

3 Kuwaiti military aircraft with emergency aid arrives in India



5 23 dead, dozens injured as metro collapses in Mexico



8 Gulf Cable approves distribution of cash dividends at 50 fils per share





Fajr	03:36
Shurooq	05:03
Dhuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Maghrib	18:26
Isha	19:51



# MP raises questions about secretive Twitter accounts

Assembly panel fails to meet over crucial law

## 5-day Eid holiday from Wednesday

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Civil Service Commission said yesterday that Eid Al-Fitr public holiday will start on Wednesday, May 12, and will end on Sunday May 16 irrespective of whether or not Wednesday marks the first day of Eid. The decision for the five-day break applies to all ministries, government agencies and bodies along with public sector institutions, according to a statement issued by the Commission. Public sector institutions will return to regular working hours on Monday, May 17, the statement added. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition lawmaker Shuaib Al-Muwaizri yesterday sent a series of questions to Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah about a number of unidentified Twitter accounts that have been publishing material about a perceived conspiracy in the country.

In his questions, Muwaizri sent the names of 10 Twitter accounts that carried mysterious titles and that have been allegedly posting videos and texts, alleging the presence of a conspiracy targeting the stability of the country and its leadership.

The lawmaker asked the minister if the ministry agencies have been following these and similar accounts and if the accounts were being run from inside or outside of the country. He also asked if the ministry has identified those behind the accounts and if it has taken any legal action

against them.

Muwaizri also asked the minister if the ministry has asked the Twitter regional management based in Dubai about the people running those accounts especially that they have been spreading material targeting the stability of Kuwait. The lawmaker asked the minister if those accounts had any relation with members of parliament or any economic, political or security personalities in Kuwait.

He asked if the ministry, through its security cooperation with regional or international powers, came to know about any internal or external plots targeting the security of Kuwait and its stability, and what measures it had taken to counter such plots if any.

MP Hisham Al-Saleh, meanwhile, asked Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Shaye Al-Shaye for a list of MPs and ministers who had been granted state agricultural land since 2010 and

another list for their close relatives who received the same grants. The lawmaker asked if the state Audit Bureau has recorded any violations in this regard and demanded to know the measures taken against such violations.

The Assembly interior and defense committee failed to meet yesterday due to a lack of quorum as only two of its five members attended. Committee member MP Marzouk Al-Khalifa said that the meeting was supposed to discuss crucial amendments to a law which bans people convicted of religious insults or insulting HH the Amir from contesting parliamentary elections for life.

The law was used to nullify the membership of former opposition MP Bader Al-Dahoum and the opposition pressed to amend the legislation which they said is not in line with the constitution. Khalifa charged that the absence of the three committee members is deliberate to prevent the amendments.



## NO DOWN PAYMENT.

Enjoy leasing any of Volvo's models with no down payment during Ramadan.

CALL US 2209 9999 • 9500 0000

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM IN AL RAI OR VOLVO STUDIO IN AL KHALEEJIA TOWER

VOLVO



# Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince meet Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad

Sheikh Nawaf condoles with Mexican President on train collapse victims



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condo-



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

lences yesterday to the Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez. In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed sorrow over the victims of the metro train bridge collapse, which left several dead and injured. His

Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA

## Prime Minister visits Kuwait Land Forces

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Monday paid a visit to the Land Forces in northern Kuwait. The Premier was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali

Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff General Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Nasser. His Highness the Premier listened to a brief presentation on the modern mechanisms used by the Land Forces and their duties, and he then was briefed on Caracal helicopters, which have recently entered the military service.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister held an Iftar banquet in honor of His Highness the Prime Minister and his companions. Following the visit, Sheikh Sabah Khaled expressed pride for the key role by the Land Forces to safeguard the dear homeland, and maintain its stability, security and territorial integrity. He



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in a group photo during his visit to the Land Forces in northern Kuwait. — KUNA

lauded the Defense Ministry's efforts aiming to keep pace with the accelerated development witnessed by the military field and modern technology in military

equipment. The Minister of Defense, meanwhile, expressed his appreciation to His Highness the Prime Minister for his permanent support to all sectors of the

army and keenness on enhancing its capabilities. His Highness the Prime Minister also paid a visit to north of the country. — KUNA



TOYOTA

# IT'S A FAMILY THING

My grandfather owns a 1964 Toyota Land Cruiser J45. He would take me and my brother out into the middle of nowhere camping. He would tell us stories around the fire under the cover of the stars about his life and adventures. That's why I call mine the "star".



The AlSayer family introduced Toyota to Kuwait in 1954. As the range has grown so has the bond, establishing trust, versatile showrooms, quality service, genuine spare parts and 24/7 roadside assistance. Now the favourite of generations.



MOHAMED NASER ALSAYER & SONS EST. CO. W.L.L.  
A SUBSIDIARY OF ALSAYER HOLDING.

1803803

 toyotaku



## Local

# Kuwait govt briefed on measures to prevent entry of Indian variant

## MOH seeks help of 500 nursing students; certificates for volunteers

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet during its weekly meeting on the latest developments of the global situation of the coronavirus (COVID-19) especially in light of the spread of India's mutant strain. He also informed the ministers on the latest developments of the coronavirus in Kuwait and the preventive measures taken to monitor and ensure the prevention of entry and spread of the Indian new strain into the country. Sheikh Basel also apprised the ministers of the number of infections, recoveries and deaths as well as those who receive treatment, noting that the ministry is continuing the vaccination campaign as the centers of inoculation are witnessing a high turnout of people to get vaccine.

