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# Kuwait reports 1,002 new COVID-19 cases, 6 deaths

## MoI to enforce shop closures • Social gatherings root cause of spike in cases



KUWAIT: Maj Gen (Rtd) Abdulfattah Al-Ali, who is in charge of enforcing compliance with coronavirus measures, oversees the removal of campsites in Ahmadi governorate yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Kuwait said 1,002 people tested positive for coronavirus with six related deaths reported yesterday, taking total COVID-19 cases to 172,996, while deaths increased to 975, according to the health ministry. The number of people hospitalized with the virus currently stands at 9,310, with 96 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad.

He added some 10,271 swab tests were conducted over the past day, taking total tests to 1,618,576. Sanad urged citizens and expatriates alike that abiding by health precautions, mainly following social distancing rules, is the only way to halt the spread of the virus. The ministry earlier reported 591 more people had recovered from the virus over the past day, raising total recoveries to 162,711.

The interior ministry yesterday said it will deploy security teams to assist authorities to implement decisions by the Cabinet to close commercial activities to counter the spread of the coronavirus. The ministry of commerce and the municipality will monitor the implementation of the closure of commercial shops and malls from 8 pm to 5 am and the total shutdown of health clubs, salons and barbershops.

Health ministry sources have warned against the continued hosting of social events and gatherings at diwanis, rest areas, stables and farms, adding that this behavior has contributed to the increase of coronavirus cases lately, in addition to hospital



admissions due to complications. "The ministry is monitoring the epidemic curve of the virus and the causes of infection periodically," said the sources, who were quoted in a report published by Al-Qabas Arabic daily yesterday. "It was noticed that most of the latest cases were due to lack of compliance with health protocols and attending social events held in diwanis and other places."

Continued on Page 2

### News in brief

#### Kuwait bans live sheep exports

KUWAIT: The ministry of commerce and industry yesterday issued a ministerial decree banning the export and re-export of domestic and imported live sheep and goats for three months. The aim of the decision is to meet the needs of the local market. — KUNA

#### Iraq hangs 5 convicts

NASIRIYAH: Iraq yesterday hanged five people convicted on "terrorism" charges, security sources said, despite an international outcry over the country's execution record. The five men, all Iraqi, were executed at the Nasiriyah prison in Dhi Qar province. — AFP

#### Sitting US congressman dies

WASHINGTON: A Republican congressman from Texas who was being treated for COVID-19 has died, the first sitting member to lose his life after battling the coronavirus. House of Representatives lawmaker Ron Wright, 67, who had also suffered from cancer, died at a Dallas hospital. — AFP

#### Iran starts vaccination drive

TEHRAN: Iran began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign yesterday using Russia's Sputnik V jab to fight the Middle East's deadliest outbreak of the illness. The first doses were given to doctors and nurses, with recipients handed a blue card marked with "Sputnik V" and the date of the injection. — AFP

#### Dubai inoculates transport workers

DUBAI: Dubai has begun the mass vaccination of public transport workers. At a center of Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) on Monday, dozens of drivers and other employees formed long lines for an AstraZeneca jab. RTA has already vaccinated some 20,000 employees. — AFP

## Women in Kuwait launch their own #MeToo movement

KUWAIT: Women in Kuwait are defying conservative norms and a culture of "shame" to speak out against harassment for the first time, in a social media campaign sparked by a popular fashion blogger. Dozens of testimonies about being stalked, harassed or assaulted have emerged online, focused on the Instagram account "Lan Asket", Arabic for "I

will not be silent".

Kuwaiti fashion blogger Ascia Al-Faraj, who has more than 2.5 million social media followers, said in an explosive video uploaded last week that there is a "problem" in the country. "Every time I go out, there is someone who harasses me or harasses another woman in the street," she said in the emotionally charged video uploaded after a vehicle sped up to "scare" her while she was walking to her car. "Do you have no shame? We have a problem of harassment in this country, and I have had enough."

Faraj's video sparked a nationwide movement in a country where the #MeToo campaign that took off in the United States in 2017 did not make much

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## UAE probe enters Mars orbit in first for Arab world

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' "Hope" probe yesterday successfully entered Mars' orbit, making history as the Arab world's first interplanetary mission. The probe is designed to reveal the secrets of Martian weather, but the UAE also wants it to serve as an inspiration for the region's youth. "To the people of the UAE, to the Arab and Muslim nations, we announce the successful arrival to Mars orbit. Praise be to God," said Omran Sharaf, the mission's project manager.

Officials at mission control broke into applause after the probe entered orbit, visibly relieved after a tense half-hour as the probe carried out a "burn" to slow itself enough to be pulled in by Martian gravity, in what was the most perilous stage of the journey. Hope is the first of three spacecraft to arrive at the Red Planet this month after China and the US also launched missions in July, taking advantage of a period when the Earth and Mars are nearest.

The UAE's venture is also timed to mark the 50th anniversary of the unification of the UAE's seven emirates. "What you have accomplished is an honor for you, and an honor for the nation. I want to congratulate you," said Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed after entering the control room.

Continued on Page 2



DUBAI: Burj Khalifa is lit up in red as the UAE's "Al-Amal" probe successfully entered Mars' orbit yesterday. — AFP



## WHO mission to China fails to find source of COVID

WUHAN: The WHO mission to China to uncover the origins of the coronavirus has failed to identify the source of the pandemic but the team yesterday ruled out the Wuhan lab-leak theory propagated by Donald Trump. Experts believe the disease - which has killed more than 2.3 million people worldwide - originated in bats and could have been transmitted to humans via another mammal.

World Health Organization foreign expert Peter Ben Embarek said identifying the animal pathway remains a "work in progress", and the absence of bats in the Wuhan area dimmed the likelihood of direct transmission. It was "most likely" to have come from an intermediary species, he said. He also backed up China's position that there was no evidence of "large outbreaks" in Wuhan before December when the first official cases were recorded.

Animals such as rabbits, ferrets and bamboo rats could be the intermediary, another team member Marion Koopmans added, saying they might be an "entry point" for further investigations. Liang Wannian, head of the China side of the joint mission, said animal transmission remained the likely route, but "the reservoir hosts remain to be identified".

Ben Embarek quashed the theory that a leak from a virology lab in Wuhan could have caused the pandemic. "The laboratory incident hypothesis is extremely unlikely," he said. It "is not in the hypotheses that we will suggest for future studies". — AFP



## Local

# Amir meets Turkish Foreign Minister, receives letter from Qatar's Amir

## Sheikh Tamim thanks Kuwait for efforts to resolve Gulf rift



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received the Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on his official visit to the country. The two meetings were attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Saud Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan and Director of the Office of His Highness the Amir Ahmad Al-Fahad. His Highness the Amir also received a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing his gratitude for His Highness' efforts in the success of the 41st Gulf

Cooperation Council Summit. In turn, His Highness the Amir thanked the Qatari Amir for his sincere sentiments, praising the historical ties between Kuwait and Qatar. Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait Bandar bin Mohammad Al-Attiya delivered the letter to His Highness the Amir. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Speaker Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace yesterday. He later received Sheikh Dr Ahmad alongside the visiting Turkish Foreign Minister. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait as he handed His Highness a hand-written letter from Qatar's Amir, in which he expressed his appreciation to the efforts of His



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, delivered by Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait Bandar bin Mohammad Al-Attiya.

Highness the Crown Prince in resolving the Gulf conflict in the 41st GCC summit held in Al-Ula governorate in Saudi Arabia. His Highness the Crown Prince replied with his sincere appreciation to the brotherly message from Qatar's Amir, and embraced the deep relations between the two countries. Director of His Highness the Crown Prince's office Jamal Al-Theyab and His Highness the Crown Prince's office undersecretary of foreign affairs Mazin Al-Essa attended the meeting.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah also received Ambassador Attiya, who delivered a written message from the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al-Thani. In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad and Foreign

Minister Assistant for Europe Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al-Khubaizi attended the meeting held at Seif Palace.

Moreover, Speaker Ghanem received Minister Cavusoglu, and the two sides explored relations between the two countries and means of boosting cooperation between the two countries in various sectors. They have also exchanged views on a number of top regional and international topics. Turkish Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Aisha Kuytak attended the meeting. Separately, Kuwait's Foreign Minister received his Turkish counterpart and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, the two sides displayed the deep brotherly bonds between the two countries, and also discussed ways of boosting bilateral ties in all fields, in addition to discussing latest regional developments. Several senior officials attended the meeting. — KUNA

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## UAE probe enters Mars orbit in first...

Continued from Page 1

The probe, named "Al-Amal", Arabic for "Hope" rotated and fired all six of its powerful thrusters to dramatically slow its average cruising speed of 121,000 km per hour to about 18,000 kph. And as the clock ticked down, Dubai's needle-shaped Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, lit up in red with blue laser lights, to the backdrop of dramatic music.

Landmarks across the Gulf state have been lit up in red at night and government accounts and police patrol cars emblazoned with the #ArabstoMars hashtag. While the probe is designed to provide a comprehen-

sive image of the planet's weather dynamics, it is also a step towards a much more ambitious goal - building a human settlement on Mars within 100 years.

Apart from cementing its status as a key regional player, the UAE also wants to engage youth in a region too often wracked by sectarian conflicts and economic crises. "This project means a lot for the nation, for the whole region, and for the global scientific and space community," Sharaf told AFP before the launch. "It's not about reaching Mars: it's a tool for a much bigger objective. The government wanted to see a big shift in the mindset of Emirati youth... to expedite the creation of an advanced science and technology sector in the UAE."

To mark the historic moment, the UAE this week projected onto the Dubai night sky images of Mars' two moons - Phobos and Deimos - to allow residents "to see what the probe sees". — AFP

## Women in Kuwait launch their own...

Continued from Page 1

of an impact. Radio and TV shows have hosted activists, lawyers and academics to discuss the issue of harassment, and the US embassy in Kuwait also threw its weight behind the women. "A campaign worth supporting. We can all do more to prevent harassment against women, whether in the US or in Kuwait. #Lan\_asket," it said in a tweet last week.

The embassy also tweeted a striking graphic that illustrates the campaign - images of three women, one unveiled, one with a headscarf, and another with her face covered - and bearing the slogan "Don't harass her". Activists have also emphasized that foreign women who make up a large portion of the Kuwaiti population, many in menial roles, are among the most vulnerable to assault and abuse.

Shayma Shamo, a 27-year-old doctor who studied abroad and moved back to Kuwait last year, launched the "Lan Asket" platform after seeing Faraj's video. "As soon as I opened the account, the messages started to pour in... from women and girls that have experienced verbal, physical and sexual harassment," she told AFP.

Faraj said in another video uploaded later that week that she had also received "intense stories" by Indian, Pakistani and Filipino women working in Kuwait. "The expat community here is incredibly vulnerable and are sometimes harassed at a level that Kuwaiti women will

never understand," she said.

While there has been tremendous support online, the movement has also faced a backlash from conservative voices who say women should simply dress conservatively to avoid harassment. "Silence is no longer an option. We must speak up, unite and defend each other because what is happening is unacceptable," Shamo told AFP.

Rolhna Begum, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch, said women were taking the fore in a society where, like many in the Middle East, police often do not take such abuses seriously, and the fear of bringing shame to families silences many. "These accounts being published are incredibly important to give Kuwaitis a sense of what harassment actually looks like and the terrible harm it causes," she told AFP.

The Arabic word "ayb", or shame in English, is a term that most girls growing up in the region learn at a very early age. "Going to the police station is 'ayb' and talking about harassment is 'ayb'," said Shamo. "As soon as a woman starts to speak about being harassed, the questions from family members start: What were you wearing? Who were you with? What time was it?"

But Kuwaiti women are pushing the boundaries of their society, considered one of the most open in the Gulf region, and where a law against harassment exists on the books, but where discussions about gender-based violence remain taboo. Lulu Al-Aslawi, a Kuwait media personality whose Instagram feed features her in glossy fashion shoots, said she has been bullied online for the way she dresses. "Girls don't speak up over fears of being stigmatized, but we will not stop until we overcome this cancer in society," she said. —AFP

## Kuwait reports 1,002 new...

Continued from Page 1

The sources added that the continued increase in cases may have adverse health and social repercussions. "Reverting to the third or second phase of restrictions is in the hands of citizens and expats and their commitment to health protocols," the sources warned. They said the return of a partial curfew is being discussed by the ministry to avoid

escalation of the health situation in the country.

"Some people not only attend social events, but also do not observe social distancing, especially since they stay there for hours, which allows for the transmission of the virus in case any of them is infected, even if they show no symptoms," said the sources.

They argued that holding of events such as weddings, funerals, parties and others were behind the strict health measures taken lately, which negatively reflected on the recovery rates compared to the number of infections registered daily. The sources said the recovery rate from COVID-19 dropped to 94.5 percent after reaching 97.3 percent at the beginning of the year. — Agencies



Local

# Interior deploys security teams to enforce measures around Kuwait

## MP questions vaccines, measures and fake PCR tests

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry said yesterday it will deploy security teams to assist authorities to implement decisions by the cabinet to close commercial activities to counter the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The ministries of commerce and municipality will monitor the implementation of the closures of commercial shops and malls from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am and the total shutdown of health clubs, saloons and barber shops.

The interior ministry said in a statement that each governorate has allocated security teams to provide any assistance needed to the two ministries as they oversee the implementation of the new health measures. The statement also said that security men will ban all types of gatherings prohibited by the cabinet decisions.

MPs and representatives of small and medium businesses have strongly opposed the new measures and demanded that the government must either compensate them or allow them to operate. The government is expected to take decisions on this issue soon.

The health ministry yesterday reported 1,002 new coronavirus cases, the largest in several weeks, with six deaths. The ministry said 96 patients are being treated at intensive care unit and the number of active cases rose to 9,310.

**New measures**

In the meantime, MP Hisham Al-Saleh yesterday sent a series of questions to the minister of health about the new measures, vaccines and the vaccination drive in the country. Saleh asked the minister to provide him with the scientific basis he used to order the closure of saloons, barber shops and health clubs and demanded figures of coronavirus cases detected by the ministry in the past six months and related to the operation of these activities.

He asked the minister about the sources of coronavirus tests carried daily and if the cases were for travelers or at hospitals. He also demanded the number of vaccines Kuwait has contracted from each company, the dates of arrival and the number of vaccines that had already arrived.

Saleh also asked about the number of people who registered for vaccinations and the number of who had already been vaccinated, including the number of citizens and expats. The lawmaker asked the minister about how many fake PCR tests had been discovered.

The government communication center meanwhile raised the alarm yesterday after a big increase in the number of cases. It said that in the first nine days of February, 7,739 cases have been reported compared to just 7,949 cases in the month of December and 14,673 cases in January. MP Bader Al-Humaidi asked the government about the number of flights that arrived from Turkey and Dubai since February 3 and the number of expat passengers and their jobs.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality workers stand outside shops that are closing on 8:00 pm on Monday in compliance with the government's measures to help limit the spread of COVID-19. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Philippine Embassy provides mobile passport extension

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Following a decision by the Kuwaiti building owner for the early termination of the lease agreement with the Philippine Embassy (due to security concerns over a royal palace nearby), effective Jan 17, the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait announced temporary mobile passport validity extension-only consular services at the Kuwait Disabled Club in Hawally. Due to strict health protocols, the mobile consular service will focus only on the extension of passport validity, which started on Feb 5-6 (every Fridays and Saturdays). The next mobile passport extension services will be on Feb 12-13, Feb 19-20 and Feb 26-27.

"This is the primary concern of many Filipinos today because their iqamas will not be renewed (by their employers) if their passports' validity is less than a year. To address this concern, the Philippine Embassy, with the support of some Filipino organizations here in Kuwait, will run a mobile consular service every weekend during the entire month of February, strictly for the extension of passport validity only," said Philippine Vice Consul Adrian Baccay.

"We understand consular services are important to our people in Kuwait. However, these unforeseen circumstances are out of our control.

But we are thankful to the Kuwait authorities for authorizing us to temporarily conduct mobile consular services at the Kuwait Disabled Club. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait and our Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila were informed about this, so the service is sanctioned by both governments," said Baccay, who is also the official spokesperson of the embassy.

To avoid crowding and strictly follow health protocols, the embassy has sought the support of the Ministry of Interior and some Filipino organizations to man the venue. The embassy also advised Filipinos to come to the venue only if their passports have expired or are near expiry.

"To observe social distancing at the venue, we urge individuals and our clients to please bring all necessary documents including the duly filled-out passport application forms. Bring the original passport and a photocopy of it, plus a photocopy of the civil ID. Also, please have the exact amount of KD 6.500 for payment," Baccay said. "Do not come to the venue if you feel unwell, have a dry cough, high body temperature or loss of taste and smell," he reiterated.

Baccay explained that although they closed the embassy on Jan 17, the Assistance to the Nationals Unit (ATNU) of the embassy continues. "We never stopped working even as we transfer our documents to our new location. We are organizing this temporary service of passport extension validity to help our fellow countrymen as ordered by our Ambassador Noordin Padosina Lomondot," Baccay said. "Our new temporary embassy will be in Sabah Al-Salem. It's ready now, but several formalities have to be tackled," he concluded.

## Passengers can choose quarantine hotel category

By Nawara Fattahowa

**KUWAIT:** Starting from Feb 21, 2021, institutional quarantine will be mandatory for all arrivals to Kuwait for seven days, followed by seven days of home quarantine. As the institutional quarantine

is at the passenger's expense, people are interested to know the approximate cost of this requirement.

"The passenger will be able to choose from three categories of hotels - five-star, four-star and three-star. We are working now on the list of hotels that will be included, and it will be announced soon," Director General of Civil Aviation Yousef Al-Fouzan told Kuwait Times.

However, there are no changes yet in the status of the 35 countries from which direct arrivals are banned, as of publication. Passengers from these countries have to stay for 14 days in a third country before arriving to Kuwait.

