, it will be an Australian-like trading agreement and we are fully ready for that.” — Reuters

Business

Russian former Gulag town on China's doorstep eyes rebirth

Svobodny eyes new lease of life with mega projects

SVOBODNY, Russia: The remote Russian town of Svobodny has languished in misery for decades but the launch of new mega-projects with their sights set on nearby China is expected to give it a new lease on life. In the center of a town that once served as headquarters of one of the largest Soviet-era Gulag camps, children huddle around a small skate park, the sole attraction of the drab Lenin Square.

Svobodny's roads are riddled with potholes, and many buildings are dilapidated and crumbling.

Few streets have modern pavements, and just over 15 percent of public spaces are illuminated. Heavy rainfall frequently leaves streets flooded, and tap water sometimes turns reddish brown.

But the recent emergence of new sports facilities and streets being dug up signal the beginning of an ambitious project to transform Svobodny by 2030. "We have prepared a roadmap for the city's development," said mayor Vladimir Konstantinov.

Konstantinov hopes that Svobodny-whose name means "free" in Russian-can eventually become one of the "Far East's most beautiful cities" and offer its residents a new quality of life. Over the past decade Vladimir Putin's government has spent billions of dollars to renovate Soviet-era towns and cities, and in 2017 authorities approved a 50 billion ruble (\$663 million) plan to transform Svobodny.

Construction projects

Authorities want Svobodny to become one of Russia's fastest-growing cities and a top industrial hub that will benefit from its proximity to China. Russia's tensions with the West and Moscow's pivot to Beijing give those plans new urgency. Outside the town of 54,000 people, construction of two huge plants is under way.

Energy giant Gazprom is building what it says will be one of the largest gas processing plants in the world, part of its Power of Siberia project with China. In August, petrochemicals company Sibur began early work on a huge gas polymer plant that will also serve

Asian markets. Svobodny's population has dropped by a third since before the fall of the Soviet Union, but the master plan foresees the arrival of a new workforce.

Tens of thousands of people will work on-site at the peak of construction and Svobodny's population may double in several years, according to Strelka KB, the country's top urban consulting firm working on the project. Founded as a gold-mining settlement, Svobodny earned notoriety as headquarters of the Baikal Amur Collective Labour Camp (Bamlag). Set up in 1932, the gulag housed hundreds of thousands of prisoners who built the Baikal-Amur mainline railway. In later years Svobodny was a busy industrial centre but most of the manufacturing plants closed in the early 1990s.

'Takeaway coffee'

Some locals like Ilya Kutuyrov note that Svobodny-which suffers from power cuts and offers limited leisure opportunities-has begun to change. "In the morning, I can now find takeaway coffee here," said the 34-year-old who has lived in the town for the past two years.

A website has been set up to crowdsource development ideas from locals, and older residents say they

want to see more public spaces for young people to keep them in Svobodny, said Semyon Moskalik, project director at Strelka. He said that in its work on Svobodny, Strelka used some modern American and Canadian cities "as inspiration".

But many online critics have accused authorities of being "dreamers" or seeking to "line their pockets".

Mayor Konstantinov acknowledged that some residents were against the massive overhaul but most recognize that the town needs the huge industrial plants to develop. "Out of 54,000 people around 85 percent understand everything perfectly well and say that if not for these two plants Svobodny would find itself in a very difficult situation," he said. Strelka's Moskalik said the resistance of some locals did not surprise him. "It's hard to believe that all these plans one day will come true," he said. "The contrast seems too big between reality and the pictures we show." —AFP

support people who did nothing wrong," he said. The Fed chair specifically raised concerns about families facing the loss of their homes, telling the broadcaster, "We shouldn't let those people lose everything they have and have to move out or be evicted."

"It could have significant macroeconomic effects over time. But it's also just the right thing to do."

Labor Department data released earlier in the day showed the world's largest economy added 1.4 million new jobs in August and the unemployment rate dropped to 8.4 percent. However, there were indications of weakness in the monthly report, particularly given the rising share of people being permanently laid off, as well as the large numbers of job gains from temporary hiring to staff the US census count.

Powell said the report showed "significant improvement" in the hiring situation and was not necessarily indicative of a slowing recovery, and he remained optimistic the economy would bounce back. The Fed cut its benchmark lending rate to zero and rolled out trillions of dollars in liquidity as the pandemic arrived. Last month, it announced a new policy framework that would keep interest rates lower for longer in an effort to maximize employment. —AFP

fuel to the fire on the downside," said Jeffrey Kleintop, chief global investment strategist at Charles Schwab in Boston.

The Nasdaq had powered the stock market's stellar recovery from the coronavirus-led crash, climbing as much as 82 percent from March lows. The benchmark S&P 500 and Dow had surged about 60 percent from their troughs. Earlier on Friday, the Labor Department's closely watched employment report showed the jobless rate improved to 8.4 percent from 10.2 percent in July, better than analysts had anticipated. Nonfarm payrolls, however, increased less than expected last month.

Kleintop argued that the jobs news did little to help the progress of stalled talks for a fresh coronavirus stimulus package among sharply divided lawmakers in Washington. "It wasn't wonderful enough to get the market excited enough that we don't need any more stimulus. On the other hand it wasn't weak enough to bring the two sides in Washington together to extend that stimulus package," he said. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 159.42 points, or 0.56 percent, to close at 28,133.31, the S&P 500 lost 28.1 points, or 0.81 percent, to 3,426.96 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 144.97 points, or 1.27 percent, to 11,313.13.

The communication services, consumer discretionary and technology indexes posted Friday's steepest percentage declines among the 11 major S&P sectors. Only three S&P sectors ended the day higher including financials which was powered by a 2.2 percent gain in its bank subsector index. Also, the S&P 1500 airlines sub index rose 1.85 percent for the day. For the week the S&P 500 fell 2.31 percent after five consecutive weeks of gains. The Dow dropped 1.82 percent for the week and the Nasdaq lost 3.27 percent for the week and clocked its biggest two-day drop since March 17 between Thursday and Friday. —Reuters



Residents skeptic about overhaul



Children play on their smart phones next to a monument to the founder of the Soviet Union Vladimir Lenin in the town of Svobodny, far eastern Russia. —AFP

Spain's property portals see record usage despite slump

MADRID: Spain's property portals are betting historically low interest rates and incoming European aid will boost real estate, but data show sales diving, household debt rising and prices flatlining even after Spain's lockdown ended in June. Fotocasa and Idealista, two of Spain's largest property portals, saw record user activity in the past three months.

Fotocasa communications director Anaïs Lopez highlighted a 40% year-on-year jump in traffic in June.

"All the real estate agencies we work with say they're seeing unprecedented interest in changing homes," Lopez said, adding that Fotocasa's page visits and contact rates were well above pre-pandemic summer averages. Idealista spokesman Benat del Coso said online mortgage brokerage requests over the summer were 20 percent higher than normal.

But Bank of Spain data show house sales in freefall, despite intensified interest from Spaniards who dread spending a second confinement in the same residence and prefer spacious homes with gardens and balconies. Nationwide, house sales plunged 43 percent to 75,000 in the second quarter, the Bank of Spain said last week, with transactions in traditionally red-hot markets like Madrid and Barcelona falling 20.2 percent and 17.3 percent respectively. —Reuters

Pandemic worsens inequality in US, says Fed chair

WASHINGTON: Poor Americans are bearing the brunt of the US coronavirus downturn and may also take longer to recover, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said. "Without question, this event has exacerbated really pre-existing disparities in our economy that were already troubling," Powell said in an interview with National Public Radio.

He said help should be given to people who have lost their livelihoods due to Covid-19 through no fault of their own—comments that come amid an impasse in Washington over a new aid package to offset the economic damage from the virus. "The burdens of the pandemic have fallen to a greater extent on people at the low end of the income spectrum," Powell said, especially low-wage employees who rent and have little savings, who are "very vulnerable to an extended period of unemployment."

"I think it really does behoove us as a country, as a very wealthy country, to use our great powers to

Tech-heavy Nasdaq falls amid selloff

NEW YORK: The Nasdaq closed lower on Friday though well above its session low as selling eased late in the day after investors dumped heavyweight technology stocks due to concerns about high valuations and a patchy economic recovery. The major indexes regained some ground in late afternoon though trading was still volatile.

At its lowest point of the day the tech-heavy Nasdaq fell as much as 9.9 percent from its record high reached on Wednesday and the S&P 500 dipped briefly below its pre-crisis record, reached in February, although it too closed well off session lows. Mega-cap companies such as Apple Inc, Microsoft Inc, Amazon.com Inc and Facebook Inc also pared losses though of that group only Apple managed a very tiny gain for the day. "You had a significant sell-off on Thursday, some follow-through in the morning and then we stabilized. The selling was pretty fierce," said Michael Antonelli, market strategist at Baird in Milwaukee.

"Corrections like this have been quick and severe lately. We don't know if it's over," he said. "The fact we stabilized today could be a good sign." While Thursday's sell-off already reflected investor fears that valuations for the Nasdaq high-flyers had overheated, the worries were exacerbated on Friday by the Financial Times (FT) and others reporting that options trading by Japan's Softbank had inflated these stocks. "We've started to see signs of weakness in the last few days, notably yesterday. Then you get a headline like the FT story. That really adds



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Business

Japan's Suga signals ultra-easy monetary policy to continue

Economy still struggling with impact of pandemic

TOKYO: Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, a frontrunner to be the next prime minister, said he would like the central bank to continue its ultra-loose monetary policy as the economy is still struggling with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

In an interview that ran on Saturday in the Nikkei newspaper, Suga also said he would consider compiling another economic stimulus package by the end of this year to "put the pandemic to an end and shift the economy to a new stage." "I highly approve of his handling of monetary policy," Suga said of BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda, who undertook bold easing steps that were part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's "Abenomics" stimulus strategy.