The Ministry of Health had announced Monday recording 1,246 new coronavirus infections and 12 related deaths in the previous 24 hours. The new figures took the total cases in the country up to 277,832 and deaths to 1,590 respectively, noted the ministry's spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad. He pointed out that some 1,361 more people had been cured of the virus over the same period, raising the total of those who have overcome the disease to 261,369. He added that the number of people hospitalized with the virus stood at 14,873 as of Monday, with 207 of them in intensive care units. Dr Sanad revealed that some 8,869 swab tests were conducted over the same period, bringing the total to 2,351,938.

### Accelerating vaccination

The Cabinet called on all citizens and expats to be cautious, stressing that abiding by measures and upgrading awareness with health authorities to accelerate vaccination ensure the safety of both citizens and expats. It reviewed the recommendations made by the ministerial committee for coronavirus emergency and took some measures. In this regard, the Cabinet approved the demand of the Ministry of Health on using the service of 500 nursing students of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training for six months to occupy the shortage at the MoH



KUWAIT: People queue up to receive a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at the makeshift Kuwait Vaccination Center in Mishref's Kuwait International Fairground yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

and enable those students to practice that qualifies them to work in health facilities in the future. In addition, the Cabinet also allowed the entry of citizens who have licensed cattle via sea and land borders, and other cases. The government tasked the Ministry of Interior's civil defense with giving certificates of appreciation to the volunteers who work during the coronavirus crisis, in recognition of their efforts and sacrifice.

The Cabinet had previously announced a travel ban on Kuwaitis, their first-degree relatives and domestic helpers as of May 22 if they do not receive anti-coronavirus vaccine set by the Ministry of Health. Young people who are not included in the vaccination are exempted from the ban, said Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, noting that non-Kuwaitis are still prevented from entering the country.

### Interpellation motions

During its meeting held in Seif Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet

during examined interpellation motions addressed to the ministers of foreign and finance affairs, affirming support for the two executives as they "sincerely pursue fulfilling their tasks." A statement read after the session said the ministers examined the two motions that had been submitted by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, and Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Khalifa Hamadah.

Based on Article 135 of the National Assembly Bylaw, the two motions would be included in the agenda of the Forthcoming parliamentary session. Noting that the interpellation is a right for MPs guaranteed by the Constitution, the Cabinet affirmed its full confidence in the two ministers and its keenness on backing them so they may pursue their sincere efforts in fulfilling the tasks accorded to them. In the end of the session, the ministers discuss some political affairs in light on latest developments on the political arena at the Arab and International levels. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti military aircraft carrying emergency aid arrives in New Delhi

NEW DELHI: The first Kuwaiti military flight carrying emergency medical aid from Kuwait Red Crescent Society arrived in New Delhi yesterday. Kuwaiti Ambassador Jassem Al-Najem said that this emergency support is coming in line with the guidelines of Kuwait leadership, especially His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in order to help to reduce the suffering of the friendly Indian people due to this health disaster. Ambassador Najem, who was at the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New Delhi to receive the military aircraft, said that the flight carried 40 tons of emergency aid from the KRCS. The first aid consignment from Kuwait includes ventilators, a large number of oxygen concentrators, about 300 oxygen cylinders of various sizes, medicines, sterile corridors, sterilization tools, personal protective equipment, and other medical supplies, he said. The Ambassador underlined that this aid reflects the solidarity of the leadership, government, and people of Kuwait with India in these difficult times. He also hailed the key role played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and the Kuwait Red Crescent

Society for the quick response and for harnessing all capabilities for immediate delivery of the aid.

Meanwhile, Joint Secretary, Gulf, at the Indian External Affairs Ministry Ambassador Vipul praised the pioneering humanitarian role of the State of Kuwait and its solidarity with India during various adversities adding that Kuwait was among the first countries in extending a helping hand. He thanked the Amir, the government, and the people of Kuwait for their support and assistance to India at this tough time. He also praised the proactive role played by Kuwait Embassy in New Delhi for the speedy coordination with the concerned authorities in Kuwait and hailed the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for their prompt response to distress calls in various countries of the world. The Indian official also stressed that this pandemic demonstrated the importance of joint international cooperation and that how the international community can work together to face serious challenges. The Kuwait Cabinet had decided in a meeting earlier to send emergency aid to India to help it fight a mutated variant of coronavirus. —KUNA



NEW DELHI: Kuwaiti Ambassador to India Jassem Al-Najem (left) and Joint Secretary, Gulf, at the Indian External Affairs Ministry Ambassador Vipul pose for a picture outside a plane carrying medical aid from Kuwait to India. — KUNA photo

## Minister signs KD 2.7m optical fiber maintenance contract

KUWAIT: The Minister of Public Works and Minister of Communications and Information Technology Dr Rana Al-Fares signed a maintenance contract for fiber optic devices for the first and second stages at the ministry which is worth about KD 2.7 million (\$9.2 million). The under-secretary assistant for Communications and Support Services Sector at the Ministry, Engineer Manea Al-Ajmi, said in a press statement that the ministry has contracted with Nokia

Company to provide development and operation of the Next Generation Network (NGN) to ensure that the devices continue to operate with the required efficiency. He added that the contract also provides the latest developments in the world of technology to provide the best services to citizens and residents subscribing to optical fiber services. He pointed out that it is a three-year contract, indicating that there are penalties in breaching any clause of the contract. — KUNA



