



3 Deputy Amir's representative delivers letter to Qatari Amir



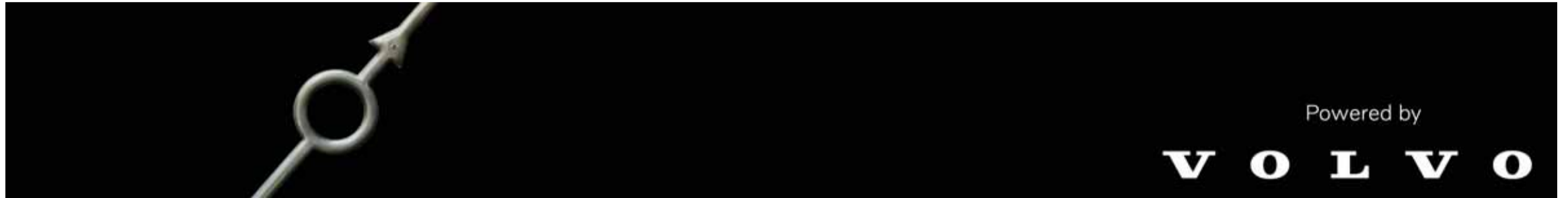
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Two leading political figures submit roadmap for reforms

Assembly session canceled over lack of quorum

Moody's downgrades Kuwait issuer rating, outlook stable

NEW YORK: Moody's Investors Service has downgraded Kuwait's long-term foreign and local currency issuer rating to A1 from Aa2 and changed the outlook to stable, concluding the review for downgrade initiated on March 30, 2020. The decision to downgrade the ratings reflects both the increase in government's liquidity risks and a weaker assessment of Kuwait's institutions and governance strength.

In the continued absence of legal authorization to issue debt or draw on the sovereign wealth fund assets held in the Future Generations Fund (FGF),

available liquid resources are nearing depletion, introducing liquidity risk despite Kuwait's extraordinary fiscal strength.

While the fractious relationship between parliament and the executive is a long-standing constraint on Moody's assessment of institutional strength, the deadlock over the government's medium-term funding strategy and the absence of any meaningful fiscal consolidation measures point to more significant deficiencies in Kuwait's legislative and executive institutions and policy effectiveness than previously assessed. (See Page 10)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Two leading political figures and former members of parliament Abdullah Al-Nafisi and Obaid Al-Wasmi yesterday met HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and submitted to him a proposed roadmap for executing comprehensive reforms in Kuwait.

The two figures said on their Twitter account that they met HH Sheikh Nawaf and handed him what they called the "Kuwait Document", which includes "five urgent and necessary measures and implementation mechanisms". They did not elaborate on the content of the five measures but said they sought the opinion of HH the Deputy Amir on the document before they reveal it for public debate.

But social media activists and news services said the document calls for

comprehensive political, parliamentary and economic reforms in Kuwait. It calls for forming a national salvation government to run the country, agree on a new election system and reform the judicial system, in addition to the economy. The document also calls for a political compromise and a general amnesty for political activists.

Nafisi, a veteran opposition politician and a highly respected analyst, was a member of parliament in the 1980s. Wasmi, a leading opposition figure and a professor of international law, was a member of parliament in the 2012 Assembly which was annulled by a court verdict. The two figures have recently been vocal in criticizing developments in Kuwait and have been very critical of a series of corruption scandals.

The move comes just two months before crucial general elections that are

expected to be held late in November amid calls to change the electoral system based on the single vote, which has been blamed for the political dilemma in the country. The meeting also comes after HH Sheikh Nawaf held a meeting with Ahmad Al-Khatib and Ahmad Al-Saadoun - highly-respected veteran opposition politicians - to discuss domestic politics. Also, a group of intellectuals and activists issued a statement in the past few days calling for wide-ranging reforms, fighting corruption and pardoning activists jailed for expressing political opinions.

The Assembly session scheduled yesterday was not held for a lack of quorum. This was supposed to have been the last regular session of the current Assembly, whose four-year term is expected to close next week following voting on a non-cooperation motion against the prime minister.

News in brief

Israeli plane flies to Bahrain

DUBAI/JERUSALEM: Israeli carrier Israir operated a flight from Tel Aviv to Bahrain yesterday, flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 showed. Israeli media reported an Israeli government delegation was onboard the flight. Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday discussed by phone the agreement to establish formal ties, state news agency BNA said. — Reuters

Record daily cases in UAE

DUBAI: The UAE yesterday reported its highest daily number of coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic at 1,083 new cases. The Gulf state has been scaling up the number of tests carried out daily and said 103,199 tests for the virus had been carried out on Tuesday in the country of around 9.9 million people. — AFP

Iran cries 'victory' over Trump

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani yesterday declared "victory" over the United States after the UN Security Council rejected the Trump administration's bid to reimpose UN sanctions on the Islamic republic. "The Iranian nation has achieved great political, legal and diplomatic success at the United Nations," Rouhani told a televised weekly meeting of his cabinet. — AFP

Pentagon vows to help Israel

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper pledged Tuesday to help maintain Israel's military superiority in the Middle East, amid its concerns over a possible US sale of F-35 fighters to the United Arab Emirates. "A cornerstone of our defense relationship is preserving Israel's qualitative military edge in the region," Esper said. — AFP

ISS moves to avoid debris

WASHINGTON: Astronauts on the International Space Station carried out an "avoidance maneuver" Tuesday to ensure they would not be hit by a piece of debris, said US space agency NASA, urging better management of objects in Earth's orbit. — AFP

Saudi Arabia to resume umrah from October 4

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will gradually resume the year-round umrah pilgrimage for Muslims from Oct 4, the interior ministry said Tuesday, seven months after it was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic. The kingdom had suspended the umrah in March and later scaled back the annual hajj in a blow to millions of pilgrims around the world amid fears that the coronavirus could spread to Islam's holiest sites.

In the first stage, "6,000 citizens and residents within the kingdom will be allowed to perform the umrah per day from October 4", the ministry said in a statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency. Visitors from outside the kingdom will be permitted from Nov 1, when umrah's capacity will be raised to 20,000 pilgrims per day, the ministry added.

The umrah, which refers to the Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah that can be undertaken at any time

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MAKKAH: In this file photo taken on June 14, 2018, worshippers and pilgrims gather at the Grand Mosque. — AFP

Airlines look to tests that give instant results

ZURICH/MILAN: European airlines are pinning hopes on pre-flight COVID-19 tests that deliver results as fast as pregnancy tests to help restore passengers' confidence in taking to the skies in

confined spaces with shared air. Germany's Lufthansa, at the mercy of government bailouts for survival, is in talks with Swiss drugmaker Roche over deploying so-called antigen tests, according to two people familiar with the discussions, as the airline aims to make them available next month.

Italian operator Alitalia, meanwhile, told Reuters that from yesterday it would add two flights from Milan to Rome, to the two it is already offering from Rome to Milan, exclusively for passengers with negative tests. The tests are administered by health authorities at the airports and included in

ticket prices. If they prove popular and safe, these antigen-tested flights will be expanded to more domestic, and later international, routes, the airline said.

Unlike laboratory-based molecular tests that have been the staple of health authorities in the pandemic, antigen tests do not require machines to process. Much like pregnancy tests, they can produce results in about 15 minutes. However the tests require an uncomfortable nasal swab and are not as

Continued on Page 2

380 whales die in mass stranding

MACQUARIE HARBOR, Australia: At least 380 whales have died in a mass stranding in southern Australia, officials said yesterday, as hopes faded of saving more than a few dozen of those creatures still trapped. Nearly the entire pod of 460 long-finned pilot whales stuck in Macquarie Harbor - on the rugged and sparsely populated west coast of Tasmania -

has now perished.

"We can confirm that 380 whales are dead," Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service manager Nic Deka said, describing the three-day rescue effort as emotionally and physically taxing. "There's around 30 left still alive, but the good news is that we have saved 50," he said. It is believed to be the largest mass stranding ever recorded in Australia, and is among the largest anywhere in the world.

The first of the giant mammals were discovered floundering on Monday, sparking a major effort to free them from sandbars and beaches only accessible by boat.

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MACQUARIE HARBOR: A handout photo taken on Tuesday shows people helping a whale on the rugged west coast of Tasmania. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Deputy Amir receives top state officials



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 Premier, Interior Minister 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 at Bayan Palace yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. He also

received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. — KUNA

stc celebrates Saudi National Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, celebrated the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a video dedicated to the country's people on this joyous occasion.

With its Saudi roots extending from Saudi Arabia, stc dedicated a video production titled "We are one, our nations are one" to the Saudi population in celebration of their 90th National Day. The production emphasized on the unified and unbreakable bond that is shared between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait throughout history. With time, the two nations have only come closer together, celebrating special occasions as one united nation.

As a subsidiary of stc Group, stc Kuwait extended its sincerely heartfelt tribute to the Saudi Nationals, expressing its pride and appreciation on this memorable day. The top management team and employees at stc participated in the celebration, while wishing their neighbors a happy national day. As part of its celebra-



Danah Al-Jasem

tion, stc has offered a 50 percent discount on all international calls to Saudi Arabia on the 23rd of September.

Commenting on the occasion, Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "On behalf of stc, we would like to extend our appreciation and excitement in celebrating with the Saudi population this emotional day that comes close to the heart of the stc family and the people of Kuwait. As a gesture of the ties and values shared between the two nations, we dedicate this video production as an expression of the solid bond embodied with feelings of national pride and spirit."

or negative," said Christian Paulus, a Roche research and development manager. "The PCR remains the gold standard. Therefore if there are any questions open, or if the clinical appearance of the person who had a negative test, if the person has symptoms like a fever, then you would for sure do confirmatory testing."

Alitalia launched its "COVID Tested Flights" program from Rome to Milan last week, and will expand it from Wednesday. Only passengers with negative COVID-19 results can board. "So far no positive passengers have been found," said an Alitalia spokesman, adding that many chose to take the airline's antigen tests the night before the flight. Travellers can access airport-testing facilities via a preferred lane with their tickets.

The airline plans to analyze findings around the middle of October, but already expects antigen-tested flights will be expanded to domestic and later international routes. "First, we have to see how this experiment goes," the spokesman said. The pre-flight antigen tests follow a scheme in Italy where such tests were used defensively. SD Biosensor said its tests had been deployed at Italian airports for incoming tourists, to avoid a renewed COVID-19 wave imported from infection hotspots. —Reuters

Kuwait participates in Arab-German Health Forum

BERLIN: Kuwait's Ambassador to Germany Najeeb Al-Bader participated in the 13th Arab-German Health Forum and got acquainted with ongoing efforts to curb the coronavirus pandemic. Bader said yesterday that the forum, which was held in the North Rhine-Westphalia State in western Germany, enabled him to take first-hand account of the European state's attempts to confront COVID-19 with the objective of eliminating the virus. He said he exchanged views with experts attending the forum about efforts by some Arab countries to fight the virus, which infected over 20 million people worldwide and killed hundreds of thousands others. The forum featured many sessions about impacts and challenges posed by the pandemic on health systems, said Bader. The sessions, he added, also included transfer of health expertise and technologies, building of smart hospitals, boosting Arab-German pharmaceutical cooperation and establishing health partnership between public and private sectors. Armin Laschet, Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia State, addressed the forum and called for promoting cooperation between the Arab countries and the German state in health and education. Arab Ambassadors to Germany met with Laschet and discussed bilateral relations and cooperation. — KUNA



BERLIN: Kuwait's Ambassador to Germany Najeeb Al-Bader (left) meets with Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia State Armin Laschet. — KUNA

380 whales...

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A rescue crew of 60 conservationists, skilled volunteers and local fish farm workers have spent days wading in icy water trying to release the whales - which can grow up to six meters long and weigh a ton each.

The crews have focused efforts on a group of 30 partially submerged whales, using boats fitted with special slings to guide them back to the open ocean. "They're focused on the job - it's demanding work, some of them are up to their chest in cold water so we're trying to rotate the crews," Deka said. "It's very draining physically. It's also draining emotionally."

Nearby, rescuers decked in fluorescent uniforms tried to cloak fully beached whales in wet sheets to keep them alive, while other members of the once close-knit pod lay dead. "As time goes on (the whales) do become more fatigued so their chances of survival reduces," Deka said. "But we'll keep working as long as there's live animals at the site. Increasingly our focus is shifting to what to do with the retrieval and disposal of the carcasses."

The whales have been found stranded across an area 10 km long, and the search area has been expanded to see if more of the mammals are stuck nearby. Some of the whales rescued Tuesday re-stranded overnight, in line with predictions by whale behavior experts, who say the highly social creatures would try to return to be with family and friends.

But Deka remained upbeat about the immediate prospects for those that made it to the ocean. "The good news is the majority of whales that were rescued are still out



This photograph taken on September 21, 2020 shows a pod of whales stranded on a sandbar in Macquarie Harbour on the rugged west coast of Tasmania. Up to 90 whales have died and a "challenging" operation is underway to rescue 180 more still stranded in a remote bay in southern Australia on September 22. — AFP

in deep water and swimming," he told reporters in the nearby town of Strahan. "They haven't stranded. So we've been more successful than not."

The causes of mass strandings remain unknown - even to scientists who have been studying the phenomenon for decades. Some researchers have suggested the pilot whales may have gone off track after feeding close to the shoreline or by following one or two whales that strayed. Tasmanian environment department marine biologist Kris Carlyon said it was a "natural event" with strandings of the species occurring regularly throughout history in both southern Australian and neighboring New Zealand.

"We do step in and respond in these

situations, but as far as being able to prevent these occurring in the future, there's really little that we can do," he said. Carlyon said animal welfare issues were a major reason authorities and conservationists intervened in mass strandings, along with public expectations and the opportunity to learn more about a species.

It would have been a "hugely stressful" experience for the whales that were freed, he said, but past events showed they were likely to thrive in the wild. "We have shown fairly conclusively that animals will regroup, they will reform those social bonds, and they will - at least in the short- to medium-term for the duration that they've been tracked - demonstrate normal and natural behavior," Carlyon said. — AFP

Airlines look to tests that give...

Continued from Page 1

accurate as the molecular, or PCR, tests. They generally produce more "false negatives" which could mean sick people could slip through the cracks and onto planes.

An increasing number are hitting the market, from companies such as Abbott Laboratories, Becton Dickinson & Co and Quidel Corp and Roche, which is rebranding antigen tests from South Korea's privately held SD Biosensor. Airlines are pressing governments to embrace alternatives to blanket travel restrictions amid a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Europe. Rapid antigen tests that can be administered by non-medical staff are expected to become available in coming weeks for as little as \$7 each, the head of industry body the International Air Transport Association said on Tuesday.

Despite the drawbacks of such antigen tests, carriers hope they could tip the balance in convincing people to fly. "It is to give ... confidence, at a specific point in time, that the result is positive

Saudi Arabia to resume umrah...

Continued from Page 1

of year, usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year. The ministry said umrah would be allowed to resume at full "natural capacity" once the threat of the pandemic is eliminated. The decision to resume umrah was in response to the "aspirations of Muslims home and abroad" to perform the ritual and visit the holy sites, the ministry added.

The decision comes after the kingdom organized the smallest hajj in modern history in late July, with only up to 10,000 Muslims allowed to take part in total - a far cry from the 2.5 million who participated last year. Health authorities said no coron-

avirus cases were reported at the holy sites during the hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam and a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime.

Hajj pilgrims circled the sacred Kaaba - a cubic structure inside Mecca's Grand Mosque towards which Muslims around the world pray - along socially distant paths. The pilgrims were also subjected to regular temperature checks and required to go into mandatory quarantine after the ritual.

King Salman, the kingdom's ruler, said holding the hajj in the shadow of the pandemic required "double efforts" by Saudi authorities. The hajj and umrah pilgrimages are a massive logistical challenge, with colossal crowds cramming into relatively small holy sites, making them vulnerable to contagion. The kingdom has sought to contain a spike in infections, which have now risen to more than 330,000 cases - the highest in the Gulf - and over 4,500 deaths. But Saudi Arabia has also reported a high

rate of recoveries, which surpassed 312,000 on Tuesday.

Last week, Saudi Arabia partially lifted its suspension on international flights, six months after travel curbs were imposed due to the pandemic. Saudi Arabia's custodianship of Makkah and Madinah - Islam's two holiest sites - is seen as the kingdom's most powerful source of political legitimacy. The holy sites are also a key revenue earner for Saudi Arabia. The pilgrimages typically cost thousands of dollars for worshippers, who often save for years as well as endure long waiting lists for a chance to attend.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform plan seeks to decouple the economy of the kingdom - the world's top crude exporter - from oil dependency towards other sources of revenue, including religious tourism. The government hopes to welcome 30 million pilgrims to the kingdom annually by 2030. —AFP

Local

Kuwait's Foreign Minister delivers letter to Qatari Amir

Kuwait, Qatar foreign ministers visit embassy in Doha



DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Al Thani reads a letter from Kuwaiti Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, delivered by Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al Thani.

DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Al Thani received yesterday Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah, who delivered a letter from Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dealing with the "solid relations between the two countries," Kuwait's foreign ministry said in a statement. The letter also included issues of mutual interest, the ministry added.

Sheikh Dr Ahmad had arrived in Doha, Qatar earlier yesterday for a visit as representative of Kuwait's Deputy Amir and Crown Prince, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) said in a statement. He also met with Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al Thani, and discussed with him bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. The two ministers then visited Kuwait's Embassy in Doha, where they were received by Ambassador Hafeedh Al-Ajmi and Embassy staff. — KUNA



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Qatar's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al Thani and pose for a group picture with Kuwait's embassy staff members.

Kuwait, US discuss culture, arts cooperation

KUWAIT: The Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters Kamel Suleiman Al-Abduljaleel welcomed to his office the Ambassador of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait Alina Romanowski yesterday morning. The two parties discussed aspects and ways of sustainable cultural and artistic cooperation.

Abduljaleel described the meeting as fruitful and constructive, as several proposals and ideas were discussed to be formulated into programs and implemented in the future through the proper official channels. Among these topics was the interest in the film industry and benefiting from the experiences and long history of the United States, and its long-standing institutions in this important and influential field. In this regard, discussion talked ways to create opportunities for national companies to strengthen their expertise and development in the field of film directing and its branches such as sound, montage, and others, in addition to

seizing the opportunity for virtual cooperation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in the fields of film production, directing, and gaining experience in its wide fields.

In regards to artistic cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the United States, Abduljaleel affirmed that his meeting with Ambassador Romanowski also included the possibility of hosting concerts for musical bands known for their valuable contributions in this field, in addition to boosting bilateral cooperation in the field of fine arts, such as painting, sculpting, and others, by attracting artists from different art schools, especially contemporary ones. This is in order to keep up to date with the Kuwaiti Fine Arts scene that was created decades ago, thanks to the efforts of the founding artists and those who have come after them, as well as the efforts of the Academy of Arts and Media at the Public Authority for Youth.

In the meantime, Abduljaleel affirmed Ambassador Romanowski's appreciation of



KUWAIT: Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters Kamel Suleiman Al-Abduljaleel meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski.

the legislative progress and the constructive cooperation between the National Assembly and the government, which resulted in issuing the copyright and related rights' law. Abduljaleel said that this achievement is a step forward "consistent with the cultural reputation of the State of Kuwait," adding that it provides a legal framework

that protects creativity and creators in the field of culture, arts and literature. Towards the end of the visit, Abduljaleel showed Ambassador Romanowski examples of the periodical and special publications that NCCAL sponsored. Assistant Secretary General for the Culture and Arts Sectors in NCCAL Dr Essa Al-Ansari attended the meeting.

Solar panel dust platform wins US patent

KUWAIT: Three Kuwaiti researchers working with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research has obtained a patent issued by the United States Patent and Trademark Office for an invention measuring the effect of dust and other pollutants on solar panels. Dr Firas Al-Zoubi, Engineer Abdullah Al-Kandari, and Engineer Abdel Wahab Al-Asfour succeeded in designing the platform that will allow testing photovoltaics of all kinds and under different pollution conditions, allowing the invention to have a wide range of potential applications.

The invention uses a single solar cell, which is measured under three different conditions in three stages within a very short period of time.