## Indians advised against traveling to Kuwait via UAE

**ABU DHABI:** The Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi has advised nationals not to attempt to travel via the United Arab Emirates in order to reach Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. In a notice posted on Twitter on Monday, the Indian government in the UAE warned: "Due to COVID-related restrictions on incoming passengers, currently it is not possible for Indian nationals to transit via Dubai and Abu Dhabi to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," the tweet from India in UAE account

@IndembAbuDhabi reads. Hundreds of Indians working in Kuwait have been stranded in UAE after Kuwait abruptly announced the closure of its airport to all foreigners. India is among 35 countries banned from direct flights to Kuwait as the emirate battles to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

Thousands of people stranded abroad had been traveling via UAE and other countries like Turkey in order to reach Kuwait after staying in a third country for 14 days and obtaining a negative PCR. But Kuwait has now closed air travel for foreign passengers from February 7 for two weeks and it is possible it may extend the closures.

Indian nationals already in UAE on their way to Kuwait or Saudi Arabia are advised to return home. The Indian Embassy in Kuwait's Twitter account retweeted the notice.

## Absconding maids 'sold' to licensed offices

**KUWAIT:** Criminal detectives raided a bogus office that encouraged maids to escape from their workplaces or homes of their sponsors in exchange for double their salaries, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily reported yesterday. Seven Nepalis were arrested, along with several maids found at the office. The bogus office used to send the runaway maids to licensed offices, which in turn sent them to other workplaces, provided that mandoubs (representatives) of the licensed offices paid the gang upfront to have priority for the service.


Detectives were tipped about the bogus office that encouraged maids to escape, then made them work by the hour, after hundreds of maids escaped during the past few months. Information revealed that fights took place between mandoubs of licensed offices at the bogus office to compete for the priority to get the maids.


An undercover source was sent to the office, and when the information was confirmed and the office directors were present, the office was raided and the arrests were made. The suspects said that they went to places such as cooperatives in Kuwaiti areas to urge maids to escape, with promises to pay them double what they get and by the hour. They then coordinated with licensed offices to use the services of the runaway maids.

## Police raid Kabd brewery




**KUWAIT:** Three Asians were arrested for running a brewery in Kabd, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday. Tips were received about the illegal activities, so police went to the area and found a large farm closed from all sides. When they entered the place, they found three persons without any IDs running the local brewery, which is considered the largest as far as equipment is concerned. The place had a large hall for distillation and a large pool for bottles. Police found 340 large drums and 12,200 full bottles of liquor. Arrangements were made to demolish the factory, as the suspects were sent to concerned authorities to face legal action.


**Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed**





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## Over 9,000 work permits canceled in one month

**KUWAIT:** Authorities canceled 9,296 work permits of expats in one month, of which 5,000 expired due to their presence outside the country without renewal, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday. Statistics issued by the Public Authority for Manpower revealed these work permits were canceled during the period from January 12 until February 7, adding that 183 expats cancelled their work permits and transferred to family visas, including those who fall under the decision of banning renewal of work permits of those over 60 who do not have a university degree.

Meanwhile, the authority cancelled 1,322 work permits of Kuwaitis for leaving the job or being terminated, while 4,330 permits were automatically renewed. The authority allowed five persons to transfer from the government to the private sector, while 362 received work permits through the health protocols committee of the Cabinet and will be brought to Kuwait according to current measures. Permits will be issued to them within two months after entering the country. The authority approved 10,152 academic certificates of expats uploaded online, while 25 persons transferred from the private to the government sector.

## Oil price up to \$60

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 80 cents to \$60.39 per barrel Monday after it was at \$59.59 pb Friday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Meanwhile, the price of the Brent crude went up by \$1.22 to \$60.56 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which went up by \$1.12 to \$57.97 pb. — KUNA

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Towers illuminated to celebrate the UAE's first probe on Mars, the first mission from the Arab world to the red planet yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Foreign Minister reiterates Kuwait's support to Palestine

**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah headed on Monday Kuwait's delegation, participating in the Council of the Arab League meeting in an extraordinary session. The meeting which was held at the headquarters of the Secretariat General of the Arab League States in Cairo, tackled various issues of importance to Arab security interests, on top of which the Palestinian issue and its developments. Sheikh Dr Ahmad delivered Kuwait's speech at this meeting, started off with his respectful greetings to Egypt, Chairman of the current session of the League Council Sameh Shoukry, and Secretary General of the League of Arab States Ahmad Abul Gheit, and all participants. He thanked Egypt and Jordan for calling for this important meeting, which comes in light of the accelerating data and changes witnessed by the region and the world.

Sheikh Dr Ahmad also welcomed Yemen's Foreign Minister and Expatriate Affairs Dr Ahmad bin Awad bin Mubarak, wishing him success in his duties, also

thanking Abul Gheit for efforts in preparing this meeting, wishing utmost success. He went on to say that considering these circumstances with the continued wounds in some of Arab countries, there is a need for commitment to unify roles, strengthen cohesion and overcome differences, working in a coordinated and thoughtful manner to confront the threats and challenges facing the region. The inclusive Arab position that achieves protection for Arab security, serves common Arab interests and promotes solidarity and joint Arab action, also in this context everyone should value the Arab support for the efforts of Kuwait concerned with achieving the desired Gulf and Arab solidarity, and with the support of brothers and friends, which contributed to reaching the Gulf and Arab reconciliation, as he commended the results of the 41st summit of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and Al-Ula statement issued by it, which confirms the closer ties that bind all Arab countries together.

Sheikh Dr Ahmad reiterated the solid and principled position of Kuwait on Arab central issue, which is the Palestinian issue, and in providing all aspects of support while standing by Palestinians until their full legitimate rights are obtained, with a just solution plus a lasting and comprehensive peace represented in the two-state solution leading to the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with East

Jerusalem as its capital, on the borders of June 4, 1967, in accordance with the relevant international legitimacy decisions and the Arab Peace Initiative. In conclusion, he asked Allah Almighty to enlighten the path for what is in the interest of the Arab nation, and to guide steps with good, peace, mercy, and blessings. Kuwait's delegation included Assistant for the Arab Homeland Affairs, Ambassador Fahad Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Kuwait's Permanent Delegate at the Arab League, Ahmad Al-Bakr, and several senior officials of the ministry of foreign affairs.

The Arab foreign ministers had affirmed their rejection of any unilateral Israeli projects that negatively affect the rights of the Palestinian people, violate international law and undermine the two-state solution "for which there is no alternative." This came at the conclusion of the meeting to discuss the latest regional issues and support the Palestinian cause, which was held at the request of Egypt and Jordan. The Council reaffirmed the importance of the Palestinian issue to the Arab countries, and reiterated the commitment of all Arab countries to support the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty with East Jerusalem as its capital. The meeting stressed on the need to find a just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, in accordance with United Nations Resolution. — KUNA

## Canadian Ambassador visits Reconnaissance Research

**KUWAIT:** The Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Louis Pierre Emond visited the Kuwait-based policy institute Reconnaissance Research in Kuwait City and met with the founder and CEO Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri and Deputy CEO Yusef Al-Ghusain. The ambassador said, "Canada and Kuwait enjoy strong and growing bilateral relations, and we seek to invest them in establishing more bridges of communication and interdependence between the two countries. With our sights on the permanence and durability of official relations, and the accompanying strengthening of economic and commercial ties, we cannot overlook the importance of think tanks and research institutes as they have a positive role in societal awareness among interested people from the two friendly countries. We find it important to harness the positive potentials of growth in dialogue between Canada and Kuwait which is now more possible via our collaboration with Reconnaissance Research, which, despite its recentness, is distinguished by the professionalism of serious research work they do, and we are happy to work together to enhance bilateral relations."

Meanwhile, Anjari said that he was happy with



this meeting because of Canada's special and distinctive importance to Kuwait. He added: "The meeting was fruitful in the topics it contained and in what was agreed upon in terms of a clear-cut outline of a policy for future cooperation with Canada, as it was agreed with the ambassador. The cooperation will not be limited to only the economic and commercial fields, but it will also focus on three main topics, namely environmental issues, women's rights and human rights. Canada's pioneering and honorable record in these areas is unparalleled, and the cultural diversity of Canadian society and its openness to all races and religions is a message of peace to everyone. They seek coexistence with others within an environment that guarantees rights for everyone and societal justice in light of economic growth that benefits everyone."

## Safir Hotels and Resorts comply with Cabinet's decisions

**KUWAIT:** Safir Fintas Kuwait, Marina Hotel Kuwait, and Safir Airport Kuwait will be in compliance with the decisions made by Kuwait's Cabinet on February 3, in regard to the closure of gyms, spas and salons, and ending restaurant services at 8:00 pm. The hotels' salons, spa and gyms will close and classes will halt. Memberships will be extended by a month in order to avoid inconveniencing Health Club members. Marina Hotels' three pools and beachside will remain open. However, with the exception of the Kashta on the Beach, food and beverage services will be discontinued for these areas until further notice. Safir Fintas Kuwait's rooftop pool will close, while its spacious Beach Garden will remain open.

Marina Hotel Kuwait will cancel the dinner that was intended to be held at the Atlantis Restaurant and shift its attention to the outdoor Kashta on the Beach, in which additional social distancing measures will be implemented. The 7:30 pm to 10:30 pm Kashta on the Beach slot will be closed, and instead a brunch slot will open from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Marina's Atlantis Restaurant will be open from 6:30 am until 7:00 pm, serving a la carte breakfast and lunch.

Similarly, at Safir Fintas Kuwait, the Beach Garden Kashta is also adjusting its timings. One slot will remain



open Saturday through Thursday from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. On Fridays, two slots will be available, the first spanning from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and the second from 04:30 pm to 7:30 pm. In all cases, operation will end at 8:00 pm as decreed. Safir Fintas' Flavors Restaurant will serve breakfast from 8:00 am till 11:30 am, and its other outlets will continue to operate as normal, except ending service at 8:00 pm and offering takeaway services thereafter. Al-Roshinah Kuwaiti Restaurant will offer dine in from 12:00 pm till 8:00 pm, and takeaway thereafter till 11:00 pm.

Safir Hotels and Resorts reminds guests to follow the 'SAFER @ SAFIR' COVID-19 policy and standard procedure, which includes wearing masks, undergoing temperature checks, practicing social distancing, and frequently sanitizing hands. Finally, in order to continue to assure guests that the company and all its properties are following international protocol and best practices that prioritize everyone's health and safety, Safir will be extending its Bureau Veritas Safe Guard Certification, first obtained in September 2020.

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# Biden, Modi speak of climate, values in first talks

## US seeks to deepen close relationship with India

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden signaled he would seek to deepen the close US relationship with India in his first talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he added climate change and "democratic" values to the agenda. Biden's telephone call marked a continuation of the upbeat tone of his predecessor Donald Trump, who paid a state visit to India a year ago on his last foreign trip as his administration saw a partner in its tough stance on China. But Biden also raised climate change, which the new US leader has elevated to a top priority amid the planet's rapidly warming temperatures. Biden and Modi committed to "work closely together to win the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, renew their partnership on climate change, rebuild the global economy in a way that benefits the people of both countries and stand together against the scourge of global terrorism," the White House said in a statement. In New Delhi, the prime minister's office said Modi welcomed Biden's raising of climate ambitions and rejoining of the Paris accord, from which Trump withdrew.

It said that Modi looked forward to participating in a climate summit that Biden plans to call in April. India is the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide responsible for climate change after China and the United States, and historically has argued that it is unfair for it to be held to the same rules as developed nations. The White House said Biden had "underscored his desire to defend democratic institutions and norms around the world and noted that a shared commitment to democratic values is the bedrock for the US-India relationship."

India enjoys broad support in the United States but has come under growing criticism from some lawmakers in Biden's Democratic Party as Modi pursues his nationalist agenda, including revoking the statehood of Kashmir. India in recent days has drawn additional scrutiny from prominent figures including pop superstar Rihanna and climate activist Greta Thunberg over internet blackouts around New Delhi, where protesting farmers have been camped out for more than two months.



WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo taken on September 30, 2014, US Vice President Joe Biden speaks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi alongside US Secretary of State John Kerry during a luncheon at the US State Department in Washington, DC. —AFP

The White House said Biden also spoke to Modi about how the "rule of law and the democratic process must be upheld in Burma," where the military retook power a week ago. India has a close relationship with its neighbor, also known as Myanmar, maintaining contact with its military even as Western nations shun it on human rights grounds. —AFP

## No baby boom in China as births fall further in 2020

BEIJING: China's number of registered births in 2020 dropped by nearly a third from the total births reported the year before, in the latest sign that relaxations in the country's strict family planning policy are failing to spark a baby boom. After decades of a "one-child policy", Beijing changed the rules in 2016 to allow families to have two children as fears grew about China's fast-ageing population and shrinking workforce.

Figures from the Public Security Ministry released Monday showed there were 10.04 million registered births in 2020, which is 15 percent down from the figure of registered births reported early last year for 2019. In the same month, the official statistics bureau reported a higher figure of 14.65 million babies born in 2019 — more than 30 percent above the latest birth data reported this week. The data also points to a fourth consecutive year birth numbers declined.

The number of registered births is typically lower than the actual number of births later announced in China, as not all parents register their children immediately. The gender balance was 52.7 percent boys and 47.3 percent girls, according to the data. One user on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform noted the birth figure was "lower than the number of people taking the college entrance examination", adding that ageing was going to become more serious in decades to come. Another called the low rate "the biggest crisis the Chinese nation is facing".

China introduced the one-child policy in the late 1970s in a dramatic effort to slow rapid population growth, before reversing it in 2016. But the change has not yet resulted in a baby boom, with empowered Chinese women often delaying or avoiding childbirth and young couples blaming rising costs and insufficient policy support for families. —AFP

## Qatar says ready to help Lebanon when new govt formed

BEIRUT: Qatar's foreign minister yesterday said his country was ready to help kick-start Lebanon's flailing economy, but only if its deeply divided political class agreed on a new government. "Under our policy, we only provide financial help through economic projects... that will make a difference to the country's economy," Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said during a visit to Beirut. But "this demands there be an independ-

ent government to work with," he said at a press conference after meeting Lebanon's president.

"As soon as a government is formed, Qatar will be ready to study all the options" and only then discuss "a comprehensive economic program to support Lebanon", he said. Lebanon is locked in its worst economic crisis in decades and desperately needs international aid, but donors have conditioned financial help on an independent cabinet enacting sweeping reforms.

The country's politicians have failed to agree on a new government since the previous cabinet stepped down after a monster August 4 blast at the Beirut port that killed more than 200 people and ravaged large parts of the city. Two visits to the country by French President Emmanuel Macron have failed to bring the various sides together.

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## International

# Heavy snowfall, bitter cold bring chaos to Germany and Britain

## Drivers stranded for hours in traffic jams; vaccination centers shut

**BERLIN:** Freezing drivers were stranded for hours in traffic jams in Germany and COVID-19 vaccination centers were shut in Britain yesterday as Europe was pummeled by the heaviest snow in years.

Traffic on a motorway near the German city of Bielefeld was brought to a standstill by heavy snowfall overnight Monday into yesterday, with some drivers trapped for at least 16 hours, according to media reports. The bottleneck, caused by lorries stuck in the snow and stretching over 37 kilometers (23 miles), had still not been cleared by yesterday morning, local police said. Video footage showed shivering drivers huddled in their vehicles, complaining of going for hours without food as temperatures plunged to minus 12 degrees Celsius (10 degrees Fahrenheit).

Severe jams were also reported in Hesse, where some drivers were stuck in their cars for 15 hours, according to police. Transport Minister Andreas Scheuer asked residents to avoid setting out on journeys until today at the earliest.

Northern and eastern Germany were particularly badly hit on Sunday and Monday night, with blizzard-like conditions and some of the coldest temperatures seen in years. Police in Saxony-Anhalt said a man had probably frozen to death after he was found buried in snow next to his tractor. In Bielefeld, a man was found dead on a snow-covered road on Monday, though emergency services said initial findings suggested he had suffered a medical emergency. In the southern city of Nuremberg, many residents had their heating cut off because of a fire in a power station.

### Rail disruptions

Train services across the country have seen severe delays and cancellations because of the winter weather.

## Kalashnikov maker targets hipsters with 'gadget gun'

**MOSCOW:** The Kalashnikov group, which produces the AK-47 assault rifle, is planning to target hipsters and young people with a gadget-packed shotgun, its director said yesterday. Kalashnikov's director Dmitry Tarasov said the group had developed a semi-automatic 12-gauge shotgun dubbed the MP-155 Ultima that has a built-in computer and can teach its users how to shoot. "It's the first gadget weapon. The task is to attract that part of the audience who was born with gadgets and cannot imagine themselves without them," Tarasov said in an interview with the RBK business daily. "Classic



**BERLIN:** People crowd the Wilmersdorf-Schoeneberg park as they take advantage of the fresh snow to use their sledge and play on the frozen pond near the town hall in Berlin's Schoeneberg district. — AFP

er, with snow and ice clogging the rails. Snow is expected to decrease in the coming days, according to forecasters, but temperatures as cold as -18 C mean travel conditions will remain hazardous. With the wind-chill factor, temperatures could feel as low as -30 C at night, forecasters have said.

Heavy snow has also fallen in other countries across central and northern Europe, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. Parts of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were placed on amber alert yesterday, with major disruptions expected to road and

hunting today is becoming more rare, even outlandish. Therefore, I would like to involve... hipsters, Generation Z," he said, referring to those born from the mid-1990s onwards.

"I really want people to own weapons responsibly and at the same time get a kick out of it." The estimated price of its new high-tech shotgun, which was first presented at a military expo outside Moscow last summer, is 100,000 rubles (\$1,348). It can be adapted with gadgets including a compass and a video camera, Tarasov said. The Kalashnikov group is Russia's largest weapons producer and is part of the state-owned defence conglomerate Rostec. The group says it manufactures some 95 percent of "all Russian small arms". Mass shootings in Russia are relatively rare. In the last high-profile case, a teenage gunman in October 2018 killed 20 at his college in Moscow-annexed Crimea. Last month a young army recruit was sentenced to over 24 years in prison for shooting dead eight servicemen, in a trial that spotlighted hazing in the army. — AFP

rail travel, according to the Met Office weather service. Heavy snow yesterday morning drew many families to London's parks for sledding, while parts of northern and eastern England were expecting up to 15 centimeters.