Dr Rana Al-Fares

## Kuwait curfew: What you need to know

KUWAIT: Kuwait imposed a curfew from 7:00 pm to 5:00 am until the end of Ramadan to help curb an increase in COVID-19 cases. During the curfew hours, pharmacies, medical stores, co-operative societies and supermarkets are allowed to continue operation only through delivery services, while restaurants and cafes are allowed to deliver food from 7:00 pm to 3:00 am every day. Also during the curfew, people are allowed to go to prayers at mosques only by walking, and the government allowed people to practice walking and jogging from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. The government meanwhile allowed salons and health clubs to reopen during the day but kept restaurants and cafes closed except for drive-through and delivery services. Meanwhile, taxis are allowed to carry only a maximum of two passengers.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched a booking service, allowing people to shop from 7:00 pm to 12:00 am during the curfew hours. The service is valid for all co-ops and supermarkets around Kuwait. To book an appointment, a shopper should visit [www.moci.shop](http://www.moci.shop), enter the required information (civil ID number and serial number, contact number and email address), the reason for appointment (food supply center) and the time and date of the appointment. The shopper would then receive a barcode to show once

they reach the shopping center.

### Where to obtain a curfew pass?

Citizens and residents that need a pass during the curfew hours to leave their homes can apply for a pass at <https://www.paci.gov.kw/>. The pass is available for those in need of emergency medical treatment, doctor's visits, blood donation, COVID-19 swabs and COVID-19 vaccinations.

### Co-op delivery during curfew hours

During curfew hours, co-ops, grocery stores and other markets will be allowed to offer delivery services. Most co-ops will accept orders via delivery. Here is an incomplete list of co-op WhatsApp numbers. Each co-op will be responsible for deciding if and when they provide delivery services and not all may be providing.

Omariya Co-op  
WhatsApp 6041-0067

Farwaniya Co-op  
WhatsApp 6767-8211

Qairawan Co-op  
WhatsApp 9000-3749

Jahra Co-op  
WhatsApp 5160-2458

Abdulla Al-Mubarak Co-op  
WhatsApp 6066-6338

Nuzha Co-op  
WhatsApp 9784-5531

Khaitan Co-op  
WhatsApp 6777-9745

Ardhiya Co-op  
WhatsApp 6902-0779

Rabiya Co-op  
WhatsApp 2438-8316

Wafra Farm Co-op  
Tel: 9883-5245 / 5170-0085

Salmiya Co-op  
Tel: 22253225

Jabriya Co-op  
Tel: 1805-353  
WhatsApp 6566-6084

Rawdha & Hawally  
WhatsApp 9662-2883

Shaab Co-op  
WhatsApp 9090-4455

Wafra Co-op  
WhatsApp 5055-0539

Keifan Co-op  
WhatsApp 5178-1719

Rehab Co-op  
WhatsApp 9222-2358

Mishref Co-op  
WhatsApp 5055-9900

Faiha Co-op  
Tel: 1861-000  
WhatsApp 9098-6000

Rumaihiya Co-op  
WhatsApp 6066-0045

Bayan Co-op  
WhatsApp 9004-2500

Fahaheel Co-op  
WhatsApp 5178-9951

Adan & Qusour Co-op  
Tel: 5034-3111 / 6593-3975

Salam Co-op  
WhatsApp 9788-7832

• Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**

• Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**

• Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

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



## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

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

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## 60K subscribers in KFH virtual walking challenge

**KUWAIT:** The number of subscribers in the virtual walking challenge organized by Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in partnership with V-Thru application has reached nearly 60,000 since the beginning of Ramadan. The virtual walking challenge takes place throughout the month of Ramadan covering over 50 areas. This comes as part of KFH's "Better Health ... Better Life" program and the bank's social responsibility and efforts to engage with people to promote virtual activity and daily exercise lifestyle.

The virtual activity takes place during the walking hours allowed by the government. Everyone is invited to participate by opening the app and completing the challenge of walking a certain distance (1km). Everyone who completes the challenge in time receives KD 1 in their balance on the App which can be used for in-app purchases from various cafes and restaurants. People could also have the option to donate the daily prize of KD 1 to charity inside Kuwait.

At the end of the month of Ramadan, KFH will reward the top 10 in the scoreboard with X-Pay compatible wearable devices (Garmin, Fitbit, Samsung). In addition to the daily walking challenge, KFH organizes side challenges by encouraging people to activate their Digital Wallet on their fitness wearable device and upon finishing the daily challenge, they show one of KFH representatives proof of activation for an extra credit reward of KD2. KFH also distributes coffee for participants in some areas in collaboration with Kuwaiti small businesses.

### Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Workers prepare iftar meals at a restaurant in Kuwait yesterday. Despite COVID-19 restrictions that saw iftar feasts banned across Kuwait, iftar meals continue to be distributed to people in need during Ramadan. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Contribution of prophets and messengers to civilization

By Hassan T Bwambale

According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, civilization means "A society, culture and its way of life during a particular period of time or in a particular part of the world." It also means "A place that offers you the comfortable way of life of a modern society." According to Wikipedia - Free Encyclopedia, civilization may be used more broadly to refer to the sum, or current extent, of human accomplishments. The word civilization came from the Latin word for townsman or citizen. As such, to be "civilized" meant being a townsman, governed by the constitution and legal statutes of that community.

Since God (Allah) created everything for us, He wouldn't have left us groping in darkness trying to make use of them without knowledge and guidance. He sent messengers and prophets who first taught their peoples how to worship Him (Allah) and then direct people towards benefiting from the resources essential for their survival on this earth. God says in Al-Hadeeth Al-Qudsi what can be translated as, "O son of Adam! I have created everything for you, and created you to serve Me. Therefore, continue worshipping Me - everything will be easy for you." (Sahih Muslim)

Work is an act of worship in Islam. Allah (the Almighty and Majestic) says in the Quran what can be translated as: Say: "Work (righteousness); soon will Allah observe your work, and His messenger, and the believers. Soon will you be brought back to the Knower of what is hidden and what is open; then will He show you the truth of all that you do." (9:105) Prophets and Messengers demonstrated to their respective followers that working hard is beneficial both in this transitory life and in the Hereafter. They all had special skills by which they earned their sustenance to support them and those they were responsible for.