"I want to carry over (the bold easing steps)," he was quoted as saying by the paper.

The remarks reinforce expectations that Suga will continue with many of Abe's pro-growth economic policies as the pandemic adds to the pain of an economy already in deep recession.

Suga told Nikkei he would take steps to revitalize smaller firms by promoting consolidation and boosting competitiveness. He also expressed hope of cre-

ating a new government agency to promote digitalization of government services and various industries such as healthcare, as delays on this front have slowed payouts to companies and households hit by COVID-19.

"I know there could be resistance, but we should move forward on this," Suga said of his plan to allow clinics to permanently offer medical treatment online.

Japan currently allows online treatment only as a temporary step to accommodate patients having difficulty visiting hospitals due to COVID-19.

Suga is widely expected to win the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) leadership election on Sept. 14, set after Abe's decision to step down. The winner is virtually assured of becoming premier due to the LDP's parliamentary majority. Markets have been rife with speculation that Suga, upon becoming prime minister, may call a snap election in coming months to solidify his political grip.

"What people want most from the government is to deal with the pandemic and create a safe environment to live," Suga told a television program, when asked whether he would call an early snap election if he becomes Japan's new leader. —Reuters



Another stimulus package likely by year-end

AUB congratulates Al-Hassad weekly draw winners

KUWAIT: In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw on 02 September 2020 of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait and has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Al-Hassad Islamic account offers over 800 prizes, Over 12 Month Period and has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners.

The bank and announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Bothaynah Abdulrahman Al-Julaibi, Najat Ali Ahmad, Saleh Hamad Saleh, Younes Abdullah Al-Habeeb, Meazi Dhaifallah Al-Mutairi, Faisal Saleh Al-Eidan, Hasan Mohammad Hasan, Faeqah Ali Al-Youhah, Talal Ahmad Al-Khudhur, Abdulrahman Mahmoud Al-Khanji, Shaikhah Ayedh Al-Mutairi, Fouzeyah Ali Hasan, Bader Jaser Al-Najdi, Latifah Mohammad Al-Anjeri, Mohammad Khairi Abdulkareem, Kawthar Kadhem Al-Jadi, Ahmad Abbas Abdullah, Badriya Nasser Al-Khaldi, Hameed Salman Al-Hussaini And Salem Mnahi Al-Owais.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. On top of that, Al-Hassad offers a monthly draw of KD 100,000, as well as 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years.

For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account. It is worth mentioning that Al-Hassad Islamic account has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Such features include the simplest and easiest program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, unique draws during Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, loyalty multipliers, unique online account opening feature, transparent draws held during radio shows with live broadcast on the Bank's social media platforms.

Britain names Australia's Abbott as trade adviser

LONDON: Britain appointed Australia's former prime minister Tony Abbott as a trade adviser as it seeks to agree new post-Brexit deals, despite criticism over his personal views. Abbott, 62, is among several senior figures from a range of backgrounds who will advise the government on trade and invest-

ment but "will have no direct role in striking trade deals", the UK government said in a statement.

Britain is forging its own international trade policy for the first time in decades following its split with the European Union, and is currently negotiating deals with Brussels, the United States, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. "At a time of increased protectionism and global insecurity, it's vital that the UK is a strong voice for open markets and that we play a meaningful role in reshaping global trading rules alongside like-minded countries," International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said.

"The new board will help us do that, bringing together a diverse group of people who share



TOKYO: Pedestrians walk past an electronic quotation board showing numbers of the Nikkei 225 index in Tokyo. —AFP

World Bank cancels loan for disputed Lebanon dam

WASHINGTON: The World Bank said it was canceling a loan to fund a dam in Lebanon that environmentalists claimed could destroy a valley rich in biodiversity.

The Bisri Dam was partially suspended in June after the Washington-based development lender said it raised concerns about the project's implementation, and given the government of Lebanon until September 4 to finalize key agreements related to operations and maintenance as well as the environment. In a statement, the World Bank said it had notified the government that it was withdrawing its financing "due to non-completion of the tasks that are preconditions to the commencement of construction."

"The canceled portion of the loan is \$244 million and the cancellation is effective immediately," the bank said. Located in a valley 30 kilometers (20

miles) south of the capital, the dam aims to supply drinking water as well as irrigation for 1.6 million residents. Environmentalists and some farmers had disputed assurances from the government and the World Bank that the dam, to be built on a seismic fault line, does not increase the risk of earthquakes.

Roland Nassour, an activist who has campaigned against the project, said he was delighted the loan had been cancelled. "Today one of the corruption deals in the country has collapsed," said Nassour, the coordinator of the Save Bisri initiative, adding that popular anger had made the project a "burden" for the global lender.

'Glimmer of hope'

Eddy Akl, the owner of land expropriated by the state to build the dam, said the loan's withdrawal was a step in the right direction. "The decision is of course positive. But our other battle will be for the state to hand us back our land," he said. "It's a glimmer of hope, but no one knows what the state has in store for us next." On social media, users shared the image of a stork flying across a valley in blossom, carrying a banner that read: "We saved the Bisri valley." "Finally some good news in 2020," one wrote.



The World Bank said it was canceling a loan to fund a dam in Lebanon that environmentalists claimed could destroy a valley rich in biodiversity

Gebran Bassil, the head of the president's Free Patriotic Movement political party and a backer of the project, claimed the Lebanese public would ask for a dam again soon. "There will come a day when the Lebanese state, and with it the people of Beirut, Jezzine, Saida, Chouf, Baabda and Aley will ask for the Bisri dam to be funded," he wrote on Twitter. "The need for water will become apparent... and nothing will do except to secure a new loan to return to the same dam." —AFP

Fast take: The jobs report and US presidential race

WASHINGTON: An unexpectedly steep drop in the US unemployment rate last month looks to offer fresh ammunition for President Donald Trump as he stumps for votes contending he is the better choice for the US economy in the run-up to the Nov 3 presidential election.

But the Labor Department's monthly jobs report also contains tinder for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden to make his own case against Trump's economic stewardship, with fewer job gains and widening disparity among racial groups. Trump was quick off the draw with his take: "Great Jobs Numbers!" he tweeted, adding that the unemployment rate had fallen below 10 percent, the peak during the Great Recession, sinking "faster and deeper than thought possible."

Biden, meanwhile, took Trump's economic stewardship to task in a campaign speech on Friday. "The economic pain remains unrelenting for millions of working people from every race and background who aren't getting the relief they need." Historically, incumbent presidential candidates are hurt by a weak economy, and the coronavirus pandemic touched off the worst quarter in modern U.S. economic history. But a sharp recovery could offset that.

With just one more national employment scorecard due before Election Day, here's a look at some highlights of

Friday's report and what they may mean for each political candidate:

Falling unemployment

At 8.4 percent, the unemployment rate is lower than many top economists had expected it to be even by the end of the year. The drop surprised economists, who forecast a slide to 9.8 percent from July's 10.2 percent. While still well above the pre-crisis rate of 3.5 percent, the steep downward trajectory plays into Trump's narrative of a quick return to a strong economy as businesses re-open.

Slowing job gains

Including the 1.37 million jobs gained in August, US employment has recouped just about half its losses since the crisis began, still leaving the total number of employed short by 11.5 million compared with six months earlier. Moreover, the pace of gains has slowed, particularly in the hard-hit leisure and hospitality sector. Just 174,000 leisure and hospitality jobs were created in August, less than 10 percent of new jobs in the sector created in June. "If this sector has run out of steam, high levels of joblessness will last longer than initially thought," wrote Nick Bunker, chief economist at job search website Indeed. In fact, private-sector hiring overall at just over 1 million fell well short of the median estimate among economists in a Reuters poll, and the big overall driver was government hiring - mostly for 238,000 short-term jobs for the 2020 US Census.

Widening racial gap

The strengthening job market



MIAMI, Florida: A "We're Hiring" sign is seen in a store front window in Miami, Florida. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report Friday that shows the unemployment rate fell to 8.4 percent last month, down from a COVID-19 pandemic peak of 14.7 percent in April. —AFP

benefited white people more than Black people, marking the fourth month of reversal of a pre-crisis trend that had brought Black and white unemployment rates much closer to parity than ever before. Among Black people the jobless rate dropped to 13 percent in August, from 14.6 percent in July; for white people it fell to 7.3 percent from 9.2 percent a month earlier. The gap was the biggest in six years, underscoring racial inequalities that have become a flashpoint in the presidential election campaign.

Women's gains stall

The share of the US population who had a job or were seeking a job - a yardstick of labor market vibrancy - rose in August, but gains were

driven almost entirely by men. The male labor force participation rate climbed to 67.7 percent from 67.1 percent, while the rate for women barely changed, inching up to 56.1 percent from 56 percent a month earlier.

For those in their peak working years, ages 25 to 54, the gender split was even more pronounced, with the participation rate for women declining for a second straight month, while it edged up for men, pushing the gap between them to 13.2 percentage points, the widest in more than a year.