Some coronavirus vaccination centers in England were forced to close—including major hubs in Ipswich and Colchester—hampering Britain's rollout. Schools, currently open only to vulnerable children or those of essential workers, were also closed in southeastern England and Lincolnshire. — AFP



**MUMBAI:** In this file photo Indian Bollywood actor Rajiv Kapoor attends a prayer meeting for Bollywood film producer and director Ravi Kapoor in Mumbai. — AFP

## Bollywood actor Rajiv Kapoor dead

**MUMBAI:** Bollywood actor and late Raj Kapoor's son Rajiv Kapoor passed away yesterday. He was 58. According to reports, he suffered a massive heart attack, following which he was rushed to Inlax Hospital in Chembur. Before the doctors could start treating him, he breathed his last, the reports added.

Rajiv Kapoor's brother Randhir Kapoor also confirmed the news while speaking to a leading daily, stating, "I have lost my youngest brother, Rajiv. He is no more. The doctors tried their best but could not save him," he said adding, "I am at the hospital, waiting for his body." Rajiv's sister-in-law Neetu Kapoor took to Instagram to confirm the news. Sharing a photo of the actor, Neetu wrote, "RIP"

Rajiv Kapoor was a part of Bollywood's Kapoor clan. He was the brother of Randhir Kapoor, Rima Kapoor, Ritu Nanda, and late Rishi Kapoor.

Rajiv Kapoor made his acting debut in 1983 with Ek Jaan Hain Hum. He was seen as the leading actor in father Raj Kapoor's last directorial venture Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985). His most notable being Aasmaan (1984), Lover Boy (1985), Zabardast (1985) and Hum To Chale Pardes (1988). —AFP

the three warmest years on record. "Despite the general cooling influence of La Nina events, land temperatures are expected to be above-normal for most parts of the globe in February-April 2021," the WMO said. "La Nina and El Nino effects on average global temperatures are typically strongest in the second year of the event, but it remains to be seen to what extent the current La Nina will influence global temperatures in 2021," the United Nations agency added.

### Warmer temperatures expected

In a global seasonal climate update, the WMO said that other than in a few small areas, above-normal land temperatures are "expected to dominate everywhere" for February-April. "The highest probabilities of above-normal temperatures occur in western, central and eastern Asia and over the southern half of North America," the WMO said. "Above-normal temperatures are also likely over much of the northern high latitudes (except over northwestern North America), southern, central and eastern parts of South America, and equatorial and northern regions of Africa.

"Below-normal temperatures are more likely for northern South America." Meanwhile the precipitation outlook for February to April is consistent with typical La Nina effects on regional climates, said the WMO. "These include increased chances of unusually wet conditions over much of southeast Asia, Australia and northern South America and islands in Melanesia, Southern Africa may also see above-normal rainfall," the WMO said.

"Below-normal precipitation is likely over much of western and central Asia... as well as parts of the Greater Horn of Africa, parts of Central Africa, subtropical latitudes of North America, islands in Polynesia and some parts of southeastern South America." The last La Nina, which was brief and relatively weak, began developing in November 2017 and ended in April 2018. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Hacker tries to dump chem into water

**WASHINGTON:** An unknown hacker broke into a Florida city's water supply and briefly pushed levels of a potentially dangerous additive up 100-fold, local law enforcement said Monday. The hack was noticed quickly and reversed immediately, so no one in the Tampa suburb of Oldsmar was ever in danger, Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said. But it underscored the broader threat of cyberattacks to US infrastructure, he added. —AFP

#### Colombia to offer protected status

**BOGOTA:** Colombia will temporarily normalize the status of almost one million undocumented Venezuelan migrants, President Ivan Duque said on Monday during a visit by the UN Refugee Agency. Some 56 percent—around 950,000 — of the 1.7 million Venezuelans to have arrived in Colombia fleeing economic and political crises in their homeland, are undocumented and will benefit from the measure. —AFP

#### Family of Suu Kyi aide 'distracted'

**Sydney:** The relatives of an Australian economic advisor to Myanmar's deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi say they are "distracted" over his detention in the wake of a military coup. Macquarie University professor Sean Turnell was the first foreign national confirmed arrested by the new military junta, which took power last week after detaining Suu Kyi and other senior members of her National League for Democracy (NLD). In a statement released by Australia's foreign affairs department late Monday, the family said they were "distracted" that Turnell had been detained. — AFP

#### Republican wins final election

**NEW YORK:** The final unresolved race of the US election was brought to a conclusion Monday, three months after polling day and over a month since most lawmakers were sworn into Congress. New York's elections board certified Republican Claudia Tenney as the winner of the state's 22nd congressional district over Democrat Anthony Brindisi. She becomes the final member of the 435-seat lower chamber after months of wrangling over the vote count. A judge on Friday ordered the New York State Board of Elections to certify a count that put Tenney just 109 votes ahead of Brindisi out of 300,000 ballots cast. —AFP

#### Israel, Greece sign travel deal

**JERUSALEM:** Israel and Greece agreed a tourism deal Monday that will allow coronavirus-vaccinated citizens of the two countries to travel between them without limitations, once flights resume. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said the agreement "will allow us... to be able to offer Israeli tourists the opportunity to spend their holidays in Greece without any restrictions" at a joint press conference with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. This would go into effect once "a significant percentage of the population is vaccinated" and travel restrictions are lifted, Mitsotakis said. —AFP

## Family sues trading app Robinhood over suicide

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The family of a college student who killed himself after thinking he'd lost a fortune using Robinhood sued the free trading app Monday. A message left behind by Alex Kearns asked how it was that a 20-year-old with no income could get access to nearly \$1 million of financial leverage using Robinhood, according to the suit filed in Silicon Valley, where the app is based. "Robinhood's website entices young, inexperienced users," the suit contends.

"By marketing its online trading platform like a video game, it implied that trading stock and options was a fun way to make money, perhaps even to get rich." The suit accuses Robinhood of causing the Illinois man's death along with unfair business practices, and asks for unspecified damages. In response to an AFP query, Robinhood said it was "devastated" by Kearns' death last June and has since improved trading features along with guidance and education features for users.

"We remain committed to making Robinhood a place to learn and invest responsibly," a spokesperson said. Kearns was in his final year of high school when he opened a Robinhood account, according to the suit. He used the app to start trading options in his freshman year of college, and a series of trades resulted in him finding his account was \$730,000 in the red, the suit detailed. "Tragically, Robinhood's communications were completely misleading, because, in reality, Alex did not owe any money," the lawsuit contended. "He held options in his account that more than covered his obligation." —AFP



**MOSCOW:** In this file photo Kalashnikov's MP-155 Ultima shotgun is pictured in the Kalashnikov expo center prior to the International Military-Technical Forum Army-2020 in the military Patriot Park outside Moscow. — AFP

## Caribbean islands in dire straits as new COVID rules hit

**PARIS:** It's February and the palm-fringed beaches of French islands in the Caribbean should be dotted with mainland tourists on mid-term holidays. But the annual influx has slowed to a trickle in Guadeloupe and Martinique following a government decision to ban non-essential travel outside of the EU over the COVID-19 pandemic. The move, part of a series of restrictions announced to stave off a third nationwide lockdown, caused dismay in the islands that have been part of France since the 17th century and rely heavily on tourism from the mainland.

The government insists the islands must be protected from the new, more infectious coronavirus strains that are sweeping France. So far they have been relatively shielded from the pandemic, with Guadeloupe recording 159 deaths, Martinique 45 and the rate of new infections described by the health ministry as stable. "We have to do everything to protect them from this new risk," Minister for Overseas Territories Sebastien Lecomte tweeted on January 28. But travel restrictions are a blow to the economy of islands that had hoped to profit from the closure of French ski resorts—a popular destination in February—to sell more winter sun holidays.

French travellers to Guadeloupe, an archipelago of nine inhabited islands that are home to 390,000 people, and Martinique, an island of 370,000 inhabitants, must now show a "compelling" motive for their trip. This could be visiting a dying relative or a child of which the traveller has shared custody. They also have to present a negative PCR test taken less than 72 hours before departure, self-isolate for a week on arrival, and, since last week, present a negative PCR test before returning to the mainland. —AFP

## La Nina climate cycle has peaked

**GENEVA:** The 2020-2021 La Nina phenomenon has passed its peak, the UN weather agency said yesterday, but its impact on temperatures, rain and storm patterns is set to continue. La Nina refers to the large-scale cooling of surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, occurring every two to seven years. The effect has widespread impacts on weather around the world—typically the opposite impacts to the El Nino warming phase in the Southern Oscillation cycle.

Besides the cooling effect, La Nina is usually associated with wetter conditions in some parts of the world, and drier conditions in others. La Nina conditions have been in place since August-September 2020, according to atmospheric and oceanic indicators. "La Nina appears to have peaked in October-November as a moderate strength event," said the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The WMO said there was a 65 percent likelihood that La Nina will persist during February-April. The odds shift rapidly thereafter, with a 70 percent chance that the tropical Pacific will return to neutral conditions in the cycle by April-June. "El Nino and La Nina are major drivers of the Earth's climate system," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. "But all naturally-occurring climate events now take place in the context of human-induced climate change, which is increasing global temperatures, exacerbating extreme weather, impacting seasonal rainfall patterns and complicating disaster prevention and management."

The temporary global cooling effects of La Nina were not enough to prevent 2020 from being one of



## International

# Desperate search for survivors after glacier disaster in India

## Death toll hits 31, 170 still missing

**TAPOVAN, India:** Indian rescue workers battled through tons of rock and mud yesterday searching for survivors in a choked Himalayan tunnel after a deadly flood—apparently triggered by a glacial burst—smashed through two mountain dam projects. More than 170 people were still missing, two days after a wall of water and debris hurtled down a valley in the northern state of Uttarakhand, destroying bridges and roads, hitting two hydroelectric power plants and killing 31.

The disaster has been blamed on rapidly melting glaciers in the Himalayan region caused by global warming. Building activity for dams and dredging riverbeds for sand and the clearing of trees for new roads—some to beef up defense on the Chinese border—are other factors.

Most of those missing were employees at two of the many hydro plants being built around Uttarakhand, home to soaring Himalayan peaks and the sources of the Ganges river. Hundreds of rescue workers were involved in the operation across the state, using helicopters equipped with surface-penetrating high-definition cameras, as well as sniffer dogs.

Yesterday the focus was attempting to locate and extract 34 workers who were in a network of tunnels when the 20-metre-high (70-foot) barrage of icy water and debris roared through on Sunday morning. Workers toiled all night and police official Banudutt Nair, in charge of the rescue operation, told AFP he believed that there were air pockets where the employees could still be alive.

“Forty-eight hours have passed and it has become a race against time. We hope they survive but there’s been no contact so far,” army rescuer Vivek Sahai said.

Giant floodlights lit up one entrance late Monday as a huge excavator slowly extracted the sludge which rescuers then sifted through. Nearby, workers used heavy machinery to remove giant boulders from the road blocking the way to the second power plant, Rishi Ganga, where 35 people were missing.

The plant was obliterated and is now a wasteland thickly coated with viscous grey mud. At a nearby village, four bodies were recovered yesterday including that of a policeman. Building projects criss-cross highly-seismic Uttarakhand state despite warnings from scientists about the impact on its ecologically fragile hills and valleys.

### ‘Don’t let go’

One of those who made it out was Rajesh Kumar, 28, who together with others clung to scaffolding rods in the tunnel for four hours before the water level fell and they were able to escape. “Suddenly there was a sound of whistling... there was shouting, people were telling us to come out. We thought it was a fire. We started running but the water gushed in. It was like a Hollywood movie,” Kumar told AFP.

“We just kept telling each other—come what may, we must not let go of the rods,” he said from his hospital bed. Shopkeeper Ramesh Negi was enjoying the Sunday morning sun when he heard a loud roar



Relatives load on a vehicle the body of a victim recovered from Raini village, outside a temporary morgue in Tapovan of Chamoli district yesterday following a flash flood thought to have been caused when a glacier burst on February 7. — AFP

and saw a huge wall of water smash into and sweep away a bridge.

Dozens of workers on the river bed and grazers leading their cattle along the mountain slopes disappeared beneath the sudden deluge, he recalled.

“There was dust and screams all over,” the 36-

year-old said. “We tried to alert the grazers but they were blown away by the wind pressure before being consumed by the water and slush. We can only guess what happened.” Mangra, another survivor, remembered hearing a loud, rumbling sound and the screams of other colleagues: “Run, run, run!” — AFP

## Myanmar police fire rubber bullets at protesters

**YANGON:** Security forces fired rubber bullets and tear gas at anti-coup protesters in Myanmar yesterday as demonstrators around the country defied a military ban on rallies.

Protests erupted for a fourth straight day against last week’s coup to oust civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as international condemnation of the putsch grew. The rallies came despite a warning from the junta that it would take action against demonstrations that threatened “stability”, and a new ban on gatherings of more than five people.

In Naypyidaw, the remote capital purpose-built by the previous military regime, witnesses said police fired rubber bullets at protesters after earlier blasting them with water cannon.

“They fired warning shots to the sky two times, then they fired (at protesters) with rubber bullets,” a resident told AFP, adding that he saw some people injured. It remained unclear how many people were hurt, as a hospital in Naypyidaw would not

allow relatives in to see their family members, said Tun Wai, who rushed there when he heard his 23-year-old son was in the operation room.

“My son was shot when he tried to use the megaphone to ask people to protest peacefully after the police used water cannon to disperse them,” the 56-year-old goldsmith said.

“He got hit in the back... I’m very worried about him.” In Mandalay, the country’s second-biggest city, police fired tear gas to disperse protesters.

After watching hundreds of thousands of people rally in opposition to last week’s coup, junta chief General Min Aung Hlaing made a televised speech on Monday evening to justify seizing power.

The first of a series of bans on gatherings in protest hotspots was also announced on Monday, as was a nighttime curfew. But yesterday, fresh protests initially emerged in various parts of Yangon, including near the headquarters of Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD).



YANGON: A protester holds a sign calling for the release of detained Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi as they part in a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon yesterday. — AFP

The protesters carried placards some of which read “We want our leader”, in reference to Suu Kyi—who is currently detained by the military—and “No dictatorship”. In Yangon’s San Chaung township, scores of teachers marched on the main road, waving a defiant three-finger salute

that has become a signature gesture of the protesters.

“We are not worried about their warning. That’s why we came out today. We cannot accept their excuse of vote fraud. We do not want any military dictatorship,” teacher Thein Win Soe said. — AFP

## Four Afghanistan ministry staff killed in ambush

**KABUL:** Militants shot dead four government employees in central Kabul yesterday in the latest rush-hour violence to rock the Afghan capital. The city has seen near-daily attacks during the busy morning commute, targeting prominent Afghans including politicians, journalists, activists, judges, and religious scholars. Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz told reporters that gunmen opened fire on a vehicle carrying staff from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, killing four of them.

A separate attack saw a civilian wounded when a bomb targeted another government vehicle, police said. Yesterday’s attacks came a day after three bomb blasts rattled the capital, killing at least one person. Afghan and US officials have blamed the Taliban for the wave of violence, although the group has rejected the charges. The surge comes as peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government that began in September are deadlocked.



Afghan security forces arrive at the site of a car bomb attack that targeted a security outpost in Khogyani district of Nangarhar province on Monday. — AFP

Government negotiators are pushing for a permanent ceasefire, but the insurgents have so far dismissed calls for a truce.

The rise in violence has led US President Joe

Biden’s administration to launch a review of a deal signed between Washington and Taliban last year that paved the way for the withdrawal of all American troops in coming months. — AFP

## India glacier disaster highlights pressure on Asia’s great rivers

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A glacial burst that triggered a deadly flash flood in the Indian Himalayas at the weekend was a disaster waiting to happen, and one likely to be repeated in a region transformed by climate change and unchecked infrastructure development, experts warn.

Asia is home to some of the world’s biggest waterways, from the Ganges and the Indus in India to the Yangtze and Mekong originating in China, that snake for thousands of kilometers. They support the livelihoods of vast numbers of farmers and fishermen, and supply drinking water to billions of people, but have come under unprecedented pressure in recent years.

Higher temperatures are causing glaciers that feed the rivers to shrink, threatening water supplies and also increasing the chances of landslides and

floods, while critics blame dam building and pollution for damaging fragile ecosystems. “Rivers are really at risk from development projects, dumping of solid waste and liquid waste, sand mining and stone mining,” Himanshu Thakkar, from the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, said.

“Climate change is a longer-term process that has already set in. The impacts are already happening. “So in every respect, rivers are under greater threat.” The disaster in India was apparently triggered by a glacial burst, that unleashed a wall of water which barreled down a valley in Uttarakhand state, destroying bridges and roads and hitting two hydroelectric power plants.

### Shrinking glaciers

It is not yet clear what damaged the glacier and triggered the accident, but there are suspicions that construction of hydro-power projects in an area that is highly seismically active—may have contributed. “This area is prone to vulnerability, it is not appropriate for this kind of bumper-to-bumper hydro-power development,” Himanshu said. “Proper planning, impact assessment, proper geological assessment—this has not happened here.” Patricia

Adams, executive director from Canada-based environmental NGO Probe International, said dam building in such an area was simply too dangerous, as it makes hillsides unstable and causes landslides.

Some have also pointed to rising temperatures as a contributing factor. A major study in 2019 suggested Himalayan glaciers had melted twice as fast since the turn of the century as in the 25 preceding years. “The impacts of climate change in the Himalayas are real,” said Benjamin P. Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

As well as greater danger of accidents, glacier loss in the Himalayas deprives local communities of water to drink and for agriculture, he said.

There have been other flooding disasters in the region in recent years. In 2013, some 6,000 people died when flash floods and landslides swept away entire villages in Uttarakhand as rivers swollen by monsoon rains overflowed.