Prophet Saleh, for example, was sent to the tribe of Thamud. Beside urging them to worship Allah alone, he also urged them to continue developing the living conditions on earth given the fact that God had blessed them abundantly with various skills. Allah says translated as: "To the Thamud people (We sent) Saleh, one of their own brethren. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other god but Him. It is He who has created you from the earth and settled you therein. Then ask forgiveness of Him, and turn to Him (in repentance), for my Lord is (always) near, ready to answer.'" (11:61)

### Prophets, their roles and some of their achievements

**a. Adam:** He was the progenitor of mankind and the first prophet, a farmer, a mason and a shepherd. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) informed his companions that all the prophets worked as shepherds. This activity helped them acquire some virtuous qualities such as kindness, forbearance, patience, magnanimity, etc. This is a great indication that prophets were not only learned but also had practical vocational roles.

**b. Noah:** He was a shepherd and carpenter. Allah Almighty says translated as: "So We inspired him (with this message): Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance. Then when Our command comes, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take on board pairs of every species, male and female, and thy family ...." (23:27)

**c. David:** He was a king and a blacksmith. God says translated as: "It was We (God) Who taught him (David) the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence; will you then be grateful?" (21:80)

**d. Jesus:** He was a physician and a shepherd. God says translated as: "You (Jesus) make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave. And you breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by My leave. And you heal those born blind and the lepers, by My leave. And behold! You bring forth the dead by My leave..." (5:110)

**e. Idris (Enoch):** He invented the art of writing, sewed clothes from bark, and made conventional primitive weapons.

**f. Abraham and Ishmael:** They were masons and shepherds. God says translated as: "And remember Abraham and Ismail raised the foundation of the house (Ka'bah) with this prayer: 'Our Lord, accept (this service) from us, for You are the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing.'" (2:127)

**g. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):** He was a shepherd in his childhood and youth as well as a trader, historian and orator, military commander and effective leader, among others.

### Prophets and messengers built and never destroyed

Before going to war, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would admonish his companions not to kill children, women, the elderly and monks in their monasteries. He also advised them against mutilation of the enemy's corpses, arbitrary killing of animals except for food, and destroying vegetation.

### Conclusion

Due to the fact that prophets and messengers did not depend on their status as prophets for their livelihoods, but rather employed their skills for their survival, we conclude that human civilization started with them. Therefore, we should read about them as much as we can and put into practice whatever they did whenever we deem it suitable. It should be clearly understood that using our health, time, property, and material products of all kinds, we develop our moral, physical, spiritual and emotional nature.

- Courtesy of TIES: TIES is among the projects funded and managed by Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Dialogue. TIES aims at empowering Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or 94079426 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

## UN regional bureau honors KPC CEO

**KUWAIT:** The UN regional bureau for Gulf states granted the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation CEO Hashem Hashem an award in appreciation of his efforts as one of the leading oil executives in the Arab world. A celebratory ceremony was held on Monday at the KPC headquarters; attended by Minister of Oil, Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares, where Hashem received the award from the head of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat — the Arabian Gulf branch — Dr Amira Al-Hassan, the UN acting resident coordinator in Kuwait and the UN resident envoy, Hassan in a statement said the award represented appreciation for Hashem and Kuwaiti oil sector personnel. — KUNA

### News in brief

#### Kuwait gives 65 tons of food to Iraqis

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's General Consulate in Irbil is handing out 65 tons of food as a Ramadan initiative to the displaced and refugee Iraqi community in the northern Kurdistan region, a diplomat said yesterday. The move falls in line with Kuwait's humanitarian policies currently assumed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah formerly, Consul General in Irbil Omar Al-Kandari said. Kurdistan is home to millions of displaced people, seeking safe shelter far from the practices of the so-called Islamic State group, he mentioned. The initiative will see assorted food packages distributed across Irbil, Sulaymaniyah and Mosul, amongst other nearby cities and towns. — KUNA

#### Kuwait denounces Houthi attacks

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Foreign Ministry on Monday condemned in terse terms continuous attacks by Houthi militia on civilian targets in Saudi Arabia. The ministry said in a statement that the continuous attacks constitute a threat to the security of the kingdom and the region. They also undermine international efforts aimed at putting an end to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. These attacks defy international and humanitarian rules, thus there must be rapid and decisive action to deter them. The ministry re-affirmed the State of Kuwait standing on side of the kingdom and support for any measure it may take to safeguard its stability and sovereignty. — KUNA

#### Kuwaiti oil price down

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 37 cents to \$65.77 per barrel Monday as oppose to \$66.14 pb Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. The prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate, globally, went up with the first going up by 80 cents to \$67.56 per barrel, while the latter went up by 91 cents to \$64.49 pb. — KUNA

# RAMADAN QUIZ 2021

*Kuwait Times annual Ramadan competition will publish every day throughout the holy month of Ramadan. All thirty coupons containing the correct answer must be sent to the newspaper to become eligible for the raffle draw. All coupons must be received on or before Monday 17 of May 2021. Winners will be announced in Kuwait Times.*

ISSUE NO: 18427 RAMADAN 23, 1442 AH

### Kuwait Times Ramadan Quiz

**23- Before the fasting of Ramadan was enjoined, the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, ordered his companions to fast a specific day in the year. Which was this day?**