Stage one: full and direct exposure to sunlight. Stage two: exposure to light through clean transparent glass. Stage three: exposure to light through transparent glass that is exposed to dust or any natural pollutant, as the solar cell is allowed to move in two directions to measure the energy produced under different points of the contaminated glass, which is the distinctive feature of this invention and the first of its kind.

Measuring the effect of the accumulation of pollutants on photovoltaic devices is still in its infancy, and with regard to the invention presented, irregular pollution can cause a greater reduction in energy compared to regular pollution. The information may be utilized in the future in the construction and design of layouts for solar panel farms as well as cleaning cycles and potential losses due to pollution. Kuwait has in recent years pushed forward with a variety of sustainable energy initiatives aimed at preparing the country for a future without oil.



News in brief

Quarantine violators prosecuted

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health has filed up to 80 cases against people who violated mandatory home quarantine since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in Kuwait late February, Al-Qabas daily reported yesterday. The ministry is continuously coordinating with the interior ministry to take legal action against patients who test positive to COVID-19 and leave their houses before the end of their quarantine period, said sources quoted in the report.

Judges stuck in Egypt

KUWAIT: The Supreme Judicial Council has assigned the Ministry of Justice to coordinate with relevant authorities in order to return to Kuwait 120 judges and consultants currently stuck in Egypt, Al-Jarida daily reported yesterday. The judges' services are urgently required to process several cases at the public prosecution and courts that have been put on hold pending their return back to their work there, according to sources quoted in the report.

Tests in classes

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education is preparing to carry out make up tests for 1,679 grade 12 students who failed in their finals, days after the final results were announced. The students will take their paper tests in school buildings under strict health precautions, such as having a maximum of seven students inside a classroom and 30 inside halls and theaters, Al-Jarida daily reported yesterday quoting ministry sources.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Kuwait COVID-19 cases rise by 616 to 101,299, deaths by two

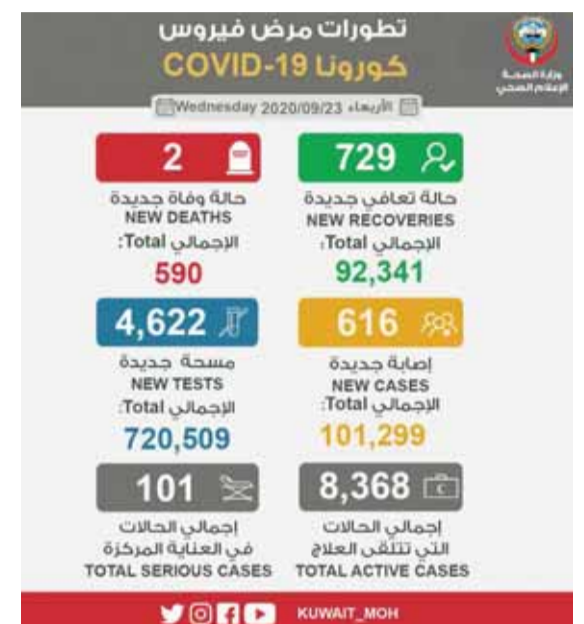
Kuwait registered 100,000 COVID-19 cases in 212 days

KUWAIT: Kuwait recorded 616 new coronavirus cases and two deaths in the past 24 hours, the Ministry of Health said yesterday. The new figures raised the total number of cases to 101,299 and deaths to 580, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said in a statement to the press. He noted that 152 cases were registered in Hawally governorate, 171 in Ahmadi, 91 in Farwaniya, 107 in the Capital and 95 in Jahra. There are currently 101 patients in ICUs, as the total number of patients still receiving medical care is 8,368, he added. The number of swabs tests conducted in the past 24 hours amounted to 4,622, raising the total number of tests to 720,509, he added. The ministry had announced earlier that 729 COVID-19 patients have recovered in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of recoveries to 92,341.

Kuwait had breached the 100,000 COVID-19 infection barrier 212 days since the first case of a female citizen returning from Iran was detected on Feb. 24, followed by 1,000 infections within 72 hours, Al-Rai reported yesterday. Meanwhile, the 'Social Watcher' platform showed that reaching the first 10,000 infections took 79 days - on May 12. However, the second 10,000 cases were registered in only 11 days, on May 23, the third 10,000 cases were regis-

tered in 13 days on June 5, and the fourth 10,000 cases were registered within 17 days on June 22. The fifth 10,000 cases were registered in 15 days on July 6, the sixth 10,000 cases were registered within 15 days on July 21, and the seventh 10,000 cases were registered within 17 days on Aug 3. In the meantime, the eighth 10,000 cases were registered in 18 days on Aug 23, the ninth 10,000 cases were registered in 15 days on Sept 7 and the tenth 10,000 cases were registered in 15 days on Sept 22. This makes the average period of registering 10,000 infections almost 15 days.

Kuwait ranked eighth in the world's top 10 countries with the highest rates of COVID-19 infections compared to their population as of Tuesday. And after exceeding 100,000 infections, Kuwait is ranked 37th worldwide in the number of coronavirus cases in general. Starting July 16, 2020, the health ministry stopped providing data about the nationalities of infected cases and their distribution as per health zones or areas. The ministry also started obscuring data about the nationalities of infected non-Kuwaiti cases on June 17. On May 4, it stopped providing information about certain cases concerning the sources of infection, nationalities, age and gender of the dead or the period they spent in ICUs. The report added that as a result, data about 47,582



cases (47 percent of the total number) and about 548 fatalities (93 percent of the total number of 588) were obscured.

Crimes

Man sues wife over abortion

KUWAIT: An Indian man filed a case at Salmiya police station against his wife, accusing her of deliberately aborting their three-month-old fetus. The wife admitted to ingesting a large quantity of pills to get rid of the fetus. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Body found in tank

An unidentified male body was found in a water tank of a Fintas building, said security sources. The building's tenants had reported to the janitor that the water tasted strange and a foul odor was emanating from the tank. The janitor said on checking the water tank himself, he found the body. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Fatal accident

A five-year-old bedoon boy was killed when his uncle accidentally ran over him in Jahra, said security sources. The child sustained serious head injuries and various fractures, and died after being rushed to hospital for treatment, the sources added. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Fake degree

Kuwait Lawyers Association yesterday removed the name of a Kuwaiti lawyer who had been previously accused of breaking into the parliament and stealing the speaker's gavel from the board of Kuwait lawyers after a court proved that his law degree is fake, said security sources, noting that the association is still investigating all lawyers' degrees and will take legal action against any holders of fake degrees. —Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Kuwait takes part in OPEC energy, IT online workshop

VIENNA: The OPEC Secretariat concluded the second Workshop on Energy and Information Technology on Tuesday, featuring lively discussions on latest developments in blue hydrogen and trends in digitalization. Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, acted as of the workshop's moderator. More than 200 participants representing OPEC Member Countries, industry, government and research institutions took part in the workshop.

The videoconference also focused on topical issues such as robotics, cyber security, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology and how they can drive innovations in OPEC Member Countries and the industry in general. The event, a follow-up to a two-day workshop held in September 2019, provided a platform to examine timely techno-

logical developments with the participation of leading experts. Several speakers pointed to the critical contributions that Information Technology has played in providing stable and secure energy supply during the COVID-19 crisis, and in transforming the way people live and work.

In opening the event, OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo quoted Bill Gates, who once commented that "innovation is the reason our lives have improved over the last century." The Secretary General said, "I would like to expand upon these words of wisdom by noting that the oil industry, from its earliest days in the 19th century, has been a leader in developing and utilizing technologies to the benefit of global development and human progress. In the 21st century, technological innovation, coupled with an experienced and highly-skilled work force, are driving advances in the industry's operations across the value chain and contribute to its ever-improving environmental performance."

In their inputs, panelists noted that blue hydrogen has tremendous potential in the areas of transport, providing a buffering fuel and potentially for heating. Both Japan and Australia provide a potential model for how this technology has evolved and how OPEC can benefit from their valuable expertise, the

Secretary General noted. Another important takeaway, the Secretary General said in his remarks, is the transformative role that innovation and technology can play in meeting the rapid growth in energy demand in the future.

Robotics and other innovations, for example, can help improve productivity, maximize efficiency and safety, and drive efficiencies across the value chain. Barkindo also noted that COVID-19 crisis ushered in a digital era that has brought tremendous changes to ways of working. "Without IT, none of us would be participating in this workshop. Despite social distancing and other measures to contain the pandemic, we have been conducting business as usual thanks to innovations in remote communications and operations," he said.

"The miracles of technology," he continued, "allow us to carry on with decades of OPEC tradition in supporting dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of information to the benefit of producers, consumers and the global economy at large." The videoconference was part of the OPEC Secretariat's ongoing research program for its Member Countries, which includes workshops and technical meetings that act as a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas on some of the energy industry's most important issues. —KUNA

Some influencers provide 'convincing evidence' to clear names in laundering cases

KUWAIT: Under its new directorship, the state security department is preparing to provide the public prosecution with new supplementary investigations in the money laundering and inflated accounts case involving a number of celebrities, informed sources told Al-Rai.

"A number of influencers referred for investigations managed to provide convincing evidence justifying, to a large extent, the inflation of their bank accounts, while others failed to do so and claimed losing the receipts and proofs because those went too far back and they did not keep

them," the sources explained.

"The investigations previously conducted by the state security department were not professional enough as they mainly tracked the accounts, interrogated some celebrities and referred their testimonies to the prosecution instead of proper investigations, which made it hard to prove whether they were guilty or innocent," the sources added. Moreover, legal sources stressed supplementary investigations currently underway will shift the course of investigations in some cases.

Responding to a question whether it would be likely to correlate the cases of the celebrities and inflated accounts with other cases, the sources said: "Let us not jump to conclusions, but everything is possible. Anyhow, there are indicators that another case might be related to one of the controversial celebrities." The sources noted that unusual transactions conducted through the concerned bank accounts synchronized with considerable activity in the fields of real estate, precious watches, yachts and remittances abroad.

Four hurt in Sabah Al-Salem fire

KUWAIT: Firemen battled a blaze reported in a Sabah Al-Salem building yesterday. Mishref and Qurain fire stations' men arrived to the scene shortly after the blaze was reported, and immediately evacuated the three-storey building before tackling the flames. Four persons suffered smoke inhalation and were treated on site, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) said in a statement. Meanwhile, Hawally firemen put out a blaze that started in a power transformer in the area yesterday, KFS said, adding that no injuries were reported. Investigations were opened in both cases.



A power transformer in Hawally seen after firemen put out a blaze reported there yesterday.



KUWAIT: Heavy damage left by a fire reported in a Sabah Al-Salem building yesterday.

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Criminal 'clans' challenge Sweden's law enforcement

Malaysia oppn leader claims 'formidable' majority to form new govt

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NEW YORK: This UN handout photo shows US President Donald Trump (on screen), as he addresses the general debate of the seventy-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN in New York. US President Donald Trump angrily cast blame on China over the coronavirus pandemic in an address on Tuesday before the United Nations, whose chief warned against a new "Cold War" between the two powers. —AFP

Trump lashes China over coronavirus pandemic as UN warns against 'Cold War'

'United States is spreading a political virus here in the General Assembly'

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump cast blame on China over the coronavirus pandemic in an address on Tuesday before the United Nations, whose chief warned against a new "Cold War" between the two powers.

At a General Assembly held almost entirely virtually due to Covid-19, Trump delivered a speech in election campaign mode, while Chinese President Xi Jinping instead unveiled ambitious new targets to fight climate change.

As the US death toll from Covid-19 reached the grim milestone of 200,000, the highest in the world, Trump attacked Beijing and the United Nations for not stopping the disease and even used the loaded term "China virus."

"We must hold accountable the nation which unleashed this plague onto the world — China," Trump said in a recorded address to the General Assembly, where each nation was represented by a single, masked delegate.

"The Chinese government and the World Health Organization - which is virtually controlled by China - falsely declared that there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission," Trump said, referring to initial statements by the UN health body after Beijing covered up early cases of the respiratory disease.

Trump has given notice that the United States is pulling out of the World Health Organization, to which it has been the largest contributor. Critics say Trump is trying to shift blame for his handling of Covid-19. His rival for the November 3 elections, Democrat Joe Biden, has vowed to keep the US in the WHO, which also fights against malaria, polio and other public health scourges.

Speaking before Xi's announcement of China's new climate pledge, Trump — who has pulled the United States out of the Paris accord on climate change — said that his critics ignored "China's rampant pollution." "They only want to punish America. And I will not stand for it," he said.

'Political virus'

Leaders were asked to send videos of their speeches days in advance in a — partly successful — bid to avoid technical glitches, meaning Xi could not respond to Trump's remarks.

But China's ambassador to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, told reporters that Trump's tone was "incompatible with the general atmosphere" of the world body. "When the international community is really fighting hard against the Covid-19, the United States is spreading a political virus here in

the General Assembly," he said.

"If we do have to hold anyone accountable, it should be the United States held accountable for losing so many lives with their irresponsible behavior," Xi, in a mild-mannered speech delivered before a painting of the Great Wall, warned the world not to "politicize" the fight against coronavirus.

In a step hailed by environmentalists, Xi announced that China — the world's largest polluter of greenhouse gases — would peak its emissions in 2030 and go carbon neutral by 2060.

China has been rapidly curbing dirty coal and shifting to renewable energy, but under the Paris accord had said only that it would cap emissions "around" 2030. "We call on all countries to pursue innovative, coordinated, green and open development for all," Xi said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced alarm over the US-China rift, warning that "we must do everything to avoid a new Cold War." "We are moving in a very dangerous direction. Our world cannot afford a future where the two largest economies split the globe in a Great Fracture — each with its own trade and financial rules and internet and artificial intelligence capacities," Guterres said in a rare in-person address.

French President Emmanuel Macron similarly said that the rest of the world should not be reduced to "rueful spectators." "The world today cannot be reduced to the rivalry between China and the United States, irrespective of the global weight of these great powers," he said.

Covid 'populism'

The UN General Assembly in normal years draws about 10,000 people from around the world, a prospect that is unthinkable at a time when nations have imposed strict entrance requirements to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Russian President Vladimir Putin in his speech hailed the safety of a Covid vaccine unveiled by Moscow — which has drawn wide skepticism among Western scientists. Putin called for universal access to the vaccine and offered to give it for free to UN staff. "I repeat again that we are absolutely open and disposed for partnership," Putin said. Guterres in his address criticized nationalist approaches to the coronavirus, without naming Trump or other world leaders. "Populism and nationalism have failed. Those approaches to contain the virus have often made things manifestly worse." —AFP

Britain imposes six month curbs against second wave

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the British people on Tuesday to work from home where possible and ordered restaurants and bars to close early to tackle a fast-spreading second wave of COVID-19, with new restrictions lasting probably six months.

After scientific warnings that deaths could soar without urgent action, Johnson stopped short of imposing another full lockdown, as he did in March, but warned that further measures could come if the disease was not suppressed.

"We reserve the right to deploy greater firepower, with significantly greater restrictions," he told parliament following emergency meetings with ministers and leaders of the United Kingdom's devolved governments.

Just weeks after urging people to start returning to workplaces, Johnson advised office workers to stay at home if they could. He ordered all pubs, bars, restaurants and other hospitality sites to close at 10 p.m. from Thursday, with only table service allowed.

In a prime-time televised plea to citizens, Johnson said the winter would be hard but that his strategy would keep the economy moving while containing

COVID-19 contagion.

"We must take action now...This way we can keep people in work, we can keep our shops and our schools open, and we can keep our country moving forward while we work together to suppress the virus," he said.

It was unclear if the measures would be enough to curb Britain's second wave, which government scientists warned could reach 50,000 new cases per day by mid-October.

Masks will be required in more settings, there will be tougher enforcement of rules, and the military could be brought in to help free up the police, Johnson said. Schools and universities are to stay open. A poll by YouGov of 3,436 British adults found that 78% supported the measures, although 45% said Johnson should have gone further while 32% said he had got the restrictions about right.

'Brazen' rule-breakers

Businesses breaking COVID laws face penalties of up to 10,000 pounds (\$13,000) or even closure, while individuals may be fined 200 pounds for not wearing a mask when required.

Johnson said it was frustrating for the law-abiding majority to see a few "brazenly defying the rules". Asked in parliament why Britain's figures were worse than Germany and Italy, Johnson said: "There is an important difference between our country and many other countries around the world and that is our country is a freedom-loving coun-

try...It is very difficult to ask the British population uniformly to obey guidelines in the way that is necessary."

In the televised address, he said that there had been too many rule breaches, and that even those who were willing to take chances with the virus would be endangering others.

"Never in our history has our collective destiny and our collective health depended so completely on our individual behaviour," he said. The United Kingdom already has the highest official COVID-19 death toll in Europe - 41,825 - while it is borrowing record amounts to pump emergency money through the damaged economy.

Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey warned that the "very unfortunate" escalation of COVID-19 cases threatened the economic outlook and said the central bank was looking hard at how it could support the economy further.

Pub operator JD Wetherspoon said it could cut 400-450 jobs at sites at six airports, including London's Heathrow and Gatwick, because of the large drop in passengers. Opposition leader Keir Starmer urged the government not to end a furlough scheme at the end of October, accusing it of losing control of the coronavirus crisis.

Scotland will introduce additional nationwide restrictions on household gatherings that go further than Johnson's new rules for England, its First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said. —Reuters

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International

Malaysia opposition leader Anwar claims 'formidable' majority to form new govt

Muhyiddin has fallen as prime minister: Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday he has secured a 'strong, formidable' majority from lawmakers to form a new government and oust Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin from power.

However, it remains uncertain if he would be able to form a government as he is yet to receive the nod from Malaysia's king, who could instead choose to call for elections on Muhyiddin's advice to end

"We have a strong, formidable majority. I'm not talking about four, five, six (seats), I'm talking about much more than that," Anwar told reporters. "With these numbers, Muhyiddin has fallen as PM."

Anwar said he commanded support from close to two thirds of the legislature's 222 lawmakers, without giving actual numbers or disclosing who had pledged support, though he did stress that the majority of lawmakers backing him were Malay Muslims.

Muhyiddin's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Representatives for Malaysia's biggest Malay parties, including the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Islamist party PAS and Mahathir's party, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Anwar's next step would be to meet with the king, Sultan Abdullah. The king plays a largely ceremonial role in Malaysia but he could appoint a prime minister who in his view is likely to command a majority in parliament. He could also dissolve parliament and trigger elections on the premier's advice.

Anwar said he was scheduled to meet with the king on Tuesday but it had to be cancelled as the king was unwell and had to be taken to a hospital. Analysts said elections were more likely to end the political uncertainty.

"If Anwar has the numbers, snap polls will be very likely," said Adib Zalkapli, director at political consultancy BowerGroupAsia. Muhyiddin came to power in March after securing a parliamentary majority with the support of UMNO, which was defeated in the 2018 election. His opponents have accused him of grabbing power by shifting alliances instead of earning it at the ballot box.



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (C) and his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (R) leave after a press conference at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

Anwar, 73, has had a tumultuous political career. At first a rising star of Malaysian politics and UMNO, he was jailed for sodomy and corruption after being fired as deputy prime minister by Mahathir in 1998.

He was again jailed on sodomy charges in 2015, when Najib Razak was prime minister.

Anwar and his supporters described all the charges brought against him as a plot to destroy his political career. He was granted a royal pardon in 2018, as part of the deal with Mahathir for him to succeed the premiership, after the two had forged an alliance to defeat Najib in the 2018 election. — Reuters



Razor-thin majority

months of political volatility.

Muhyiddin has a razor-thin majority in parliament and has already hinted at polls to win a stronger mandate. And there is a risk that political upheavals could delay delivery of government support measures for an export-focused economy that has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

If Anwar is awarded the premiership of the multi-ethnic Southeast Asian nation it would mark culmination of 22-year long struggle, during which he spent almost 10 years in jail.

Anwar's latest bid for power comes less than seven months after Muhyiddin emerged as leader following uncertainties triggered by the resignation of the previous prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad.

In blast-hit Beirut, Armenian elders determined to stay

BEIRUT: Beirut resident Vany Bandikian once dreamt of travelling outside Lebanon, but after a massive explosion wrecked her neighbourhood, all she wants is to stay in the home her father built. "Never will I leave this home," said the Lebanese Armenian retiree as she sat in her windowless living room.