In neighboring China, flooding has also worsened on major rivers. Last year the Yangtze, Asia’s longest waterway, suffered record deluges that killed hundreds of people and submerged thousands of homes, with environmentalists saying it indicated climate change impacts were growing. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Greece facing third virus wave

**ATHENS:** Greece is facing a third coronavirus wave, the health minister said yesterday as officials met to discuss tighter lockdown rules. “The analysis I am receiving from experts... shows this third wave is coming to our country too,” Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias told Open TV, ahead of an emergency cabinet meeting on the pandemic. Greece was hit with a first wave of the virus in March last year before infections eased off, surging again in autumn prompting the government to re-impose a nationwide lockdown. In the greater Athens area, 71 percent of intensive care beds allotted for COVID patients were now occupied, the minister said. — AFP

#### Equatorial Guinea imposes curfew

**MALABO, Equatorial Guinea:** Equatorial Guinea yesterday said it would impose a curfew for the first time, limit flights and reintroduce other restrictions after cases of coronavirus rebounded in the West African country. The tiny state, ruled by 78-year-old President Teodoro Obiang Nguema for the past 41 years, scaled back a rigorously enforced range of restrictions in August. But bars, restaurants, discotheques, casinos and other “leisure sites” will once again be closed, according to a decree read on television yesterday. But places of worship, which were shut during the first wave last year, will remain open. — AFP

#### Two COVID tests for arrivals in UK

**LONDON:** Travellers arriving in Britain from abroad will have to take two coronavirus tests during quarantine, the government is expected to confirm yesterday. Health Secretary Matt Hancock is due to announce that people told to isolate at home will be required to get a test two and eight days into a mandatory 10-day quarantine period. The new measures, which critics say come too late to curb the spread of the virus, are aimed at halting new variants. But the health ministry said Britain’s response had been informed by experts leading to “some of the toughest border regimes in the world”. — AFP

#### Kidnapped Chinese freed in Nigeria

**LAGOS:** Nigerian police said yesterday they had freed three Chinese workers kidnapped last week from a gold-mining site in south-western Osun state. The Chinese were abducted and their police escort killed on February 1 following a dispute with local laborers at the mining site at the Atakumosa area of the state. “We have rescued the three Chinese expatriates. They were freed on Sunday,” state police spokeswoman Yemisi Opalola said. She said the foreigners who took ill while in captivity, were being given medical care. She said that no arrests had been made. — AFP

#### South China Sea patrol

**PARIS:** A French nuclear attack submarine was among two navy ships that recently conducted a patrol through the South China Sea, its defense minister announced, in a move likely to anger Beijing, which claims most of the strategic waters as its territory. The SNA Emeraude was accompanied by support ship BSAM Seine for the passage. Defence Minister Florence Parly said on Twitter late Monday. “This extraordinary patrol has just completed a passage in the South China Sea. — AFP



# Business

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021

## Small US businesses increasingly fearful about economy: Survey

### Inflation hawks critique Biden's \$1.9 trillion spending plan

WASHINGTON: Small businesses saw no light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel as optimism about the US economy waned in January, according to an industry survey released yesterday.

Following a third wave of coronavirus cases late last year, and as Congress debates a new round of government aid, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) said its optimism index dropped 0.9 points to 95.0, three points below the average since 1973 and down from 104 in January 2020.

Even as hiring increased solidly, owners expecting better business conditions over the next six months declined seven points to the lowest level since November 2013, NFIB said. January came in with a whimper as consumer spending tailed off sharply at the end of 2020, the report noted.

Small firms have benefitted from multiple rounds of government loans, and President Joe Biden's proposed \$1.9 trillion rescue package would extend additional aid. "As Congress debates another stimulus package, small employers welcome any additional relief that will provide a powerful fiscal boost as their expectations for the future are uncertain," NFIB Chief Economist Bill Dunkelberg said in a statement.

Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics notes that the survey—which had just over 1,000 responses—has a "strong Republican bias" and despite the decline had returned to the level seen prior to the 2016 election won by former president Donald Trump.

#### Spending plan

President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion proposal aimed at revitalizing the US economy has drawn skepti-

cism from some economists, including a former Treasury secretary who is also a member of his Democratic Party. Larry Summers's warning last week that the plan could cause inflation to rise and crowd out other investment priorities has sparked a debate over whether Biden's proposal is excessive, even for an economy that has sustained massive damage during the pandemic.

Here is a look at the debate over whether the spending package would cause an inflation uptick in the United States:

#### Summers and Yellen disagree

In a column for The Washington Post last week, Summers, who served as Treasury secretary under president Bill Clinton and as an adviser in Barack Obama's White House, acknowledged that Biden's plan may be just what the economy needs to recover from the sharp growth contraction and mass layoffs caused by Covid-19.

But given the enormous size of the package, he said policymakers should make clear that they will closely monitor for any sustained upticks in inflation, or the increase in the cost of living as measured by commonly used goods and services. He also warned such massive spending could end up leaving the United States without the resources for other Biden administration priorities, like investing in the country's aging infrastructure or fighting economic inequality.

Summers' critique was echoed by former IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard, who said the package is "too much" but could be restrained by new taxes aimed at offsetting its costs and limiting overheating effects. In a weekend interview with CNN, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen acknowl-



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo members of small business owners practice social distancing in front the TCL Chinese Theatre prior to a 'Save Small Business' protest in Los Angeles, California. Small businesses saw no light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel as optimism about the US economy waned. — AFP

edged inflation is "also a risk."

But the former Federal Reserve chair said, "We have the tools to deal with that risk," and argued that the president's proposal could get the US economy back to full employment by 2022.

The president's rescue plan would provide for stimulus checks, expanded unemployment benefits and aid to small businesses, though it may ultimately

get whittled down from its initial \$1.9 trillion price tag as it makes its way through Congress, where his Democratic party has a slim majority in both houses. If passed, the measure would be the third major aid package approved by Congress, following the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act enacted as the pandemic struck last March, and a \$900 billion follow-up measure passed in December. — AFP

## British Airways eyes greener jet fuel from 2022

LONDON: British Airways yesterday unveiled a partnership with US startup LanzaJet to produce jet fuel aimed at cutting carbon emissions from 2022. The announcement comes as the global aviation industry is looking to bounce back from a collapse in demand caused by the coronavirus pandemic grounding planes.

"Despite the crisis in global aviation, it is vital for our future that we continue to address climate change and we remain focused on playing our part to reduce the impact we have on the planet," BA chief executive Sean Doyle said in a statement. "Progressing the development and commercial deployment of sustainable aviation fuel is crucial to decarbonising the aviation industry and this partnership with LanzaJet shows the progress British Airways is making as we continue on our journey to net zero," he added. BA, owned by aviation giant IAG, will invest an undisclosed amount in LanzaJet, which starts building its first commercial plant in the US state of Georgia later this year.

The airline will purchase fuel from LanzaJet to



LONDON: People watch as a British Airways Airbus A321-251NX aircraft prepares to land at London Heathrow Airport in west London. — AFP

"power a number of the airline's flights from late 2022", BA said in the statement.

The investment is part of BA's ambition to become a net zero carbon company by 2050. LanzaJet, spun off from US biotech firm LanzaTech last year, combines gasoline with sustainably-sourced ethanol—mainly from agricultural processes—to create cleaner aircraft fuel. Current jet fuel, or kerosene, is distilled from crude oil.

BA joins LanzaTech, Japan's Mitsui and Canada's Suncor Energy as investors in LanzaJet, which is looking into the possibility of having a bio-refinery built in the UK. BA already has a partnership with sustainable fuels technology company Velocys, aiming to convert commercial and household waste into cleaner jet fuel by 2025. IAG plans to invest \$400 million (332 million euros) in sustainable aviation fuel over the next two decades. — AFP

## Amazon workers vote in landmark US union push

WASHINGTON: Workers at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama have begun voting on whether to form the first American union at the e-commerce giant, an effort that could pave the way for further unionization in the United States at one of the world's most powerful companies. Amazon is the second-largest employer in the US with an 800,000-strong workforce, most of whom are "essential workers" who cannot do their jobs from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

There have been a series of protests around the United States on safety and working conditions at Amazon, with the pandemic increasing pressure on its distribution network even as profits soar.

Employees at its BHM1 facility in Bessemer, Alabama, notified authorities of their plan to unionize in November. "Working at Amazon is supremely dangerous. The record on Amazon's deadly and dehumanizing working conditions is well established," the pro-union campaign website says.

"Amazon warehouse workers face outrageous work quotas that have left many with illnesses and lifetime injuries." In addition to safety, the campaign is urging employees to vote in favor to improve procedures covering grievances, discipline and termination.

Ballots started to go out by mail on Monday to the 5,800 workers at the Bessemer warehouse, with



In this file photo an Amazon.com Inc. van delivery driver departs a distribution facility in Hawthorne, California. — AFP

voting to continue through March 29 under an order from the National Labor Relations Board.

The count is expected to begin March 30. The campaign is the most serious since 2014 when Amazon workers at a Delaware facility voted against a union, and could spark further efforts to unionize hundreds of thousands of employees in the United States. Unlike in the United States, Amazon workers in many other parts of the world are unionized.

Helmed by the world's richest person Jeff Bezos, Amazon does not officially oppose unions but it has campaigned against the move within the Bessemer workforce. In addition to flyers posted in bathrooms, it has held meetings for workers to make the case against unions and launched a website called "#DollWithoutDues". — AFP

## Germany hunts NZ over 'cum-ex' tax fraud affair

FRANKFURT: Germany is hunting a New Zealand man over suspicion he was involved in the "cum-ex" tax fraud scandal that cost European treasuries billions of euros, federal criminal agency BKA said yesterday. Paul Robert Mora, 53, is "strongly suspected of having planned and carried out so-called cum-ex trades for an investor in his function as head of department of a major bank in the years 2006-2008, together with other bank employees as well as a lawyer and tax advisor," the BKA said in a statement.

Under the tax fraud scheme, investors essentially reclaimed tax which had never been paid. First exposed in 2017, the scam involved numerous cooperating participants quickly exchanging stock in companies amongst themselves around dividend day, in order to claim multiple tax rebates on a single payout.

Used across Europe, this practice cost Germany 7.2 billion euros (\$8.7 billion), Denmark 1.7 billion euros and Belgium 201 million euros since 2001, according to an investigation published last October by European media outlets including German public broadcaster ARD and French newspaper Le Monde. In Germany, a change to the tax law in 2012 closed the legal loophole exploited by the practice, though the German finance ministry insists that it was already illegal. — AFP

## Dollar drops, as bitcoin nears \$50,000

LONDON: Stock markets posted mixed results, the dollar retreated and oil steadied yesterday, while bitcoin closed in on \$50,000 for the first time as investors reacted to US stimulus and COVID vaccine developments. Asia's main stock indices closed higher, with Tokyo posting a 30-year high, while Europe was largely stable around the half-way stage.

Wall Street ended at new heights overnight but the dollar hit a near three-month low against the British pound yesterday. While stocks are benefitting from expectations of a strong economic rebound, optimism is being curtailed by delays to the huge US stimulus plan.

President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion rescue bill is also seen as adding to global inflation worries, which are starting to be fuelled by rising oil prices and the prospect of large consumer spending post lockdowns.

While contributing to dollar weakness, the inflation outlook is helping gold, a traditional store of value. "One can't help that for all of this optimism, the real elephant in the room is what happens if oil prices continue to rise at their current rate," noted Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK. Benchmark crude contract Brent North Sea held around 13-month highs above \$60 yesterday thanks to surging demand expectations as economies reopen.

"Oil's fundamentals are looking strong again on both (the) supply and demand side," said Edward Moya, analyst at Oanda trading group. "Despite demand being down about five million barrels year-over-year, optimism is high that vaccine rollouts will have key parts of the global economy return to normal." Bitcoin has meanwhile pushed to a new record-high of \$48,215.83 after winning a huge boost Monday from news that Elon Musk's electric carmaker Tesla had invested \$1.5 billion in the cryptocurrency.

Axi strategist Stephen Innes said that market sentiment in general was buoyed also "by an upbeat set of earnings from the holiday season and vaccine optimism". The inoculation drive "provides the ultimate recovery safety net that will allow people to participate on all those pre-COVID activities like the simple pleasures of going to a movie or having a meal out", he added.

In another sign of upbeat times, crisis-hit Japanese carmaker Nissan upgraded its full-year forecast for the second straight quarter, as the global auto industry shows signs of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP



## Business

# Crisis-hit Nissan upgrades annual forecast despite its Q3 net loss

## Global auto industry shows signs of recovery from pandemic

TOKYO: Crisis-hit Japanese carmaker Nissan yesterday upgraded its full-year forecast for the second straight quarter, as the global auto industry shows signs of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The embattled firm beat market expectations to return an operating profit for the first time in four quarters, but said net loss for the quarter expanded. It now projects a net loss of 530 billion yen (\$5.1 billion) for the fiscal year to March, smaller than its earlier estimate of a 615 billion yen net loss.

For the three months to December, its net loss expanded to 37.8 billion yen from 26.1 billion yen a year earlier. Operating profit for the third quarter came in at 27.1 billion yen, beating market expectations of an operating loss. Even before the crisis, Nissan was battling weak demand as well as the fallout from the arrest of former boss Carlos Ghosn, currently an international fugitive after jumping bail and fleeing Japan.

It suffered a massive loss in the previous fiscal year and its recovery has been slower than some of its rivals. Earlier yesterday, Honda said net profit had more than doubled in the third quarter and it revised up its full-year forecast. Toyota, which overtook Volkswagen last year as the world's biggest selling automaker, releases its earnings today.

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the auto sector worldwide, but demand recovered swiftly in the second half of last year, most notably in the US and China. "Japan's auto industry showed a steady performance as major markets are recovering from the negative impact of the new coronavirus globally," said Satoru Takada, auto analyst at TIW, a Tokyo-based research and consulting firm.



YOKOHAMA: A man rides his bicycle past signage at the Nissan Motor global headquarters in Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture yesterday. — AFP

"Nissan is showing signs of recovery from its disastrous results for the previous fiscal year, but the recovery appears to lack strength," Takada told AFP before the announcement. Nissan executives talked up the figures, saying in a statement that "the recovery in each quarter is evident, with improved retail sales and a strengthened financial base as outlined in the Nissan NEXT business transformation plan".

"Nissan returned to a positive operating profit in the third quarter, versus previous quarters," the firm noted.

### 'Uncertainties will continue'

Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida said the firm recognized "that uncertainties will continue". "But through the ongoing implementation of our Nissan NEXT plan we will ensure steadily increased growth and we hope

to turn (Nissan) into a profitable company," he told reporters. But while the operating profit beat analyst expectations for a loss of 46.7 billion yen, Takada said the firm wasn't out of the woods yet.

Sales increased in Asia, including in China and Japan, but declined in the rest of the world. "Nissan's full recovery is not yet in sight. It may take more time for its brand to shine again," Takada said.

Nissan has been buffeted by a series of problems, ranging from weak demand and the pandemic, to the ongoing saga over its former chief Ghosn. The firm faces court proceedings over the case in Japan, and the drama has underscored longstanding tensions in Nissan's alliance with Mitsubishi Motors and France's Renault. Ghosn has claimed that his arrest was orchestrated by Nissan executives opposed to his plans to more closely integrate the Japanese firm with its French partner.

After a rocky period, the alliance partners agreed last year to a joint transformation plan, with each member taking the lead in a specific market.

"Nissan is still struggling to rebuild the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance in the post-Ghosn era," Takada said. The company has also been hit by a global semiconductor shortage, which it cited among its reasons for downgrading its sales forecast.

"We detected this in the months of November and December and since then we are working very closely with the suppliers on getting out of this situation," chief operating officer Ashwani Gupta told reporters. "Nobody has a crystal ball, but... we think that by May or June we should be out from this (semiconductor) crisis." — AFP

## KIB reveals winners of 5 final 'KIBPay campaign' draws

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently announced the names of nine lucky winners of the final five draws of the KIBPay campaign, which was launched back in November 2020. The five final draws were held at the Bank's headquarters on January 26 in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as KIB staff members and managers.

Among the winners, Ahmad Mohammed Taqi won the monthly prize of KD 1,000, while 8 others won the weekly prize of KD 250 each, the winners were: Mouayad Rommel Al-Hariri, Mohammed Saber Mohammed, Suha Mesfer Al-Khathaami, Abdullah Ali Al Shammari, Mohammed Saeed Al-Atili, Mena Makram Iskandar, Salama Rabih Mhanna and Manal Ali Al-Ajmi. Cash prizes will be credited into the winning customers' accounts within 10 business days from the date of the draw.

The KIBPay campaign was designed to reward users of the KIBPay service, as customers were eligible to enter the weekly draws for a chance to win KD 250 upon receiving a transfer worth KD 200 or more through the service - given that they deposit it into their account during the specified period of the draw. Customers were also then eligible to enter the monthly draw of KD 1,000, provided that the total transfers received through KIBPay and deposited in the customer's account exceeded or were equivalent to KD 2,000 during the specified period.

On this occasion, Othman Tawfeeq, General



Othman Tawfeeq

Manager of KIB's Retail Banking Department congratulated all KIBPay campaign winners and wished them and other customers luck in future campaigns.

Tawfeeq also spoke about the campaign, noting: "We are delighted with the high turnout of customers who participated in the KIBPay campaign which was designed in line with the direction set by KIB's recent digital transformation strategy. Since the launch of this campaign, we saw a significant increase in customer demand for KIBPay - an e-banking service that enables customers to receive transfers within minutes with utmost speed and security, either through the smartphone app or by sharing the payment link through email, WhatsApp and other mobile applications."

Tawfeeq further noted that KIB continuously strives to reward a variety of customer segments and provide them with a premium set of banking services and products. "KIB is keen to launch innovative marketing campaigns for customers enabling them to enjoy a world of banking services at a tap of their phone, in addition to valuable prizes that meet their expectations and suit their lifestyle, and we certainly promise our customers more of such campaigns in the near future."