With both political candidates courting the female vote, a stall out in women's labor force gains in August bodes poorly for Trump. —Reuters



Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott has been appointed as a trade envoy by the British government. —AFP

Classifieds

Monday, September 7, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 08 - 35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Rather hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WATCH			Fog	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 06/09/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	41 °C	33 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	43 °C	29 °C		
ABDALY	43 °C	28 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	45 °C	31 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	37 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWAISIB	42 °C	29 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	25 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	27 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	09/07	Hot and and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	26 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	09/08	Very hot	48 °C	29 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	09/09	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	29 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 38 km/h
Thursday	09/10	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	28 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:07
Sunrise	05:27
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:19
Sunset	18:07
Isha	19:25

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	29 °C
MAX. RH	70 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	SE 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP:0 2020/09/06 02:26 UTC V1.00 T2.4 ق.ت.ع. 1-2

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

NOTICE
 September 3, 2020

Mr. Nikhil D Souza, son of Mr. D Souza Diago Justin Joseph, resident of 403, Godavari Jangid Complex, Mira Road, East Thane, Maharashtra 401107 and Ms. Deandra D Mello, daughter of Mr. Jawahar Kenneth Lawrence D Mello, resident of Mel Cat, Bolar Main Road, Mangalore both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in) / letters/ telephonic calls (00965 - 22533315, 00965 - 22533125).

(Rameer Bharti)
 Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer.

Embassy of India, Kuwait.
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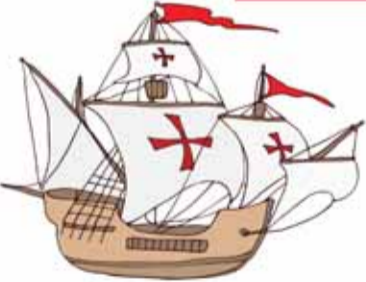
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Word Search

Christopher Columbus

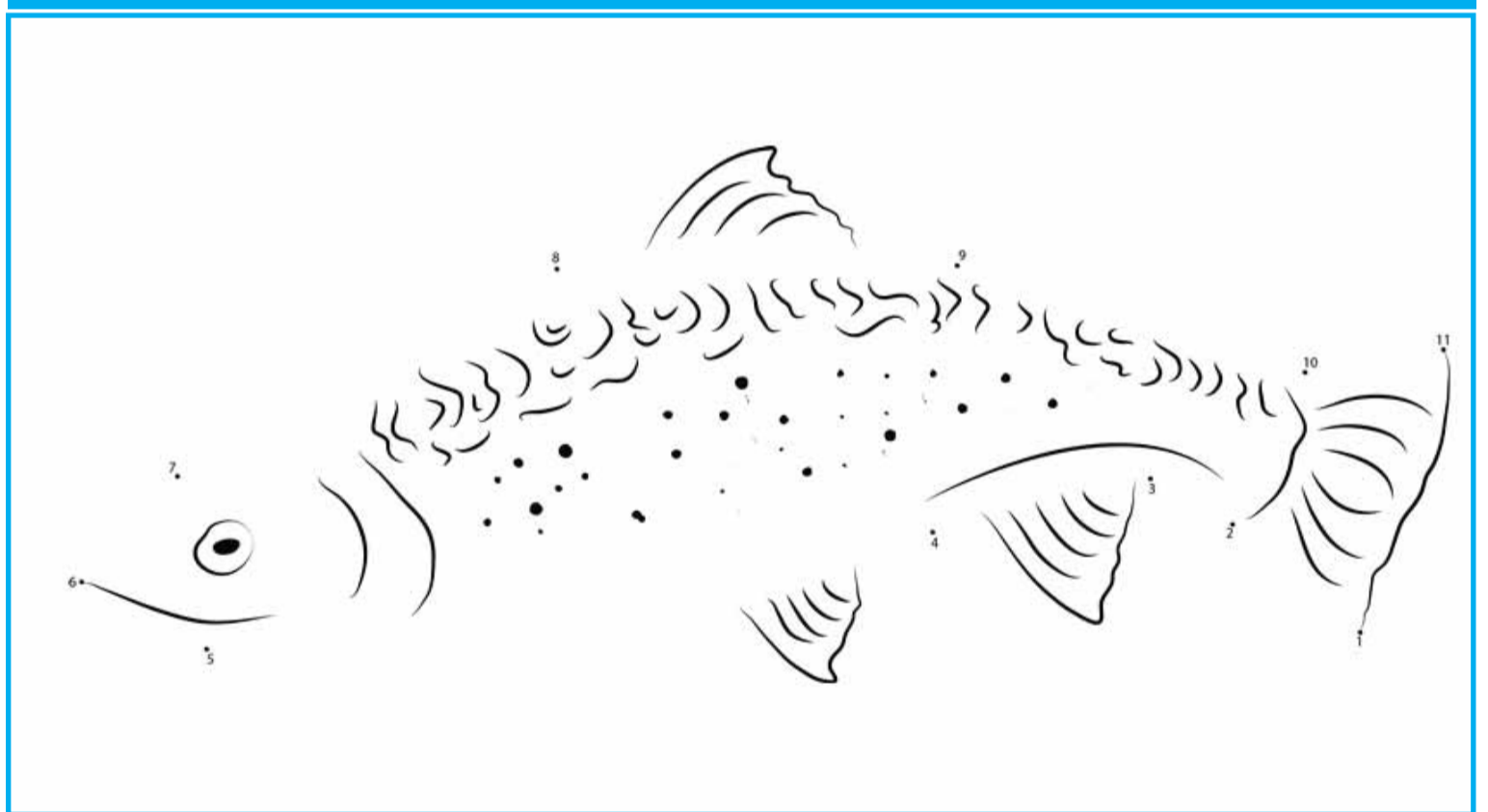
DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

AMERICA
ATLANTIC
BAHAMAS
CAPTAIN
CARIBBEAN
CHRISTOPHER
COLUMBUS
COMPASS
CREW
DISCOVERY
EUROPE
FERDINAND
GOLD



ISABELLA
LAND
LATITUDE
LONGITUDE
MAP
NAVIGATE
NEW WORLD
OCEAN
PENTA
PORTUGAL
SAIL
SANTA CLARA
SANTA MARIA
SHIP
SPAIN
TRADE ROUTE
VOYAGE
WEST INDIES

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)
 Perhaps you've been planning a trip or a return to school for a long time. However, Aries, a rather disturbing letter or phone call could jeopardize your plans and leave you teetering on the edge of disappointment. If you look at the situation carefully, you may find that it doesn't set you back that much. You can take care of it without sacrificing what you want.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
 Your mind may be going a thousand miles an hour today. You might be inundated with new ideas and information that could cause mental overload. Write it all down if you can. You'll want to refer to it later. It might be advisable to then go out for a walk or other exercise. This intellectual overload could produce excess nervous energy that you'll need to work off.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
 Misinformation might spread through your extended family or neighborhood and cause unnecessary upsets among those involved. Don't accept at face value any gossip or rumor you hear today until you check it out yourself, Libra. It could turn out to be a tempest in a teapot. This isn't a good time to plan or take a trip of any kind. Delays or mishaps could result.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
 Weariness may have you feeling a bit listless today, Capricorn, and you're likely to want to stay home in bed rather than go anywhere. This goes against your normal inclination, so you could be tempted to bite the bullet and get out in spite of your malaise. Don't fall into this trap. Get some rest so that when you absolutely have to go out, you'll be your old self again.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
 Seemingly bad news about your financial situation could throw your usually even-keeled nature off kilter. Look into the matter carefully before panicking, Taurus. There may have been a computer error or other mistake, or perhaps someone confused you with someone else. Take steps to rectify the blunder. It's a drag, but you'll be relieved to know that all was better than it seemed.

Leo (July 23-August 22)
 Worries over the situation of a lover or close friend who seems depressed could plague you today, yet you may hesitate to contact this person and ask what's wrong because you don't want to intrude. Nonetheless, you should. All is not as bad as it seems, and your concern will be appreciated. Tonight, get some much-needed rest. You've been working far too hard.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
 Misinformation regarding money could come from someone who has a stake in your believing whatever you're told. This could be a banker, creditor, investment counselor, or even a close friend or relative. Whoever it is, Scorpio, don't accept what this person says at face value. Look into the facts of the situation yourself before making any decisions about what you need to do.

Aquarius (January 20-February 18)
 A lover or close friend may seem to have dropped out of the picture, and this could have you worried, confused, and wondering if this person isn't interested in continuing a relationship with you. Don't let your insecurity get the best of you. The person has his or her troubles and will eventually want a strong, sympathetic shoulder to cry on. You're likely to be that person!

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
 An unpleasant situation could arise. Your first reaction may be to protect those closest to you from the truth. You could be tempted to lie or at least avoid mentioning the situation. Don't give in to the temptation, Gemini. Your desire to shield loved ones is understandable, but it could cause problems. You can't protect people from everything. Most people prefer to know the facts.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)
 A family member may be depressed and not up for talking about what's wrong. His or her mood could spread to everyone else, so it might be a good idea to ask what's wrong. Point out that moods are contagious! Don't force the issue, Virgo. That would be worse. A number of calls could interrupt your work, which you might find irritating. Don't be afraid to let voicemail get the calls.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
 Someone close to you may not be totally honest. This person could be avoiding telling the truth or hiding something from you in order to protect you. Trust your instincts, Sagittarius. If someone tells you something important that doesn't ring true, check it out before accepting one person's word. This isn't a vicious deception - only a protective one. But shielding someone from the truth can sometimes backfire!

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
 Career interests may be short-circuited by gossip, rumor, and office politics. Someone has an agenda and isn't likely to care too much about the effect on others' lives of any underhanded dealings. If you hear about such goings-on, Pisces, do what you can to stop them before they get out of hand. That way you can protect your and your colleagues' career interests.