"The walls speak to me," she said, the endless din of reconstruction work ringing from outside. The August 4 blast at Beirut's port killed more than 190 people, injured thousands and ravaged dwellings in large parts of the capital. Some of the worst-hit areas are home to the city's century-old Armenian community. More than a month since the explosion, construction workers trudge up and down the stairs of Bandikian's 1930s villa. Its tall white columns and cast-iron balconies are still standing, but its windows, now covered with sheets of white plastic, have been blown clean of glass.

Doors cracked in half lie on the tiled floor, and window frames have been dislodged from the walls.

"A lot of people rang me and said: 'Come and live with us'. But I can't. How am I supposed to leave an open house?" said the former French-language teacher, who lives with her sister. Relatives in the United States have urged her to emigrate, but she is not interested. "I really feel rooted in Lebanon," said Bandikian. Some 140,000 Armenians live in Lebanon, mostly descendants of those who escaped the mass killings of their people under the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1917. They are the largest such community in

the Middle East, and have their own schools and university as well as seats in the Lebanese cabinet and parliament.

In Beirut, many live in the Bourj Hammoud neighbourhood, but also in the heavily damaged districts of Geitawi and Mar Mikhail close to the port. Shop signs in the area are often in Armenian, residents use their own dialect, and the elderly often speak halting Arabic.

Though some members of the Armenian community — like many young Lebanese — have emigrated in recent years because of the economic crisis, the older generation is bent on staying. Berjouhi Kasparian, a frail 90-year-old with short white hair, said that even though she had three children living abroad, she would not leave the Geitawi apartment where she has lived on and off since she was 10.

"It will pass. Every country has problems," she said sitting in her living room, surrounded by family photos and handmade crochet doilies. A scar to the side of her mouth is the only visible sign of the nightmare she experienced on the day of the explosion, four days before her birthday. She was standing in her kitchen when a cascade of plates and glasses fell on top of her. With Beirut's hospitals overwhelmed, she had to wait a whole day for someone to dress her wounds. Bandikian and Kasparian have received help to repair their homes from the Lebanese branch of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), a century-old non-profit diaspora organisation.

The charity has fixed 100 homes and started work on 80 others in blast-affected areas, AGBU's Lebanon director Arine Ghazarian said. It hopes to restore 600 homes in total, not all of them belonging to Armenians.

In areas around the port, the explosion dealt a further blow to households already reeling from Lebanon's worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war. Three times a week, AGBU distributes a total



BEIRUT: Residents of the Armenian CAHL nursing home and care center in the Bourj Hammoud neighbourhood of the Lebanese capital Beirut, sit together in the center's courtyard. The August 4 blast at Beirut's port killed more than 190 people, injured thousands and ravaged dwellings in large parts of the capital. Some of the worst-hit areas are home to the city's century-old 140,000-strong Armenian community. — AFP

of 1,500 meals in the Bourj Hammoud and Mar Mikhail neighbourhoods, Ghazarian said.

At a home for the elderly in Bourj Hammoud, its manager Sebouh Terzian said he was grateful a donor had pledged \$22,000 to fix the damaged building. "Hopefully they will come next week and do all the repairs," said the head of the institution, which also relies on non-governmental organisations to feed its 119 residents. But for others in the community, the pain

of the blast is still very raw. In Mar Mikhail, Dikran Geuzubeuyukian, 58, and his teenage children have received food aid and help to renovate their damaged flat. But the cast-iron craftsman said he had mixed feelings about moving back in after the repairs have been finished. From the kitchen, he can see what remains of the port's grain silos, while in the corridor, there is the place where he found his wife Liza, who died in the explosion. — AFP

India building collapse toll climbs to 39

MUMBAI: Rescue workers battled rain and cramped conditions to scour through rubble and look for possible survivors as the toll from an apartment building collapse on the outskirts of Mumbai rose to 39, a senior government official said yesterday.

"It's been more than three days, so we don't know if there are any survivors any more, but we are not losing hope," Satya Pradhan, the head of the National Disaster Response Force, told Reuters.

At least eight people are still missing and rescue personnel are clearing debris to look for them, said Pradhan. The building, a three-storey structure in a narrow alley of the industrial town of Bhiwandi, on the north-east outskirts of Mumbai, collapsed early on Monday.

Rescue work has been hampered by rain and a narrow entrance to the alley, which prevented heavy equipment from being brought in to clear debris. Officials are still investigating the cause of the collapse of the structure that housed 54 apartments.

Such disasters are commonplace in India during the monsoon season, as the torrential rains can destabilise old and often illegally constructed buildings. This week's collapse however, is one of the worst such incidents in recent years around Mumbai.

Last month, more than a dozen people were killed when a building collapsed in the industrial town of Mahad, 165 km (100 miles) south of Mumbai. In 2013, more than 120 people were killed in two separate building collapses around Mumbai. — Reuters

China stakes claim as climate leader

BEIJING: The US is guilty of "obstructing" the global fight against emissions, China said yesterday, as Beijing seized the climate agenda by vowing to go carbon neutral by 2060 — a target welcomed by environmentalists despite its patchy detail.

The goals, which include a pledge to reach peak emissions in 2030, are still the most concrete yet announced by China, which is the world's biggest polluter and accounts for a quarter of the planet's greenhouse gas blamed for rising temperatures.

They also open a new divergence in relations with the US, which are already pinched by squabbles over trade, tech, defence and human rights.

Freed Taliban have returned to battlefield

WASHINGTON: A number of Taliban prisoners who were released by the Afghan government as a condition for peace talks have taken up arms again, top official Abdullah Abdullah said Tuesday.

Abdullah, who chairs Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation and is overseeing the government's peace efforts, said discussions with the Taliban in Qatar so far have been positive.

However, he said some — though not the majority — of the 5,000 Taliban prisoners released by the government as a condition for talks had resumed the fight against Kabul.

"I do know that some have returned to the battlefield, which is a violation of the agreement that

they had made," Abdullah said during an online conference with the US Council on Foreign Relations.

Abdullah said talks between the two sides had begun in Doha on a positive note, as the delegations build some familiarity with each other.

Yet the level of violence inside Afghanistan has not fallen, and he called on the United States, which launched the peace process with its own deal with the Taliban, and Pakistan, which maintains ties to the insurgents, to pressure them to agree to a ceasefire.

"Unfortunately, so far, the level of violence is very high and to a level that is not acceptable for the people," Abdullah said.

"I repeat my call to the Taliban themselves and also to all partners who have any leverage over the Taliban to press on that point," Abdullah said he planned to visit Pakistan in the coming days for the first time since 2008.

The persistent violence, and the Taliban's failure to completely cut relations with the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda jihadist groups, was singled out as a

barrier to success by US officials testifying in Congress Tuesday.

US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad said a drawdown of US troops, under the US-Taliban agreement, would halt at around 4,500 remaining in Afghanistan in November while Washington assesses whether the insurgents were living up to their pledges.

"Further withdrawals will be determined based on conditions on the ground and delivery by the Taliban on their commitments," Khalilzad told a hearing of the House oversight committee.

The US has slashed troop numbers in Afghanistan by more than half from above 12,000. Under President Donald Trump's promise to end US involvement in wars abroad, Washington has pledged to withdraw all forces by May 2021, if the Taliban and the government can achieve a solid peace agreement.

"By any measure, the current levels of violence are too high. We know that the reductions are possible," Khalilzad said, noting short ceasefires were respected by the Taliban in the past. — AFP

International

Rebuild or leave? Future uncertain for US communities in fire zones

'We'll never have enough fire engines to park in every driveway'

LOS ANGELES: Deadly blazes raging across the western United States have again destroyed thousands of homes nestled in forested areas this year — with months of the fire season still to come in a region perilously exposed to climate change.

With many insurers now refusing or charging exorbitant rates to cover at-risk houses, some homeowners are questioning what the future holds for their exhausted communities.

Populations of settlements built on the forested margins of cities — officially known as the wildland-urban interface (WUI) — have exploded in recent decades, and now total some 50 million households.

One example is Paradise, a town bordering



Remodeling would be expensive

Northern California's national forests which was devastated by the state's deadliest modern-day fire in 2018. Rebuilding from the inferno that claimed 86 lives had not even finished when it was threatened by another fire burning in a neighboring town this month.

Despite the inherent risk of living in settlements like Paradise, the idea of evicting citizens "is the last solution residents want to resort to and policymakers want to resort to, because it's so dramatic and so costly," said Gregory Pierce, of University of California Los Angeles. "But for some communities, it's the only answer for survival," the urban planning professor told AFP.

'Out in the wilderness'

So far this year, some 6,500 structures have been destroyed in California alone, according to CalFire, with massive devastation extending far into Oregon and Washington states up the Pacific coastline. But WUI housing has grown exponentially due to the region's "housing affordability crisis," said Pierce. California's real estate is among the nation's costliest, but it remains "cheaper to build new development in outlying areas than it is in core urban areas," he added. WUI housing boomed nationwide from 1990 to 2010, both in number of new homes (41 percent) and land area used (33 percent), according to the US Forest Service.



LOS ANGELES: Firefighters work the Bobcat Fire burns in the Angeles National Forest on September 21, 2020 in Los Angeles, California. The fire, which erupted on September 6 in the Angeles National Forest, has become one of the largest fires in Los Angeles County's history with over 100,000 acres scorched by the fire. — AFP

"We have communities that are building around canyons that have brush, that are tough (to access)," said Darrell Robert, a 20-year-old firefighter in Southern California. "I mean, everybody wants that beautiful home with the trees over the top and out in the wilderness — we get that." But the risks are high, he added.

Prescribed fires

There are many factors behind California's record fires. Besides overpopulation of the WUI, years of drought worsened by climate change have left endless acres of excess, dry vegetation.

For President Donald Trump, a climate change skeptic, poor forest management is the leading culprit. One management tactic is to deliberately light "prescribed fires" that remove the fuel that feeds wildfires

in a controlled way.

"Plans and practices like that can be very successful, but it's very, very difficult to do today because of the fact that there is a lot of people living out there," said David Shew, a retired California fire chief. "Can you guarantee that it's not going to escape its control and burn down somebody's house?" Shew agreed that evicting inhabitants would be a radical solution. And simply banning construction — as is done in flood-prone parts of the Mississippi Delta — is also problematic, because it is "much harder to predict" precisely which areas will burn.

Incentives

Another alternative would be to shift new housing stock to less flammable materials, said Shew. Reinforced walls, windows and roofs built from highly

fire-resistant products, and covered fireplaces, could even be applied to existing homes. The remodeling would be expensive, but could make the vital difference in surviving the next inferno, he added — and besides, there is no other easy option.

"We'll never have enough fire engines to park in every driveway," said Shew. Insurance companies — who have lost millions of dollars underwriting homes in fire zones, but are obliged to extend policies for 800,000 at-risk homes by California state law — could financially incentivize customers to make modifications to their properties.

"For people who are already living in harm's way, there aren't many options to get out without losing a big chunk of the value of your assets," said Amy Bach of NGO United Policyholders, which looks after the rights of insured homeowners. — AFP

Hair to the rescue as oil pollution blights coastlines

BRIGNOLES: In the town of Brignoles in southeast France, 40 tonnes of human hair are stacked in a warehouse — discarded locks sent in from salons far and wide under an innovative recycling scheme.

After a successful trial in the nearby port of Cavalaire-sur-Mer, the hair is destined to be stuffed into nylon stockings to make floating tubes that will line harbours to mop up ocean oil pollution. "Hair is lipophilic, which means it absorbs fats and hydrocarbons," said Thierry Gras, a hairdresser in Saint-Zacharie near Brignoles and founder of the project Coiffeurs Justes (Fair Hairdressers).

Awaiting the green light from labour inspectors and anti-pollution officials, Gras hopes to start large-scale production of

the tubes before year-end and so help fight against pollution. He plans to sell the forearm-length tubes, which can each absorb eight times their weight in oil, for nine euros (\$10.50) apiece.

At the Brignoles warehouse, paper bags are filled with two kilogrammes (4.4 pounds) of hair each, waste from thousands of participating hairdressers from all over France — including Gras's own — as well as Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg.

The bags are then sent to another site a few streets away, where formerly-unemployed people and school dropouts are paid to make the absorbent tubes. Gras plans to reinvest half of the sale price of the tubes in the employment centre.

According to the stylist, each hairdresser on average produces about 29 kilogrammes of hair waste every year, most of it ending up in the trash. Last year, scientists found that discarded human hair was likely to blame for a strange phenomenon of missing toes among Paris pigeons. The birds appear to get entangled in the dis-

carded locks, cutting off blood flow to their extremities.

While snipping away at a client's hair, Gras told AFP his appetite for fighting pollution was awakened in childhood by the 1978 stranding of the Amoco Cadiz tanker off France's Brittany coast.

For perhaps the first time ever, human hair was employed in the effort to mop up the more than 200,000 tonnes of spilled oil.

When he became a hairdresser later, Gras was shocked to discover there was no recycling facility for hair waste — which can also be used as fertiliser, isolation material, concrete reinforcement or in water filtration.

Gras thus came up with the idea of creating hair-filled oil absorbers, and in 2015 founded his association. It has some 3,300 contributing salons to date.

The tubes, Gras explained, "can be used in case of a serious oil spill, such as the one in Mauritius recently, but the idea here is to remove micro-pollution on a continuous basis" in ports. — AFP

Criminal 'clans' challenge Sweden's law enforcement

STOCKHOLM: Police in Sweden say they're struggling to control criminal "clans" exercising their own form of justice, amid an escalation of violent crime in what has long been a tranquil and safe country. With close family loyalties and little regard for the authorities, a few dozen criminal gangs now wield considerable influence over some of Sweden's disadvantaged neighbourhoods, say experts. Shootings, bombings and grenade attacks have become regular events in cities and towns across the country. Media outlets report on drug wars, blackmail, settlements of scores and witnesses too fearful of repercussions to testify.

"Have you seen the movie 'The Godfather'? Then you know what it's like," journalist Johanna Backstrom Lerneby, who wrote a book about one of Sweden's most infamous crime families, told AFP. Gang members tied to the family Backstrom Lerneby wrote about recently made headlines in Sweden when, during a feud with a rival gang in August, they set up makeshift roadblocks, stopping cars and asking to see passengers' ID cards.

Interviewed by broadcaster SVT on condition of anonymity, a young man involved in the car checks who called himself "Samir" said the controls were set up to "protect residents and children in the area". The feud came to a halt in late August — but not because police arrested any suspects. Instead, members of several gangs met at a Gothenburg hotel and agreed to end hostilities, effectively ending the strife overnight.

"It's very frustrating, because it is a good solution in the short term... but it was resolved in the wrong way," local police officer Fredrik Terje told SVT. "It's these criminal networks that reached a



STOCKHOLM: File photo shows people lay flowers and candles at the place where a twelve-year-old girl was shot dead at a petrol station in Hallunda in Botkyrka, south of Stockholm, Sweden on August 3, 2020. — AFP

peace deal and set the agenda, while the authorities stood on the sidelines," Terje added.

The problem of "clan gangs" has made headlines since early September, when deputy police chief Mats Lofving told Swedish Radio there were at least 40 family-based criminal gangs in Sweden. "Far from everyone wants to be a part of Swedish society," Lofving said, adding these families had come to Sweden solely for the purpose of committing crime, bringing with them their own parallel systems of government. Lofving also said these families were making their way into business and politics in order to wield more formal influence, primarily in disadvantaged suburbs, many of which have a large proportion of residents with immigrant backgrounds. — AFP

Belarus neighbours open doors to tech talent

WARSAW: With Belarus in upheaval, its neighbours are eyeing its tech sector in the hope of attracting the talent behind global successes such as calling app Viber and the game World of Tanks.

Since the mass protests against President Alexander Lukashenko began last month, Poland and the Baltic states have opened their doors to companies from the former Soviet republic's thriving IT sector.

Lukasz Czajkowski, head of growth at Poland's Software Development Association, said relocation was a "win-win" both for Belarusian IT workers and for Poland's economy. Poland has a booming IT sector that required an additional 50,000 workers in 2019, according to European Commission estimates.

Many Belarusian IT sector employees have openly supported and participated in the anti-Lukashenko protests, themselves fuelled by communication through social media. Czajkowski said it was unsurprising that some Belarusian startups would be thinking of moving.

"These people want change. They have contact with the outside world, work for Western clients and therefore travel. They earn more than most Belarusians, they have different aspirations," he told AFP.

Poland's Investment and Trade Agency has set up a new programme called "Poland: Business Harbour" offering legal and logistical assistance to Belarusian tech companies wanting to set up in Poland.

Renata Zukowska, a spokeswoman for the agency, said it was working with "10 big firms and dozens of smaller ones" that want to move some or all of their operations, but she declined to reveal which ones until completion. Despite a largely state-controlled economy dominated by farming and heavy industry, Belarus has managed to turn the legacy of a solid Soviet technical education into a thriving IT sector helped along by tax breaks.

Belarus's tech sector currently

employs around 60,000 people and represents some five percent of the country's economy, according to experts. In 2005, Minsk created a High Technology Park, quickly dubbed a "Belarusian Silicon Valley", where companies could receive additional incentives and protection from the perils of doing business in a post-Soviet environment.

But that all changed when some executives openly sided with the opposition in the run-up to and following Lukashenko's disputed reelection on August 9.

Mikita Mikado, founder of PandaDoc, a sales process software company, proposed financial aid for members of the security forces who wanted to switch sides.

Since then, the company has been raided and some of its managers have been arrested for fraud.

Baltic countries

Poland is not alone in trying to attract technical know-how from Belarus. The Baltic countries that were once part of the Soviet Union and are now EU members have also outlined a raft of new measures.

Kaspars Rozkalns, head of the Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIAA), last week said that "29 companies are seriously thinking about moving, while 12 others have decided to move".

Lithuania has said it is in negotiation with 60 Belarusian companies, mostly in the IT sector.

One potentially influential figure is Valery Tsepikalo, a former government minister in Belarus who has switched to the opposition.

Tsepikalo is credited with overseeing the development of Belarus's tech sector and has now fled to Poland after unsuccessfully trying to register as a candidate against Lukashenko.

Tsepikalo, who has been touring neighbouring countries to drum up support for the opposition, has a gloomy outlook for the sector without fundamental political and economic change. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Boursa Kuwait sponsors '2020 MEIRA Virtual Annual Conference and Awards'

Fahad Al-Besher addresses panel discussion on effects of COVID-19 pandemic

KUWAIT: In line with its longstanding partnership with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and its Kuwait chapter, and as part of its commitment to playing a vital role in the development of the practice of investor relations, Boursa Kuwait sponsored the '2020 MEIRA Virtual Annual Conference and Awards' event, themed MEIRA 20/20 Vision: Driving Stakeholder Value.

The two-day virtual conference, which took place on 22 and 23 September 2020, is the largest IR event in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, bringing together participants from locally listed firms, international corporations, investors, research analysts and advisors, as well as representatives of the region's regulatory bodies.

Sponsored by Boursa Kuwait, the panel session 'Kuwait IR Challenge: Facing the Pandemic' was addressed by Fahad Al-Besher, Director of Investor Relations at Boursa Kuwait, who shed light on the swift actions taken by the exchange in general throughout the pandemic, and by the Investor Relations department specifically, to ensure minimal ramifications on all stakeholders and their interests.

"Over the past few months, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in many uncertainties across financial markets, creating economic anxiety and driving volatility. It is with no doubt that this external event has affected some plans during this calendar year for Boursa Kuwait and other companies, due to some of the ramifications it brought about, including the shutdown of some businesses, travel restrictions, and imposed healthy and safety measures. Despite these challenges, Boursa Kuwait remained committed to its standard of communications and transparency with its stakeholders, utilizing its multiple platforms from the company website to its social media channels to ensure timely and clear updates. In addition, a slightly altered yet robust framework for trading operations was put in place immediately to minimize the negative impact on trading actions



Fahad Al-Besher

and results while ensuring the safety of all involved stakeholders," Al-Besher explained to attendees.

Boursa Kuwait highlighted the operational decisions taken during the pandemic to mitigate the impact of the outbreak, such as modifying the security circuit breaker and reducing the lower limit from -10 percent to -5 percent, while maintaining the upper limit at 10 percent. Boursa Kuwait has rolled out the reduction in the security circuit breaker, in compliance with its Rulebook, which allows it to intervene in such challenging conditions and take the necessary action to ensure the protection of all dealers and minimize any negative impacts. This was one of many precautionary measures that the bourse undertook to ensure the seamless operation of the Kuwaiti capital market, working with the Capital Markets Authority, the Kuwait Clearing Company and the Central Bank of Kuwait to ensure minimal negative impact on transactions.