It serves to note that KIB seeks to enhance its customer loyalty and meet customer's financial and banking needs, by constantly launching a new suite of services and products, in addition to rewarding them with attractive deals and lifestyle privileges through marketing campaigns tailored to fit their unique requirements.



Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei speaks during a press briefing in Taiyuan, in China's northern Shanxi province yesterday. — AFP

fourth quarter of 2020, according to industry tracker IDC, as the supply-chain disruptions curbed production. It fell to number five in the world in smartphones in the quarter-behind Chinese rivals Xiaomi and Oppo.

### Diversification

With China's huge domestic market, Huawei will likely survive but not without major changes, said Nicole Peng, analyst with Canalys. "They will not go away. I believe they will come back, but need to rethink the business model," she said. To this end, Huawei in November spun off budget smartphone line Honor to free that brand's access to needed components.

But Ren insisted Tuesday it would hold on to its main premium phone brands. "We have decided we absolutely will not sell off our consumer devices, our smartphone business," he said. Despite his apparent overture to the White House, Ren admitted it would be "extremely difficult" for Biden to lift the sanctions.

There is pressure in Washington to stay firm on China, and Biden's commerce secretary nominee Gina Raimondo has pledged to "protect" America from potential Chinese threats, including Huawei. Huawei is fast diversifying to encompass enterprise and cloud computing, Internet-Of-Things devices and networks, and other business segments related to the advent of 5G networks, an area of Huawei strength. "We have more means to overcome the difficulties (we face)," Ren said. Huawei also is building an alternative operating system after the US barred it from using Google's Android. But Ren appeared to shoot down recent reports that Huawei is seeking self-sufficiency in semiconductors-long an Achilles Heel for China-either by acquiring stakes in chip companies or setting up its own plant.—AFP

## Ooredoo Kuwait uplifts its Xpress prepaid brand

KUWAIT: Driven from the notion of exceptional journey fuels growth, Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, has elevated its Xpress prepaid brand to better serve its customers and help them Xpress themselves with a variety of voice and internet plans.

We live in a time where people compare their behind-the-scenes lives with everyone else's highlight reel. It makes them forget that each one of them, regardless of their economic or social status, brings value to their family, friends, community and the world at large. Xpress is now helping its customers take center stage, soak up the spotlight, and start shining like no other.

It is a brand that introduces flexible bundles with competitive prices which helps its customers to talk endlessly, connect constantly and enjoy the internet with no unnecessary charges while also controlling and managing renewal with ease on My Ooredoo App. It does not stop here, as a customer-oriented brand, it offers its customers constant inimitable offers with Ooredoo surprise and Fun Friday.

Xpress has held a leading position in the Kuwait's pre-paid market for a number of years and now it is coming in strong with its new uplift. Customers can subscribe to a variety of bundle that includes internet and local calls, starting at KD 5 per month, and have the freedom to subscribe to add-on at competitive prices that include internet, international minutes or local calls.

Ooredoo Kuwait skillfully manages the complete customer journey, analyzes it, and redesigns its products and services accordingly to meet the changing demands of its customers.

Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We adapted a whole new way of managing our service operations in order to reinvent the customer journeys that mattered the most. We adapted a journey-centric approach that allowed us to be more innovative and maintain high quality customer service."

"Providing an added value to the customer, is the DNA of an outstanding customer experience. Xpress is a brand that is here to show each one of its customer that they are one-of-a-kind, a true original." Ooredoo added.

## Cyberpunk 2077 video game developer hit by hack attack

WARSAW: Polish video game maker CD Projekt RED, the company behind The Witcher and Cyberpunk 2077, said yesterday hackers had stolen data in a "targeted cyberattack". "An unidentified actor gained unauthorized access to our internal network, collected certain data belonging to CD PROJEKT capital group, and left a ransom note," the company said on Twitter.

The game developer said the incident happened on Monday and it had contacted the police. CD Projekt published a copy of the ransom note in which the hackers claimed to have stolen the source codes for Cyberpunk 2077 and The Witcher 3 as well as internal administrative documents.

"If we will not come to an agreement, then your source codes will be sold or leaked online," it read, giving the company 48 hours to respond.



Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei speaks during a press briefing in Taiyuan, in China's northern Shanxi province yesterday. — AFP

## Norwegian fertilizer maker Yara steps into green energy

OSLO: Norwegian fertilizer producer Yara International yesterday announced it was betting on green energy, as it reported higher annual profits. The company said it was creating a new business unit, dubbed "Yara Clean Ammonia," in order "to capture growth opportunities within carbon-free food solutions, shipping fuel and other clean ammonia applications."

The base component for nitrogen fertilizer, the compound of nitrogen and hydrogen is an efficient vector for energy storage and distribution. It can be used to extract hydrogen but also directly as a carbon neutral fuel in thermal power plants and industrial furnaces.

Yara is working on a pilot project to produce what it calls clean ammonia at a plant in Porsgrunn, south-eastern Norway, that is now fuelled by natural gas. The company aims to connect the plant to the Norwegian power grid, which relies primarily on hydroelectric power, on condition that it qualifies for public subsidies. The fertilizer producer made the announcement as it published its financial results for 2020, which held up well despite the impact caused by COVID-19.

In 2020, net profit was \$691 million (571 million euros), compared to \$599 million a year earlier, despite a 9.3 percent drop in turnover to \$11.73 billion. Excluding special items, gross operating profit (EBITDA) was virtually unchanged at \$2.16 billion, as lower gas prices, increased deliveries of high-end products and a stronger dollar offset lower prices and slightly higher costs, the company explained. Shares in Yara were trading up by around 1.3 percent in morning deals on the Oslo Stock Exchange. — AFP

## Huawei CEO hopes for reset with US

TAIYUAN, China: The CEO and founder of Chinese telecom giant Huawei called yesterday for a reset with the United States under President Joe Biden, after the firm was battered by sanctions imposed by Donald Trump's administration. In his first appearance before journalists in a year, Ren Zhengfei said his "confidence in Huawei's ability to survive has grown" despite its travails across much of the western world where it is maligned as a potential security threat. The comments come as the firm struggles under rules that have effectively banned US firms from selling it technology such as semiconductors and other critical components, citing national security concerns. Insisting that Huawei remained strong and ready to buy from US companies, Ren called on the Biden White House for a "mutually beneficial" change of tack that could restore its access to the goods. Continuing to do so, he warned, would hurt US suppliers. "We hope the new US administration would have an open policy for the benefit of American firms and the economic development of the United States," said Ren, 76.

"We still hope that we can buy large volumes of American materials, components and equipment so that we can all benefit from China's growth." Ren was speaking during a visit to the city of Taiyuan in China's northern coal belt to open a laboratory for technologies that automate coal production to boost safety in a notoriously dangerous industry. Founded by Ren in 1987, Huawei largely flew under the global radar for decades as it became the world's largest maker of telecoms equipment and a top mobile phone producer.

That changed under Trump, who targeted the firm as part of an intensifying China-US trade and technology standoff. Trump from 2018 imposed escalating sanctions to cut off Huawei's access to components and bar it from the US market, while he also successfully pressured allies to shun the firm's gear in their telecoms systems. The former president raised fears that China's government could potentially use "back doors" in Huawei gear for espionage, which the company strenuously denies. The US campaign is hurting Huawei. Once a top-three smartphone supplier along with Samsung and Apple, its shipments plummeted more than 40 percent in the

"Investors will lose trust in your company and the stock will dive even lower." CD Projekt's shares were down 5.2 percent on the Warsaw stock exchange at around 0900 GMT. The company's stock has taken a beating after a series of problems surrounding the release of the much-hyped Cyberpunk 2077 in December. The shares rose again last month after tech billionaire Elon Musk praised its design.

The company said it would not "give in to the demands nor negotiate with the actor" even though it was aware that data could be released.

"We are taking necessary steps to mitigate the consequences of such a release," it said. "At this time we can confirm that-to our best knowledge-the compromised systems did not contain any personal data of our players or users of our services." — AFP



## Business

# Toyota Genuine Parts mega prize draws 2021: Al-Sayer announces draw winners

## Visit Toyota Genuine Retail parts outlets, buy and start winning



**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Co (MNSS) Group Spare Parts Division, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding, held its first electronic raffle draw to select the winners of Toyota Genuine Parts Winter Promotion 2021 on Sunday 31st January 2021 through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Computer system.

Toyota Parts Division is committed to maintaining the health precautions of COVID-19 and



the winners collected their prizes adhering to the ministry guidelines. In addition to the above five winners, 70 additional winners were also selected who won Toyota Parts Vouchers worth KD 21 each.

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer continues to guarantee highest level of customer satisfaction through quality assured genuine products at fair competitive prices. Al-Sayer Toyota Genuine Spare Parts

operates 16 exclusive outlets across Kuwait to offer an enhanced customer experience through better accessibility and convenience.

Toyota Genuine Spare Parts Winter Promotion 2021 which commenced on 14th January 2021 will continue until 16th April 2021. With every KD 5 spent at any Al-Sayer Toyota Parts Retail outlets, customers are eligible to participate in the electronic raffle draw for a chance to win cash prize of

KD 1000 or any other attractive prizes. Total of 225 winners will be selected in 3 draws. Balance two draws will be held on 23rd February 2021 and 19th April 2021 respectively. So, visit during the Winter 2021 Promotion to buy Toyota Genuine Parts and enter a chance to win prizes.

Al-Sayer thanks all valued customers for choosing Toyota Genuine Parts and congratulates the lucky winners from the first draw.

**Top 5 Winners of the First Raffle Draw are as follows:**

	Prize	Names of Winners
First Prize	KD 1000	Dhuhawi Mohammad
Second Prize	iPhone 12	Ahamad Eissa Eissa
Third Prize	iPhone 12	Hela Mikled Sanad Almitery
Fourth Prize	Apple Watch	Dalal Mudhhi Saffah Aldhafeeri
Fifth Prize	Apple Air Pods Pro	Wali Jan Umer Jan

## Kamco Invest Saudi appoints Ibrahim Al-Shariadah as CEO



Ibrahim Al-Shariadah



Sufyan Zamil Al-Zamil

**RIYADH:** Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse, with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced the appointment of Ibrahim Al-Shariadah as Chief Executive Officer for its operation in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Shariadah joins Kamco Invest - Saudi with extensive experience in banking and Investment having held several executive positions with top Asset Management firms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has experience across all core areas of Asset and Wealth Management, managing various investment asset classes and building strong relations where he has served government and semi-government institutions, regional sovereign wealth funds, Saudi and regional family offices, and UHNW individuals. He holds a BA in Management Information and an MBA from Colorado Technical University (CU, CTU), USA.

Prior to joining Kamco Invest - Saudi, Al-Shariadah headed the Wealth Management at Al-Rajhi Capital, leading a team of 40 people with an AUM in excess of SAR46bn in a multi-asset class portfolio. He has also held several executive positions with exposure across regional and international markets including Head of Discretionary Portfolio Management (DPMs) at Al-Rajhi Capital, Acting Head of Capital & Money Market and Senior Fund Manager at Adeem Capital in Saudi Arabia, as well as several positions at Samba Capital in Saudi Arabia where he first started his career, the last being Senior Fund & Portfolio Manager in the Equity, Money Market and Real Estate Funds Department under the Asset Management Division.

Engineer Sufyan Zamil Al-Zamil, Chairman of Kamco Invest - Saudi, said, "We are pleased to welcome aboard Ibrahim Al-Shariadah as Chief Executive Officer of Kamco Invest - Saudi. His experience and track record will be an added value to lead the Saudi operation to further contribute towards the implementation of the group's growth strategy."

Commenting on his appointment, Al-Shariadah said, "Kamco Invest has built a strong reputation in the local and regional markets as a leading non-banking financial services provider and as one of the largest asset managers in the GCC. I look forward to working with the talented team in Saudi Arabia as we work together to progressively strengthen our position in the Saudi market, capitalizing on the vast resources that Kamco Invest has to offer as well as the strength of its regional reach."

It is worth noting that Kamco Invest manages an AUM of around \$12.9 billion (as of 31 December 2020) on behalf of its clients in various asset classes and jurisdictions, making it the fifth largest asset manager in the GCC according to Moody's asset management report dated September 2019. It also holds a strong track record with investment banking credentials exceeding \$23.8 billion since inception till 31 December 2020 in equity capital markets, debt capital markets and mergers & acquisitions. Kamco Invest - Saudi manages the Kamco Saudi Equity Fund with AUM in excess of SAR 685 million (as of 7 February 2021), making it the second largest conventional Saudi equity fund, and the largest fund managed by an independent investment company not affiliated with a local bank.

## KFH opens 10th KFH-GO at Kuwait International Airport



Members of the executive management of KFH and DGCA officials



KFH-GO-Airport branch

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) inaugurated the tenth 24/7 digital self-banking station in the arrivals hall on the ground floor at Kuwait International Airport. The inauguration took place in the presence of members of the executive management of KFH and officials of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

The new e-branch KFH-GO comes within an ambitious plan developed by KFH under the theme "easy banking experience" for opening more e-branches in different locations in Kuwait. This confirms KFH's achievements in providing diversified e-banking services and its continuous pursuit of becoming a FinTech pioneer as part of its digital transformation strategy.

KFH-GO offers customers highly efficient e-services covering over 80 percent of the services and transactions provided by traditional branches, making it the preferred choice for many segments of customers, especially young people.

### Interactive services

KFH-GO-Airport branch contains an XTM

machine which enables communicating directly with the telephone service personnel in audio and video calls, and 5 ATMs as well as a cash deposit machine (Bulk Deposit) capable of accepting 300 notes in a single transaction.

Customers can access several services, including conducting "Murabaha" financing transactions, requesting credit cards and prepaid cards, updating data and phone numbers, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts, receiving gold bullion (10 grams), opening (Gold, Saving, Alrabeh, Electron) accounts, buy and sell gold, cash withdrawals without a card through the mobile phone using the "QR code", IDs or phone number, as well as a host of banking and financing services in a secure and fast manner.

### Two branches at Airport

KFH has recently inaugurated its fully revamped branch in the departures lounge (first floor) of Kuwait International Airport. It stands out for its spaciousness, contemporary design, and modern technology.



Demonstrating the branch's services

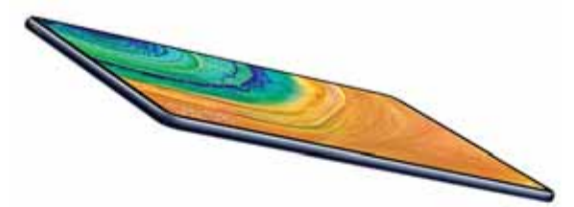
This reflects KFH success in boosting its Airport presence to offer best banking services around the clock.

## How the industrial change happened with Huawei

**KUWAIT:** With the last year emphasizing the need for working from home and e-learning scenarios, the demand for tablets and laptops has seen a huge surge. Every household now requires at least one laptop per person, be it for work or studies, which can be further complemented by a tablet and a smartphone to integrate them all together.

Along with an increase in demand for laptops, there has also been an increase for tablets. However, with both devices together, the user experience is further enhanced by having them connected under one ecosystem. This is where the smartphone comes in as a central device to control both and acting as a source for seamless integration. This industrial change happened strongly with Huawei, whose smart products and cloud services are all integrated and inter-connected under its 1+8+n strategy as part of the Huawei AI Seamless Life to provide users with an immersive and connected experience. This strategy essentially keeps the smartphone at the center of it all, such as the Huawei Mate 40 Pro, to connect to 8 different categories of Huawei products and wide range of IoT devices (n) through layers such as Huawei Share and HiLink (+).

Coming back to laptops and tablets, Huawei enhances the user experience by integrating them with a smartphone for a providing seamless interactions and smart solutions. For example, working, replying to chats and even answering emails are most easily done on a smartphone, but constantly picking up a smartphone while working can be quite disruptive for productivity. Solving this is the Multi-screen collaboration feature from Huawei. Users can simply take their Huawei smartphone and tap it on a compatible Huawei laptop like the Huawei MateBook X, to instantly stream the smart-



phone display on the laptop. This way, users can control both devices at once, open multiple windows to run more apps from the smartphone simultaneously and even drag and drop files for easy file transfer. Users can also answer calls received on the smartphone directly on the laptop instead, even using the connected peripherals. Another advantage is how content from the smartphone can be enjoyed on the larger laptop display.

A similar relationship is also built between Huawei's smartphones and tablets like the Huawei MatePad Pro, with multi-screen collaboration at the user's disposal. This also comes in use with regards to education, where it's easier to have multiple apps open side by side, be it for attending class and references, for a more immersive studying experience. Additionally, Huawei's devices and services are connected under one universal Huawei ID. In addition users can be enjoying music or videos on services like Huawei Music or Huawei Video, and can seamlessly switch between the smartphone and tablet without any kind of interruption.

Having a combination of smart devices from Huawei rearing to go not only creates a smarter and technological space at home or office, but also assures enhanced productivity and an immersive experience, be it for work or studies, thus driving a change in the industry towards a more advanced and connected digital future. Meta description: Laptops, tablets and smartphones have become common in every household. This is how Huawei brings all of them together for a more connected experience.