A glassblower forms glass at factory, which is recycling the broken glass as a result of the Beirut explosion, in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli. — AFP photos

Piles of broken glass and debris fill a plot of land, reserved by the Beirut municipality to serve as a location to gather all the debris ahead of recycling, in the Lebanese capital.

FROM WINDOW TO JUG: LEBANESE RECYCLE GLASS FROM BEIRUT BLAST



The glassblowers form glass at a factory.



A worker washes jugs at a factory.



The glassblowers form glass at a factory.

Standing in a pile of broken glass in northern Lebanon, a man heaved shovel-loads of shards-retrieved from Beirut after the massive explosion at its port into a red-hot furnace. Melted down at a factory in the second city Tripoli, they re-emerged as molten glass ready to be recycled into traditional slim-necked water jugs. The August 4 port explosion ripped through countless glass doors and windows when it laid waste to whole Beirut neighborhoods, killing at least 190 people and wounding thousands more.

Volunteers, non-governmental groups and entrepreneurs have tried to salvage at least part of the tons of glass that littered the streets, some of it through recycling at Wissam Hammoud's family's glass factory. "Here we have glass from the Beirut explosion," said Hammoud, deputy head at the United Glass Production Company (Uniglass), as several men sorted through a mound of shards outside the building. "Organizations are bringing it to us so that we can remanufacture it," said the 24-year-old.

As workers washed and stacked jars behind him, Hammoud said between 20 and 22 tons of glass had been brought to the factory, a hive of rhythmic activity centered around the furnace that burns at 900-1,200 degrees Celsius (1,650-2,190 Fahrenheit). Nearby, three men produced jars stamped out of a mold in a carefully choreographed sequence, while another two handled the more delicate process of blowing and forming the traditional Lebanese pitchers. "We



A worker washes jugs at a factory.

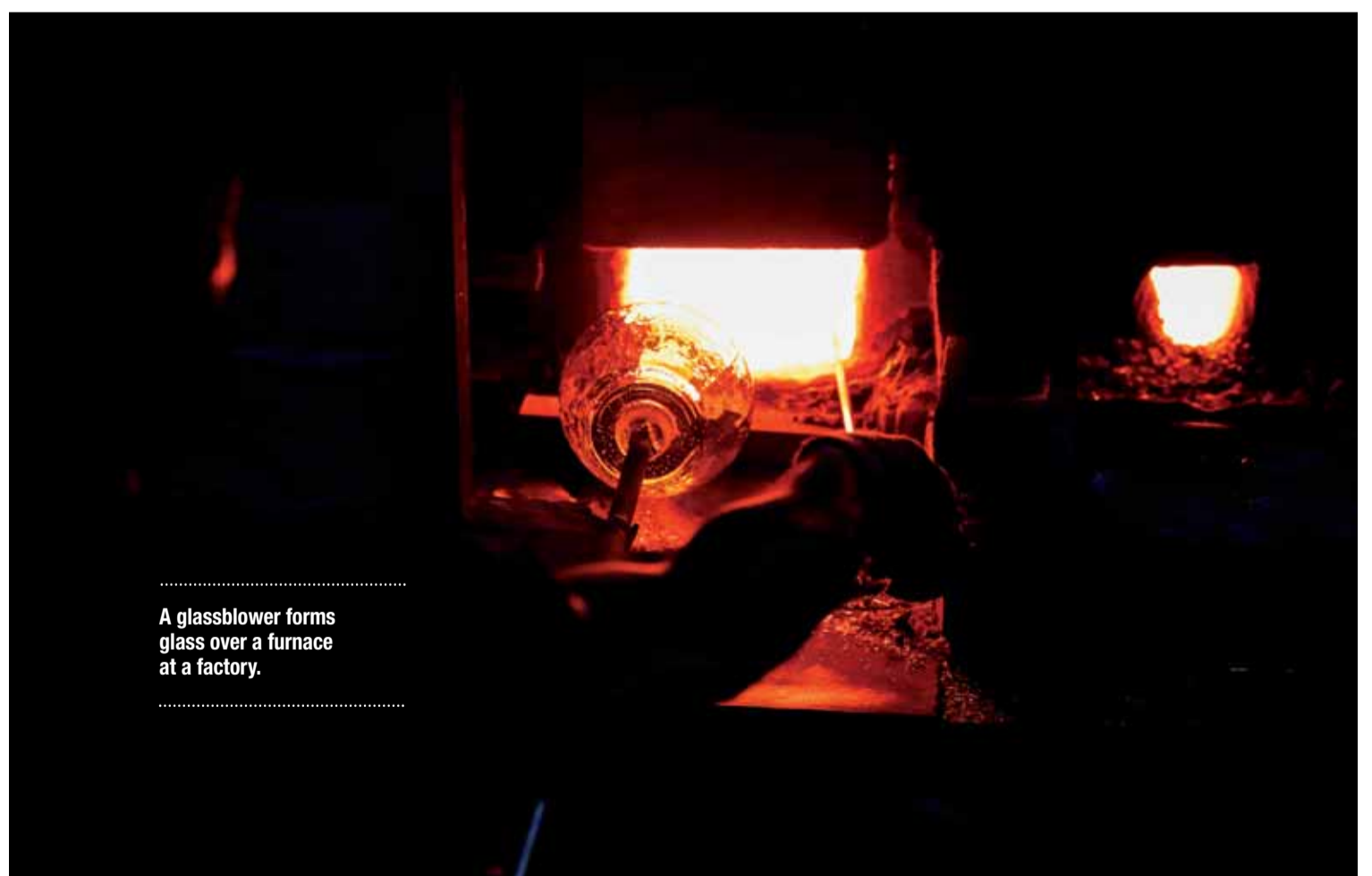
work 24 hours a day," Hammoud said. "We can't stop because stopping costs too much money."

Helping local industry

Ziad Abichaker, CEO of environmental engineering company Cedar Environmental, has spearheaded multiple glass recycling initiatives in Lebanon. In the first days after the blast, he teamed up with civil-society organizations and a host of volunteers to come up with a plan to keep as much glass

as possible out of landfills already overburdened by a decades-old solid waste crisis. "We decided that at least part of the shattered glass... our local industries should benefit from as a raw material," Abichaker told AFP.

"We're diverting glass from ending up in the landfill, we're supplying our local industries with free raw material," he added. According to him, more than 5,000 tons of glass was shattered by the explosion. From mid-August to September 2, almost 58 tons



A glassblower forms glass over a furnace at a factory.





A worker washes jugs at a factory.



Workers sort through broken glass at factory.

were sent for reuse at Uniglass and Koub/Golden Glass in Tripoli. Abichaker said he hoped, with funding, to bring the total to 250 tons.

'Tip of the iceberg'

At the volunteer hub dubbed the Base Camp in Beirut's hard-hit Mar Mikhael district, young men and

women kitted out with sturdy shoes, masks and heavy gloves sort the glass, pulling bits of detritus out of the piled shards under a scorching sun. Anthony Abdel Karim, who months before the blast had launched an upcycling glass project called Annine Fadye or "Empty Bottle" in Arabic, coordinates the operations. We have "mountains of waste

that are piling up in Beirut, they're mixed with everything. Glass and rubble and metal are mixed with organic waste... and this is not healthy," he said. "We don't have proper recycling in Lebanon."

Abdel Karim was drawn to recycling glass after seeing huge numbers of bottles being thrown out while working in events management in Beirut's nightlife, one of the city's calling cards first quieted by the pandemic and economic crisis, and now battered by the blast. Glass from the explosion poses different challenges from bottles, as much of it is dirty, so the initiative focuses on gathering glass from inside homes and other buildings, setting up a hotline where people can request pickup.

Abdel Karim said they aim to find other ways of recycling the glass that is not suitable to send to Tripoli, possibly by crushing it to be used in cement or other materials. "This is the tip of the iceberg," he said, noting just a fraction of the glass so far had been collected and repurposed. "It needs a lot of time, we know that." — AFP



A construction vehicle clears glass from a damaged building in Beirut's Gemmayzeh neighborhood.



A truck empties shards of glass in a plot of land, reserved by the Beirut municipality to serve as a location to gather all the debris ahead of recycling, in the Lebanese capital.



A glass maker pulls a cart of broken glass from Beirut port explosion.



A glassblower forms glass over a furnace at factory.



Workers sort through broken glass at factory.



A worker shows jugs at a factory.



Recycled jugs and jars are pictured at a factory.

Forgotten Australian history showcased in camel adventure pic

Australian director Roderick MacKay was blown away one day in 2014 viewing 19th century photographs of Muslim and Sikh men leading camels through his native country's harsh desert outback. That sudden awareness of a forgotten part of Australia's history is now the basis of the director's first feature film, "The Furnace," which premiered at the Venice film festival on Friday.

"I couldn't believe what I was looking at," MacKay told AFP. "To see men in their traditional garb with a camel train behind them in the otherwise familiar outback was pretty revelatory." Enter six years of work to bring the historical drama to the screen-including painstaking work piecing together dialogue spoken in Badimaya, a dying Aboriginal language.

"The Furnace" points a lens on forgotten Islamic and Sikh cameleers whose stories have been eclipsed by white settlers' history. Set amid the late 19th century gold rush in Australia, the film follows a young cameleer from Afghanistan, Hanif (Ahmed Malek), who finds himself partnered with a bushman and fugitive thief Mal (David Wenham). Helped by Hanif's camels and in pursuit by the law, the two embark on an odyssey through Western Australia's inhospitable outback in search of a furnace to melt down stolen gold bars.