"Boursa Kuwait has announced an altered framework for trading operations to minimize the negative impact on trading actions and results. The company has also taken all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all internal and external stakeholders, cancelling all its external meetings, holding them only in cases of extreme emergency, while internal meetings have been held using virtual audiovisual methods. The number of employees with access to the exchange premises has been limited to those essential to in running the basic activities and necessary operations only, while a system of rotation within key departments was activated. The

company also closed the doors to its premises for the safety of all market participants, prohibiting any visitors from entering the building while allowing service providers to utilize electronic communications to complete their transactions with market participants," Al-Besher added.

One of the key highlights was the successful roll-out of its first electronic Annual General Assembly, and its electronic Extraordinary General Assembly in June, in collaboration with the Kuwait Clearing Company, where the Boursa Kuwait IR department was adamant to address all investor related inquiries, in addition to the publication of the Annual Report on the company website.

Addressing the panel questions on knowing more about Boursa Kuwait's IR function as an entity and how it aspires to lead by example, Al-Besher said: "As an organization that strives to advance a sustainable capital markets ecosystem in Kuwait, Boursa Kuwait has long recognized the importance of the investor relations function. The stock exchange has adopted best-in-class international practices to establish and maintain meaningful relationships between the various capital market participants. A result of its extensive market development initiatives and inclusion in major global indices is a growth in Boursa Kuwait's issuer and investor base. This has led the company to intensify its efforts in promoting investor relations practices over the last two years, which included an addition of IR related terms and procedures that all companies currently listed and wishing to list on the "Premier" Market must adhere to."

The panel session was concluded with thoughts shared by each of the participants, on how they evaluate the concept of virtual IR, and how they foresee the future of IR post the pandemic. Al-Besher stated that in order to adapt with the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, Boursa Kuwait's plans are

continuously being assessed to maintain an effective and strategic communication plan, in an effort to sustain an open dialogue with the company's investors and participants, leveraging on technology and using virtual communication options.

Commenting on the virtual conference, John Gollifer, General Manager MEIRA said: "Today, in the midst of the changes and uncertainties, one thing that remains constant and that is the importance of a solid investor relations framework, one that will function under all circumstances. This is made evident as we hold the '2020 MEIRA Virtual Annual Conference and Awards', discuss experiences of leading companies across the MENA Region, how they have managed to thrive in the time of COVID-19, and recognize IR excellence."

Gollifer added, "MEIRA remains committed to raising awareness of IR best practices, taking the function to the next level in a region where investor relations is booming, and continuously providing a credible networking platform to share latest industry trends and bring experts together."

The MEIRA Annual Conference and Awards sponsorship is the latest event in a series sponsored by Boursa Kuwait in collaboration with MEIRA and its Kuwait Chapter, as part of the MOU signed between both entities back in 2017 to raise awareness about IR best practices and enable listed companies to benefit from effective IR processes and frameworks to drive business growth while helping advance the capital markets in Kuwait. As a longtime partner of the Middle East Investor Relations Association and its Kuwait chapter, Boursa Kuwait's support of this conference goes hand in hand with its corporate sustainability strategy to promote financial literacy in all aspects of the community, as well as the overall company strategy of promoting best-in-class international practices and standards with regards to the thriving field of investor relations.

Oil majors not in sync with global climate goals

PARIS: Oil and gas giants are far from aligning with the global climate change goals they purport to uphold, and only a government-managed decline of the sector can prevent climate catastrophe, according to an analysis released yesterday. "We have seen a wave of announcements from oil companies over the last nine months claiming to be part of the solution on climate, but none of their plans measure up to what is needed," co-author Kelly Trout, a senior research analyst at Oil Change, told AFP.

Oil majors have touted measures such as reducing the carbon intensity of their products, transitioning into renewable energy, storing "captured" CO2 underground, and offsetting emissions through reforestation. The report stacked up the climate commitments of eight oil and gas companies against the Paris climate goal of curbing global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Under the 2015 treaty, nations are enjoined to cap the planet's average rise in temperature at "well below" 2C, and 1.5C if feasible. A subsequent report from the UN's IPCC climate science panel showed 1.5C to be the safer limit by far, and laid out scenarios for achieving that goal by slashing or sequestering greenhouse gas emissions. The IPCC has calculated that the additional release of more than 500 billion tons of CO2 into the atmosphere would push temperatures above the 1.5C threshold.

If global CO2 emissions continue at the recent level of about 40 billion tonnes a year, this "carbon budget" would be used up in less than a decade and a half. BP, Chevron, Eni, Equinor, ExxonMobil, Repsol, Shell and Total, all based in Europe or the United States, have to varying degrees laid out strategies they say are compatible with the Paris targets.

Using the 1.5C threshold as a benchmark, Trout and colleagues graded 10 components of each company's climate plan along the spectrum of "fully aligned" to "grossly insufficient".

Pledges to stop approving new extraction projects, for example, were judged "grossly inefficient" in all eight oil giants. The same failing mark was given across the board for committing to a date to end oil and gas extraction; being "honest" about the high carbon content of gas; and with the exception of BP-promising to stop exploration. Even if global use of coal—which powers 40 percent of electricity generation worldwide—were phased out overnight, developed gas and oil reserves would still push the world beyond the 1.5C threshold, earlier research has shown. — AFP

Bangladesh weavers hanging by a thread

RUHITPUR, Bangladesh: In small tin sheds in a town outside Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, wooden looms are deftly operated by a group of men and women—some of the country's last traditional weavers—as huge garment factories churn out cheaper alternatives.

The nation's centuries-old traditional weaving was once highly sought after, with nobility from Asia and Europe wearing the fine muslin clothing. But over the past two decades, Bangladesh has become one of the world's largest ready-made garment exporters, with 4,000 factories making clothes for the likes of retail giants Primark and H&M.

Left in its wake are traditional weavers such as 55-year-old Mohammad Abu Taher, who is the last of his family to take up the once celebrated vocation. "My great-great-grandfather was a weaver and all my ancestors were into weaving," Taher told AFP as he sat in a tin shed with several other arti-



DHAKA: Weavers prepare threads to make fabric with a handloom in Ruhitpur on the outskirts of Dhaka. — AFP

sans in Ruhitpur, a town 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Dhaka. Taher's two sons have left Ruhitpur for the capital to seek work, unwilling to pick up the dying art-form.

'Once prized'

Three centuries ago, Ruhitpur was one of the region's biggest hubs for manufacturing lungis—traditional sarongs worn by men. There were 4,000

that they all add up to batteries that can be made faster and cheaper and provide longer vehicle range. Innovations include using plentiful silicon in batteries in place of more expensive material and designing battery cells themselves into the very structures of vehicles, according to Brauer.

Sustainable future

Musk and Baglino were adamant that a shift away from fossil fuels toward sustainable energy is a vital part of tackling climate change. "It's really important that we take action," Baglino said.

"We're going to run out of these fossil fuels, so let's just move to the future." Making lithium-ion batteries cheaper and more abundant is essential to a global shift to renewable power, which is Tesla's over-arching goal, according to Musk. "We are going to work our darndest to transition the world to sustainable energy as soon as possible," Musk said. Along with making electric cars, Tesla has a battery division devoted to power cells for its vehicles, as well as storage packs for electricity at homes, businesses or disaster scenes.

Tesla makes batteries at its plants in the US and China, and is building a factory in Germany. Lithium-ion batteries for Tesla models are made by Panasonic at the electric vehicle company's "gigafactory" in Nevada. Musk said in a tweet on Monday that Tesla intends to increase battery purchases from Panasonic, LG and China-based CATL.

"However, even with our cell suppliers going at maximum speed, we still foresee significant shortages in 2022 and beyond unless we also take action ourselves," Musk said. Tesla is already ahead of other automakers when it comes to batteries, the key to the future of electric vehicles.

The battery event followed an annual shareholders meeting, with attendees sitting in Tesla cars parked in a lot facing an outdoor stage to reduce COVID-19 risk.

handlooms in Ruhitpur and nearby villages, employing 12,000 weavers. A handwoven lungi from Ruhitpur was a "prized asset", said local trader Chowdhury Abdur Rahman, recalling stories of his father and uncles buying the cloth for their weddings. "It was a big part of Bengal's heritage," historian Hameeda Hossain said of the historical region now known as Bangladesh and West Bengal state in India. "Unfortunately, it can't compete with power looms."

Now, just three dozen weavers—with an average age of 50 — remain in Ruhitpur, serving a small group of customers still willing to shell out for the softer, handmade lungis. "Our lungi is expensive. Still, some people haven't deserted us because of the softness of handmade clothing," 45-year-old Ruhitpur weaver Mohammad Rafiq said.

But he admits his profession is dying out. Employment in the town has shifted to almost a dozen factories manufacturing plastic, textiles and jute that have more than 10,000 people on the payroll. "They (factories) have set up electric-powered weaving industries worth hundreds of millions of dollars," he said. "They can make lungis and saris very cheaply. We can't compete with them in terms of price." — AFP



Tesla employees work outside a Tesla showroom in Burbank, California. — AFP

Honking greeted Musk as he walked on stage, prompting him to laugh. "We've got the Tesla drive-in movie theater, basically," Musk quipped.

"It's a little hard to read the room with everybody being in cars." Sound was missing from videos streamed at the start of the event, but the apparent glitch was fixed by the time speakers began presenting. Colorful founder and chief executive Musk has a pattern of envisioning wondrous innovations, from colonies on Mars to meshing minds with computers and "hyperloop" tunnel systems, with people zipping along underground.

Tesla's new method of battery making will potentially enable the company to field a \$25,000 model in "three years-ish," according to Musk. Despite a long-stated goal of making electric cars for the masses, Tesla models currently start at a bit more than \$35,000 and quickly leap in price. "It is absolutely critical that we make cars that people can actually afford," Musk said. — AFP

Business

No-deal Brexit could hit British economy more than COVID-19

Survey says Brexit is likely to be more significant in the long term

LONDON: A "no-deal" Brexit could be three times more costly to Britain's economy in the long term than the coronavirus outbreak, a new study published Tuesday warned. The think-tank UK in a Changing Europe said the political and economic effects of the pandemic were likely to mitigate or hide that of failing to secure a trade agreement with the EU.

But in the short term, the lack of a new formal trading relationship with Brussels would be bad news for economic recovery and larger than the health crisis in the long term. The think-tank, which collaborated with the London School of Economics, said Brexit would hit growth in the coming years more than if the UK had opted to remain in the bloc.

"The claim that the economic impacts of COVID-19 dwarf those of Brexit is almost certainly correct in the short term," its authors wrote. "Not even the most pessimistic scenarios suggest that a no-deal Brexit would lead to a fall in output comparable to that seen in the second quarter of 2020."

"However—assuming a reasonably strong recovery, and that government policies succeed in avoiding persistent mass unemployment—in the long run, Brexit is likely to be more significant."

"Our modelling with LSE of the impact of a no-deal Brexit suggests that the total cost to the UK economy over the longer term will be two to three times as large as that implied by the Bank of England's forecast for the impact of COVID-19."

The study estimated that the negative impact on gross domestic product would be 5.7 percent over

the next 15 years compared with the current level, while GDP was forecast to take a 2.1-percent hit from COVID-19.

The projections come despite a lack of clarity about the overall repercussions from the pandemic, and as a second wave of infections hits Europe.

At the borders

The report said the most immediate and visible consequences of a "no-deal" will be seen at borders, with risks of queues and shortages of certain



Effects to show up at borders

foods and medicines. The reintroduction of customs duties and paperwork for importers and exporters will increase costs for both businesses and consumers. Britain and the European Union have set an October 15 deadline to strike a deal, but weeks of talks remain deadlocked over key areas such as competition and fisheries. Prime Minister Boris



LONDON: A man wearing a face mask or covering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, walks across Waterloo Bridge against the backdrop of the skyscrapers of the City of London. — AFP

Johnson has said he will walk away from negotiations if there is no agreement, despite having promised that it would be quick and easy to get one. Britain would then deal with the EU—its biggest trading partner—under World Trade Organization rules from January 1, 2020.

"While the prime minister said no deal is a 'good

outcome', our report shows that it may lead to significant disruption and will have a significant economic impact," said Anand Menon, director of the UK in a Changing Europe. "As significant will be the political fallout of no-deal, particularly with the UK and EU, but also inside the UK, particularly Northern Ireland, and internationally too." — AFP

Our verdict on new HUAWEI Y9a: It's set to be another success story!

KUWAIT: When it comes to entry level smartphones, the usual consensus is to expect limited or downgraded features in a basic design, focusing more in functionality than appearance. However, Huawei's Y series is known for breaking that stereotype, introducing more devices into its successful Y series with powerful features, great performance and stunning good looks. The latest addition to the series, the HUAWEI Y9a, continues this trend with a solid 64MP Quad Camera, 40W HUAWEI SuperCharge, powerful performance and a gorgeous design up its sleeve. We got our hands on this SuperCamera SuperCharge smartphone and here is our verdict.

64MP Quad Camera

Huawei is known for putting powerful camera setups in almost all of its smartphones. This continues in the entry-level segment as well, with Y series phones boasting powerful camera setups. The newly launched HUAWEI Y9a, comes with a 64MP Quad Camera setup that can capture key moments anytime, anywhere.

This camera setup packs a 64MP Main Camera, 8MP Ultra Wide Angle Lens, 2MP Depth Lens and a 2MP Macro Lens, all of which work together for an all-scenario photography experience. The main 64MP camera is fitted with f/1.8 aperture lens for high resolution photography with rich and enhanced details. The 8MP Ultra Wide Angle lens on the other hand packs f/2.4 lens and offers 120 degree field of view with support for wide angle recording as well. The 2MP Depth lens contributes towards bokeh effects and works with the main camera for beautiful portrait shots with blurred backgrounds, while the 2MP Macro Lens allows for close up shots up to 4cm close.

A key highlight of the camera setup is the Super Night Mode, which uses the main camera and large sensors to enable an amazing low-light photography experience. This is paired with high ISO of 51200, AIS and AI multi-frame noise reduction for better image stabilization and for a brighter shot, no matter how dark the subject is. Additionally, the HUAWEI Y9a uses Smart Snapshot to detect the subject as well and can change the shooting modes accordingly. This includes five shooting modes of children, pets, sports, flowers and landscapes and over ten shooting scenarios such as playing, sports, jumping, cycling and more.

Up front, the 16MP front camera with AI Beauty 5.1 also ensures stunning selfies with every click. The newly upgraded AI Beauty 5.1 algorithm tailors to the user's age and gender to create perfect skin under high-resolution lens, by enhancing aspects like skin texture, eyebrows, hair and more.

Super Performance

Since more tasks are done on the go on smartphones these days, it is a given that a user's smartphone should be reliable with long lasting battery life, ample amounts of storage and provides a powerful performance. However, entry-level phones usually don't get these features. The HUAWEI Y9a on the other hand, packs in the 40W HUAWEI SuperCharge, a feature usually seen on higher end phones, to ensure that users can charge up their smartphones quickly, up to nearly 70% in just 30 minutes. This is crucial to the large 4200mAh battery that the HUAWEI Y9a packs



in, both which work together for extended periods of intensive use. This is further complemented by the HUAWEI AI Power Saving Technology, which optimizes battery use for a further enhanced user experience.

With users today depending on the smartphone for more activities on the go, ample amount of storage and enough memory to run tasks efficiently is also a key factor for choosing a smartphone. The HUAWEI Y9a takes this into consideration and packs in 128GB of storage, which is perfect for high quality music, movies, games and more. This can be further expanded to 256GB with a memory card as well. On memory front, the HUAWEI Y9a comes with 8GB of RAM which supports the overall performance and enables better background multi-tasking.

Charming Flagship Design ID

The HUAWEI Y9a boasts a large 6.63 inch Ultra FullView display with an FHD resolution of 2400 x 1800 for an immersive viewing experience. Thanks to its minimal bezels, the HUAWEI Y9a provides a screen-to-body ratio of 92.02 percent, which is perfect for watching videos, playing games or even working on the go.

What makes the HUAWEI Y9a stand out from other phones in its segment is in fact its Halo Ring design, which is reminiscent of the flagship HUAWEI Mate 30 series which puts the camera hardware together surrounded by an outer ring engraved through a unique coat-

ing process. This layout is not only symmetrical, but also gives a trendy and pleasing feeling, mainly due to its exquisite craftsmanship. The colors also contribute to its unique look. The Midnight Black, Space Silver and Sakura Pink each have its own captivating look, representing the night sky, star studded space and cherry blossoms respectively.

The HUAWEI Y9a boasts an ergonomic 3D arc design overall, which provides a robust frame in a glossy, glass-like finish. The body features a two-in-one fingerprint reader and power button on the side, which quickly unlocks the phone with a light tap. The side mounted fingerprint reader contributes to the streamlined look of the phone and improves the aesthetic on the back with the Halo design in the center.

Our Verdict

Along with all of this features paired with an overall smooth and intelligent user experience with the help of EMUI 10.1, the HUAWEI Y9a is one of the best entry level smartphones out there. Be it for casual use or even for intensive performance, the HUAWEI Y9a delivers on all fronts. The HUAWEI Y9a also comes with HUAWEI AppGallery preinstalled, so you can easily search and download all your favorite apps. You can also download Petal Search, which complements the HUAWEI AppGallery and provides access to a million apps complete with an easy to use search widget for the home screen as well.

Opinion-Editorial

Renewables appetite in Mideast continues despite COVID-19

By Claudia Carpenter & Dania Saadi

Despite an abundance of fossil fuels and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, countries in the Middle East are still forging ahead with international and local renewables projects. The oil-rich Gulf region is among the areas benefiting most from the global appetite for these projects. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman are the four countries in the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council that have developed renewables projects over the last few years.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, is expected to lead the push in the Middle East in the next few years, having launched several renewables projects, including its first wind farm, to free up crude burned in power plants for export. The country's third renewables round to add 1.2 GW of solar capacity is advancing after 49 companies pre-qualified for lead roles. The kingdom announced it would "very soon" announce a solar energy project with the lowest electricity cost per kilowatt-hour in the world.

Record-low tariffs and plans to reduce dependence on crude oil and natural gas as feedstock for power and energy-intensive water desalination plants are the main factors behind the rapid development of renewables in the region. But growth would be even faster if regulatory barriers to new market entrants outside of auctions were removed, according to the International Energy Agency.

Examples include the world's first large-scale chemical production site to be run entirely on renewable power pioneered by Saudi Basic Industries Corp., majority-owned by Saudi Aramco.

However, both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have delayed renewables programs raising questions about their respective renewable goals, according to S&P Global Platts Analytics. Even before the pandemic, Saudi Arabia had put on hold a \$200 billion solar project with Japan's Softbank Group.

Although there are risks from the pandemic, most renewables projects haven't been rolled back or cancelled, potentially showing how environmental, social and governance concerns have become more central to oil-exporting countries. Saudi Arabia has set a target of 27.3 GW of renewables by 2024. "Even if Saudi Arabia continues to lag behind in terms of installed capacity and projects, we think the country will catch up within the next few years to become the largest player for renewables in the region next to UAE," according to Bruno Brunetti, head of global power planning at Platts Analytics.

S&P Global Platts Analytics expect renewables capacity in the Middle East to more than double within the next five years, building on almost 7 GW of utility-scale solar and 1.5 GW of wind projects in development. Solar and wind accounted for about 1 percent of power production in the Middle East in 2019, according to the S&P Global Platts World Energy Demand Model. It is expected to be slightly higher at around 1.3 percent or roughly 8 TWh in 2020, and about 3 percent of the total almost 35 TWh by 2025.

The UAE targets 50 percent clean energy by 2050, including nuclear power, with renewables playing a lead role. It has conducted several large-scale competitive solar auctions that yielded low prices, and Abu Dhabi's 2-GW tender in April drew close to global record-low solar bid of \$13.50/MWh, submitted by TAQA, France's EDF and China's Jinko Solar for a 30-year contract. It will be the largest solar farm in the world, joining plants in China, India and Egypt with capacity of over 1 GW.