# Classifieds

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
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 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)

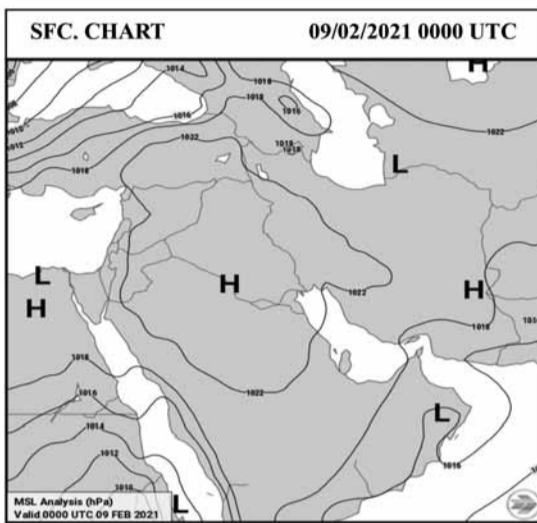
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm with light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 12 - 35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Rather cold and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

**WEATHER WARNING** No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	15 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	10 °C
ABDALY	24 °C	11 °C
BUBYAN	21 °C	17 °C
JAHRA	25 °C	12 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	23 °C	16 °C
AHMADI	22 °C	15 °C
NUWAISIB	24 °C	13 °C
WAFRA	24 °C	12 °C
SALMY	21 °C	09 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	02/10	Warm and Partly cloudy	25 °C	11 °C	NW	15 - 35 km/h
Thursday	02/11	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	26 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	02/12	Warm	25 °C	11 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	02/13	Warm	24 °C	11 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:11
Sunrise	06:33
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:10
Sunset	17:33
Isha	18:51

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	12 °C
MAX. RH	96 %
MIN. RH	43 %
MAX. Wind	N 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

**NOTICE**  
 February 02, 2021

Mr. Arun Kollara Baby, son of Mr. Baby Kuriakose, resident of Kollara House, Kattappana P.O., Parakkadavu, Idukki, Kerala 685608 and Ms. Aswathy Noble, daughter of Mr. Noble John, resident of Elavumackal house, Keerikode, Thodupuzha East PO, Thodupuzha, Idukki, Kerala 685585, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ranveer Bharti)  
 Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer.  
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
 Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

**NOTICE**  
 February 08, 2021

Mr. Arunkumar Manayil Unnikrishnan, son of Mr. Unnikrishnan, resident of Manayil House, CSEZ PO, Thuthiyoor, Ernakulam, Kerala - 682037 and Ms. Sowmya Gopalakrishnan, daughter of Mr. Mangat Gopalakrishnan, resident of Padmasadan Kottayi, Varode Post, Palakkad - 678572, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ranveer Bharti)  
 Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer.  
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
 Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

## Word Search



### Charlie Chaplin

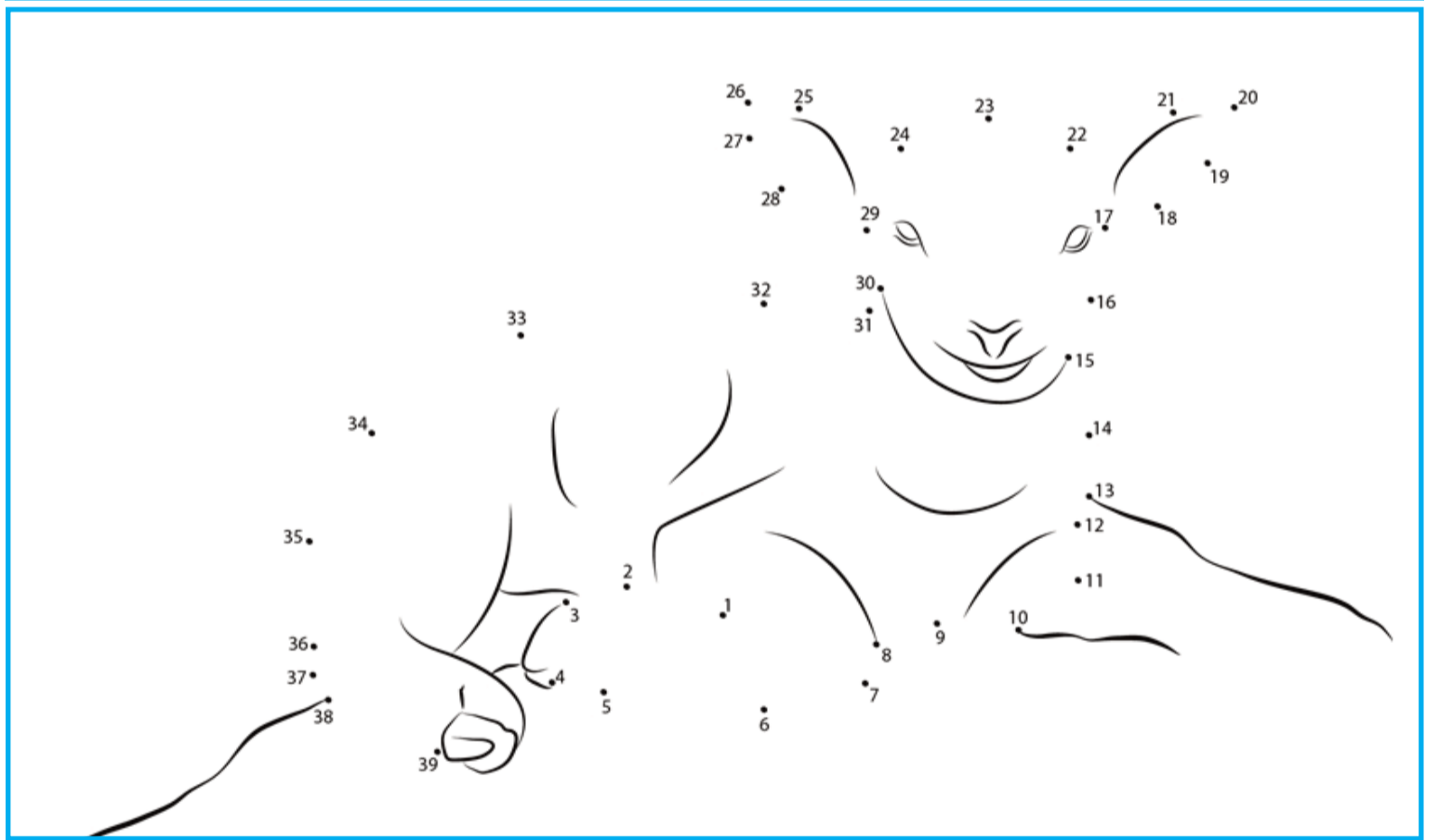
#### Word Search

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

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

Actor	England	Producer
Adulation	Filmmaker	Silent Film
Chaplin	Icon	Slapstick
Charlie	Keystone	Studios
City Lights	Marriages	Switzerland
Comic	Pathos	The Gold Rush
Composer	Perfectionist	The Tramp
Controversy	Politics	United Artists
Director	Poverty	Workhouse

## Join the Dots



## STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**  
 Friends or a group with which you're affiliated could want you to help them formulate a workable plan for advancement. You're in just the right frame of mind for this, Aries, and therefore willing to roll up your sleeves and pitch in. You might be the center of attention at some point, perhaps sharing your skills with associates. Don't forget your own goals. They could be advanced today, too.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**  
 Ideas and insights coming from deep within your psyche are likely to increase your effectiveness in whatever work you do today, Cancer. Your mind is particularly practical and logical. When coupled with an increased intuition, these abilities are invaluable. You might be most effective working solo, but if that isn't possible, you should still accomplish whatever you set out to do, and do it well.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**  
 An older person you're very fond of could visit or call and ask for your advice on practical matters. Clear and logical thinking enhances your intuition, Libra, and you might be able to put this ability to work not only for your friend but also for yourself. Your own interests will be advanced today in some way, so expect a good day.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**  
 To those around you, you might appear to be your usual logical, rational self, Capricorn. Actually, you may be drawing a lot of your ideas and insights from deep within your psyche. You're probably drawing on experiences from your past, even if you aren't consciously aware of it. Even though the source is unorthodox, whatever you come up with is likely to have a lot of practical value.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
 Career interests are advanced through clear, logical thinking and the sound application of good business sense. Financial interests look especially promising now, Taurus, so seize any opportunities for advancement that come your way. Working with others is likely to prove profitable, and could bring you closer to them, too. Roll up your sleeves and go to it. The results could surprise you.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**  
 Today you could attend more than one social event, Leo. Some of your professional colleagues will probably be there. Conversations are going to focus primarily on business development and the economy in general. A lot of useful information could result from social contacts with others in your field. Write it all down. You will want to remember it so you can make use of it later.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**  
 Logical and focused thinking could lead to social, career, or financial advancement. Your organizational ability and industry are keener than usual, Scorpio. You're likely to be able to make sense of murky matters that might not have been clear before. Paperwork could prove challenging, but you will be able to get through it today where yesterday you might have found it too daunting.

**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**  
 To friends and colleagues, you may seem to have suddenly acquired acute business sense. Your experience has joined with knowledge acquired from others to enable you to formulate practical ideas for advancement. You may have lost faith in your goals, but now they seem more attainable. What you've wanted for a while could be within your grasp. You could make some real progress.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**  
 Social events, perhaps business related, could put you in touch with people in fascinating fields or from foreign countries, Gemini. Logical thinking and a philosophical attitude enhance your communicative gifts, so people will be drawn to you to hear what you say. You could make important contacts. Take notes. This evening could be a key turning point for your future plans.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**  
 You tend to prefer intellectual and philosophical rather than practical pursuits, Virgo, but today you may feel especially practical and more inclined to want to get as many routine tasks out of the way as you can. This could involve chores around the house that you've neglected for a few days. Other members of your household could pitch in. Go to it. You will be glad you did.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**  
 You might be feeling very communicative today, Sagittarius. Concentration, logical thinking, and a heightened ability to put ideas into words enhance your own communicative abilities. Therefore, your gift of getting directly to the point in any matter is likely to clear previously clogged channels, impress others, and increase your self-confidence.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**  
 Today you're likely to experience a heightened level of intuition and how to use it, Pisces. This could mean advancing a career, furthering a personal goal, or helping a friend. Right now you may be especially good at sizing up people, and you're instinctively aware of how to deal with them. Make use of this ability while you can, because right now it could lead to success and good fortune.



## Lifestyle | Features



Owner Susanne Schreiber (right) watches as a customer shows her antigen virus test upon entering Schreiber's hairdressing salon in Vienna. — AFP photos



A hairdresser and her customer wear FFP2 protective face masks in a hairdressing salon in Vienna.



## Austrians rush to get haircuts but only after a test

Austria's hairdressing salons were among the businesses reopening on Monday as the country's third virus lockdown eases but a negative COVID test result is now a prerequisite for a visit to the barber. Schools, shops and museums are also opening for the first time since late December and school pupils also have to be tested twice a week to attend classes. Brisk demand was seen at the various public

virus testing stations set up by Vienna city authorities.

Even at the recently installed center in the city's famous Schoenbrunn Palace, extra slots had been made available in anticipation of high demand. Welcoming her first clients in weeks, Viennese hairdresser Susanne Schreiber said: "On the one hand I feel relieved that we are able to work again, but on the other hand there is the obsta-

cle of testing, which some customers aren't taking very well". Complaints from hairdressers about the new rules have surfaced in the Austrian press, with some pointing out the difficulty of getting tested in rural areas. Neighboring Slovenia has also brought in mandatory tests for hairdresser visits and similar services but the measure has not been adopted widely in Europe.

Schreiber's first customer at 9:00 am

sharp was a woman who only gave her first name, Martine. She said she was "very, very happy to come back" and was spoiling herself for her 49th birthday. Martine was not fazed by the test requirement. "For me it's not a problem, because my parents belong to an at-risk group and I always get tested before visiting them anyway," she said. Austria, with a population of 8.8 million, is currently recording around 1,000 new

infections a day, a figure that has remained stubbornly high despite the weeks of lockdown. Experts are particularly worried by the situation in the western region of Tyrol, where the South African variant of the virus has been circulating, prompting the government on Monday to advise against non-essential travel to the region. — AFP



Gheorghiu, shown here in 2012, said she felt a "human and professional need" to support the Met. — AFP

## Famed soprano Gheorghiu to sing in aid of Met musicians

Romanian soprano Angela Gheorghiu has announced she will lend her voice to help the musicians of New York's Metropolitan Opera (Met), deprived of their pay because of virus-related cancellations of their shows. "On February 21, through the wonders of technology, I will perform for you Dvorak's 'Song to the Moon' and Anton Pann's 'Tatal Nostru' (Our Father) in a special arrangement by (composer) Andrei Tudor," she wrote on Facebook late Sunday. Considered one of the world's greatest opera singers, Gheorghiu, 55, will perform in Bucharest alongside pianist Alexandru Petrovici, to the accompaniment of the Met Orchestra from New York.

Tickets for the performance, which can be watched online, have gone on sale for \$15 (12.5 euros). Gheorghiu said the proceeds would "benefit over 150 Met musicians in need". In an interview with the Romanian channel Digi24, Gheorghiu said that the musicians "had not received their salaries for a year and were in a very difficult situation". The soprano rejected the term "charity concert", stressing that she felt a "human and professional need" to support the cause. "An artist is important only alongside one's artistic family," she said. "Without an orchestra or choir we cannot do anything."

Gheorghiu will perform for the recital in Bucharest's elegant Athenaeum concert hall, built by the French architect Albert Galleron and inaugurated in 1888. "This is my cathedral," Gheorghiu said of the venue, recalling that she gave her first recital there at the age of 17. The Met's general manager Peter Gelb told AFP in September that his institution was going through "the most difficult period" in 137 years of existence. The last eight weeks of the 2019-20 season and the whole of the following one have been cancelled, which is expected to result in a shortfall of \$154 million. — AFP

## Soviet spy gadgets to go under hammer in Beverly Hills

Cyanide-filled fake teeth and cigarette packs concealing cameras are among the Soviet spy gadgets going under the hammer at a Beverly Hills auction this week. Many retro espionage devices in the sale by US-based Julien's Auctions-known for Hollywood and pop culture memorabilia-would not be out of place in a classic James Bond movie, including microphones hidden within pens, ashtrays and porcelain plates. "The people that actually created these things were the pioneers of miniaturization," said director of gallery operations Kody Frederick.



A Soviet KGB spy fake suicide tooth is displayed during an auction preview for The Cold War Relics Auction.

"Everybody now carries a camera, everybody now has a microphone," but many of the auction's spy gadgets hail from an era when cell phones were "as big as six bricks," Frederick told AFP. Miniature cameras fitted inside women's handbags, belt buckles, shoebrushes, birdboxes, signet rings and ties-and used by real secret agents-are all going on the block. "People are looking to get their hands on really unique, different pieces from a time when digital didn't



A German Minifon P55 miniature steel wire recorder and spy wristwatch with hidden microphone is displayed during an auction preview for "The Cold War Relics Auction - Featuring the KGB Espionage Museum Collection" at Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP photos

exist and analog was the way of life," Frederick added.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, many of the items were discarded in Eastern Europe and eventually made their way to New York's short-lived KGB museum, which opened in January 2019 but closed last year due to the pandemic. Among those for sale this Saturday, both on-site in California and via the internet, are a fake tooth containing deadly cyanide expected to fetch up to \$1,200. "The tooth was designed to shatter when bitten a certain way so that captured agents could end their own lives when necessary to avoid torture or the release of compromising information," explains the auction catalog.

## Deadly umbrella

The collection includes a replica of the "Bulgarian umbrella" used in 1978 in London to fatally poison Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov in one particularly infamous Cold War episode. It is esti-



A Soviet KGB ashtray with hidden microphone "bug" is displayed during an auction preview for The Cold War Relics Auction.

mated at between \$3,000 and \$5,000. But other initially announced items including a lipstick tube and a pen designed to fire bullets had to be withdrawn due to California's gun laws. Spy enthusiasts will have to content themselves with clandestine devices used to store sensitive microfilm or other documents, including cufflinks, high-heeled shoes, hollowed-out coins... and even a "rectal concealment capsule."

Alongside the double-agent gadgets, Cold War relics for sale will include Che Guevara's 1942 school report card, and letters signed by him and fellow Communist revolutionary leader Fidel Castro. One Castro missive contains plans to infiltrate Havana, and is predicted to draw bids up to \$1,500. Further objects relate to the US-Soviet space race, such as NASA spaceship designs, vintage astronaut equipment and archive film stock including footage of the low-gravity testing of "various fecal and urine collection devices." — AFP

## PARIS OPERA TO SEEK OUT NEW TALENT IN DIVERSITY DRIVE

The Paris Opera vowed an overhaul of its recruiting practices on Monday as it launched a drive towards greater diversity in the heart of its elite ballet company, orchestra and dance school. The issue has already sparked fierce debate in France with right-wingers accusing the Opera's new director-general Alexander Neef of bringing American-style culture wars into the cloistered world of its arts scene. But with Black Lives Matter protests roiling France, and deepening debate over its colonial legacy, Neef remains unrepentant about the need for greater diversity, and on Monday promised a shake-up of the 350-year-old institution.

The Opera will implement recommendations from a new report, including an active effort to send recruiters out into the world in search of new talent, rather than relying on dancers coming to them. "The objective is not that the school recruits less talented students to meet diversity objectives, but to search for great students wherever they can be found," the report said, calling for decentralized exams in towns across France and its overseas territories. Neef told AFP he was proud the Opera was the "first large cultural organization in this country to have launched such a thing. There are others for sure that will follow." "As an organization that is so large and that is so deeply connected to

the past... we shouldn't be afraid of asking not only these questions, but all kinds of questions," he said.

## 'Ballet blanc'

The report highlighted other specific areas of concern, including the sensitive question of "anatomical criteria" in the selection process-to move beyond "old and tenacious ideas" about black bodies as somehow ill-suited to classical dance. It also touched on the tradition of "ballet blanc" (white ballet) — where dancers appear all in white tutus and black performers are rarely seen-making the point that skin color was never referenced when they were originally designed in the 19th century.

Paris Opera will appoint a dedicated "diversity and inclusion officer", Neef said, following the lead of New York's Metropolitan Opera which named its first person to that role last month. A consulting body of experts from inside and outside the Opera will also look at what these issues mean for its repertoire. In 2015, the Opera's ballet director Benjamin Millepied met resistance after he ended the use of blackface for "La Bayadere" and renamed its "Danse des Negrillons" ("The Dance of the Little Negroes") as "The Dance of the Children." Neef himself made waves recently when he told Le Monde newspaper that "some works will no doubt disappear from the repertoire." — AFP

## SUPREMES SINGER MARY WILSON DIES AGED 76

Motown singer and the Supremes co-founder Mary Wilson has died, US media reported yesterday. She was 76. She founded the US group aged 15 while living in a Detroit housing project, according to Variety, and continued with the band long after lead singer Diana Ross' departure, eventually going on to be inducted into the 1988 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "Mary Wilson was extremely special to me. She was a trail-blazer, a diva and will be deeply missed," said Berry Gordy, founder of Motown records who were behind many of the band's hits. She died at her Las Vegas home on February 8, her publicist Jay Schwartz told ET News.