- ☐ A. Day of Arafah  
☐ B. Day of Aashoora  
☐ C. Day of the middle of Shaaban

### Kuwait Times Ramadan Quiz

Date :  
Name :  
Civil ID :  
Tel :  
Email :

Strategic Partner

**zain**

Sponsored by





India virus infections top 20m, Europe, US ease restrictions



MEXICO CITY: Rescue workers gather at the site of a metro train accident after an overpass for a metro partially collapsed in Mexico City Monday. — AFP

# 23 dead as metro collapses in Mexico

## Mexican president vows full investigation into deadly metro crash

MEXICO CITY: An elevated metro line collapsed in the Mexican capital on Monday, leaving at least 23 people dead and dozens injured as a train came plunging down, authorities said. Carriages were seen hanging from the overpass in a tangle of twisted cables with the ends pointing towards the ground in a V-shape.

“Unfortunately there are 23 deceased,” including minors, Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum told reporters at the scene in the south of the capital. Around 65 others received hospital treatment following the dramatic accident, one of the worst to strike the Mexico City metro since it was inaugurated in 1969. Anxious relatives gathered at the site awaiting news of those believed to have been aboard the train. Efraim Juarez said that his son was in the wreckage.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador yesterday promised a full investigation involving international experts into a metro accident. “A thorough investigation will be carried out ... to know the truth,” Lopez Obrador said at his daily news conference. “From that the responsibility will be established,” he added. The left-wing populist said that the investigation was in the hands of the federal

and Mexico City prosecutors.

“We cannot get into speculation, much less blame the possible perpetrators without having proof. We will have the investigation carried out soon,” Lopez Obrador said. The metro line that partially collapsed on Monday night was built while Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, a close ally of Lopez Obrador, was mayor of the capital from 2006-2012. Ebrard told the same news conference that it was “a very sad day for everyone” and said he shared the outrage and pain over the tragedy.

“My daughter-in-law called us. She was with him and she told us the structure fell down over them,” he told AFP. Another man who did not give his name said that his brother was among those trapped. “He came with his wife and they managed to get her out, but he was crushed there and we don’t know anything,” he said.

### ‘Structure was shaking’

Dozens of emergency workers were seen trying to rescue victims from the carriages. The work had to be suspended because of fears the wreckage was too unstable, but it later resumed with the help of a

crane. A car was trapped under the rubble, but a person inside managed to get out alive, she said.

The police, who brought rescue dogs, urged onlookers to move back in case of falling debris.

“Suddenly I saw that the structure was shaking,” an unidentified witness told the Mexican television network Televisa. “When the dust cleared we ran... to see if we could help. There were no screams. I don’t know if they were in shock,” she added.

Medics were seen taking the injured away on stretchers. The casualties were rushed to different hospitals in the city, Sheinbaum said. She promised a structural examination of the affected metro line, which will remain closed, and a full investigation into the causes of the accident. “We will report the whole truth. Our support to all victims,” Sheinbaum tweeted.

### Lucky escape

One man, Jose Martinez, told reporters that he had a miraculous escape because he was unable to leave work in time to catch the ill-fated train. “I was saved by like 15 minutes. It’s good that nothing happened to me,” he said. The Mexico City subway has 12 lines and carries millions of passengers each day.

Line 12, where the accident struck, was inaugurated in October 2012 by then mayor Marcelo Ebrard, who is now foreign minister. Writing on Twitter, Ebrard offered his cooperation with the investigation to establish the causes and responsibility for what he called a “terrible tragedy.”

Ricardo de la Torre, a Mexico City resident who lives close to Line 12, said that he had been worried about the quality of the overpass because the trains make nearby buildings shake.

“By that simple fact we know that the construction is bad,” he said. In one of the worst accidents on the network, two metro trains rammed into each other leaving 23 dead and 55 injured in October 1975. Monday’s incident comes just over a year after two subway trains collided in Mexico City, leaving one dead and around 40 injured as panicked passengers escaped through dense smoke. In January of this year, one person died and 29 suffered smoke inhalation injuries in a fire in the metro’s control center. The latest accident comes at a time when Mexico is struggling to cope with the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 217,000 people dead in the country—one of the world’s highest tolls. — AFP

## London’s feisty mayor fighting for second term

LONDON: London Mayor Sadiq Khan, running for re-election tomorrow, has risen from humble roots to spar with prime ministers and presidents since taking charge of the British capital five years ago.

The 50-year-old politician from the main opposition Labour party, a former human rights lawyer brought up on a London public housing complex, is firm favorite to be returned to City Hall for a second stint. It will continue a remarkable journey for the Pakistani immigrant bus driver’s son, who was the first Muslim mayor of a Western capital when initially elected in 2016.



Sadiq Khan

He has made a name for himself as a vocal critic of Brexit and successive Conservative prime ministers, including his mayoral predecessor Boris Johnson, as well as for a feud with former US president Donald Trump. The pair became embroiled in an extraordinary war of words, after Khan criticized Trump’s controversial travel ban on people from certain Muslim countries. The mayor allowed an infamous blimp of the president dressed as a baby in a nappy to fly above protests in Parliament Square during his 2018 visit to Britain.

“He once called me a stone cold loser. Only one of us is a loser, and it’s not me,” a typically combative Khan told AFP as he campaigned ahead of this week’s poll.

**Street fighter**

Born in London in 1970 to parents who had recently arrived from Pakistan, Khan was the fifth child out of seven brothers and one sister. He grew up in public housing in Tooting, an ethnically mixed residential area in south London, and slept in a bunkbed until he was 24.