Further, the Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (DEWA) this year awarded Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power the 900-MW fifth phase of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, a project that aims to have 5 GW of solar power by 2030 at a cost of Dirham 50 billion (\$13.6 billion).

Oman this year began operations of its first utility-scale solar power plant, which will free up 95.5 million cubic meters a year of natural gas for export. In July, ACWA Power, the Saudi future city of NEOM and the US's Air Products, signed a \$5 billion deal to build a green hydrogen-based ammonia production facility powered by renewable energy. According to a survey published in May by UK-based law firm Ashurst, only 18 percent of executives in the Middle East expect to see growing opportunities to invest in the energy transition in the next 12 months, the lowest percentage globally. The jury is still out on whether the coronavirus will slow future renewables plans in the region. While many projects are already in the later stages of development, the low oil prices currently could limit support available for renewables.

Note: Claudia Carpenter and Dania Saadi represent Middle East Oil Team, S&P Global Platts

Business

Moody's Investors Service Report

Moody's downgrades Kuwait's issuer rating to A1, changes outlook to stable

Budget deficit could reach KD 13.7 billion this year

NEW YORK: Moody's Investors Service, ("Moody's") has downgraded Kuwait's long-term foreign and local currency issuer rating to A1 from Aa2, and changed the outlook to stable, concluding the review for downgrade initiated on 30 March 2020.

The decision to downgrade the ratings reflects both the increase in government's liquidity risks and a weaker assessment of Kuwait's institutions and governance strength. In the continued absence of legal authorization to issue debt or draw on the sovereign wealth fund assets held in the Future Generations Fund (FGF), available liquid resources are nearing depletion, introducing liquidity risk despite Kuwait's extraordinary fiscal strength.

While the fractious relationship between parliament and the executive is a long-standing constraint on Moody's assessment of institutional strength, the deadlock over the government's medium-term funding strategy and the absence of any meaningful fiscal consolidation measures point to more significant deficiencies in Kuwait's legislative and executive institutions and policy effectiveness than previously assessed.

While liquidity risks are particularly relevant in the next few months, over the medium term next one or two years, upside and downside risks are broadly balanced reflected in the stable outlook. Kuwait has a vast stock of sovereign financial assets currently ring-fenced from the general budget by law, securing predictable access to which would eliminate government liquidity risk. Conversely, Moody's sees a continued risk that the executive and legislature perpetuate stop-gap measures in response to the funding impasse, without providing lasting visibility on the funding of Kuwait's budget. While not Moody's expectation, government liquidity risks would manifest if continuing gridlock over funding led to the exhaustion of available liquid resources ahead of the maturity dates of Kuwait's international bonds, including the \$3.5 billion tranche maturing in March 2022.

Kuwait's foreign currency bond ceiling has been lowered to Aa3, from Aa2 and the foreign currency deposit ceiling has been lowered to A1 from Aa2, whereas the short-term ceilings remain at Prime-1 (P-1). The local currency bond and deposit ceilings have been lowered to Aa3 from Aa2U.

Rationale for downgrade

Government liquidity risk has risen in the absence

of legal authorization to issue debt or access the future generation fund. With a government debt law yet to be passed and General Reserve Fund (GRF) assets likely to be depleted before the end of the current fiscal year (ending in March 2021), government liquidity risks have increased. Legislation passed by parliament so far, including the removal of the mandatory transfer of 10 percent of government revenues to the FGF and the reversal of last year's FGF transfer have only extended the point of depletion to December 2020.

Even if the debt law is passed—whether by parliament or by decree from HH the Amir while parliament is in recess—it will likely not provide a credible medium-term funding strategy, which was a key driver behind Moody's initiating the review for downgrade in March. The draft debt law, which has already been rejected once by the parliamentary financial and economic committee, contains a KD 20 billion debt ceiling which would be reached in less than two years under Moody's baseline scenario. A lower ceiling possibly to wield parliamentary approval would be exhausted even earlier given the large size of the government's immediate and medium-term funding requirements. Even if the government received legal authorization to issue debt without the constraint of a ceiling, Moody's projects net sovereign issuance of up to KD 27.6 billion (\$90 billion) would be required to meet the government's funding requirements between the current fiscal year and the fiscal year ending March 2024, testing the capacity of the government to access such large financing.

Kuwait has one of the largest stocks of sovereign financial assets in the world, both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the economy and government debt burden. Securing predictable access to these funds would eliminate government liquidity risk. However, these funds are explicitly ring-fenced from the general budget by law. While the mandatory budget transfer to the FGF has been suspended, the government has not given any indication nor made any formal request to parliament to access FGF assets or income. Should the request come through, it would be politically contentious and likely take a long time and multiple versions to secure legislative passage. In the meantime, government liquidity risks will remain elevated

Medium-term funding situation

The fractious relationship between parliament and the government is a long-standing and well-known feature of Kuwait's credit profile. While active debates in parliament contribute to checks and balances, when the process is not conducive to agreement-seeking, it hampers policy-making. Historically, the impact of government inertia on the sovereign credit profile has not been so significant since Kuwait long ran large fiscal and current account surpluses. However, in an environment of structurally lower oil prices and growing government expenditure, the ongoing delay in finding a durable solution for Kuwait's medium-term funding presents a more acute risk to the sovereign credit profile. The persisting deadlock addressing the funding situation now directly threatens the ability of the government to function, representing a significant escalation in the brinkmanship between the two branches of government.

Capacity of fiscal policy to respond to shocks

Moreover, the government's continued inability to respond to severe revenue shocks from oil prices points to even weaker fiscal policy effectiveness than previously assumed. In contrast to earlier statements from the government that it would seek to reduce its expenditure in year-on-year terms, the passing of the budget for fiscal year 2020/21 incorporates a 1.6 percent increase in expenditure, despite a budgeted 56 percent decline in revenues.

Kuwait has also made limited progress in reforming subsidies, which account for 22 percent of government spending. In particular, non-energy subsidies, which includes a broad range of subsidies covering services like healthcare and education abroad, have also remained largely untouched due to parliamentary opposition. Kuwait's revenues remain highly dependent on hydrocarbon receipts, which averaged 89 percent of government revenues between 2017 and 2019. Progress in diversifying the non-oil revenue base has been very slow, in part due to parliament's resistance to any measures that would reduce the living standards of their constituents. The implementation of a 5 percent VAT, as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) wide post-2014 oil price shock initiative is the single largest revenue measure that the government has explored. However, Kuwait's parliament has still yet to ratify the VAT treaty which would

precede any VAT legislation, and Moody's now expect the implementation of VAT to be between 2022 and 2023 at the earliest, contrary to earlier indications from the government that it would be in place by 2021. An excise tax on sugary drinks and tobacco which was planned to be implemented this year has also been delayed. Given the absence of any meaningful adjustment following the 2014-16 and the more recent oil price drops, Moody's expects the government budget deficit will reach KD 13.7 billion (38 percent of GDP) this year. While, Moody's expects a reduction in the fiscal deficit in the fiscal year 2021/22 to KD10.6 billion (25.7 percent of GDP), this is underpinned entirely by a higher oil price assumption and increased hydrocarbon production volumes as the OPEC+ production caps taper.

Furthermore, Moody's expects that fiscal consolidation will prove challenging due to the government's inflexible spending structure. Current expenditure has increased cumulatively by over 20 percent since the end of the fiscal year ending in March 2016, which has been driven predominantly by increased spending on government salaries and compensation. Projected growth in the Kuwaiti labor force due to the country's young demographics, the government's status as employer of first resort, and limited tolerance among the leadership for higher unemployment are likely to continue to drive growth in government payroll expenditure unless employment opportunities in the private sector increases significantly or the government is prepared to tolerate higher unemployment, neither of which represents Moody's baseline expectations.

Rationale for stable outlook

While liquidity risks are particularly relevant in the near term, over the medium term upside and downside risks are broadly balanced reflected in the stable outlook. On the downside, the likelihood that the executive and legislature continue to deliver only piece-meal, make shift measures means that uncertainty over the funding situation will persist. The liquidity risk generated by the persisting legislative impasse represents a low probability but high severity tail-risk event. While not Moody's expectation, government liquidity risks would manifest if continuing gridlock over funding led to the exhaustion of available liquid resources ahead of the maturity dates of Kuwait's bonds, such as the \$3.5 billion Eurobond tranche maturing in March 2022

Palantir to begin New York trading on September 30

WASHINGTON: Data analysis specialist Palantir announced on Tuesday it would begin trading on the New York Stock Exchange on September 30 in what could be one of the biggest market debuts since Uber. The secretive company which sells software used by governments and large firms worldwide said in a statement it "expects that trading of shares of its Class A common stock on the New York Stock Exchange will commence on Wednesday, September 30, 2020."

In an earlier filing, Palantir, which hasn't turned a profit, indicated it would go public via a direct listing without raising new funds, listing its shares at \$0.001 on the exchange on or around September 29.

That filing suggested a valuation of some \$10 billion, down from a private value as high as \$25 billion, according to Renaissance Capital. Founded in 2003, the Colorado-based company has said its software is used in more than 150 countries, and that it took in revenue of \$742.6 million last year while logging a net loss of \$579.6 million.

In the first half of this year, Palantir reported that it has generated \$481.2 million with a loss of \$164.7 million. It stressed its mission of working with military and intelligence agencies and revealed it plans to trade under the symbol "PLTR" in New York.

Created after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks with initial funding from a CIA venture-capital unit, Palantir software is used by institutions ranging from defense agencies to companies in the energy, manufacturing and healthcare sectors.

Palantir's predictive analytics platform reportedly helped the US military locate Osama bin Laden and track weapons movements in the Middle East. —AFP

OPPO launches Reno4 series in Middle East

KUWAIT: Global technology brand, OPPO, yesterday announced the launch of OPPO Reno4 Series in the Middle East. The OPPO Reno4 Series which includes Reno4 Pro 5G, Reno4 Pro and Reno4, make it easier than ever to capture creative portraits and imaginative videos at night.

Starting on today, 23 September and exclusively for a week, customers will be rewarded when they pre-order their new Reno4 smartphone - available while stocks last across major retailers and e-commerce platforms in Kuwait.

At an interactive and engaging virtual event titled, 'Own the Night' on 22 September, OPPO unveiled its Ultra Night Wide-angle Video and other engaging videography functions that gives every user a chance to make their night come alive in their own unique way. The event also revealed touch-free interactions and made this flagship feature more easily accessible to a greater market place, powered by an AI-enhanced Smart Sensor that allows the phone to be controlled with a wave, and an AI algorithm secures the phone from peeping eyes.

Ethan Xue, President of OPPO Middle East and Africa said, "The Reno Series has always been a pathbreaker in smartphone camera technology and Reno4 Series carries on Reno3's legacy of pioneering the mobile photography, with new videography features and portrait shooting that enable users shoot a comprehensive range of scenes. Designed for personality and style, the Reno4 Pro 5G not only delivers powerful performance but also enables a connected lifestyle through the power of 5G. Living up to OPPO's mission of elevating life through technological artistry, OPPO's Reno4 Series introduces fun and new ways to 'own the night' by using the trendy phone's innovative technology to express their creativity."

Make your night alive with trendsetting design

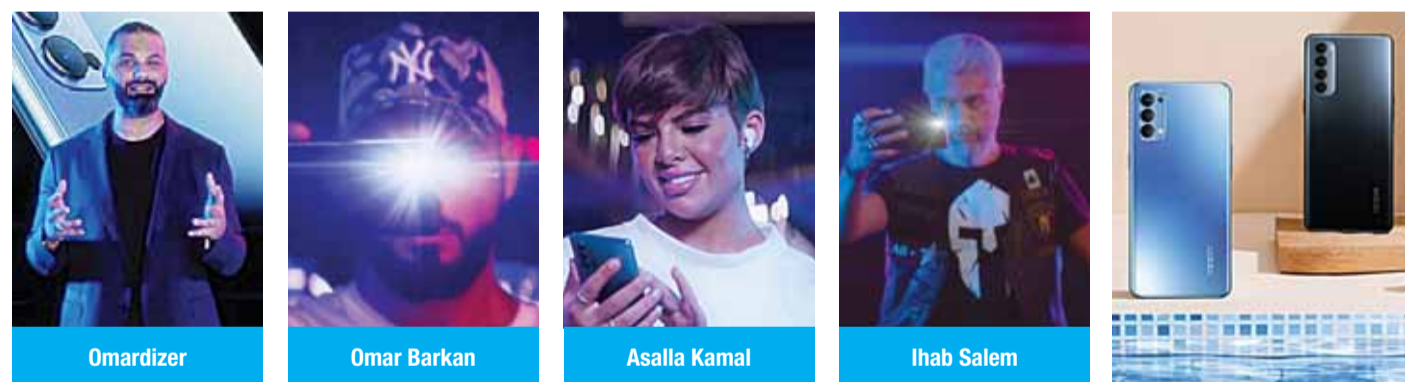
The Reno4 Series pushes the boundaries of industrial design by packing a powerhouse of components into a slim and sleek design. A brand-new patent-applied technique introduces a gradient color in a perfect combination of matte and glitter. Reno4 Pro 5G weighs 172g at 7.6mm, while Reno4 Pro weighs 161g and is 7.7mm thin. A 90Hz 3D Curved Screen elevates the premium look and feel of the phones and a unique gradient color on the back cover would certainly elevate your style in all angles.

Inspired by the tranquility of nature, Reno4 Pro 5G comes in Galactic Blue and Space Black, with the Galactic Blue crafted with the patent-applied 'Reno Glow' process, which achieves both a matte finish with a subtle glittery detail, almost like tiny diamonds are embedded on the back cover, and is more resistant to fingerprints and scratches. Reno4 Pro comes in two premium colors, Galactic Blue and Starry Night, which convey an innate peacefulness, but like a blank canvas brings out the user's artistic side.

Equipped with a 6.4-inch AMOLED display, Reno4 is 7.7mm thick, fitting easily in the hand or pocket, while it's 165g light weight ensures that the user will never tire holding it. For trendsetting looks, Reno4 comes in two colors: Galactic Blue and Space Black. Galactic Blue offers a



Fadi Awni Abu Shamat, director of planning and strategy, Middle East



- Kuwait fans can 'make their night alive' with ground-breaking low-light photo and video imaging, AI-powered touch-free interactions and immersive listening experiences

- A pioneer of 5G videophone, OPPO Reno4 Pro 5G brings industry-leading innovations in night photography and videography

vibrant and glossy look with subtle glittery details, and the looming OPPO monogram on Space Black adds a sense of mystery, offering a more premium appearance and great in-hand feel.

Make your night alive with Brilliant Videography and Portraits

Continuing to strengthen its foothold with smartphone imaging technology, the Reno4 Series leads the way with exceptional night videography and portrait shooting capabilities. Reno4 Pro 5G is further enhanced with a customized, ultra-wide, ultra-powerful Sony IMX708 image sensor with laser detection auto-focus (LDAF). At 1/2.3 inches, the larger sensor gathers more light making it ideal for brighter night videos or photos. OPPO Reno4 Pro and Reno4 feature a Quadcam matrix, including a 48MP primary camera, 8MP ultra wide-angle camera, a 2MP macro camera and a 2MP mono lens, in addition to a 32MP front camera.

Creative Filming: With the increasing popularity of short video platforms in the region, including TikTok and Instagram stories, the Reno4 Series enables users to effortlessly express their own unique style and share their creativity with the world. For OPPO Reno4 Pro 5G, the scene-stealer Ultra Night Wide-angle Video enables everyone to take stunning videos at night, and there's a suite of playful videography features to capture your life and memories more vividly. On Reno4 Pro and

Reno4, the epic slow-motion shots in the thick of the action, whether sprinkling water or colored powder, are made possible with the 960fps Smart Slow Motion, and the Ultra Steady Video 3.0 enables steady videos of high-intensity activities while walking, running or cycling.

Colourful Shots: On Reno4 Pro and Reno4, the all-new AI Color Portrait Mode on both photo and video function mutes the background into black and white while keeping the subject in real color. The Monochrome Video feature retains only the red, green or blue colors in the video, while turning the others black and white, which produces an effect that resembles a blockbuster video.

Brilliant Night Shots: Mastering nighttime portrait shots is a breeze with Night Flare Mode on Reno4 Pro and Reno4, which applies artistic neon effects against the backdrop of streetlights and makes the subject brighter at the same time. In addition, Ultra Night Selfie Mode and Ultra Dark Mode capture clearer and brighter night shots using both the front and rear cameras.

Make your night alive with AI-enhanced smart sensor

In order to truly keep up with the personality of the youth, the Reno4 offers life conveniences that are hard to dismiss. The phones are equipped with an AI-enhanced Smart Sensor to perform functions like Smart Spying Prevention, Smart

AirControl, Smart Rotation and Smart Always-on Display. With Smart Spying Prevention the sensor automatically hides content when it detects that anyone other than the owner is peeking at the phone. Smart AirControl is a futuristic way to answer a call or scroll through social media apps with just a wave of the hand.

Make your night alive with a phone that keeps up with you

The new Reno4 Pro 5G is configured with a Qualcomm Snapdragon 765G integrated 5G chip, while both the Reno4 and Reno4 Pro smartphones will be packed with a Qualcomm Snapdragon 720G. On top of that, OPPO's best-in-class fast charging technology will reach more consumers in the Middle East through the Reno4 Pro 5G and Reno4 Pro. With 65W SuperVOOC Flash Charger, just five minutes of charging gives four hours of YouTube watching, and 36 minutes gives a full charge. Additional power saving solutions such as Super Power Saving Mode allows users to chat on WhatsApp for 1.5 hours or make calls for up to 77 minutes with only 5 percent of battery. Super Nighttime Standby ensures that only 2% of battery is consumed for around eight hours at night, so that users won't need to worry about power draining out even if they forget to charge the phone at night. The Reno4 Series will be available for pre-order in Kuwait from 23 September 2020.

Classifieds

Thursday, September 24, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind changing to south easterly wind later on with speed of 08 - 35 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Rather hot to fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind with speed of 10 - 35 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 23/09/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	33 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	24 °C			
ABDALY	45 °C	27 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	45 °C	32 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	41 °C	27 °C			
SALMIYAH	40 °C	33 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWASIB	44 °C	24 °C			
WAFRA	44 °C	24 °C			
SALMY	44 °C	29 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	09/24	Hot	44 °C	26 °C	NW-NE	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	09/25	Hot and some high clouds will appear	44 °C	25 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 40 km/h
Saturday	09/26	Hot and some high clouds will appear	45 °C	25 °C	VRB-S	08 - 28 km/h
Sunday	09/27	Hot and some high clouds will appear	44 °C	25 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:17
Sunrise	05:37
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	15:08
Sunset	17:44
Isha	19:01

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	25 °C
MAX. RH	41 %
MIN. RH	05 %
MAX. Wind	W 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP:0

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 جاهز للانضمام فوراً
 الأيقل العمر عن ٢٥ عاماً ولا يتجاوز ٤٠ عاماً وأن يكون لائق صحياً وبدنياً
 الإلمام باللغة الإنجليزية (يفضل)
 اجادة السباحة (يفضل)

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- राष्ट्रीयता: भारतीय, श्रीलंका, नेपाली और फिलिपिनो
- ट्रांसफरबल रेसिडेंसी होनी चाहिए (केवल अनुच्छेद 18 विज्ञा धारक)
- तुरंत काम शुरू करने के लिए तैयार
- 25-40 वर्ष की आयु के बीच
- तैरने की क्षमता (बेहतर)

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Word Search

Pour Me a Drink

Word Search

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

Martini
 Mimosa
 Mint Julep
 Mojito
 Negroni
 Old Fashioned
 Pina Colada
 Pisco Sour
 Planter's Punch

Sidecar
 Tom Collins

Join the Dots

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

A friend may have some juicy gossip for you, Aries. Perhaps someone is getting married. You aren't the type to put too much stock in gossip, but your friend could be so convincing that you believe everything. Be skeptical! What you're hearing may not be outright lies, but it could be exaggerated. Wait until you see the people in question before accepting it as truth.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A small gathering in your neighborhood could attract interesting people, Cancer, but you may feel a little under the weather and consider staying home. Your energy may be lagging, as all energy does once in a while after a stressful time. It might do you good to make the effort and go if at all possible. It's up to you, of course, but enjoy the evening whatever you do.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

An online prayer or meditation group could meet tonight, Libra, and you may get carried away with the spiritual dimensions these meditations take on. You feel comfortable with the people in this group, and you're grateful for the friendship and support they provide. Be with this feeling tonight, and try to hang onto it for as long as you can. It can help you through some rough times.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Have you been going crazy with all the demands placed on you? Don't despair. Reflect on all that's been going on. Think about where you want to make changes. Once you've come to a decision, don't hesitate to implement it. This is easier than waiting for one big opportunity and doing it all at once. That chance may never come. The step-by-step approach can bring satisfying results.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A last-minute gift that you've wanted to buy for someone special might elude you today, Taurus. You could go to several stores and find the item sold out. This could be disappointing, but don't despair. There are other options. You could order it online or find something else and save this particular item for a birthday. Relax and enjoy your shopping.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

A quick check of your bank balance might reveal that it's a bit lower than you expected, Leo. You probably won't panic, but you're apt to feel a little disappointed. Don't waste time kicking yourself. Money can always be earned. Relax, resolve to tighten your belt a little, take care of the necessities, and stick with a financial plan. Soon you'll be glad you took action.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Love matters have been going well for you recently, Scorpio, but today you could be alone and unable to reach a current or potential romantic interest. This could bring about a twinge of the blues, which up until now have passed you by. Don't waste time feeling down. Find something to distract you until your friend can come around to see you and you can have a little fun.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

If you're currently romantically involved, Aquarius, your lover could well go from what appears to be utter lassitude to total passion. This could throw you for a loop, and you might not know exactly how to deal with it. If you're single, you could meet someone you find attractive but forget to get his or her contact information! Keep paper and pen handy. You don't want to miss anything!