Only two days ago Wilson uploaded a short clip to YouTube celebrating Black history month and announcing: "exciting news about The Supremes, Florence Ballard and unreleased materials." The circumstances around her death have not been released, her publicist said. Born March 12 1944 in Greenville, Mississippi, Wilson was brought up by her aunt and uncle, before moving to Detroit with her mother when she was 12.

There she began singing and with Ballard founded the group that would eventually become known as the Supremes. Despite limited early success, the band struck success in the late sixties with hits like "Stop! In the Name of Love" and "Baby Love". But following Ross's



In this file photo singer Mary Wilson arrives for the Ryan Gordy Foundation 60 Years of Motown Celebration at the Waldorf Astoria in Beverly Hills. — AFP

departure in 1970 for a solo career the group never regained its dominance on the US charts, but did enjoy some hits such as "River Deep, Mountain High" and "Stoned Love". Wilson continued to perform with Jean Terrell-remaining a constant during the shifting cast of members until the group finally folded in 1977. In 1988 she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of the Supremes.

Little heard of in the intervening years, she burst back onto the public stage with her 1986 memoir "Dreamgirl: My Life As a Supreme", detailing her time in the band and her relationship with Ross. In 1974 she married Pedro Ferrer, but the couple divorced in 1981. She is survived by their two children, daughter Turkessa and son Pedro Antonio Jr., as well as 10 grandchildren. — AFP



In this file photo Paris Opera dancers perform at the Palais Garnier during a dress rehearsal of "Giselle".



Lifestyle | Features



This combination of pictures shows Jordanian make-up artist Alaa Bliha, 27, speaking to a journalist (left), after completing her make-up to resemble Queen Elizabeth II, in the basement apartment where she lives with her mother and young brother in the capital Amman.



Alaa Bliha uses a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II saved on her mobile telephone to work on her imitation make-up. — AFP photos

# JORDAN MAKE-UP ARTIST LIGHTENS LOCKDOWN WITH CELEBRITY IMPRESSIONS

A young Jordanian make-up artist has beaten the lockdown blues and shot to online fame with videos of herself imitating famous figures from across the Arab world and beyond. From Donald Trump and Queen Elizabeth II to Egyptian superstars like singer Umm Kulthum and actor Adel Imam, her characters have made Alaa Bliha a star in her own right with tens of thousands of social media followers. The 27-year-old says she started making the clips to stave off depression, after losing her job as a theatre make-up artist in Bahrain and returning to a grim coronavirus lockdown in Jordan.

Based in a basement apartment in northern Amman where she lives with her mother and young brother, she has transformed herself into Angelina Jolie, Michael Jackson and Cristiano Ronaldo. "Everyone was bored and under psychological pressure when the pandemic began," she said. "So I decided... to bring people a bit of happiness." Months later, she has some 30,000 followers on



Alaa Bliha applies coloured eye lenses to complete her imitation make-up to resemble Queen Elizabeth II.

TikTok and another 24,000 on Instagram, where comments on her videos are full of praise. "I was surprised by people's positive reactions and encouragement," Bliha said.

Her imitations of Lebanese singer Fairuz and Egyptian mega-star Umm Kulthum have been big hits, while her

sketch of Emirati singer Abdullah Bilkhair has been watched more than half a million times on TikTok. But while they may be light-hearted, each video takes hours of preparation. Bliha, a visual arts graduate, studies her chosen personalities and spends up to seven hours in front of the mirror applying cosmetics, wigs, accessories and even coloured contact lenses. Then she films herself lip-syncing over interviews or songs by her characters. "I spend entire days watching videos to understand their behavior, their movements, the way they talk, dress, walk or smoke," she said. "It takes me out of myself and I become another person," she added. "It's a really strange feeling."

### 'Not all funny'

Bliha's clips provided a distraction from Jordan's tough three-month lockdown last year, which was followed by months of curfew to stem Covid-19. Coronavirus has infected at least 330,000 people in Jordan and killed more than 4,300. Soon, she plans to



Alaa Bliha poses for a picture after completing her make-up to resemble Queen Elizabeth II.

poke fun at Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and leading US senator Bernie Sanders. But some videos also have a serious note. On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November, she posted disturbing images of herself made up with bruises.

"We need to shine a spotlight on these issues and take a stand," she said. "Not everything in life is funny or entertaining. There are women who face violence and oppression, and this needs to stop." She says the pandemic has given some people time to discover themselves and develop new skills. And since she arrived home jobless, her videos have won her two offers of work at TV stations. Jordanian actor and screenwriter Omar Zorba has also hired her to work on a sitcom, to be aired during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan. "During the lockdown, I saw on Instagram that (Bliha) had done an amazing impression of me," he said. "She's able to totally change actors' faces, meaning they can play two different roles in the same series," he added. "Honestly, I haven't seen another make-up artist in Jordan with this level of creativity and craftsmanship." — AFP



Alaa Bliha draws outlines on her face before she starts working on her imitation make-up.

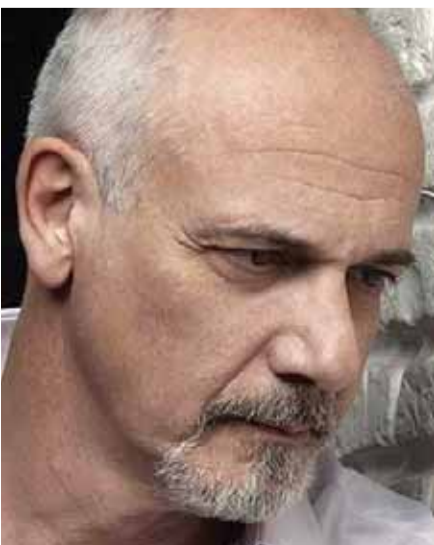


Alaa Bliha works on her imitation make-up to resemble Queen Elizabeth II.



## Star Greek actors lose jobs as #MeToo claims grow

Three Greek theatre and television stars have lost lucrative jobs, the latest on Monday, as a chorus of sex harassment, abuse and bullying allegations grows in a #MeToo awakening in Greece. Giorgos Kimoulis, regarded as one of Greece's finest actors, has been removed from this year's Athens and Epidaurus Festival, the country's premier arts festival said Monday after a flurry of bullying claims from actresses. The festival said there were "public complaints against Mr Kimoulis from colleagues (alleging



Giorgos Kimoulis

insults to their personality."

Also Monday, state TV ERT said it axed an actor without identifying him, but Greek news reports identified him as one of the country's top comedians, Petros Filippidis. Mega TV last week said it had a leaked letter to the Greek actors' guild from three actresses, accusing Filippidis of lewd behavior. The actor was briefly hospitalized last week, after issuing a statement through his lawyer calling on media to refrain from mentioning his name in relation to the story. "You've known me for 35 years," the statement said. "Please respect my wife and child, the truth will not come out through trial by television."

Another prominent thespian, National Theatre artistic director Dimitris Lignadis, on Sunday resigned from his post, citing a "toxic climate of rumours, innuendo and leaks." All three artists deny the accusations. Few of the complaints can be prosecuted as they occurred decades earlier. The Greek actors' guild has said it has received over a thousand complaints from alleged victims in recent days. More than three years after the #MeToo movement surfaced in the United States, the code of silence in Greece was broken by a two-time Olympic sailing medallist, Sofia Bekatorou.

Bekatorou in December said she was 21 when she was subjected to "sexual harassment and abuse" by a senior federation member in his hotel room, shortly after trials for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Her comments have encouraged other women athletes, students, journalists and actresses to step forward. Last week, the leftwing MeRA25 party suspended one of Greece's best-known composers as a member after a singer alleged he tried to have sex with her in his home when she was 14. — AFP

## 'Cyrano' and 'Tin Drum' screenwriter **Carriere** dies at 89

Legendary French screenwriter Jean-Claude Carriere, who penned some of the most memorable movies of the last half century including "The Tin Drum" and "Cyrano de Bergerac", has died at the age of 89, his daughter told AFP. Carriere, best known for his work with Luis Bunuel and Milos Forman, died in his sleep late Monday at his home in Paris, said Kiara Carriere. A prolific writer whose career spanned six decades, Carriere created a range of memorable and provocative scenes, including tying a fresh-faced Catherine Deneuve naked to a tree. "Belle de Jour" was one of the fruits of his 19-year collaboration with subversive Spanish enfant terrible Luis Bunuel, famous for shocking audiences. Carriere and Bunuel won an Oscar in 1972 for "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoise", adding to Carriere's best short film Oscar in 1963. His work ranged across cultures, religions and historical periods, from "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1990), for which Gerard Depardieu gave one of the performances of his career, to the adaptation of Milan Kundera's "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (1988) with Daniel Day-Lewis.

Carriere's 1979 adaption of Gunter Grass's novel "The Tin Drum", directed by Volker Schlöndorff, won another Oscar as well as the Palme d'Or at Cannes. He was also nominated for another Oscar for his "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" screenplay together with director Philip Kaufman and won a French Cesar in 1983 for best original screenplay for "The Return of Martin

Guerre", starring Depardieu.

### 'The boss'

In 2014 Carriere was awarded an honorary Oscar for his life's work of around 80 screenplays but also essays, fiction, translations and interviews. And one of his final films, "At Eternity's Gate" about the artist Vincent Van Gogh's final months, was nominated for another, with Carriere determined to prove that the painter did not kill himself. He also enjoyed frequent appearances in front of the camera, with roles opposite Juliette Greco, Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau.

The Cannes film festival's former



president Gilles Jacob led the tributes, saying that Carriere was France's finest screenwriter ever. "You were the boss," he added. Born on September 17, 1931 into a family of winegrowers, his parents moved near Paris in 1945 to open a cafe. A star pupil, Carriere went on to study at one of France's elite Grandes Ecoles. By 26, he had written his first novel. He said he enjoyed being at the service of a director and slipping into their way of thinking. "I have no ego," he once said.

"Meetings, friendships and life teachers" marked his life, from the Dalai Lama to the great surrealist Bunuel. One key encounter was with acclaimed British director Peter Brook with whom he adapted the Sanskrit Hindu epic the "Mahabharata" for the stage and screen. When its play version was performed at the Avignon festival in 1985, it ran for nine hours to an astonished crowd. "Watching it, forgetting I was the one who wrote it, was one of the great joys in my life," Carriere said. Despite the coronavirus restrictions, a tribute will be held for him in Paris, his daughter said, and he will be buried in his native village in Colombieres-sur-Orb in southern France. — AFP

In this file photo French writer Jean-Claude Carriere poses after receiving the Best Adaptation of a Foreign Play for "The Tempest" by William Shakespeare during the 5th Moliere theatre award ceremony at the Champs-Elysees theater in Paris. — AFP



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Daniil Ivanov performs in Russia. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Maradona death probe to include nurses, psychologist

**BUENOS AIRES:** A psychologist and two nurses who helped care for football legend Diego Maradona before his death have been added to a widening involuntary manslaughter probe, a judicial source told local media Monday. Maradona died of a heart attack outside Buenos Aires on November 25, weeks after undergoing brain surgery on a blood clot.

His psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov and heart surgeon Leopoldo Luque are already under investigation, as they were treating Maradona before his death. The three people newly under investigation must appear before prosecutors this week, the judicial source told local media. Investigators are trying to determine if any of the five people who had Maradona in their care were in any way negligent. Maradona was suffering from liver, kidney and cardiovascular disorders, but there were no signs of alcohol or narcotics consumption, according to his autopsy.

Luque, the surgeon, in November responded to the launch of an investigation for involuntary manslaughter by saying he did "everything he could, up to the impossible" for an "unmanageable" patient. A first autopsy conducted the day Maradona died found he had suffered from liquid on the lungs with acute heart failure brought on by a disease of the heart muscles that makes it harder to pump blood. — AFP

# No hugs or high-fives: Olympic organizers unveil athlete rulebook

## Athletes tested at least once every four days

**TOKYO:** No socializing, no handshakes and definitely no hugs — that's what athletes at the coronavirus-postponed Tokyo Olympics can expect this summer, according to a virus rulebook released yesterday by organizers. The 33-page document — the last in a series of "playbooks" drawn up in a bid to ensure the Games can go ahead safely — also warns athletes they could be kicked out of their events if they break strict anti-virus rules.

Under the guidelines, athletes will be tested for the virus at least once every four days, and will be barred from competing if they return a confirmed positive test. Their time in Japan will be "minimized to reduce the risk of infection," and those staying at the Olympic Village will be expected to "avoid unnecessary forms of physical contact." Organizers said yesterday that they still plan to hand out around 150,000 free condoms to athletes, but the new rulebook urges them to "limit your contact with other people as much as possible."

"If you have been to the Games before, we know this experience will be different in a number of ways," the guidebook warns. "For all Games participants, there will be some conditions and constraints that will require your flexibility and understanding."

The guide for athletes and team officials is set to be revised in April and again in June, and follows the release of handbooks for sports officials, media and broadcasters last week. The document lays out further detail on virus testing for athletes, with a

negative test required within 72 hours of travelling to Japan and again immediately upon arrival.

There will be no quarantine for athletes, and they will still be allowed to attend training camps in Japan before the Games begin, but all movements must be rigorously logged and the use of public transport is subject to permission. Athletes "must not visit gyms, tourist areas, shops, restaurants or bars" and can only go to "official Games venues and limited additional locations."

They are also advised to wear masks at all times except when they are competing, training, eating, sleeping or outside in open space. The virus rulebooks are being released as organizers, Olympic officials and Japan's government works to build confidence that the Games can go ahead safely despite a surge in infections globally.

While vaccinations are recommended for athletes, they will not be a requirement to participate in the Games. Support for hosting the virus-postponed event remains low in Japan, with around 80 percent of Japanese backing cancellation or further postponement — something organizers have ruled out.

The rollout of the virus rules has been overshadowed by a row over sexist comments made by Tokyo 2020 chief Yoshiro Mori, who faces calls to resign after claiming women speak too much in meetings. So far, he has apologized but declined to step down. The Games are due to open in Tokyo on July 23. — AFP



**TOKYO:** In this file photo a large size Olympic rings symbol is seen at "Tokyo Waterfront" in the waters of Odaiba Marine Park on August 6, 2020, while being transferred back to the factory where it was manufactured for a safety inspection and to receive maintenance. — AFP

## LeBron shines as injury-hit Lakers leave it late

**LOS ANGELES:** LeBron James scored a 28-point triple double as the injury-depleted Los Angeles Lakers bagged a fifth consecutive win on Monday in a 119-112 overtime defeat of the Oklahoma City Thunder. For a second straight game, James and the Lakers were forced to dig deep in overtime, overturning a double-digit deficit early in the fourth quarter to grind out their 19th win of the season.

With the Lakers missing Anthony Davis and Alex Caruso through injury, Oklahoma City led for long periods with Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (29 points) and Darius Bazley (21) outstanding. Oklahoma City led 90-79 with just over 10 minutes remaining but saw their lead cut in half at 107-102 with two minutes left.

An 8-0 run put the Lakers in charge with just seconds of regulation left before Gilgeous-Alexander nailed three free throws to tie the game and force overtime. The Lakers reasserted themselves in the extra period however, with Montrezl Harrell, Dennis Schroder and Wesley Matthews putting them 117-110 ahead.

A James slam-dunk made it 119-112 to seal the Lakers win. James finished with 14 rebounds and 12 assists to complete his third triple double of the season. He was backed with 19 points from Schroder and 21 from Harrell off the bench. Matthews also delivered a big contribution off the bench with 16 points.

A relieved James said the Lakers needed to improve their urgency after being forced to come from behind. "We've got to be more conscientious how we start games," James said. "Getting down double digits is not something we want to have. Our pace was very slow at the start of the game, but we



**LOS ANGELES:** LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers shoots against the Oklahoma City Thunder in the first half at Staples Center on Monday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

understand that and we know what we need to do to change that."

### Bucks roll on

In Denver, Khris Middleton and Giannis Antetokounmpo led the way as the Milwaukee Bucks notched a fifth straight victory with a 125-112 defeat of the Nuggets. Antetokounmpo finished with 30 points and nine rebounds as Middleton added 29 points with 12 assists and eight rebounds.

Bryn Forbes had 15 points while Brook Lopez and Donte DiVincenzo added 13 points apiece. Elsewhere in the Western Conference on Monday, Devin Booker poured in 36 points as the Phoenix Suns overpowered the Cleveland Cavaliers 119-113. Mikal Bridges added 22 points for Phoenix with Deandre Ayton adding 15 against a Cavaliers side who slumped to a fourth straight defeat.

In San Antonio, Stephen Curry led the scoring with 32 points including six three-pointers but it was not enough to stop the

Golden State Warriors falling to a 105-100 reverse against the Spurs. San Antonio improved to 14-10 with the win and are now fifth in the Western Conference standings. The Spurs recorded a third straight victory thanks to 27 points from Dejounte Murray while DeMar DeRozan added 21 points.

In Dallas, the Mavericks withstood a late fightback from the Minnesota Timberwolves before completing a 127-122 win. The Timberwolves, bottom of the Western Conference with only six wins against 18 defeats, looked to be on course for a crushing defeat after trailing by 20 points early in the fourth quarter. But Minnesota whittled the deficit to just three points at 120-123 with 27.7 seconds before the rally faltered.

Elsewhere Monday, LaMelo Ball had a hot hand with seven three-pointers in a 24-point tally as the Charlotte Hornets routed the Houston Rockets 119-94. Six Hornets players finished in double figures as the visitors slid to defeat. — AFP

## England thrash India by 227 runs in first Test

**CHENNAI:** Joe Root led England to an emphatic 227-run win over India in the opening Test yesterday, taking the upper hand in their bid for a rare series victory against the hosts on their patch. Paceman James Anderson took the key wickets in a magical spell as India were dismissed for 192 on the final day while chasing a record 420 to win in Chennai. Spinner Jack Leach claimed four wickets.