Diversity on film

Cameleers from Afghanistan, Persia and the Punjab region straddling India and what is now Pakistan - all dismissively referred to as "Ghans" by white settlers - were brought to Britain's then-colony

Australia to help cart goods through the desert, often on an indentured basis. "It's a hugely important part of Australian history that not only is the rest of the world not so aware of, but Australians themselves aren't aware," MacKay said. Their interaction with local Aboriginal populations mean that some Australians today living in remote desert communities do not know the true history of their Sikh and Afghan last names.

Five languages are spoken in the film besides English: two Afghan languages (Pashto and Dari), Punjabi, Cantonese and Badimaya, a language of Aboriginal Australians. Because the last speaker of Badimaya died one year before shooting, a team had to piece together appropriate dialogue with the Aboriginal community. "It was certainly a much more exhaustive and lengthy process but also a great deal more meaningful because we felt we were really doing our bit from stopping this language from vanishing off the face of the earth," MacKay said.

MacKay said the timing of the film - arriving in a year in when non-white talent is being actively sought out by the Western movie industry - was accidental, but fortunate. "You're walking in the shoes of this Muslim character. Pitching a story like that in 2014 when diversity on screen wasn't such a big agenda was tricky and not a lot of people were interested," he acknowledged. "So I've bizarrely enough watched the world come more in alignment with that." — AFP



British actress Vanessa Kirby arrives for the screening of the film "Pieces of a Woman" presented in competition on the fourth day of the 77th Venice Film Festival, on Saturday at Venice Lido, during the COVID-19 infection, caused by the novel coronavirus. — AFP

'The Crown' star Kirby in heartbreaking home birth role

"The Crown" star Vanessa Kirby said Saturday that her latest role as a woman who loses her child after a home birth goes wrong was her scariest yet. The British actress plays alongside Hollywood star Shia LaBeouf in "Pieces of a Woman", which is premiering at the Venice film festival. It opens with a 25-minute-long birth scene which was shot in one take by Hungarian director Kornel Mundruczo and written by his longtime partner Kata Weber. "My wife and I wanted to share one of our most personal experiences with audiences through a story of an unborn child, with the faith that art can be the best medicine for pain," Mundruczo said. The film is one of a series of deeply personal films competing for the Golden Lion top prize.

Kirby, 32, said trying to be true to the suffering of the women she talked to before the shoot was "really scary". But she threw herself "really deep" into her first lead role in a movie in a way she hasn't since she made her name playing Princess Margaret, sister of Britain's Elizabeth II, in the hit Netflix series. Mundruczo admitted that making a film "about how you lost your baby" wasn't the most commercial idea he has ever pitched.

Street protests

But the acclaimed director said dealing with such searing grief, which is also tied up with the trauma of the Holocaust in the character's family, was universal. "Loss steps beyond the boundaries of understanding or control for all of us, but comes with the ability to be reborn," he added. Both Mundruczo - best known for his 2014 Cannes prize winner "White God" - and Weber wore T-shirts declaring

#FreeSZFE to support students who are occupying Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts after the country's prime minister Viktor Orban appointed one of his supporters as its head.

Orban's critics have taken to the streets to support the students and say it is the latest bid by his nationalist government to wrest power from institutions it sees as left-leaning. Mundruczo said he supported the students' defence of the university's independence. Earlier he told reporters that he had moved to Berlin more than a year ago because "the pressure is growing on free art" under Orban, who has been in power for more than a decade. "My country started to be a little strange," he added.

Family after terror attack

Another hugely autobiographical film making headlines at Venice is Italy's "Padre nostro" (Our Father) by Claudio Noce, which is inspired by a terrorist attack on his police commissioner father when the director was two. His father survived the assassination attempt in 1976 by the left-wing Armed Proletarian Nuclei (NAP), and the film focuses on the after-effects on a family of a similar horror seen through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy. "One of the reasons why I wanted to do this film was to try to overcome this fear," Noce told reporters.

"Certainly it was painful. The idea of making a film... on what had happened to my family, to my father particularly, had been living with me for a long time," he added. Italy was wracked by two decades of domestic terrorism from the late 1960s in what became known as the "Years of Lead". — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



The Flying Bulls Aerobatics Team performs during 10 rolls in a row Guinness World Record in Czech Republic. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Trout blasts club-record 300th HR in Angels victory

Nationals overpower Braves; Cardinals beat Cubs

LOS ANGELES: Jo Adell's two-run single in the bottom of the seventh lifted the Los Angeles Angels to a 10-9 win against the Houston Astros in the opener of their doubleheader on Saturday afternoon in Anaheim, Calif. The Astros (21-17) had rallied for three runs in their half of the seventh to take a 9-7 lead. Mike Trout hit his 300th home run with the Angels (15-25) to take over the franchise career lead from Tim Salmon. Trout also doubled twice and drove in three runs. Adell hit a game-tying solo homer in the fourth inning, and Justin Upton tied it with a two-run homer in the fifth and doubled in a run in the seventh for Los Angeles. Kyle Tucker had three hits and drove in three runs for the Astros, and right-hander Brandon Bielak went 3 2/3 innings, allowing four runs and seven hits. He struck out five with no walks.

Angels 7, Astros 6 (Game 2)

Anthony Rendon hit a three-run homer in the top of the seventh inning to lift Los Angeles to a win against Houston in the second game of a doubleheader in Anaheim, Calif. The Angels rallied from two-run deficits in the seventh inning to win both games of the doubleheader and stretch their season-long win streak to four games. George Springer homered twice and Josh Reddick hit a three-run homer for the Astros, who were the home team in the second game because it was a make-up from when the Angels were in Houston last week.

Nationals 10, Braves 4

Victor Robles had three hits, but the shortest one was the most important as visiting Washington topped Atlanta. With runners on the corners in the sixth inning, Robles popped up a bunt on a high pitch from Tyler Matzek in a spot that Atlanta first baseman Freddie Freeman couldn't get to for the catch. Robles easily beat Matzek to the bag, allowing Brock Holt to score the go-ahead run. The winning pitcher was Kyle McGowan (1-0), who pitched 2 1/3 scoreless innings of relief and fanned four. Matzek (3-3) allowed two runs on three hits in his one inning and took the loss.

Twins 4, Tigers 3

Byron Buxton beat out an infield grounder with two outs in the bottom of the ninth to drive in Nelson Cruz with the winning run as Minnesota rallied for its fifth straight win over Detroit in Minneapolis. Miguel Sano went 3-for-4 with a home run and two RBIs for Minnesota. Jorge Alcalá (2-1) pitched two scoreless innings of relief to pick up the win. Victor Reyes homered and had two hits and Miguel Cabrera extended his hitting streak to 12 games with a single, his 2,849th career hit, breaking a tie with Brooks Robinson for 48th place on the all-time list. Willie Castro added two hits and Jose Cisneros (1-2) took the loss for Detroit, which lost its fourth in a row.

Rockies 5, Dodgers 2

Nolan Arenado delivered the go-ahead RBI single in the ninth

inning and Colorado defeated host Los Angeles, earning a much-needed victory over its National League West rival. Rockies starter German Marquez pitched seven solid innings and pinch hitter Josh Fuentes added a two-run double in the ninth, ending the Dodgers' six-game winning streak. Dodgers pitchers had retired 14 consecutive Rockies batters heading into the ninth in a 2-2 tie. But Raimel Tapia led off with a single against right-hander Blake Treinen (3-2). Trevor Story followed with his own single and Arenado punched a single to right for the go-ahead run.

As 8, Padres 4

Oakland relocated its hitting groove, riding Matt Olson's two-run triple and Ramon Laureano's two-run homer to a victory over San Diego. One day after the Padres had roughed up Oakland pitching in a 7-0 win in the opener of a three-game interleague series, left-hander Sean Manaea (3-2) limited San Diego to one run and four hits in five innings. The Padres' only run in the first seven innings came on an Eric Hosmer infield out in the third. The A's jumped on Padres starter Chris Paddack (3-4) early, with Olson belting his two-run triple with two outs in the first inning after Tommy La Stella had singled and Mark Canha walked. The triple was a career-first for Olson. It came in his 1,602nd plate appearance.

Red Sox 9, Blue Jays 8

Christian Vazquez scored from third on a chopper to third base in the bottom of the ninth after Xander Bogaerts led off the inning with the tying solo homer and Boston came back to defeat visiting Toronto. Bogaerts led off the ninth with his ninth homer against Anthony Bass (2-3) to tie the game. JD Martinez then walked. Jose Peraza ran for him and was forced at second by Vazquez, who then stole second and continued to third on catcher Caleb Joseph's throwing error. He beat the throw home on a chopper by Yairo Munoz. Mike Kickham (1-0) pitched two innings to get the win, giving up three hits with a walk and four strikeouts but holding the Jays off the scoreboard. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a three-run homer for Toronto and Teoscar Hernandez added a solo shot.

Cardinals 4, Cubs 2 (Game 1)

Adam Wainwright pitched 6 1/3 strong innings and Paul DeJong drove in a pair of runs to boost visiting St. Louis to a victory against Chicago in the first game of a doubleheader. Wainwright scattered two runs on six hits while striking out six and walking one. Cubs center fielder Ian Happ smacked two solo home runs against the veteran right-hander, who only allowed four singles otherwise. The last of those, to Nico Hoerner with one out in the seventh, chased Wainwright from the contest as he fell two outs short of his second successive complete game.