His modest background plays well in a city that is proud of its diversity and loves a self-made success story. “I never dreamed that someone like me could be elected as mayor of London,” he said back in 2016, adding he wanted to give every Londoner “the opportunities that our city gave to me and to my family”.

Khan still regularly recalls how his father drove one of London’s famous red buses, and his mother was a seamstress. One of his brothers is a motor mechanic. He is a handy boxer, having learnt the sport to defend himself in the streets against those who hurled racist abuse at him, and two of his brothers are boxing coaches. He also ran the London Marathon in 2014.

At school, he wanted to study science and become a dentist. But a teacher spotted his gift for verbal sparring and directed him towards law. He gained a law degree from the University of North London and started out as a trainee lawyer in 1994 at the Christian Fisher legal firm, where he was eventually made a partner.

He specialized in human rights, and spent three years chairing the civil liberties campaign group Liberty. He represented Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam movement, and Babar Ahmad,

a mosque acquaintance who was jailed in the United States after admitting providing support to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

**Muslim PM?**

Khan joined Labour aged 15 when Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher was in her pomp. He became a local councilor for Tooting in the Conservative-dominated Wandsworth local borough in 1994, and its member of parliament in 2005. He still lives in the area with his lawyer wife Saadiya and their two teenage daughters.

Then prime minister Gordon Brown made him the communities minister in 2008 and he later served as transport minister, becoming the first Muslim minister to attend Cabinet meetings.

In parliament, he voted for gay marriage—which earned him death threats. As mayor, he vowed to focus on providing affordable homes for Londoners and freezing transport fares, but-like many in power around the world-has seen his agenda engulfed by the pandemic. Khan has said his priority for a second term will be “jobs, jobs, jobs” as he bids to keep London on its perch as a top world city while tackling the crisis and the fallout from Brexit, which could threaten the capital’s vital financial sector.

He is London’s third mayor after Labour’s Ken Livingstone (2000-2008) and Johnson (2008-2016), with widespread speculation he could try to follow in his predecessor’s footsteps to Downing Street.

Khan predicts Britain will have a Muslim prime minister “in the not-too-distant future” but insists it will not be him. “As long as Londoners continue to trust me to be their mayor, I’m currently in this job,” he said.—AFP



BAGHDAD: Two rockets were fired yesterday at a base hosting Americans, in the third such attack in three days and as a US government delegation is visiting the country. —AFP

## Rocket attack, 3rd in 3 days, targets US in Iraq: Army

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi army said two rockets were fired yesterday at a base hosting Americans, in the third such attack in three days and as a US government delegation is visiting the country. The two rockets fell on an unoccupied segment of the Ain-Al-Assad airbase, “without causing damage or casualties,” the army said.

The latest rocket attack follows one against an airbase at Baghdad airport housing US-led coalition troops on Sunday night, and another against Balad airbase, which hosts US contractors, north of the capital on Monday night. None of the attacks have so far been claimed, but Washington routinely blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for such attacks on its troops and diplomats.

Pro-Iran Iraqi groups have vowed to ramp up attacks to force out the “occupying” US forces in recent months, sometimes against Tehran’s wishes, according to some experts. Iraq’s Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi, perceived by pro-Iran factions as too close to Washington, on Tuesday discussed the presence of 2,500 US soldiers based in Iraq with

US envoy Brett McGurk.

The men know each other well — Kadhemi, in his role as head of intelligence, a position he retains to this day, worked closely with McGurk when he was the US-led coalition’s representative.

The military coalition was set up to fight the Islamic State jihadist group, which seized control of a third of Iraq in a lightning 2014 offensive. Iraq declared victory against the jihadists in late 2017 and pressure from Shiite public opinion for the US to withdraw all its troops has mounted in the years since.

Kadhemi and McGurk are working on drawing up a timetable for the “withdrawal of combat forces from Iraq,” according to a statement by the prime minister’s office. Around 30 rocket or bomb attacks have targeted American interests in Iraq — including troops, the embassy or Iraqi supply convoys to foreign forces — since President Joe Biden took office in January. Two foreign contractors, one Iraqi contractor and eight Iraqi civilians have been killed in the attacks.

Last month, an explosives-packed drone slammed into Iraq’s Arbil airport in the first reported use of such a weapon against a base used by US-led coalition troops in the country, according to officials. Dozens of other attacks were carried out in Iraq from autumn 2019 during the administration of Biden’s predecessor Donald Trump. —AFP



## International

# Biden to allow up to 62,500 refugees into US after criticism

## New cap could help US reach the goal of 125,000 refugee admissions

**WASHINGTON:** President Joe Biden announced yesterday, after coming under fierce criticism, that he was raising the maximum number of refugees allowed into the United States this year to 62,500 — up from the 15,000 cap imposed by his predecessor Donald Trump.

The change follows backlash from allies over Biden's earlier decision to keep the Trump-era limits—a politically costly moment of confusion that stood out in a White House notable for its iron discipline in its first three months. “This erases the historically low number set by the previous administration of 15,000, which did not reflect America's values as a nation that welcomes and supports refugees,” Biden said in a statement.

“The new admissions cap will also reinforce efforts that are already underway to expand the United States’ capacity to admit refugees, so that we can reach the goal of 125,000 refugee admissions that I intend to set for the coming fiscal year.”

The program is only for refugees selected by US security and intelligence agencies from United Nations camps around the world. The course correction was quickly welcomed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is controlled by Biden's Democratic party.