"It is a very good victory but in the scheme of the series, it is just the start," Root told reporters. "India are a brilliantly good team, especially in these conditions and a proud nation as well. They will come back hard at us, but to sit here 1-0 up is really good."

In the opener, the England captain outfoxed India, who were on a high after their sensational series triumph in Australia last month, with his bat and his tactics. He became the first batsman to score a double century in his 100th Test as his 218 guided England to 578 in the first innings. He was also the top scorer with 40 in the second innings of 178.

Root acknowledged that it had been a "crucial toss" to win in order to make the big first innings. "But from that point we had to follow through and make the most of a very good wicket. We did that very well and posted a good score," he said. "To take 20 wickets in very alien conditions, to our bowlers is huge credit." The win has taken England to the top of the World Test Championship table as India drop to fourth. The series will decide who will meet New Zealand in the final at Lord's in June.

### Anderson masterclass

India were hanging on to the chase after Leach struck early with the wicket of overnight batsman Cheteshwar Pujara for 15, and Anderson using his reverse swing on the wearing pitch to claim three wickets. Shubman Gill completed his third Test fifty in just his fourth game before Anderson took away his off-stump. Three balls later he cleaned up Ajinkya Rahane for nought.

Anderson got India's first innings hero Pant for 11 and spinner Dom Bess chipped in with the wicket of Washington Sundar for nought as India slipped to 117-6. Root hailed the bowler, who has now taken 611 test wickets, for the way "he goes about things, challenging himself constantly and getting better all the time" even at the age of 38. "He's a great role model to the rest of the group."

India captain Virat Kohli fought a lone battle, reaching his 24th Test fifty before being bowled by Ben Stokes for 72 on a delivery that stayed low. Leach and fast bowler Jofra Archer combined to run through the tail. "England played far more professionally," said Kohli, whose side were all out for 337 in the first innings. "England were ready for the grind and were far more equipped than we were. With the bat as well as the ball, we left a lot of things to be desired."

England have recorded five series wins in India since 1933. They last won under Alastair Cook in 2012-13 in a series when Root made his Test debut. They lost the last series in 2016. Root came into this series on the back of match-winning scores of 228 and 186 against Sri Lanka last month. The second Test begins Saturday with spectators allowed into Chennai's M A Chidambaram Stadium — a first for Indian cricket since the coronavirus pandemic outbreak. — AFP



## Sports

# Bayern Munich eye sixth title after reaching Club World Cup final

## European champions face Mexico's Tigres tomorrow

**AL-RAYYAN:** Robert Lewandowski says Bayern Munich are eager to claim their sixth title in a year after advancing to the Club World Cup final as his goals sealed a 2-0 victory over African champions Al-Ahly in Monday's semi-final. The European champions face Tigres in the final tomorrow after the Mexican club saw off Brazilian giants Palmeiras in Sunday's other semi-final.

"It was a very good match and we're ready for the final," Bayern striker Lewandowski told reporters. He gave Bayern the lead with just 17 minutes gone at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, a host venue for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The Poland star then headed home a pinpoint Leroy Sane cross four minutes before the whistle to book Bayern's place in the final. Lewandowski, the Bundesliga's top scorer, has now scored 29 goals in 27 club matches this season.

Bayern are bidding to become only the second team after Barcelona in 2009 to win all six domestic and international titles up for grabs in one season. The German giants lifted the Bundesliga, German Cup, Champions League, German Super Cup and UEFA Super Cup trophies in 2020.

"We want to claim another title — title number six during this season," Lewandowski added. "This is a World Cup, which is always something special. I hope we can play even better in the final and that we will have more goalscoring chances."

The European champions ended Ahly's 32-match unbeaten run in all competitions under their

South African-born coach Pitso Mosimane. "You understand why they are number one at this point in time in the world and in Europe also," said Mosimane. "They regained the ball quicker, they pressed us quicker, they're more experienced. We could only do something on a break."

### Early goal

The African Champions League winners struggled to get near the Bayern goal as the Germans enjoyed 70 percent possession. Despite the efforts of two defenders lunging to block his shot, Lewandowski put Bayern ahead with a crisp finish from a Serge Gnabry pass.

The Poland striker could have made it 2-0 towards the end of the first half when Joshua Kimmich drew the defense, but Lewandowski fired over the bar. Ahly grew in confidence at the start of the second half and created half-chances as the Bundesliga leaders showed signs of fatigue.

Heavy snow in Berlin on Saturday meant Bayern had a seven-hour delay to their flight to Doha and the Germans' tempo dropped after Lewandowski's early goal. "We travelled to Qatar because we want to bag another trophy," said Bayern coach Hansi Flick. "It was difficult to perform at first and we needed time to get into the run of the game. When we did, I think we dominated the match and deserved to score a second goal. We played well defensively, I'm very satisfied with my team."

With an eye on tomorrow's final in Al-Rayyan, Flick replaced forwards Mueller and Gnabry for



**AL-RAYYAN:** Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski celebrates his second goal during the FIFA Club World Cup semi-final football match between Egypt's Al-Ahly and Germany's Bayern Munich at the Ahmed bin Ali Stadium in the Qatari city of Al-Rayyan on Monday. —AFP

the final half-hour. It was the fresh legs of Gnabry's replacement Sane which created space

to serve up a late cross that Lewandowski headed home to wrap up the win. —AFP

## Doha drive-in delights expat footie fans at Club World Cup

**LUSAIL, Qatar:** A drive-in cinema opened during Qatar's coronavirus crisis to offer respite from strict distancing rules switched from horror films to football fever on Monday to show Bayern Munich's Club World Cup semi-final against Al-Ahly.

Egyptian expats cheering Ahly gathered alongside Doha's Bayern backers to watch on the big screen as the African and European champions slugged it out at the Ahmad Bin Ali stadium 25 kilometers (15 miles) away.

"Actually we did not choose the stadium because of (the requirement for) COVID-19 tests," said Egyptian Wael Abdelhady who has lived in Doha for 10 years. "The other option was watching it at home and we prefer to be here!"

Around him, food delivery drivers dropped off takeaway meals to hungry fans as they sat back in their pick-up trucks and off-roaders, watching Robert Lewandowski score twice to give Bayern a

2-0 win. The Germans will face Mexican side Tigres in the final tomorrow.

Bayern fan Jad Razek said the drive-in was "better to be with the family". "It's also a different experience than what we have at the stadium so it's a new adventure," he said as children ate popcorn from a bucket nearby.

### 'Smart idea'

The drive-in, which can host more than 150 cars, had previously shown Disney family favorites like "Bambi" and horror movies including "The Blair Witch Project" and the 1931 Boris Karloff classic "Frankenstein".

It launched in November during the annual Ajyal film festival when cinemas, as they are now, were subject to strict limits on attendance and tough distancing rules. "It's amazing, it's a very smart idea with the cars — even more with COVID and all. It's better," said Bayern supporting Frenchman Talal Saoudi as the brightly-lit skyscrapers of the new Lusail district twinkled behind the big screen.

The venue, which also showed Tigres' surprise win over Brazil's Palmeiras in the other semi-final on Sunday, charges \$40 per car which makes economic and practical sense for family groups who would all have to take a coronavirus test in order



**LUSAIL, Qatar:** Football supporters watch the FIFA Club World Cup semi-final football match between Egypt's Al-Ahly and Germany's Bayern Munich on a giant screen in Lusail, around 20km north of the Qatari capital Doha, on Monday. —AFP

to watch the match live.

"Bringing audiences together at safe social distances, the open-air experience of drive-in cinemas is a perfect way to bring the excitement of the game to the community at a time when it's challenging for many to go to a game," said Doha Film Institute chief executive Fatma Hassan Alremahi. —AFP

## Suarez strikes twice but Atletico stumble against Celta

**MADRID:** Atletico Madrid slipped up in La Liga for the first time in nine games on Monday as Celta Vigo snatched a late equalizer to deliver a ray of hope to Barcelona and Real Madrid. Luis Suarez scored twice at the Wanda Metropolitano to overturn Santi Mina's opener for Celta, with Atletico on course to restore their 10-point lead at the top of the table.

But Facundo Ferreyra slid in to score in the 89th minute to earn a deserved 2-2 draw for the visitors, meaning Atletico's advantage at the end of the weekend is reduced to eight, still with a game in hand. "We played quite well but they had a strong finish and a draw was probably fair," said Diego Simeone.

Atletico still have a considerable cushion but after Madrid and Barca beat Huesca and Real Betis respectively, there is at least room for encouragement for the chasing pack. Suarez shows no sign of letting up, the Uruguayan now with 11 goals in his last nine games and 16 for the season. Those 16 goals in 17 games played for Atletico make him the fastest player to score that many for a La Liga club in the 21st century, one game faster than Cristiano Ronaldo after he joined Real Madrid.

Atletico have been hit hard by coronavirus in recent months, the club confirming another two positive cases on Monday afternoon. Thomas Lemar and Hector Herrera join Mario Hermoso, Joao Felix and Moussa Dembele on the list of those currently out after contracting the illness. "We have to make the best of it," said Simeone. "We have footballers who can take advantage of the opportunities and we hope that the boys recover."

Celta, who stay 10th, were the better side in the



**MADRID:** Celta Vigo's Argentine forward Facundo Ferreyra (left) scores a goal during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and RC Celta de Vigo at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid on Monday. —AFP

first half, dominating possession and taking a deserved lead after 13 minutes when Hugo Mallo curled in a cross from the right for Mina to head in. Atletico rarely troubled Celta but managed to go in level, Suarez scoring with their first shot on target. Marcos Llorente's driven cross evaded four sets of Celta toes and found him at the back post.

Lucas Torreira came on at half-time for Felipe — Atletico reverting to a back four — and within five minutes they were ahead. Geoffrey Kondogbia

floated a ball out to the left and Renan Lodi volleyed it across goal, where the sliding Suarez arrived on his knees to finish. Celta almost had a second when Iago Aspas bundled through but Kondogbia darted back to make a superb tackle, just as the striker was about to shoot. Atletico were moments away but caved with one minute left, a brilliant through ball by Aspas freeing Augusto Solari, whose cross found Ferreyra two meters out. —AFP

## Gladbach v Man City Champions League match moved to Budapest

**PARIS:** Manchester City's first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie against Borussia Muenchengladbach will be played in Budapest due to strict coronavirus entry rules imposed by Germany, UEFA announced Monday. The switch

of venue comes 24 hours after Liverpool's match against Leipzig next week was also relocated to Budapest for the same reason.

Pep Guardiola's City will play Gladbach at the Puskas Arena on February 24. "We have to presume that the travel ban for passengers from the UK to Germany, which is currently in place until 17th February, will be extended and that the Manchester City team will not be granted special permission to travel to Muenchengladbach," said Borussia CEO Stephan Schippers. "We have come to this decision based on several conversations with the relevant authorities, politicians, the DFL (German league) and UEFA over the past week."

UEFA's regulations stipulate the home side

must find a way of hosting the match or risk forfeiting it as a 3-0 defeat. Introduced late last month the new German rules, slated to last until at least February 17, ban travellers from countries hit by new, more contagious COVID-19 variants such as the one found in Britain. The regulations also apply to visitors from Ireland and Portugal. Though there are some exceptions for medical workers and others in key professions the new protocol contains no special provision for professional sportspeople.

"UEFA's regulations state that as the home side we are required to find an alternative venue. For several reasons, we have decided to play the game at the Puskas Arena in Budapest," said Schippers. "We would like to thank UEFA and

the Hungarian FA for their support regarding this matter. A last-16 Champions League tie is a huge event for Borussia Muenchengladbach, which we now cannot play in our own ground or with any fans in attendance. Nevertheless, we're pleased that we can play the game at all and we are conscious of the overall situation."

Leipzig, who face Liverpool in the first leg on February 16, are due at Anfield for the return meeting on March 10, while Gladbach are scheduled to travel to Manchester on March 16. Fellow Bundesliga side Hoffenheim could be affected in the Europa League by Norwegian restrictions. Their last-32 clash away to Molde is also likely to be moved after the Oslo government closed its borders to all non-residents. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Biden invites Super Bowl champs

**WASHINGTON:** Super Bowl champions the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and their iconic leader Tom Brady got an invitation Monday to the White House, though it's far from certain when they'll be able to come — or if they'll accept. "We look forward to inviting the Buccaneers, as well as the 2020 NBA champions, the Lakers, to the White House," President Joe Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, told reporters. However she added a big caveat: the visit will be "when it is COVID-safe, but I don't know when that will take place yet." —AFP

#### Ohtani, Angels agree to deal

**LOS ANGELES:** Japanese star Shohei Ohtani has agreed a new two-year contract with the Los Angeles Angels taking him through to the end of the 2022 campaign, the team said Monday. The 26-year-old two-way player's deal is worth \$8.5 million and means the club avoid having to go to arbitration. Ohtani joined the Angels in 2017 and won Rookie of the Year honours in 2018 after a dazzling debut season which saw him club 22 homers and 61 RBIs while posting a 3.31 ERA from the mound in 10 starts. —AFP

#### Pogba sidelined for 'few weeks'

**LONDON:** Paul Pogba will be out of action for a "few weeks" after suffering a thigh injury during Manchester United's 3-3 draw with Everton, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Monday. The 27-year-old midfielder was forced off towards the end of the first half of Saturday's match, just days after being named the club's player of the month for January. Pogba's absence will be a blow to United as they battle to stay in touch with Premier League leaders Manchester City and with FA Cup and Europa League matches to come. Pogba was enjoying a resurgence in form but Solskjaer said he did not want to take risks with him. —AFP

#### Ref receives death threats

**LONDON:** Premier League referee Mike Dean has alerted police after his family received death threats following two controversial red cards he issued over the past week. Dean was criticized for sending off Southampton defender Jan Bednarek against Manchester United last Tuesday and West Ham midfielder Tomas Soucek in Saturday's match at Fulham. Both decisions have now been overturned on appeal. Reports said Dean had asked to be excused from duty next weekend although it is understood he will referee Wednesday's FA Cup fifth-round match between Leicester and Brighton. —AFP



## Barty bagels, Rafa magic at Australian Open

### Azarenka knocked out, Kenin advances to round two

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal's injured back didn't slow his bid for a record 21st Grand Slam title yesterday, as women's world number one Ashleigh Barty romped to a 6-0, 6-0 'double bagel' at the Australian Open. On a day when women's champion Sofia Kenin also reached round two, but two-time winner Victoria Azarenka lost after breathing problems, Nadal and Barty were the headline acts at the coronavirus-delayed Slam.

Spanish great Nadal, who pulled out of last week's ATP Cup with back problems, beat Serbia's Laslo Djere 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 in one hour and 52 minutes on a sun-kissed Rod Laver Arena. "It's been a tough 15 days for me," said the 2009 champion, whose back stiffness first flared during an exhibition match last month. "I needed to survive today and that's what I did. I'm happy to be through and I think I did a good job today. Straight sets is what I needed."

Nadal, 34, is attempting to outstrip his old rival Roger Federer, who is out with injury, and take sole ownership of the all-time record for Grand Slam titles. After world number one Novak Djokovic eased through late on Monday, Russia's Daniil Medvedev extended his winning streak to 15 matches with an emphatic 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory over Canada's Vasek Pospisil.

The 2019 US Open finalist is raising hopes of a maiden Grand Slam title with his unbeaten run, which includes winning the Paris Masters, ATP Finals and last week's ATP Cup with Russia. Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev also continued his winning start to the year with a straight-sets victory over German Yannick Hanfmann 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

And Greek fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas made short work of French veteran Gilles Simon, winning 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 in 92 minutes. "I think I played a spectacular match from the beginning to the end," said the confident 22-year-old.

#### Barty started

Barty also outclassed Montenegro's Danka Kovinic, losing only 10 points as she raced into round two in just 44 minutes. With the win Barty, last year's semi-finalist who sat out most of the 2020 season, ramped up hopes of a first Australian women's winner in 43 years. "It felt great to be here," she said. "I tried to stick to my process and routine but I just wanted to have fun."

Women's champion Kenin was less convincing and she audibly vented her frustrations during her 7-5, 6-4 win against Australian Maddison Inglis, who is ranked outside the top 100. Two-time major-winner Garbine Muguruza, who was stunned by Kenin in last year's final, had little trouble beating Russia's Margarita Gasparyan 6-4, 6-0.

But there were distressing scenes as an ailing Azarenka, the 2012 and 2013 champion, went out to Jessica Pegula. Azarenka, who was one of the players locked down in hard quarantine pre-tournament and not allowed out of her room for 14 days, began to suffer in the second set.

The 2020 US Open runner-up, who only played one warm-up match last week, was seen gasping and using an inhaler, and then looked close to collapse on court. After a medical timeout she played on but lost 7-5, 6-4.

America's Tenny Sandgren and Spain's Paula Badosa, who were also in hard quarantine, both went out but there was an impressive, straight-sets win for Spanish Grand Slam debutant Carlos Alcaraz, 17. "He has all the ingredients to become a great champion," Nadal said of Alcaraz, who swept past Botic Van de Zandschulp 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Elsewhere, fifth seed Elina Svitolina of the Ukraine was pushed hard by Czech Marie Bouzkouva before coming through 6-3, 7-5 (7/5). She will next play 16-year-old American Coco Gauff, who beat Venus Williams and Naomi Osaka



MELBOURNE: Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return against Serbia's Laslo Djere during the men's singles match on day two of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

last year and enjoyed a straightforward 6-3, 6-2 win over Switzerland's Jil Teichmann yesterday.

The year's first Grand Slam has started three weeks late because of coronavirus problems, with players and officials required to quarantine for

two weeks after arriving in Australia. Crowds are limited, masks are mandatory and movement is curbed around Melbourne Park, where Monday's attendance was 17,922, compared with 64,387 on day one in 2020. — AFP



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