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Everything may look wrong to you today, Gemini. The house doesn't look right, the furniture needs adjusting, and you probably aren't happy with the way you look either. Your perfectionism could kick in and you might plunge into action, determined to make it all right. Don't bother! There's probably nothing you can do to make it look right today. Relax. You'll see things differently tomorrow.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Working late, Virgo? What could be so important that it keeps you from paying attention to your family or partner? Probably nothing! Take a good, objective look at what you think must be done tonight. You'll probably find that your company won't go broke if you leave some tasks. Get as much done as you can and then go home to your loved ones. They're important, too!

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You could go over your accounts today and find that there's considerably less there than you thought. It isn't serious, but it can still be disappointing. There could be a new contract in the final stages of negotiation that will prove favorable, and you can find a way to make up for the shortfall. In the meantime, cut expenses so finances stay healthy until the new contract materializes.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Have you made plans to have a romantic interest come to your home, Pisces? If so, don't rush to get ready. Your friend is probably going to be late. Events beyond anyone's control have interfered, and you might have to wait. Don't make yourself crazy over it. Don't imagine all kinds of horrible scenarios. Your friend will show up even if later than planned. Have fun!

Lifestyle | Features

HOPKINS EXPLORES HORRORS OF DEMENTIA IN 'THE FATHER'

Convincing movie legend Anthony Hopkins to star in your first-ever film is a tall order for any director. But Florian Zeller the acclaimed French writer, adapting his own play "The Father" for the big screen — was so determined, he even changed his main character's name and birthdate to those of his dream leading man. "I really wrote the script for him. He was the desire and the dream," Zeller told AFP. "Until someone comes and says it's not possible, it means that potentially it is possible." Fortunately the gambit paid off, with the "Silence of the Lambs" actor signing up-alongside fellow Academy Award-winner Olivia Colman as his daughter-for Zeller's devastating dementia drama.

The film, containing elements of thriller and horror genres, takes viewers on a deliberately disorientating journey inside Anthony's fast-slipping mind. Family members become unrecognizable, and over-familiar strangers inexplicably appear in his own plush London apartment, which itself appears to shift before his-and our-eyes. "He is very known for parts where he is always in control of

everything," said Zeller, of Hopkins. "I thought that it would be powerful to see that very same person now starting to lose control... in a way, to let go of what we know about him, this Hannibal Lecter face."

'We were all crying'

The film screened at last week's Toronto film festival after rave reviews at its Sundance premiere in January. It is due to be released by Sony Pictures Classics in December. Seven months out from the Oscars, Hopkins is already seen by many as a safe bet for a sixth Academy nomination. As the true nature of his condition unravels, Hopkins draws upon a startling range of emotions, from paranoia and anger to desperation and emotional breakdown. "He's the master of subtlety. I've always admired the way he uses words, to create danger, anxiety," said Zeller.

The 82-year-old Welsh actor has spoken of concentrating on his own mortality in order to perform the role. "Anthony is a very instinctive actor-in a way he uses his instincts more than anything else, so



many times the first takes were better," said Zeller. "It's like magic in a way.... We were all crying on set."

'The Pearl Fishers'

It has been a long journey from Zeller's original French-language play "Le Pere," itself based on experiences with his

grandmother who helped raise him but who began to experience dementia when he was 15. A seamless English stage translation brought Zeller attention across the Channel and eventually in the US. The film will arrive more than eight years on from the play's Paris debut, to a transformed world. "With what we are going

through just now with the virus, when you see our grandfathers, our fathers, our grandmothers, so fragile-I think we are still very concerned and connected to the fragility of life," said Zeller.

But despite its weighty subject matter, the film is far from bleak. Hopkins imbues his mischievous character with spades of humor and charm, flirting outrageously with young Laura (Imogen Poots,) the latest in his long line of beleaguered carers. Music also plays a central role. Zeller convinced legendary composer Ludovico Einaudi to score the film. The Italian also scored this year's potential Oscar rival "Nomadland." And after Hopkins expressed his love for Bizet's "The Pearl Fishers," Zeller incorporated an aria into a script that also sees Anthony hum and dance along to classical music during a moment of clarity and levity in his kitchen. "I fulfilled that dream because he fulfilled mine," said Zeller. — AFP



Zynga out to cast spell with Harry Potter mobile game

Social gaming giant Zynga yesterday kicked off its global launch of a free puzzle game based on the beloved wizarding world of Harry Potter. "Harry Potter: Puzzles & Spells" is available on Apple and Google mobile devices and also on Facebook and Amazon Kindle, San Francisco-based Zynga said. "When the Harry Potter series first came to theatres, it was one of those rare moments when everyone was reading the same book, talking about the same film and coming together around a shared experience," said Yaron Leyvand, Zynga senior vice president of games. He said the game stays true to the Harry Potter stories and is "infused with the standout moments and delightful wizarding world flourishes that have captivated a global following."

Zynga said it licensed rights from the game unit at Warner Bros, which produced the Potter films based on the hit books by JK Rowling. The mobile game incorporates Harry Potter characters and voice-over recordings from the films, Zynga said. Chocolate frogs, spell casting and battling chess pieces are among the Potter world touches woven into the colorful puzzles that players are challenged to solve, according to the

company. "Mobile games have never been more popular or more important to people than they are right now," said Zynga publishing president Bernard Kim. "People are playing games for entertainment, relaxation and as an accessible source of comfort and connection." Zynga is known for games including "Farmville" and "Words With Friends." Puzzle games are some of the most popular among "casual gamers" thanks to their easy accessibility and the fact that they are free to download.

"Candy Crush Saga" by British developer King is among the most downloaded games on the Apple and Google Play stores, according to market tracker Newzoo. Mobile games are expected to generate more than \$77 billion in revenue this year, up some 13 percent from last year, Newzoo said. "We're all still experiencing the harrowing and unsettling situation that is the coronavirus pandemic," Newzoo mobile market lead Tianyi Gu said in a report on Covid-19's effects on the business. "Gaming has been a means of escapism and time filling for many people confined to their homes." — AFP

Luxury Geneva hotels face 'life-threatening' corona crunch

Behind its deep-red awnings, Richemont's blinds have been closed since July, after the coronavirus pandemic left the usually bustling five-star Geneva hotel starved for high-paying customers. Now, after a "catastrophic" summer, other luxury lodgings in the Swiss city—which boasts the highest hotel density in the world—are struggling to avoid the same fate. "We are in a profession that is truly in intensive care, and the condition is life-threatening," a stoney-faced Thierry Lavalley, who heads the Geneva hotel association and runs the five-star Fairmont Grand Hotel, told AFP. Before the pandemic hit, hotels in the city—a hub for diplomatic and international business activity—had been surfing on a wave of growth, with 3.2 million night stays annually for the past two years.

The sector was then struck by an "economic tsunami", Lavalley said. Switzerland, which has counted 50,000 coronavirus cases and nearly 1,800 deaths, dodged strict confinement measures seen in neighboring countries. But travel restrictions, event cancellations and months-long closures of restaurants and museums have taken a serious toll. By the end of July, Geneva hotels had booked just 693,000 night stays and they expect

no more than 1.3 million by the end of the year. That level was last seen in 1954, when the city counted half as many hotels as it does today.

'Hardest hit'

The hotel crisis is being felt across Europe, but the situation is particularly critical in Geneva, where the clientele is largely comprised of international business travellers and diplomats.

Individual clients coming for recreational tourism generally account for just a quarter of the total, Adrien Genier, head of the Geneva Tourism, told reporters recently. The remaining three-quarters are booked for people attending business congresses and seminars, or clients connected with large summits and meetings hosted by the United Nations and other international organizations.

But now, "there are no more congresses, no more business tourism, and the UN is barely moving. That makes Geneva the hardest-hit city in Switzerland," Lavalley said. During the first seven months of the year, Geneva hotels saw night stays shrink by 63 percent compared with the same period last year, and the full-year number is expected to be 75 percent lower, he said. —AFP



A picture in Geneva shows the sign of the Fairmont Grand Hotel Geneva after sunset as luxury Geneva hotels are facing 'life-threatening' corona crunch. — AFP

Unsexy selfies, huffy fashionistas as Milan opens

Getting a front-row seat to Milan's fashion week is harder than ever this year, with uninvited influencers and buyers nursing bruised egos as the shows started yesterday under coronavirus restrictions. The virus, which is resurgent in Europe, forced many luxury houses to put off confirming their presence until the last minute—and in the end, only a third have committed to appearing. Nevertheless, said the Italian fashion chamber's head Carlo Capasa: "In this year marked by the Covid-19 epidemic, fashion has demonstrated, despite the difficulties that lie ahead, a great strength and sense of unity." Missoni, the Italian label known for its explosions of colour, will start, presenting its new collection virtually, just like 41 other labels among the 64 spring/summer 2021 catwalks on the calendar.

In these social-distancing times, brands from Moschino to Versace and Prada have opted to simply stream their shows on social media. Not so Giorgio Armani, who will be showing his collection on Italian prime time television Saturday. Twenty-two houses are braving a live audience, from Fendi and Dolce&Gabbana to Etro, Ferragamo and Max Mara. "Organizing a fashion show with public present is a real headache at the moment," confesses an organizer at a major fashion house, who preferred to remain anonymous. "The number of seats has been drastically reduced and the seating plan, a diplomatic and political Tetris at the best of times, is driving us wild. We don't want to offend anyone, but we don't have enough room for everyone," he said.

Masked selfies

The ban on fashionistas travelling to Europe from China, South Korea or the US will certainly free up some strategic places. But their absence is also symbolic of the continued crisis in the sector, despite signs of recovery in China in recent months. Italian fashion revenue fell 30 percent in the first half of 2020, with a marked contraction in the second quarter. Those who get to physically attend shows will have to go through thermal scanners and use hand gel and face masks—rendering the obligatory pouting selfie in front of sashaying models rather less sexy than usual. Houses are keeping their fingers crossed that Italy's relatively low numbers of new cases—some 1,500 per day—do not dramatically rise to match those in Britain or France, which have been seeing up to 10,000 daily.

That could force last-minute changes for big names such as Valentino, which has already bowed to virus pressure by moving its Paris show to Milan this year to limit travel. To make an unprecedented fashion week even odder, Gucci will not be showing, the house having decided to reduce the number of its shows from five to two per year and hold them outside fashion weeks. Milan's edition this season will reflect the major themes in the headlines in recent months. That includes an initiative organized by the Black Lives Matter in Italian Fashion Collective to present five black designers under the title "We Are Italy". —AFP

Lockdown inspires Beckham, de la Morena at fashion week

Many people struggled with the coronavirus lockdown but for designers Victoria Beckham and Emilio de la Morena, showing at London Fashion Week on Monday, it was a source of inspiration. "Limitations can be liberating," former Spice Girl turned designer Beckham explained in the notes for her easy, fluid and Seventies-inspired collection for spring/summer 2021. "Working remotely, for this collection we reacted spontaneously. We were instinctive. We

asked ourselves what has changed? Who do we want to be? What will we desire?" "This collection is about freedom—to explore, to dress up, to be yourself." Beckham's catwalk show is normally a glamorous affair, attended by her husband, former England footballer David Beckham, and their four children.

This season, due to coronavirus restrictions on social gatherings, her collection of 21 eclectic outfits was showcased in a video shot in the

Victoria Miro gallery of contemporary art. There were floor-skimming, apple green trousers worn with a shirt and trench coat for a nonchalant style, and a tuxedo jacket, black trousers and leopard-print scarf for a more glamorous touch. With more than a touch of the Seventies, there were also long, flowing dresses worn with heavy gold chain necklaces. Since launching her eponymous label in 2008, Beckham has become a major player in the fashion industry, selling clothes and acces-

sories in more than 400 shops around the world.

However she has yet to make a profit, reporting a loss of £12.3 million (\$15.7 million) in 2018, with sales down 16 percent to £35.1 million. The 46-year-old designer, believed to be worth £335 million, initially applied for the UK government furlough scheme to pay 30 of her 120 staff during lockdown, but withdrew her application after a torrent of criticism.—AFP



Creations by Spanish designer Emilio de la Morena are pictured alongside artworks, during a press preview for a presentation entitled 'Troubles' for his Spring/Summer 2021 fashion collection, during London Fashion Week in central London. — AFP photos



Spanish designer Emilio de la Morena poses for a photograph during a press preview for a presentation entitled 'Troubles'.

Lifestyle | Features

Tracing the babies who died in France's camps for Algerian fighters

"It's here," says the employee, quietly, at the vast Perpignan cemetery in southern France. Standing in front of two small mounds of earth in the Muslim section—rows six and eight, rows 22 and 25 — Abessia Dargaid collapses in tears. "So, so sorry!" she sobs, gently placing her hand on the piled-up earth marking the burial site of her baby brothers. Fifty-seven years ago, twins Yahia and Abbas died shortly after being born in a camp housing pro-French Algerian soldiers, 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) from the cemetery. After many decades of not knowing where the infants had been buried, Abessia's family has now tracked them down. They died during a tragic chapter in Franco-Algerian history that associations, historians and families have worked in the last few years to bring to light.

soldiers. Babies were buried in camp grounds, nearby or in fields, mostly without a name plaque, they said. For those who died in hospital, authorities arranged cemetery burials but often without relatives present or informed, families say. On an oppressively hot August afternoon, a prayer in Arabic playing on a phone, Abessia, her sister Rahma, 70, and brother Abdelkader Dargaid, 65, are shocked at the unmarked and forgotten state of their brothers' graves. "There's not even a first name on their graves?" a weeping Abdelkader asks. "It shouldn't be allowed, to bury someone like that and then abandon it, without a plaque..." adds Abessia.

'Excess death rate'

Most of those who died in the camps were stillborn or young babies, according to statistics collected by French historian

mother delivered a stillborn baby in November 1962, two soldiers came to their tent with a pickaxe to show his father where he could bury the body, he said. "My father didn't really have a choice; he was upset and afraid of rebelling and of being sent back to Algeria," he added.

Arfi's father dug a hole and wrapped the baby in a towel. "I gave him a hand covering the body with earth," he recalled. "It's shameful, what happened," said the now 63-year-old, whose family was later transferred to Saint-Maurice, still now, as then, a military camp notably used in World War II. "We were considered embarrassing witnesses of a dirty war, as undesirables," he said. The Algerian War left deep scars in both Algeria and France, where the harkis were an unwelcome reminder of the country's defeat. It was only in 2001 that France began to pay tribute annually on September 25 to the up to 200,000 Algerians who fought alongside the French colonial forces.

Chaos, memory gaps

Many still ask why the children weren't buried in nearby town cemeteries. Darrieussecq says she doesn't have an answer. "There has been recognition by the highest authorities of the French state that the harkis, these French, were very poorly greeted on their arrival in France in particularly unfit and difficult conditions," she said. France was not prepared and some things were badly managed in the rush to receive them, she acknowledged.

But if little is known, it is not the result of a deliberate desire to erase the past and stop more from being discovered, she believes. Mouden also stressed the chaos in which the arrivals were handled — 22,000 people transited through Rivesaltes from 1962 to 1964. Families became scattered, as many quickly moved on, or held swift burials to respect traditions. "Their vital concern was to find a home, a job, with the difficulty for many of not being able to speak French," Mouden said.

Some were searching for family members across France or in Algeria and protecting themselves against FLN reprisals that continued on French soil until 1965, he added. Historian Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, also an Algerian War expert and daughter of a harki who spent 15 years living in camps, interviewed more than 70 harki wives some years ago. She said women spoke of giving birth in a tent in mid-winter without water or heating, of their husbands fetching snow and melting it in their mouths to wash newborns. "These women themselves wanted to forget these events," Mouden said. "To go back to the graves was also to dive back into those months in the camps which were very difficult for the families." Some did return to Rivesaltes 30 or 40 years later, but the site had completely changed. Fear was also an issue. "It was like that then, our parents didn't dare ask questions, but they must have suffered a lot," Abessia said. And, the subject was taboo for many.

'Too taboo'

At 86 and speaking in the Berber language of Kabyle, Dahbia Amrane talked about the birth of her twin boys in



In this file photo Brothers and sisters of the Dargaid family (From left) 68 year-old Abessia, 65 year-old Abdelkader and 70 year-old Rahma gather to pay their respect to their brothers who died in 1962, at the Muslim square at the Perpignan's cemetery in Perpignan.

November 1962 at Rivesaltes. After several weeks in a hospital incubator, Omar died the following January and was buried in the camp by his father and cousins, she said. "God gave him to us and then took him again; these children are angels..." Amrane told AFP, in her garden in the small southeastern town of Mouans-Sartoux. The family was then moved to a different region—it would take more than 50 years for them to return to the burial spot. "There was no passing down of our history in our family... it was too taboo, our parents didn't talk about it," said Ali, 57, Omar's twin.

Brought to light

But now, some of the children are no longer anonymous. Their names gleam on memorial stones and renovated graves, such as at Bourg-Lastic. This is thanks to the work of Mouden, harki families and associations, as well as the French National Office for Veterans and Victims of War. By gathering statements, delving in to civil registers and analysing aerial photos from the last 40 years, Mouden was able to firm up a theory that a harki cemetery had existed at Rivesaltes. Over the last two years, about 40 families who lost a loved one at Rivesaltes have been contacted. And the site where at least 50 people were buried has now been identified.

Authorities decided against exhumation as, according to French archaeological officials, after so long, the mostly baby remains would unlikely be found. Meanwhile, in the Saint-Maurice l'Ardoise region, Arfi showed AFP two areas where he believes his research shows that 39 children and four adults were buried. "For 30 years we've been saying to the authorities that there are children who were buried in these fields..." he says angrily. One of the spots, now privately owned, is at the end of a winding path leading into a dense wood.

Temporary?

The Aracan harki association believes it has also recently discovered a children's cemetery at Saint-Laurent-des-Arbres, a few kilometers from the Saint-Maurice camp and that authorities have known about it for 41 years. The roadside spot has oak trees on it, AFP saw. Aracan's Nadia Ghouafria, 47, whose par-

ents were in Saint-Maurice, stumbled across a file in the local archives about the camp's "provisional" cemetery. It contained a police record, a plan showing the site of the cemetery and a burial register with 71 names of people who died at Saint-Maurice and neighboring Chateau Lascours camp. AFP was able to view these documents.

"Thirty-one children were buried in this provisional cemetery and, in 1979, 22 graves remained, essentially young children, newborns and stillborn babies," Ghouafria said. The reason indicated on the official record was a lack of space in local towns, she added, questioning how "provisional became lasting?"