“I welcome the Biden administration's announcement that it will increase the number of refugees allowed to be resettled in the United States. This is an important step in continuing our proud, bipartisan tradition of providing refugees protection through resettlement,” the committee chairman, Senator Bob Menendez, tweeted. The American Civil Liberties Union, a powerful advocacy group, also voiced approval, saying that the country's “reputation” was at stake.

“We are pleased to see President Biden has abandoned the Trump administration's abysmal

refugee goal and recommitted to prioritizing helping people who are fleeing persecution around the globe,” ACLU representative Manar Waheed said. “We recognize that the goal may not be easy and it requires rebuilding a system that was decimated by the Trump administration, but candidate Biden promised,” Waheed said. “He must fulfill that promise, lives are at stake.”

### Biden needs party unity

Trump clamped down on refugees as part of the hardline border policies at the heart of his nationalist political platform. Biden campaigned on promises to restore more traditional US attitudes. But he then backtracked after his government ran into difficulties in handling a surge of migrants entering the country illegally or claiming asylum at the Mexican border.

Last month, the White House said it needed more time to “rebuild” the post-Trump refugee program and would therefore keep the cap at 15,000 for the year. After a top Democrat and refugee aid groups slammed Biden's target as “appallingly low” and “deeply disappointing,” the White House issued a statement hours later saying the low number was only provisional.

In another shift from Trump's policies, Biden announced in April that quotas were being expanded for refugees from Central America, the Middle East and Africa, while also opening the doors to three mostly Muslim countries—Somalia, Syria and Yemen. With Monday's announcement, the White House will hope to have calmed the political waters among Democrats just when it needs party unity to push forward on huge proposed social and infrastructure spending plans in an almost evenly divided Congress. “We are amid the largest global refugee crisis in history, and after four years of slashing admissions to the low-



**NORFOLK, Virginia:** US President Joe Biden departs after speaking on the American Jobs Plan, following a tour of Tidewater Community College in Norfolk, Virginia Monday. —AFP

est point on record, we need to return to our leadership position,” another Democratic senator, Tim Kaine, said.

“I am heartened by today's announcement that moved toward upholding our values of accepting refugees,” Trump set the 15,000 cap nearly a month before the November 2020 presidential election, which he lost. Under his predecessor, Democrat Barack Obama, with whom

Biden served as vice president, an average of 100,000 people were welcomed into the United States each year. “It is in our DNA as a nation to open our door to those seeking refuge,” said US secretary of state Antony Blinken in response to Biden's announcement Monday. “It remains in our national interest to treat individuals applying for these programs fairly and with dignity and respect.” —AFP

### News in brief

#### Ex-AFP news chief Leridon dies

**PARIS:** French journalist Michele Leridon, who broke through glass ceilings to become the first woman appointed as global news director of Agence France-Presse, has died suddenly at the age of 62, it was announced yesterday. Leridon spent nearly 40 years at the agency before becoming a member of the Superior Audiovisual Council (CSA) which oversees French TV and radio. “A woman of conviction, Michele Leridon was a great journalist, unanimously respected for her rich experience and great intellectual rigor,” the CSA said in a statement. A cause of death was not given. Leridon joined AFP in 1981 and held many posts in Europe and Africa. —AFP

#### Egypt buys 30 Rafale fighter jets

**CAIRO:** Egypt's military has confirmed it ordered 30 Rafale jets from French defence firm Dassault Aviation to shore up “national security”. The order, which follows the 2015 purchase of 24 Rafale jets, will be financed through a 10-year loan, the military said in a statement late Monday. Investigative site Disclose had reported earlier Monday that the order was part of a secret mega-defense deal worth almost four billion euros (\$4.8 billion). Egypt is the world's third biggest arms importer after Saudi Arabia and India, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. —AFP

#### Lebanon, Israel talks resume over border

**NAQURA, Lebanon:** Lebanon and Israel resumed US-mediated negotiations over their disputed maritime border yesterday after a months-long hiatus, in efforts to clear the way for offshore oil and gas exploration. The talks, between countries still technically at war, kicked off at the UN base in the town of Naqura in southern Lebanon, the National News Agency said. Washington said Friday they were to be brokered by US diplomat John Desrocher, and called the resumption of talks “a positive step towards a long-awaited resolution”. Lebanon and Israel last year took part in indirect US-brokered talks to discuss demarcation. —AFP

#### Germany's far-right crime rate jumps

**BERLIN:** The number of crimes committed by right-wing extremists in post-war Germany jumped to its highest level ever recorded in 2020, according to official figures released yesterday. Police recorded 23,604 crimes of a far-right nature last year, a jump of over five percent on the previous year, and the highest figure since records began in 2001. “Right-wing extremism remains the biggest threat to our country,” said Interior Minister Horst Seehofer as he presented the figures at a press conference yesterday. He added that right-wing violence had left a “trail of blood” through Germany in recent years, citing deadly far-right crimes such as the murder of pro-refugee politician Walter Lübcke in 2019 and the 2020 racist attack in Hanau which killed nine people.

#### Turkey probes Istanbul's mayor

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish prosecutors have launched an investigation into Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu over his “disrespectful” behavior during a visit to a shrine, officials said yesterday. Imamoglu, who is a potential election challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan from the main opposition CHP party, was pictured with his hands folded behind his back during a visit to a tomb of an Ottoman sultan last year. He was attending a ceremony marking the anniversary of Istanbul's conquest from the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Interior ministry spokesman Ismail Catakli said the probe was opened by city prosecutors over allegations that the mayor was “disrespectful to the tomb of Fatih the Conqueror”. —AFP

## G7 seeks common front on China in first talks in 2 years

**LONDON:** The Group of Seven wealthy democracies yesterday discussed how to form a common front towards an increasingly assertive China in the foreign ministers' first in-person talks in two years.