Cardinals 5, Cubs 1 (Game 2)

Paul DeJong and Tyler O'Neill drilled home runs and five relievers combined on a three-hitter to help visiting St. Louis

with 'Greisser,' just his demeanor, that he'd be a good choice for us. We've been blessed with two goalies. You try to ride the hot guy as long as you can, and if you have to go to the next guy, you do that." Mayfield gave the Islanders a 1-0 lead at 9:27 of the first period with a rising shot that made it under the crossbar. "Game-winner in Game 7 to go to the Eastern Conference Final, I don't think anyone thought I'd be scoring it," Mayfield said. "But I had a lane and just happy I could put it away."

Defenseman Greene made it 2-0 at 13:13 with a goal from the left circle. Derick Brassard set things up, holding the puck on the right until he spied Green in the opposite circle. Nelson scored to make it 3-0 at 11:26 of the second period, finishing a two-on-one off a feed from Josh Bailey. "Everybody wants to score goals and get on the attack," Nelson said. "Thought we had a pretty balanced score sheet up and down the roster. Contributions from the (defensemen) today, every line getting in on it, guys stepping up and making plays at the right time."

Bailey added another assist on Beauvillier's empty-net goal at 13:12 of the third period after Flyers coach Alain Vigneault pulled Carter Hart—who made 22 saves—for an extra skater. New York held the Flyers to 16 shots, killing off both of Philadelphia's power-play opportunities to take their penalty kill to 13-for-13 in the series. The last time the Islanders reached the conference final they fell in five games to the eventual Stanley Cup champion Montreal Canadiens. —AFP

Isles reach NHL conference final with game-seven win

TORONTO: Thomas Greiss made 16 saves and four New York players scored as the Islanders beat the Philadelphia Flyers 4-0 on Saturday to reach the NHL Eastern Conference final. The top-seeded Flyers had fought back from a 3-1 series deficit in the NHL's quarantine hub in Toronto, forcing game seven with back-to-back overtime wins. But the Islanders controlled the decisive contest to reach the conference final for the first time since 1993.

They'll open against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Edmonton today, with a chance to reach the Stanley Cup final for the first time since 1984. Brock Nelson had a goal and two assists, and Scott Mayfield, Andy Greene and Anthony Beauvillier scored for the sixth-seeded Islanders. Greiss replaced Semyon Varlamov, who had started 14 of the Islanders' first 15 post-season games, and produced the first playoff shutout of his career. Varlamov allowed nine goals in the previous two games, prompting Islanders coach Barry Trotz to opt for Greiss.

"I wanted the freshness," Trotz said. "I also knew that

Some contenders exposed, others implode on Tour's first mountain test

LOUDENVILLE: Some contenders were exposed while others imploded in the first mountain test of the Tour de France as Briton Adam Yates hung on to the overall leader's yellow jersey on Saturday. Stage eight winner Nans Peters had long crossed the line when fellow Frenchman Thibaut Pinot's ordeal ended after the Groupama-FDJ rider, highly fancied to become the first local winner of the race in 35 years, had been dropped in the second ascent of the 141-km trek through the Pyrenees. The 30-year-old, who last year abandoned the race two days from the finish in Paris, was suffering from back pains after a crash in the opening stage and Saturday's effort was too much to handle as he finished almost 20 minutes behind his rivals. Dutchman Tom Dumoulin, who was the 'Plan B' in pre-race favorite Primoz Roglic's Jumbo-Visma team, could not sustain the pace in the last ascent to the Col de Peyresourde.

On that climb, a 9.7-km effort at an average gradient of 7.8%, Slovenian Tadej Pogacar, Roglic's compatriot, attacked repeatedly. Roglic was in control, as well as Colombian Nairo Quintana, but defending champion Egan Bernal appeared to struggle and had to fight his way back to the favorites' group several times. Roglic eventually let Pogacar, who was trailing him by 1:23 in the morning, ride away, but he never panicked and is still the best placed top contender ahead of Sunday's ninth stage, another trek in the Pyrenees. Yates leads Roglic by three seconds and France's Guillaume Martin by nine. "I'm taking it day-by-day, it's pretty hard to follow the leaders but I'm going to try to keep the jersey for as long as possible," said Yates. "I rode my own pace, came back on my own pace (in the last climb) and managed to stay with them over the top." The 21-year-old Pogacar, who held off the pack of main contenders in the final descent and regained 40 seconds to move up to ninth, will start Sunday's 153-km ride from Pau to Laruns, featuring the intimidating climb to the Col de Marie Blanque, with a target on his back. —Reuters



SEATTLE: Leody Taveras #65 of the Texas Rangers safely steals second base ahead of the throw to Ty France #23 of the Seattle Mariners in the fifth inning at T-Mobile Park on September 5, 2020. —AFP

secure a doubleheader sweep of Chicago with a victory in the nightcap. After driving in two runs in St. Louis' 4-2 win in the opener, DeJong picked up where he left off in Game 2, smacking Colin Rea's first pitch of the second inning into the left field stands. Following a walk to Lane Thomas, O'Neill pushed the Cardinals to an early 3-0 lead with a two-run homer to right center, also striking on the first pitch. Austin Gomber pitched steadily to help the Cardinals' early outburst hold up, starting the game and delivering 2 2/3 innings of one-hit ball with three walks and five strikeouts.

White Sox 5, Royals 3

Jose Abreu launched a 425-foot, two-run home run in the first inning to extend his hitting streak to 19 games and give Chicago a lead it would not relinquish as it beat host Kansas City at Kauffman Stadium. Abreu's streak is the longest in the majors this season and his 40 RBIs in 40 games lead the majors. Lucas Giolito (4-2) earned the win, giving up three runs on five hits in six-plus innings. He struck out nine and didn't walk anyone. Through three games of the four-game series, the Royals have not led since the first inning of the first game.

Reds 6, Pirates 2

Eugenio Suarez drove in five runs on three homers to pace visiting Cincinnati to a win over Pittsburgh. Suarez sprayed the ball all over PNC Park, hitting a three-run shot and two solo numbers for his first career three-home run game. Tucker Barnhart added a solo homer for Cincinnati. Jacob Stallings hit a solo homer and Erik Gonzalez was 3-for-4 with a walk and a run scored for the Pirates.

Orioles 6, Yankees 1

DJ Stewart got his first two hits of the season, both solo homers, as Baltimore scored its second straight victory over visiting New York. The Yankees had scored 18 straight wins in Baltimore before the Orioles ended the streak Friday night. Now, the Orioles have a chance to win the series in Sunday's finale. Stewart had gotten off to a rough start this season, going 0-for-17 for the season before belting a homer off Gerrit Cole (4-3) to start the sixth and hand the Orioles a 1-0 lead. That sparked a five-run inning where Ryan Mountcastle drove in two with a single. —Reuters

Authentic holds off Tiz the Law to win Kentucky Derby

LOUISVILLE: Authentic held off heavily favored Belmont Stakes winner Tiz the Law to capture the 146th Kentucky Derby on Saturday, giving trainer Bob Baffert a record-equaling sixth victory in the Run for the Roses. Johnny Velazquez piloted Authentic to the victory at Churchill Downs, ensuring that a topsy-turvy Triple Crown year will not produce a 14th winner of US flat racing's coveted treble when it concludes with the Preakness Stakes on October 3.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, US racing's most prestigious event was held not on the first Saturday in May but on the first Saturday of September. Instead of more than 100,000 spectators jammed into the grandstands and infield, no more than 1,000 essential personnel, owners and trainers were on hand. Despite the lack of fans, there was a heavy police presence outside the racetrack.

Louisville was the site of daylong protests demanding for justice for Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old local paramedic killed in her own home after police mistakenly burst into the apartment in March. There were tense standoffs

with right-wing counter-demonstrators but no violence, despite heavily armed supporters on both sides. Protesters outside Churchill Downs chanted Taylor's name as the race prepared to get underway, the Courier Journal newspaper reported. Overhead, a plane flew over the track trailing a banner: "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor."

On the track, front-runner Authentic set the early pace as expected under Velazquez, who claimed a third Kentucky Derby victory. Tiz the Law, who won the belated Triple Crown opener at Belmont on June 20 and went off as the prohibitive 3-5 favorite, settled into a comfortable fourth position under jockey Manny Franco and challenged for the lead as they swept through the final turn. But Authentic, who went off at 8-1, held on to win ahead of the Barclay Tagg-trained Tiz the Law with 46-1 longshot Mr. Big News third.

"I'm not taking the credit," said Puerto Rico's Velazquez, who rode Animal Kingdom in 2011 and Always Dreaming in 2017 to Kentucky Derby wins. "Give it to the horse," Velazquez said. "Every time I asked him for more, he gave me more." Baffert tied legendary trainer Ben Jones for most Kentucky Derby wins for a trainer and said he wasn't surprised to see Authentic hang on to the end. "The training was lights out," he said. "Johnny V gave him the most incredible ride," added Baffert, who also won the Derby with Silver Charm in 1997, Real Quiet in 1998, War Emblem in 2002, American Pharoah in 2015 and Justify in 2018. —AFP

Sports

Hometown left deflated but still hopeful after Messi snub

'Your dream, our hope'; No fairytale homecoming

ROSARIO: Rosario had dared to dream but was left disappointed after the Argentine city's most celebrated son Lionel Messi announced he was staying at Barcelona. When Messi told the Spanish giants last week he wanted to quit the club, some back in his home town and at Newell's Old Boys, the club where he played junior football, allowed themselves to imagine the 33-year-old superstar returning home to play for his boyhood team.

Despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, a week ago hundreds of Newell's fans organized a joyous and colorful vehicle procession through the town under the banner: "Your dream, our hope." But after 10 days of anxious waiting, there was to be no fairytale homecoming. Despite Friday's deflation, many Newell's fans still believe the prodigal son will one day return home.

"No one in their right mind could imagine that he would come back now," Diego Schwarzstein, an endocrinologist who treated Messi as a boy, told AFP. "I'm from Rosario, a Newell's fan and I desperately want to see him here; but for now, it's wishful thinking. "I'm not frustrated that he's not coming now because it wasn't realistic to think about this. "But if he retires from football without coming to Newell's, then I would feel great frustration. "I hope that he will indulge himself-and also give us Newell's fans that pleasure too."

The diminutive Messi left Newell's at the age of 13 as his family emigrated to Spain after Catalan

giants Barcelona offered to pay for his growth hormone treatment, among other benefits. At the age of 10, he had been diagnosed with growth hormone deficiency. "Every time there is talk of his contract renewal, we fans dream, even though we know it's very difficult because his reality is in Europe now," said Lisandro Leoni, a journalist and "Leper," as Newell's fans are known. "But we also know that he's a fan of this club, so we never lose hope that, at some time and even if for only one season, he'll wear our jersey."

'Doors always open'

"We've always got that hope that Leo will wear the Newell's jersey, but we have a lot of respect for his decision," said Roberto Mensi, part of the group that organized the vehicle procession. "Last week's event was a gesture of affection that we wanted to give Messi, so he would know that we love him and the doors here are always open."

As for the club itself—a hotbed of talent that includes the likes of renowned coaches Marcelo Bielsa, Gerardo Martino and Mauricio Pochettino, who all played for the team—it has remained tight-lipped over the issue. Messi, known as "The Flea" in Argentina, has always said he would love to return home to play for the club. Although he left Rosario 20 years ago, he always returns for the New Year celebrations with his family and that of his wife Antonella Rocuzzo. Locals were delighted when the couple



BUENOS AIRES: View of the front pages of newspapers showing the news of Argentine Barcelona player Lionel Messi, at a kiosk in Buenos Aires on September 5, 2020. — AFP

decided to celebrate their 2017 wedding in the city, bringing over several Barcelona stars with them.

A few weeks ago, Messi donated 50 ventilators to the city's hospitals to help treat patients suffering from Covid-19. He owns several homes, a luxurious apartment, an iconic bar and an exclusive country club in Rosario, the third biggest city in Argentina.

Messi also still owns his simple childhood home in a middle class neighborhood that his friends have covered with murals that pay tribute to Rosario's greatest export. Newell's were founded in 1903 and named after Isaac Newell, an English teacher who pioneered football in Argentina. They have been Argentine champions six times, the last of those in 2013. — AFP

Bartomeu's victory over Messi may prove hollow

MADRID: An unexpected winner in 2015 and Barcelona's bad guy in 2020, the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu might feel some satisfaction after winning his showdown with Lionel Messi. The last year has been chaotic for Barca, even more so for their president, and not just because they lost La Liga to Real Madrid before being humiliated by Bayern Munich in the Champions League. Since January, Bartomeu has bore the brunt of the criticism, the Catalan businessman and a shareholder of Barcelona since he was eleven years old never far from controversy.

His appointment of Quique Setien as coach in January was a disappointment, with fans awaiting the return of their legendary former midfielder Xavi Hernandez to replace the clumsily dismissed Ernesto Valverde. Then in February, the club had to deny it was at the root of a social media campaign to criticise those sceptical of the board, including key players, in order to improve the image of the president.

An audit report from PricewaterhouseCoopers concluded "no corrupt behavior" took place but a judicial investigation is ongoing, with the total amount paid allegedly six times higher than the market price. And then in March, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic and with the club in serious

financial difficulty, six members of the board resigned in protest at the way the club was being run. They included two vice-presidents, Enrique Tombas and Emili Rousaud, the latter the one Bartomeu had in mind to be his successor.

There were calls for the presidential elections, originally scheduled to be held in June next year, to be brought forward but Bartomeu soldiered on, seemingly unperturbed. His regime has been high on blunders and low on diplomacy. Messi claimed on Friday that Bartomeu "did not keep his word" over an agreement to let him leave for free at the end of the season. Messi said in March the players were "not surprised" that "people inside the club" wanted to shift the pressure onto them over the issue of pay cuts.

Managing Director of the multinational company ADELTE, which specializes in engineering for ports and airports, Bartomeu's first steps at Barcelona were taken in the basketball and handball sections. He had even played basketball for some of Barca's youth teams before joining city rivals Espanyol and his connection to the sport helped him return to Camp Nou in 2003.

Billion euros on transfers

So did his long friendship with Sandro Rosell, with the pair forming part of Joan Laporta's successful bid for the presidency, only to be removed in 2005 as splits over the direction of the club emerged. But in 2010, when Rosell bid for the top job himself, he included Bartomeu as his vice-president, winning the elections with 61 per cent of the "socio" vote. Together, they began expunging the club of those linked to the philosophies of Laporta, Johan Cruyff and Pep Guardiola, instead favouring a



BARCELONA: This combination of file pictures shows Barcelona's president Josep Maria Bartomeu removing his face mask and Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi reacting prior to the UEFA Champions League match. Lionel Messi said he will stay at Barcelona but only because the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu broke his word to let him leave. — AFP

more conservative approach associated with Josep Lluís Nunez, the president who sacked Cruyff as coach in 1996.

But in January 2014, Rosell resigned as he faced charges of corruption over the transfer of Neymar from Santos for which he would later be jailed, leaving Bartomeu to assume the interim presidency. After a triumphant year in 2015 saw Barcelona win the treble with the trident - Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez - Bartomeu rode the tide of goodwill to win the election the following summer with 54 per cent of the vote. — AFP

Luis Enrique on Messi: Club is always 'above' any player

MADRID: Lionel Messi's former Barcelona coach Luis Enrique, now the boss of Spain, suggested on Saturday the club should have allowed the Argentine forward to leave. "It's a sensitive issue," said Luis Enrique, ahead of Spain's game against Ukraine on Sunday. "I think clubs are above every player. Barcelona was founded in 1899 and is one of the best in the world, it has won titles forever. "Clearly there has been a wonderful relationship. Leo has made Barca grow exponentially but I would have liked it a lot more if an agreement had been reached."

Luis Enrique managed Messi at Barca from 2014 to 2017 and they won the treble together in 2015. He added: "Sooner or later Messi will stop playing at Barca. The club will continue to win titles without Messi just as Messi will continue to be wonderful for many years if he leaves." Messi's grudging acceptance that he will have to stay put after losing his stand-off with club president Josep Maria Bartomeu means his long-term future is still in doubt. The 33-year-old was absent from training on Saturday.

Other players including Jordi Alba and Philippe Coutinho arrived for the session but Messi failed to appear at the Joan Gamper complex for the session which began at 0730 GMT. Last Sunday Messi deliberately skipped the mandatory coronavirus test. He needs to pass the test before joining Ronald Koeman's squad for their next session on Monday. The team's first pre-season friendly will be against third division Nastic on September 12. Messi announced on Friday he would be reluctantly staying and launched a stinging attack on Bartomeu, claiming he had broken his word to let him leave.

The absence of any new contract means that even if he is not allowed to leave this summer, Messi could negotiate with other teams from January 1 and go for free when his current deal expires in July. The feeling that Messi's decision was by no means the end of the affair was clear in Spanish daily Marca's headline: "Messi stays, the crisis too". Bartomeu could yet respond with his resignation, having previously indicated he would step down if Messi publicly said he was the problem and agreed to stay. — AFP

News in brief

Mercedes F1 spent \$442 million

LONDON: Formula One champions Mercedes spent 333 million pounds (\$442 million) in winning both titles last year but still reported a profit, according to the team's published 2019 accounts. Mercedes are on course to win both titles again this season for the seventh year in a row, with six-times world champion Lewis Hamilton 47 points clear of his closest rival Max Verstappen after seven races. The results to end-December showed Mercedes made a post-tax profit of 14.7 million pounds, compared with a previous 12.6 million. They won 15 races last year, including nine one-two finishes, and 32 podium places in all. The accounts said Mercedes had enjoyed a 23.6% share of television coverage, generating a cumulative television advertising value equivalent (AVE) of \$5.406 billion for commercial partners. — Reuters

Red Bulls name interim coach

NEW YORK: Bradley Carnell, a starting defender for South Africa's 2002 World Cup squad, was named interim coach of the New York Red Bulls on Saturday by the Major League Soccer club. Carnell replaces former US midfielder Chris Armas, who was fired Friday after the team suffered four losses and a draw in six matches, being outscored 7-3 in the span with no more than one goal in any match. The 43-year-old from Johannesburg had been an assistant with the US side since March 2017 after previously serving as an assistant coach for the Orlando Pirates in South Africa's Premier League. Carnell made 229 appearances for German clubs from 1998 and 2010, including Bundesliga stints with Stuttgart, Borussia Moenchengladbach and Karlsruhe. — AFP

Table tennis world cups shifted

HONG KONG: Table tennis's men's and women's world cups and tour finals will be held in China in November, its world body announced, in a rare instance of international sport in the country since the coronavirus pandemic. The men's and women's world cups are shifting from Dusseldorf and Bangkok respectively despite a mandate from Chinese authorities banning most international competition to prevent virus outbreaks. No venues were announced for the world cups in mid-November or the tour finals, which are penciled in for December 10-13. The table tennis calendar has been on hold since March. "Ensuring a safe return to international table tennis has been our utmost priority ever since the pandemic broke out and so I am delighted that... we have managed to get events back up and running before the end of 2020," International Table Tennis Federation president Thomas Weikert said in a statement. — AFP

NFL, union agree on virus test

NEW YORK: NFL players will continue to undergo daily COVID-19 testing indefinitely under an agreement unveiled Saturday between the league and the NFL Players Association. Daily testing had been set to conclude on Saturday under a prior deal reached between the NFL and the players union. A memo sent to all 32 NFL teams, according to the league website, says that all players and individuals designated Tier 1 and Tier 2, such as coaches and trainers, will continue to receive daily coronavirus tests "until further notice" with the exception of game days. The pre-game test for NFL clubs will occur on the morning before game day, most often on Saturday morning ahead of a Sunday contest. — AFP

European heavyweights enjoy winning starts in Nations League

PARIS: European heavyweights England, world champions France, holders Portugal and Belgium all enjoyed winning starts to their UEFA Nations League campaigns on Saturday even if there were signs of international rust following the coronavirus shutdown. England needed a stoppage-time penalty to beat Iceland 1-0 while France saw off Sweden by the same scoreline. Portugal shrugged off the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo to thrash Croatia 4-1 with top-ranked Belgium coming away from Denmark with a 2-0 win.