Left hidden

The official record attests to authorities at the time knowing the cemetery existed. Its authors even advised "not making the matter too widely known" for fear it would risk "unfortunate" repercussions. "What makes me angry is that they deliberately hid the existence of this cemetery from us" despite repeated requests by local associations, Ghouafria said. Aracan has called on officials to take the necessary steps to find the children's remains, contact their parents and ensure they are given a proper grave, she added. "These children are forgotten in French history," she said. Asked about the official record, Darrieussecq said she was unaware of it. "But if there were burial places there, it's not normal that the families were not informed of it at the time," she told AFP.

Forgiven

Visiting the Rivesaltes memorial stone with names carved into it, erected in front of the burial site, has a profound effect on the relatives. For Amrane, it helps knowing exactly where his twin was buried and provides a focal point for his grief. It's a comfort shared by Arfi when he thinks of his brother. "We know he's no longer anonymous." And at Perpignan cemetery, having tracked down his brothers' graves, Abdelkader Dargaid says: "I've the feeling that the twins forgive me because I've come to see them today..." — AFP



In this file photo Brothers and sisters of the Dargaid family (From left) 70 year-old Rahma, 65 year-old Abdelkader and 68 year-old Abessia gather to pay their respect to their brothers who died in 1962, at the Muslim square at the Perpignan's cemetery in Perpignan, southern France. — AFP photos

Algerian loyalists, known as harkis, fought for France in their country's war of independence against more than 130 years of French colonial rule. French forces cracked down on the independence fighters and the vicious 1954-1962 war saw atrocities on both sides. But after France pulled out of Algeria, the harkis were abandoned. Many were massacred by the victorious Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), which accused them of being traitors. About 42,000 harkis, many with their wives and children, were brought to France, while another 40,000 came under their own steam.

Considered refugees, they were confined in six camps run by the French army, in poor and unhygienic conditions, some surrounded by barbed wire and kept under surveillance. Among them was Abessia's family, who had faced FLN attacks in Algeria because her father and brother had fought for the French. In December 1962, her mother gave birth to the twins in the infirmary of the Rivesaltes camp, north of Perpignan. The infants were ill and taken to hospital but died several months later and their bodies never returned to the family. "My father was just able to see Abbas's hand after he died in hospital," Abessia, 68, told AFP.

According to historians and family accounts gathered by AFP over several months, scores of children whose parents were in the camps died and did not receive a proper burial by their relatives or

Abderahmen Mouden. An Algerian War specialist, he is trying to identify the burial sites. At Rivesaltes, at least 146 people died, of whom 101 were children, 86 of them under the age of one. All 16 of those who died at the central Bourg-Lastic camp—open from June to October 1962 — were children, an official report published in 2018 showed. And several dozen children at the southern Saint-Maurice l'Ardoise camp were buried in the area, associations say.

"There was an excess death rate among young children, certainly linked to difficult living conditions and medical care that wasn't up to it," Genevieve Darrieussecq, deputy minister in the French armed forces ministry, told AFP. Historians point to tents or barracks for accommodation in the harsh winters of 1962 and 1963 and diseases, including a measles epidemic at Saint-Maurice. In addition they highlight the psychological impact on the young mothers, uprooted and weakened by the trauma of war and exile.

'No choice'

Hacene Arfi was six when he watched his father bury his baby brother at Rivesaltes—without ever being able to find the exact spot again. He said he'd already witnessed his father's attempted murder in Algeria in a knife attack and "women and children having their throats cut" while fleeing. The morning after his

PANDEMIC PANNERS: INDONESIANS HUNT FOR GOLD IN DESPERATE TIMES

With the coronavirus devastating jobs across the country, desperate Indonesians are flocking to illegal gold mines as the soaring price of the precious metal overrides the risk to their lives and the environment. Spooked by the economic destruction wrought by the pandemic, consumers and investors around the world have been snapping up gold, which is seen as a hedge against volatility, sending its price to a record above \$2,000 an ounce last month. The surge in demand has fuelled a boom in mineral-rich Indonesia's illegal mining industry, with workers ignoring the threat of arrest, mercury poisoning or being caught in the middle of gun battles.

Father-of-two Mustafa is among the hundreds who play a daily game of cat-and-mouse with authorities in the restive Papua region as they pan for nuggets in a



Two miners panning for gold along a stream near Korowai, Papua province.

river near US-based Freeport's sprawling Grasberg site—one of the world's biggest gold mines. On a good day, Mustafa collects a gram of gold by sifting through the mud with a fabric filter, which he can sell to a local trader for about 800,000 rupiah (\$55) — no small sum in one of Indonesia's poorest regions. The miners here don't use mercury, he said, but there are plenty of other dangers lurking in Indonesia's rugged easternmost territory. Fear of arrest is ever-present and so is being caught in the middle of deadly fights between security forces and independence-seeking rebels locked in a decades-old insurgency. "There are more of us here now during the pandemic because the price of gold has jumped," Mustafa told AFP in a telephone interview.

"We're risking arrest by security forces, but we don't have any option because we need money to support our families." The arduous job also carries the risk of catching the coronavirus or skin infections from wading through waters chock full of waste from the nearby mine. "This is very dangerous for our health. Me and some of my friends have skin diseases," Mustafa said. "But thank god, so far no one has got the virus."

'Ecological disaster'

Thousands of kilometers to the west in Kalimantan-Indonesia's section of Borneo island—police this month arrested 400 gold



A miner panning for gold along a stream near Korowai, Papua province.

miners accused of operating illegally in a conservation area, a crime punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Here, the dangers of mercury to both miners and the environment is severe, said Sustyo Iriyono, the environment ministry's director of prevention and forest protection. "The recent arrests in Kalimantan show that illegal activity was huge," he said. While the ministry does not yet have hard data, Iriyono said illicit mining has spiked nationwide, including on the densely populated Java island and remote Sumbawa.

"The high price of gold during the pandemic is the stimulus behind this... illegal activity," he said. "They're making profits by destroying the environment. We're trying to find a solution."

Environmental activist Aiesh Rumbekwan said the "massive increase" in unlicensed mining was being driven by people desperate to feed their families in the pandemic-battered economy. Government aid has been slow to reach many parts of the sprawling archipelago nation. "Illegal miners (often) use mercury to speed up the process and that will harm the environment and places where this activity connects to water sources like lakes or rivers," said Rumbekwan, who heads the Papua chapter of environmental network Walhi. "It could lead to an ecological disaster."

Indonesia banned the use of mercury for artisanal miners in 2017. But the dangerous metal, which can affect the nervous system and cause disabilities in newborn children, can still be purchased on the black market. The livelihoods of at least one million Indonesians are supported by small-scale mining, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which promotes mercury-free technologies. Despite pandemic restrictions, there are reports of unlicensed operators bringing scores of domestic migrants to makeshift mines sites across the country, which have long been prone to fatal accidents. "There's no control from the authorities," Rumbekwan said. — AFP



A miner panning for gold along a stream near Korowai, Papua province. — AFP photos



Amungme Komoro tribe members panning for gold nuggets along a river near US-based Freeport's Grasberg site in Timika, West Papua.

Photo of the Day



Hannah Bergemann rides in Bellingham, USA. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Dhoni faces heat for go-slow in Chennai's chase

DUBAI: India great Mahendra Singh Dhoni faced criticism yesterday for his uncharacteristically slow start in Chennai Super Kings' unsuccessful run chase in the IPL against Steve Smith's Rajasthan Royals. Dhoni, the Chennai captain, sent up young England allrounder Sam Curran and Indian Premier League debutant Rituraj Gaikwad ahead of him in his team's chase of 217 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, on Tuesday.

Finally coming into bat in the 14th over, the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman scored just 10 runs off his first 13 balls while partner Faf du Plessis was on a hitting spree in his 72-run blitz including seven sixes. The former India skipper, who announced his international retirement last month, only got going in the final over to hit three successive sixes but by then the chase was beyond Chennai who lost by 16 runs.

"This is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at No 7 when you're chasing what...213 (217)? The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," former India opener Gautam Gambhir told ESPNcricinfo. "Yes, you can talk about MS Dhoni's last over, but it was of no use to be honest. It was just all personal runs." Curran had smashed 18 off six balls after being promoted ahead of Dhoni, who last played in India's semi-final exit of the 2019 World Cup, in Chennai's win over holders Mumbai Indians in the IPL opener last week. Dhoni, known for his finishing skills during the peak of his international career, said his lack of time in the middle prompted him to shuffle the batting order. "I haven't batted for a long time. 14-day quarantine (in the United Arab Emirates) doesn't help," Dhoni, who remained unbeaten on 29, said in the post-match chat. "Also wanted to try different things, give opportunities to Sam. Have the opportunity to try different things. If it doesn't work, you can always go back to your strengths." —AFP

Indians punch playoff ticket with walk-off HR; Giants beat Rockies

Dodgers clinch 8th straight NL West crown

CHICAGO: Jose Ramirez belted a three-run homer in the 10th inning as the host Cleveland Indians clinched a postseason berth in dramatic fashion with a 5-3 victory over the Chicago White Sox on Tuesday. Chicago appeared poised to prevent Cleveland from punching its ticket to the postseason for the fourth time in five seasons after scoring twice in the top of the 10th inning.

Adam Engel ripped an RBI triple off Phil Maton (3-3) before coming around to score on Nick Madrigal's RBI single to stake the White Sox to a 3-1 lead. Undaunted, Francisco Lindor halved the deficit in the bottom of the 10th with an RBI double off the top of the wall in center field. Cesar Hernandez earned a walk off Matt Foster (5-1) to set the stage for Ramirez, who greeted Jose Ruiz by depositing his 2-2 fastball over the wall in right field for his team-leading 17th homer and sixth in as many games.

Dodgers 7, A's 2

Corey Seager had a home run among his three hits as Los Angeles clinched its eighth consecutive National League West title with a victory over visiting Oakland. The Dodgers also clinched the No. 1 seed in the National League heading into the playoffs, which begin next week. Max Muncy, Chris Taylor and AJ Pollock also hit home runs while rookie right-hander Dustin May (2-1) was solid over five innings as the Dodgers won for the 13th time in their past 16 home games. Robbie Grossman hit a home run for the A's, who clinched the American League West title during their Monday off day when the Houston Astros lost to the Seattle Mariners. Frankie Montas (3-5) took the loss after giving up five runs on seven hits over four innings.

Braves 11, Marlins 1

Marcell Ozuna hit two home runs and drove in five as Atlanta won the National League East for the third straight season with a win over visiting Miami. Ozuna hit a long solo shot with two outs in the first to put the Braves on the board and added a two-run homer in the eighth. They were his 16th and 17th homers, giving him the NL lead. Ozzie Albies added a towering solo homer to center field in the second inning, his sixth. Atlanta got a stellar starting effort from young right-hander Bryse Wilson (1-0), who pitched five shutout innings, allowed three hits, walked one and struck out a career-high seven. Jose Urena (0-3) took the loss after giving up four runs on six hits and two walks with three strikeouts over six innings.

Astros 6, Mariners 1

Martin Maldonado and Michael Brantley hit home runs and Framber Valdez pitched seven strong innings as Houston won at Seattle to inch closer to a playoff berth. The Astros (28-27), who have five games left, hold a 3 1/2-game lead over the Los Angeles Angels (25-31) and a four-game lead over the Mariners (24-31) in the chase for second place in the American League West and an automatic postseason bid. Houston owns the tiebreaker with Seattle because it already has won the season series between the teams, but the Angels hold the tiebreaker over the Astros. Valdez (5-3) allowed one run on five hits with no walks and eight strikeouts.

Giants 5, Rockies 2

Austin Slater had two hits, including a home run. Alex Dickerson also went deep, and host San Francisco beat Colorado. Joey Bart had two doubles to help the Giants move into a tie with Milwaukee and Cincinnati for the two National League wild-card playoff spots. Reliever Tyler Rogers (3-3) got the win despite blowing a seventh-inning lead, and Sam Coonrod picked up his third save. Raimel Tapia, Kevin Pillar and Matt Kemp had two hits apiece for Colorado.

Pirates 3, Cubs 2

Jacob Stallings' home run in the ninth inning gave

Pittsburgh a win over visiting Chicago, ending the Pirates' five-game losing streak. While the game was in the eighth inning, the Cubs clinched a playoff spot when the Washington Nationals beat the Philadelphia Phillies to complete a doubleheader sweep. Pittsburgh blew a 2-0 lead before Stallings' one-out blast to left field off Andrew Chafin (1-2). It was Stallings' third homer this year and third career walk-off hit.

Twins 5, Tigers 4 (10 innings)

Max Kepler's three hits included a game-tying homer in the eighth inning and a walk-off single in the 10th that gave Minnesota a victory over Detroit in Minneapolis. Byron Buxton and Mitch Garver also homered for Minnesota, which moved to within a half-game of the first-place Chicago White Sox in the American League Central. Taylor Rogers (2-4) picked up the win despite allowing an unearned run in the top of the 10th. Daz Cameron had two doubles and scored a run and Willi Castro and Miguel Cabrera also had two hits for the Tigers.

Brewers 3, Reds 2

Eric Sogard delivered a tiebreaking RBI double during a two-run seventh inning and Brett Anderson threw six strong innings for Milwaukee, which evened its three-game with host Cincinnati to draw in even in their chase for a playoff spot. Milwaukee (27-27) was down 2-0 after one inning but fought back to win for the fifth time in six contests and catch Cincinnati (28-28) in winning percentage. Anderson (4-3) allowed only Nick Castellanos' two-run homer and three other hits while striking out seven without a walk. One of the two runs he yielded was unearned. Cincinnati, which lost for just the second time in 10 games, got five innings from Sonny Gray, who allowed a Tyrone Taylor home run and one other hit while fanning eight with one walk. It was his first start off the injured list after recovering from a back issue that kept him out 11 days.

Nationals 5, Phillies 1 (Game 1)

Austin Voth tossed a complete game three-hitter to lift host Washington past Philadelphia in the first game of a

six innings as Los Angeles won at San Diego. Stassi's sixth homer of the season in the bottom of the second tied the game at 1-1. His 409-foot drive to straightaway center followed a two-out double by Taylor Ward corner and broke the tie in the sixth. Channing (2-3) issued five walks and had 10 strikeouts en route to the win. He retired 11 of the last 12 Padres he faced after working out of jams in the first and third innings—as San Diego scored a total of one run after loading the bases in both innings before Channing recorded an out.

Red Sox 8, Orioles 3

Nick Pivetta struck out eight over five innings in his Boston debut, Christian Vazquez hit a three-run home run and the Red Sox beat visiting Baltimore in the opener of a three-game series. Pivetta (1-0) allowed one run on four hits and three walks as the Red Sox kicked off their final home series of the season. Pivetta, acquired from the Philadelphia Phillies last month, made his first major league start since July 17, 2019. The lone blemish on Pivetta's night came in the first inning, when he walked a



LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Dodgers pose for a team picture, after a 7-2 win over the Oakland Athletics, to win the National League West Division at Dodger Stadium on September 22, 2020. — AFP

Yankees 12, Blue Jays 1

Aaron Hicks had three RBIs with a triple and a single, right-hander Gerrit Cole struck out seven in seven innings, and visiting New York defeated Toronto in Buffalo, NY. Gio Urshela added four hits and two RBIs to extend his hit streak to 11 games as the teams have split the first two games of a four-game series. Cole (7-3) allowed one run and five hits in beating the Blue Jays for the second straight start. Blue Jays right-hander Tanner Roark (2-3) allowed six runs and seven hits in 4 1/3 innings in his third straight start against the Yankees.

Mets 5, Rays 2

A slumping Pete Alonso homered and finished with three RBIs and Seth Lugo bounced back from the worst start of his career by tossing 6 1/3 solid innings as host New York kept its playoff hopes alive while denying Tampa Bay a chance to clinch a division title. The Mets began the day three games behind the Philadelphia Phillies in the race for the final National League wild-card spot, but the Phillies were swept in a doubleheader by the Washington Nationals before New York's win was complete. The Rays entered Tuesday with a magic number of one for clinching the American League East, but the New York Yankees routed the Toronto Blue Jays 12-1. Lugo (3-3), who gave up four homers and six runs over 1 2/3 innings last Thursday against the Philadelphia Phillies, allowed two runs (one earned) on four hits and one walk while striking out seven.

doubleheader. It was the first career complete game for Voth, who tossed 105 pitches, struck out seven and walked one. Voth (1-5) entered the game winless with a 7.17 ERA. Juan Soto scored two runs and walked twice for the Nationals. Jean Segura hit a solo home run for the struggling Phillies, who dropped their third in a row. J.T. Realmuto and Andrew McCutchen had the other two hits, both singles. Philadelphia starter Aaron Nola (5-4) gave up six hits and five runs (three earned) in six innings. Nola struck out six and walked two.

Nationals 8, Phillies 7 (Game 2, 8 innings)

Yadiel Hernandez's first career homer was a two-run walk-off shot in the bottom of the eighth inning Tuesday, lifting host Washington past Philadelphia in the second game of a doubleheader. Hernandez finished 2-for-4 with three RBIs in the nightcap. He had eight career at-bats in six games before the outburst. Juan Soto added a three-run homer for the Nationals, and Daniel Hudson (3-2) earned the win despite giving up an unearned run in the top of the 10th. Scott Kingery homered and Didi Gregorius added two hits and two RBIs for the Phillies, who have lost four in a row. Alec Bohm and J.T. Realmuto had two hits each for the Phillies, who took a 7-6 lead in the top of the eighth. Brandon Workman (1-4) took the loss after serving up Hernandez's homer.

Angels 4, Padres 2

Max Stassi hit two homers as part of a four-hit game and Griffin Channing gave up just one run on two hits over

pair and allowed a run to score on a two-out single by DJ Stewart. Pivetta struck out the side in order in the second and later escaped a two-on, no-out jam in the fifth to end his outing.

Cardinals 5, Royals 0

Dylan Carlson had three hits, three runs and two RBIs to help St. Louis defeat host Kansas City. Cardinals starter Austin Gomber (1-1) allowed four hits and no walks, striking out three, in six innings. His longest outing previously this season was three innings. Brady Singer (3-5) took the loss with the worst—and shortest—outing of his brief major league career. He gave up three runs on three hits in three-plus innings. St. Louis grabbed a one-game lead over Cincinnati and Milwaukee for second place in the NL Central and an automatic playoff berth, while the Royals were officially eliminated from postseason contention.

Diamondbacks 7, Rangers 0

Carson Kelly slugged a three-run homer to cap a four-run sixth inning and help Arizona roll to a shutout victory over Texas at Phoenix. David Peraltá went 3-for-4 with an RBI as Arizona moved to within a win of getting to .500 at home (12-13). Eduardo Escobar went 2-for-4 as the Diamondbacks finished with 11 hits in the opener of the two-game set. Texas was shut out for the first time this season. The Rangers have dropped five of their past six contests. Eli White went 3-for-4 with a stolen base for the Rangers, while Sam Huff went 2-for-4. The Rangers were 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position. — Reuters

Sports

Qatar's Al Sadd book Asian Champions League last 16

Welliton treble boosts Sharjah's hopes

DOHA: Qatar's Al Sadd made the last 16 of the Asian Champions League after Group D rivals Sepahan and Al Ain could only manage a goalless draw. A 1-1 draw for Xavi's side against Al Nassr made no difference to their qualification, but was a more muted display in front of goal after scoring seven goals in two matches since the tournament resumed last week following a seven-month break because of the coronavirus pandemic. Al Sadd, who won the tournament in 2011, had a great chance to go ahead as early as the fifth minute but Baghdad Bounedjah, who was the beneficiary of a measured pass from South Korea international Nam Tae-he, fired wide from close range.

Goalkeeper Brad Jones then came to Al Nassr's rescue later with a fine save to foil Al Sadd captain Hassan al-Haydos after Akram Afif had done most of the spade-work on the left. A few minutes later, Al Nassr's Abdulfattah Adam challenged Al Sadd goalkeeper Saad al-Sheeb with a stinging shot but the latter was equal to the task and cleared the danger. Al-Sheeb however displayed a lack of technique in the 22nd minute when Khalid al-Ghannam drilled the ball through his legs from a tight angle to give Al Nassr the lead.

After a few more chances were fluffed by both teams, Al Sadd finally found the net three minutes from time, with Bounedjah firing home after receiving the ball via Afif and Nam. "It was a tough game. We were not good enough in the first half, and in the second half we were better," said Xavi. "Today,

we showed two faces of the team in the two halves. I'm angry with the first half, and happy with the second. "I told the players that we had to change our values, the rhythm and the mentality, and this happened in the second half. We scored the goal and we got a good point against a strong team."

Welliton boots Al Taawoun

Elsewhere Brazilian striker Welliton scored a hat-trick as the UAE's Sharjah thrashed Saudi Arabia's Al Taawoun 6-0. Sharjah, who were languishing at the bottom of Group C with just four points from as many matches, climbed to third spot, while Qatar's Al Duhail are on top with nine after beating Iran's Persepolis 1-0 in an earlier match on Monday. Sharjah and Persepolis are on seven points and Al Taawoun are on six, leaving Group C wide open with all four teams still capable of making the cut.

Sharjah scored five of their goals in the second half after Saif Rashid had given them the lead in the first minute of first-half stoppage time. Welliton netted in the 49th, 57th and 61st minutes while Mohamed Abdulbasit and Ciao each scored to complete Sharjah's victory. In the early Group C match, Almoez Ali scored for Al Duhail from the spot in the 60th minute after Shojae Khalizadeh's foul on Edmilson resulted in a penalty. Isa al-Kasir missed the chance to level when he fired wide in front of an open goal after Al Duhail goalkeeper Mohamed al-Bakri spill the ball into his path off a Bashar Resan shot.—AFP



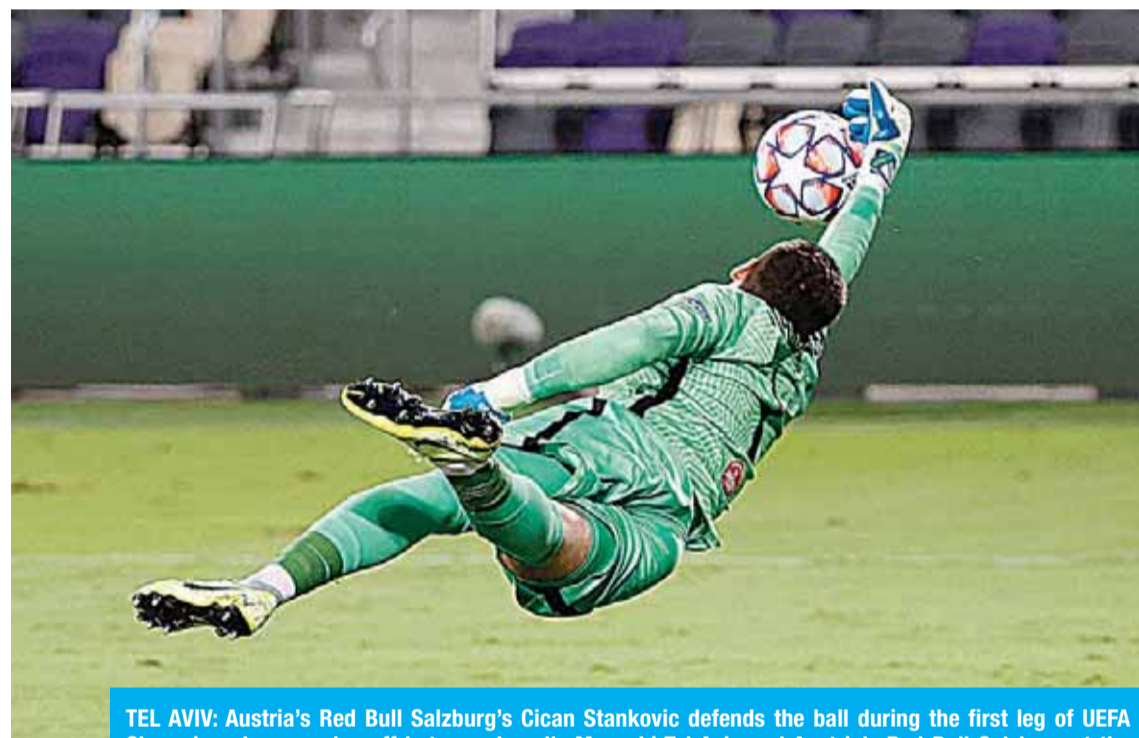
DOHA: Sadd's forward Baghdad Bounedjah celebrates after scoring during the AFC Champions League group D match between Qatar's Al-Sadd and Saudi's Al-Nassr at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in the Qatari capital Doha. —AFP

Krasnodar, Salzburg edge closer to group stage

KRASNODAR: Krasnodar and Salzburg closed in on berths in the Champions League (CL) group stage after 2-1 wins in the first leg of the competition's playoff round while Slavia Prague were held to a 0-0 home draw by Danes Midtjylland on Tuesday. Russian side Krasnodar ground out a comeback home win over Greeks PAOK Salonika, who missed a penalty, and Salzburg also came from behind to beat Maccabi Tel Aviv away after falling behind in the early stages.

Krasnodar goalkeeper Matvey Safonov saved a poor seventh-minute penalty from Dimitrios Pelkas but the PAOK forward made amends in the 32nd, steering in a low Andrija Zivkovic cross with a deft touch from close range. The home side levelled seven minutes later after Frenchman Remy Cabella was fouled by Dimitrios Giannoulis in the area and Swede Viktor Claesson drove his penalty past goalkeeper Zivko Zivkovic. PAOK missed a gilt-edged chance midway through the second half when Omar El Kaddouri hit the post and were punished in the 70th minute, as Cabella swept the ball into an empty net from three metres after a fine assist by Marcus Berg.

Winger Dan Biton fired Maccabi ahead in the ninth minute with a sublime finish and the home side were then forced to defend resolutely against dominant Salzburg. Relentless pressure from the visitors paid off in the second half as Hungary midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai equalized with a 49th-minute



TEL AVIV: Austria's Red Bull Salzburg's Cican Stankovic defends the ball during the first leg of UEFA Champions League play-off between Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv and Austria's Red Bull Salzburg at the Bloomfield Stadium on September 22, 2020. —AFP

penalty and had a hand in Salzburg's winner netted by Masaya Okugawa eight minutes later.

Midtjylland matched more fancied Slavia in every department and always looked the more likely winners, with Sory Kaba missing their best chance when keeper Ondrej Kolar saved the striker's close-range header. The home side were fortunate not to

concede an own-goal with the last kick of the game, as David Hovorka's mis-kicked clearance struck Kolar in the head. In yesterday's action, Hungarian champions Ferencvaros visited Norway's Molde, Belgian side Gent were at home to Dynamo Kyiv and Olympiakos Piraeus entertained Cypriots Omonoia Nicosia.—Reuters

Cycling thrown into fresh turmoil with Tour doping probe

PARIS: Cycling has been thrown into fresh turmoil after French judicial authorities opened a preliminary investigation into potential doping at Nairo Quintana's team Arkea-Samsic, a day after the Tour de France ended in Paris. Two people had been taken into custody, Marseille prosecutor Dominique Laurens said, adding that the probe was targeting a "small part of the team" and that those in custody were part of the "close entourage of the main rider", without naming him. Laurens added on Tuesday that the two were still being held for questioning and that a decision on whether they would be formally charged would be made on Wednesday.

Arkea-Samsic's leader on the Tour was Colombian Quintana, twice a runner-up and also a Vuelta and Giro d'Italia champion. He finished 17th overall on this year's Tour. The French team confirmed that their hotel in Meribel was searched by the OCLAESP, the Central Office for the Fight against Environmental and Public Health Damage, after last Wednesday's 17th stage. Laurens said the search had resulted in the "discovery of many health products, including drugs and especially a method that can be qualified as doping". A source with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters that a "saline solution" and "injection material" were found. "The elements gathered during the search will need further investigation and analysis," Laurens said in a statement on Tuesday. Injection material can only be in possession of doctors as per the 'no needle policy' in place in cycling since 2011. Arkea-Samsic team manager Emmanuel Hubert said on Monday that the investigation did "not target the team or its staff directly".



CHAMPS-ELYSEES: The pack rides on the Champs Elysees avenue with the Arc de Triomphe in the background during the 21st and last stage of the 107th edition of the Tour de France cycling race. —AFP

Quintana, who was allowed to continue working with his own doctor when he signed a three-year deal with Arkea-Samsic this year, later denied using any banned substances and said he had voluntarily answered investigators' questions with "a clear conscience". "I want to tell my fans and followers of cycling that never in my career as a junior, under-23 or professional have I used illegal substances that improve my performance or betray the principles of the sport," he said in a statement posted on his Twitter account. Quintana said only "perfectly legal vitamin supplements" had been found in the search last week. This year's Tour was won by Slovenian Tadej Pogacar, who produced one of

the most stunning performances in recent history in the final time trial last Saturday. The 22-year-old is with Team UAE Emirates, which is managed by Mauro Gianetti and Matxin Fernandez, sports directors at Saunier Duval in 2008 when the team left the Tour in the wake of Ricardo Ricco's failed doping test.

The duo were also managing the Geox-TMC team when Spaniard Juan Jose Cobo won the Vuelta in 2011, only to be stripped of the title because of a "violation of the anti-doping rules (use of a banned substance) based on irregularities found in his Athlete Biological Passport in 2009 and 2011". —Reuters

Fans warned as Bayern head to COVID-19 risk zone for Super Cup

BERLIN: Bayern Munich can lift yet more silverware when they face Sevilla today for the UEFA Super Cup, but travelling German fans have been warned to think again before flying to Budapest and head coach Hansi Flick has questioned

whether the match should go ahead amid the coronavirus pandemic. The Champions League winners head to Hungary on a 22-match winning streak, stretching back to February, which has seen them sweep up Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup titles.

Bayern opened the new Bundesliga season last Friday with an 8-0 hammering of Schalke with Germany winger Leroy Sane scoring on his Munich debut and declaring the "whole team showed how hungry we are". Their appetite for more silverware can be sated with two trophies up for grabs in the coming week as they also face

Dortmund for the German Super Cup on September 30. However COVID-19 has cast a shadow over today's showdown as Budapest has been declared a risk zone by the German government due to a high infection rate.

'Think again'

Flick admits he "does not quite understand" why UEFA insist on the match still taking place there, "but we are not the ones who make the decision". On Tuesday, Markus Soeder, state premier of Bavaria, announced tighter rules, "which particularly affect the Super Cup" for travelling Bayern

News in brief

Judo Tokyo Grand Slam axed

TOKYO: Judo's Tokyo Grand Slam scheduled for December has been cancelled this year, the International Judo Federation said, citing "continued uncertainty" over the coronavirus pandemic. "In light of the continued uncertainty still existing around the Covid-19 pandemic, along with considering the fact that Japan is the hosting country of the Olympic Games, the IJF needs to be extra cautious when planning events in Japan," the body said in a statement released late Tuesday. "Given that there are already several IJF events, as well as many national competitions, which will take place from the beginning of 2021, it was agreed to cancel this Grand Slam, not postpone." The IJF said the Budapest Grand Slam scheduled for late October is still on the calendar, though a final decision will be taken early next month by the Hungarian government.—AFP

Donovan named new coach

LOS ANGELES: The Chicago Bulls named Billy Donovan as the team's new head coach on Tuesday, replacing Jim Boylen who was fired last month after the franchise's latest failure to make the playoffs. Donovan, 55, joins the Bulls after parting company with the Oklahoma City Thunder by mutual agreement earlier this month after his team were eliminated from the post-season. "We are very pleased to welcome Billy and his family to the Chicago Bulls," Chicago Bulls executive vice president of basketball operations Arturas Karnisovas said in a statement. "The success that he has sustained over the course of his coaching career puts him on a different level. We feel his ability to help his players reach their potential, both individually and collectively, will mesh well with our roster. "Whether as a player or as a coach, he has won everywhere his career has taken him, and we hope that will continue here in Chicago." —AFP

Juventus sign Atletico's Morata

MADRID: Juventus have signed Spain striker Alvaro Morata on a one-season loan from Atletico Madrid for 10 million euros (\$11.71 million), the Italian champions said on Tuesday. The agreement also gives Juve an option to buy the 27-year-old at the end of the season for 45 million euros to be paid over three years, the Turin club added. They could otherwise take him on loan again for the 2021-22 season for another 10 million euro fee and then buy him outright in 2022 at a reduced cost of 35 million euros. Morata returns to the club where he spent two seasons between 2014 and 2016, including scoring in the Champions League final loss to Barcelona in Berlin in 2015. He spent just one season with Atleti, who had initially loaned him from Chelsea but then bought him outright in July last year at a reported fee of 65 million euros. Morata moved to Juve originally from Real Madrid and netted 27 goals in 93 games over two seasons.—Reuters

fans. "Everyone should think again about whether it is sensible to travel," added Soeder. Supporters must either be tested for Covid-19 before and after the trip to Budapest or quarantine for two weeks. "This is how we want to prevent there being a possible risk of infection," explained Soeder.

Only 500 Sevilla and 1300 Bayern fans are expected to watch the match at Budapest's Puskas Arena. Both clubs have set up test centres in their respective cities in a bid to reduce the risk of today's match becoming a 'super spreader' event. On Monday, Soeder had already expressed doubt whether the game in Budapest should go ahead.—AFP

14 Indians punch playoff ticket with walk-off HR; Giants beat Rockies



15 Qatar's Al Sadd book Asian Champions League last 16



15 Krasnodar, Salzburg edge closer to Champions League group stage



Denver Nuggets hold off Lakers

Murray nails two crucial late 3-pointers in closing minutes



ORLANDO: Kyle Kuzma #0 of the Los Angeles Lakers drives to the basket against the Denver Nuggets during Game Three of the Western Conference Finals on September 22, 2020. — AFP

ORLANDO: Jamal Murray scored 28 points as the Denver Nuggets held off a ferocious late fight-back from the Los Angeles Lakers to roar back into contention in the Western Conference finals series on Tuesday. Murray nailed two crucial late three-pointers in the closing minutes as Denver held on for a 114-106 victory in game three to reduce the Lakers' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

But the Nuggets—who looked in complete control for long periods of the contest—were given a mighty scare by the Lakers in a thrilling fourth-quarter battle. The Lakers had trailed by 20 points with just over 10 minutes remaining but whittled away the Denver lead to just three points with 3min 53sec left on the clock in Orlando. But just as it looked as if LeBron James and Anthony Davis were poised to complete a remarkable comeback, Murray regrouped to take the game away from the Lakers.

The 23-year-old Canadian's three-pointer from 26 feet gave Denver a seven-point advantage at 106-99 and he then provided the assist for Paul Millsap to make it 108-99. With less than a minute on the clock, Murray struck the dagger blow with a 29-foot three-point jumpshot to make it 111-99 and effectively seal victory. Denver coach Michael Malone said his team—who had suffered an agonizing buzzer-beater defeat in game two on Sunday—were determined not to go 3-0 down in the series. The Nuggets have already overturned 3-1 series deficits en route to the Western Conference finals.

'Not ready to go'

"I had no doubt we were going to show up tonight," Malone said. "We have won six straight elimination games. Everybody always has us packing our bags and leaving, but we're not ready to go. They're a very resilient group and they have proved that time and time again." Asked about his

late flourish, Murray said he had set out to lead by example. "That's my whole energy, my whole approach to the game, not getting down if I miss a couple of shots," Murray said.

"I'm just trying to be aggressive... but the most important part is the energy I bring when I'm talking to my team-mates, being a vocal leader, getting up and down and pushing everybody so they tend to follow. I just wanted to see them have a lot of fun today." The Lakers meanwhile were left reflecting on an uneven display which ultimately left James and Davis with too much to do. James led the scoring with a triple double comprised of 30 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists, with six turnovers. Davis had 27 points, with Kentavious Caldwell-Pope (12) and Kyle Kuzma (11) the only other Lakers players to crack double figures.

Murray, who also had 12 assists, was backed with 26 points from Jerami Grant while Nikola Jokic weighed in with 22 points, 10 rebounds and

five assists. "You put yourself in an 18-point hole, it's tough to climb out of that," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "I thought Denver played with great energy throughout the game. We didn't match it early, we matched it late. They're a great basketball team so credit it to them for the win. They played a really good basketball game."

"We were not as sharp as we could have been on both ends of the floor. We were playing at a high level, but were a little bit off in the first half. "But I liked the spirit that the guys competed with down the stretch to try and make it a game." Game four in the series takes place in Orlando today. The winner of the Western Conference will play either the Boston Celtics or Miami Heat in the NBA Finals. The climax to the COVID-19-interrupted NBA season is taking place at Disneyworld in Orlando, where teams have been based in a secure "bubble" since July in order to allow the NBA to complete the campaign. — AFP

Raiders, Saints fined for face covering violations

LOS ANGELES: The Las Vegas Raiders and New Orleans Saints have been fined \$250,000 each for breaches of the NFL's Covid-19 safety protocols regarding face coverings, reports said Tuesday. Raiders head coach Jon Gruden and Saints counterpart Sean Payton were also fined \$100,000 apiece for their failure to wear face coverings during Monday's meeting between the two teams in Nevada, NFL Network reported. The latest round of fines comes after the league hit the Seattle Seahawks, San Francisco 49ers and Denver Broncos and their head coaches with identical fines on Monday for violations over the weekend.

The NFL began handing out penalties a week after giving all 32 clubs in the league a reminder to follow face covering guidelines. Raiders coach Gruden apologised on Monday when asked about his failure to wear a mask during his team's 34-24 win over the

Saints. Gruden revealed he had contracted Covid-19 during the off-season but had recovered. Saints coach Payton also contracted coronavirus earlier this year.

"I'm doing my best. You know, I've had the virus. OK, I'm doing my best," Gruden said on Monday. "I'm very sensitive about it, but I'm calling plays. "I just wanna communicate in these situations and I apologize and if I get fined, I will have to pay the fine, but I'm very sensitive about all of that and I apologize." Meanwhile Seattle coach Pete Carroll apologized on Tuesday for his breach of face-covering rules, admitting he had "screwed up". "I had a coach who was reminding me about it throughout the game," Carroll said. "I even changed masks at halftime to find one that worked better. Sometimes you have to admit that you screwed up and have got to do better." — AFP

Sports face impact of empty stadiums

LONDON: Sports clubs and associations in England are bracing themselves for six more months without paying spectators after plans for a fans' return in October were scrapped on Tuesday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the House of Commons the government could not go ahead with the planned reopening of venues on a socially distanced basis from October 1 due to a sharp rise in coronavirus infections. He suggested the measures would remain in place for "perhaps six months", making it almost certain the sports sector will need some financial support from the government to prevent an unprecedented loss of professional and grassroots clubs from the landscape.

It is a devastating blow to sporting organizations, many of whom rely heavily on match-day revenue for survival, and there have already been calls from governing bodies for emergency funding. Sports governing

bodies held an emergency meeting with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Oliver Dowden to discuss the impact of the decision. Professional sport, including the Premier League and Test cricket, has largely been played behind closed doors since it returned following the coronavirus shutdown earlier this year.

The English Football League has estimated its clubs will lose a collective £200 million (\$255 million) without fans in stadiums for the whole of the 2020/21 season. The Premier League warned of the "devastating impact" the continued absence of supporters was having on its clubs and communities. "Last season, Premier League clubs suffered £700 million in losses and at present, our national game is losing more than £100 million per month," it said in a statement. "This is starting to have a devastating impact on clubs and their communities."

The Rugby Football Union has called for government aid, estimating a loss of more than £100 million from a lack of crowds at Twickenham for autumn internationals and Six Nations games alone. "From the outset we have been clear that an autumn without crowds would leave us with little choice but to approach the government for financial help," said chief executive Bill Sweeney.

"Unfortunately, we are now in that position. Without support we are in danger of clubs at the heart of communities across England, as well as players and volunteers, disappearing forever."

The Jockey Club also called for direct government support, saying the lack of paying spectators threatened the survival of sports organizations and the livelihoods they supported. English cricket recently revealed it had lost £100 million as a result of the pandemic and that could double with further disruption next year. "The impact of having to stage cricket behind closed doors again next year would be severe," said a statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said the government would "work together" with sports representatives on limiting the damage caused by the virus. "I've just held a meeting with major spectator sports to discuss today's decision to help contain the virus through winter," he tweeted. "We agreed to work together to help them through this difficult period." Dowden also confirmed that pilot events scheduled for the remainder of September had been cancelled. Each event had been capped at a maximum capacity of 1,000, regardless of venue size. — AFP