In Reykjavik, Raheem Sterling's last minute penalty salvaged England from another embarrassing result against Iceland. Gareth Southgate's men also survived going down to 10 men and seeing Birkir Bjarnason miss a late spot-kick for the hosts. Four years on from one of English football's most embarrassing nights in losing 2-1 to Iceland at Euro 2016, England were far from the free-scoring force that romped through Euro 2020 qualifying in their first match for 10 months.



REYKJAVIK: Iceland's defense jump for the ball during the UEFA Nations League football match between Iceland v England on September 5, 2020. — AFP

14 Trout blasts club-record 300th HR in Angels victory



15 European heavyweights enjoy winning starts: Nations League



15 Luis Enrique on Messi: Club is always 'above' any player



NEW YORK: Serena Williams of the United States serves during her Women's Singles third round match against Sloane Stephens of the United States on Day Six of the 2020 US Open on September 05, 2020. — AFP

Serena battles into US Open last 16

Fresh controversy hits US Open; Thiem fights his way into last 16

NEW YORK: Serena Williams battled into the US Open last 16 Saturday as the tournament endured fresh controversy after New York health officials ordered the women's top doubles pairing be withdrawn over coronavirus restrictions. Williams, chasing a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, came from a set down to oust 2017 champion Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, in what she called an "intense" encounter on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"In that first set I don't think she made any errors, honestly. She was just playing so clean and I just said, 'I don't want to lose in straight sets,'" said Williams. With spectators barred from this year's Flushing Meadows event due to the pandemic, second and fourth seeds Sofia Kenin and Naomi Osaka took advantage of suites they have been assigned to check out the competition.

"It's cool us players can watch each other. It's interesting, I like it," said Williams, who will play 15th seed Maria Sakkari for a place in the quarter-finals. The Greek player, who stunned Williams at the Western & Southern Open last month, progressed with a 6-3, 6-1 dismantling of America's 22nd seed Amanda Anisimova. Off the court, number one seeds Kristina Mladenovic and Tímea Babos were yanked from the women's doubles competition after Mladenovic was instructed to quarantine for coming in contact with

French compatriot Benoit Paire, who tested positive for COVID-19 last weekend.

"All persons who were identified as having prolonged close contact with the infected player will quarantine in their rooms for the remainder of their quarantine period," the United States Tennis Association said in a statement. The USTA said local public health authorities had issued the quarantine notices, which prevented the players commuting from their hotel to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. "The USTA is obligated to adhere to government guidance at the State, City and County level," the body said.

'Brutal'

A spokesman for New York state's health department said the decision was "in the best interest" of health and safety. But France's Alize Cornet described the move as "very brutal." "It's definitely weird because she could play her first round of singles and first round of doubles, and now suddenly she's kicked out," Cornet added, after progressing to the last 16 when Madison Keys retired injured. The shock intervention came a day after government officials tried to prevent Adrian Mannarino, who had also been in contact with Paire, from playing his last-32 match.

The health department contacted the USTA to say

Mannarino should be quarantining in his hotel room. The match got underway three hours after its scheduled start time, after authorities ruled it could go ahead following discussions with tennis officials that also included lobbying by world number one Novak Djokovic. Mannarino and Mladenovic were two of 11, mostly French players, put under enhanced safety protocols on Monday after Paire was withdrawn from the US Open the previous day following his positive test.

The players signed an agreement with New York City authorities that allowed them to remain in the tournament under the enhanced restrictions, which involved daily testing and barred them from communal areas in their hotel. Mannarino said Friday that organizers told him that New York state authorities had taken over the case and ruled that he was now not allowed to play. Following her first-round singles win on Monday, Mladenovic said she had been "living in a nightmare" following Paire's positive test result. The US Open is taking place behind closed doors because of the deadly pandemic. Players movements are tightly controlled and everyone on-site is being tested regularly to minimize the risk of infection. Paire, who later tested negative, exited the tournament in a huff, accusing authorities of operating a "fake bubble." — AFP

Denver with 27 points. "We came out sloppy, came out exhausted, fatigued. We didn't make any shots, we didn't get back on defense. "Tonight we just upped the energy and that's all it took to win." Nikola Jokic added 26 points and 18 rebounds for Denver, who had rallied from a 3-1 deficit to beat the Utah Jazz in seven games in the first round. The two-who combined for 27 points in game one-had a total of 26 between them by the end of the first quarter as the Nuggets took a 44-25 lead.

It was 72-56 at half-time, and the Nuggets were up by 12 going into the final quarter. The Clippers managed to cut the deficit to five early in the fourth and they got it to seven on Marcus Morris's three-pointer with two and a half minutes remaining. Murray promptly answered with a three-pointer and the Nuggets were away again. "I thought tonight we were a noticeably different team than we were in game one," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. Paul George scored 22 points for the Clippers and Ivica Zubac added 15.

Toronto 'starting over'

Two-time NBA Finals MVP Kawhi Leonard fin-

ished with 13 points on four-of-17 shooting with 10 rebounds and eight assists. "They were the aggressor tonight," Leonard said. "A few easy ones didn't fall early, and that was it from there." The NBA champion Raptors, who won game three against the Celtics on Thursday on OG Anunoby's buzzer-beating three-pointer, clamped down defensively to win again, holding the Celtics to 20 percent shooting from three-point range while draining 17 three-pointers themselves. Pascal Siakam shook off a slow start to score 23 points as the NBA champion Toronto Raptors levelled the series.

Kyle Lowry scored 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds with seven assists for the Raptors, who won their second straight game and will try to gain the upper hand in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series for the first time in game five today. "Feels like we're starting over," Siakam said, but added: "It's a great team we're playing against. It's not going to be easy. We know that." Lowry echoed the theme, saying the Raptors can't afford to get complacent after two straight wins. "We just continue to focus on every possession, every game," he said. "We know how tough those guys are." — AFP

Hamilton hails 'sweet spot' in F1's fastest lap in history

MONZA: Lewis Hamilton deflected personal glory and heaped praise on his team on Saturday after he clocked the fastest lap in Formula One history and Mercedes locked out the front row of the grid for Sunday's Italian Grand Prix. In the first qualifying session since F1's ruling body, the International Motoring Federation (FIA), banned the so-called 'party modes' that enable teams to increase engine power and speed, the Mercedes showed again they remain the pace-setters. Hamilton secured his seventh pole in Italy, his 68th for the Mercedes team - equalling seven-time champion Michael Schumacher's overall total-and the 94th of his career with his record lap in one minute and 18.887 seconds.

His average speed was 264.362 kph, a pace that lifted him beyond the previous fastest man Kimi Raikkonen who lapped Monza in 1:19.119 at an average speed of 263.578 kph in 2018. The championship leader and six-time champion said his final lap to beat teammate Valtteri Bottas to pole was the result of perfect planning and "bang on" strategy by his team who decided to send their drivers out early and avoid the pack as it jostled for slip-streaming positions.

"I think we learned from last year in terms of going out at the end wasn't the best for us," said Hamilton. "The strategy team did a really great job in terms of the timing. "It's something we discussed yesterday and again today (Saturday). Ultimately, I think it was bang on." Mercedes overall performance proved they have lost none of their competitive superiority over their rivals with the ban on variable qualifying engine modes. The revised rules - the directive now requires all of the cars to run in the same engine mode setting in both qualifying and the race - appeared to boost McLaren as Carlos Sainz wound up third. Hamilton said he "didn't expect" Mercedes' advantage to remain as commanding as it had been earlier this season. — AFP

Nuggets thump Clippers; Raptors down Celtics to even NBA series

MIAMI: The Denver Nuggets bounced back with a vengeance on Saturday, powering to a 110-101 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers to even their NBA play-off series 1-1. It was all-square between the Toronto Raptors and Boston Celtics, too, after the Raptors notched a second straight win, 100-93, to knot their Eastern Conference semi-final series 2-2 in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. The Nuggets, routed 120-97 in game one of the Western Conference series on Thursday, turned the tables with a blistering first half in which they led by as many as 23 points.

"Game one, we were tired. I hate to admit it, but we were tired," said guard Jamal Murray, who led