Backing US President Joe Biden's calls for a deeper alliance of democracies, host Britain invited guests including India, South Korea and Australia for talks in central London stretched out over three days.

After a welcome dinner Monday focused on the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, the foreign ministers opened formal talks at Lancaster House, a West End mansion, welcoming one another with COVID-friendly elbow-bumps and minimal staff. The G7 devoted its first session Tuesday to China, whose growing military and economic clout, and willingness to exert its influence at home and abroad have increasingly unnerved Western democracies.

## Nigeria army rules out takeover from Buhari

**ABUJA:** Nigeria's armed forces have dismissed suggestions that they should take over from President Muhammadu Buhari, who is facing mounting pressure over the country's worsening insecurity. It was not the first time Nigeria's armed forces have issued a statement backing Buhari, but the latest has come after weeks of criticism of the 78-year-old former general's failures to stem the protracted security crisis.

From a jihadist insurgency in the northeast to herder-farmer clashes in the center, banditry in the northwest and separatist tensions in the southeast, Buhari's armed forces appear to be struggling to curb insecurity. In a statement late Monday, the armed forces said they would continue to “fully” support the government, remain politically neu-

tral and protect Nigeria's democracy. “Let it be stated categorically that the Armed Forces of Nigeria remain fully committed to the present administration and all associated democratic institutions,” army spokesman Onyema Nwachukwu said in a statement. “We shall continue to remain apolitical, subordinate to the civil authority, firmly loyal to the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari and the 1999 Constitution as amended,” it said.

Last week, lawmakers had urged Buhari to declare a nationwide state of emergency after a month of almost daily attacks, kidnappings and killings across Africa's most populous country.

The military statement referred specifically to comments made by Robert Clarke, a prominent lawyer and social commentator. He had said the country was on the brink of collapse and suggested the political leadership hand power to the military so that the security forces could be restructured.

could be exposed to physical or sexual violence. The UN's International Organization for Migration reported in mid-April that more than one million people were displaced in Tigray, including 4,056 “separated” and 917 “unaccompanied” children.

That data was collected in March, meaning the true figures could be higher now. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent troops into Tigray last November to detain and disarm leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional ruling party that once dominated national politics. He said the move came in response to TPLF attacks on federal army camps. Abiy declared victory after federal forces took the regional capital Mekele, but TPLF leaders remain on the run and fighting continues.

Save the Children is far from the only group sounding the alarm about sexual violence, which has been rampant during the conflict. The International Rescue Committee said Monday that rape was “being used as a



**LONDON:** European High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell (left) arrives for a bi-lateral meeting during the G7 foreign ministers meeting in London yesterday. —AFP

constructive ways to work with China in a sensible and positive manner where that's possible”—including on climate change.

“We want to see China stepping up to the plate and playing its full role,” Raab said. The nations of the G7 — which also include Canada, France,

Germany, Italy and Japan—mostly share concerns about China but some have different approaches. Japan has historic tensions with China but has held off on joining Western nations with sanctions, wary of inflaming relations with its giant neighbor and trading partner.—AFP



**ABUJA:** Nigeria's armed forces have dismissed suggestions that they should take over from President Muhammadu Buhari, who is facing mounting pressure over the country's worsening insecurity.

Opposition figures like Bukola Saraki and Nobel winner and playwright Wole Soyinka have also urged Buhari to seek external help or resign. Buhari met with his top security chiefs last week and again on Tuesday to discuss the country's violence.

“We shall continue to discharge our constitutional responsibilities professionally, especially in protecting the country's democracy, defense of the territorial integrity of the country as well as protection of lives and properties of citizens,” the military statement said. —AFP

weapon,” and that women and girls faced “widespread abuse including mass rape and exploitation.”

“Women are having to engage in sexually exploitative relationships, receiving small amounts of money, food and/or shelter to survive and feed their children,” said Victor Odero, policy and advocacy adviser for the International Rescue Committee.

The US and EU are clamoring for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops, who have been implicated in some of the worst attacks on civilians documented so far, including brutal gang rapes.

Eritrea denies involvement in atrocities. World leaders are also ramping up pressure on Abiy's government to pursue a political resolution to the conflict, but Ethiopian officials say fighting is minimal and normalcy is returning. Over the weekend Abiy's Council of Ministers approved a resolution classifying the TPLF as a terrorist group, dealing a blow to the prospect of peace talks. —AFP



## International

# India virus infections top 20m, top cricket league suspended

## Europe, US ease curbs after mass vaccinations

**NEW DELHI:** India's coronavirus caseload topped 20 million yesterday as the relentless surge finally forced the suspension of the nation's lucrative cricket competition involving some of the sport's biggest global stars. The South Asian nation's plight was in stark contrast to Europe and the United States, where mass vaccinations have allowed the easing of many coronavirus restrictions. More than 350,000 new cases were reported in India yesterday, a drop from the peak of 402,000 last week, giving some cause for optimism that the worst of the devastating wave may have passed.

"If daily cases and deaths are analyzed, there is a very early signal of movement in the positive direction," senior health ministry official Lav Aggarwal told reporters. "But these are very early signals. There is a need to further analyze it." At least 153,403,380 cases of coronavirus have been registered across the world so far. The vast majority have recovered, though some have continued to experience symptoms weeks or even months later. These figures are based on daily tolls provided by health authorities in each country and exclude later re-evaluations by statistical organizations, as has happened in Russia, Spain and Britain.

On Monday, 10,340 new deaths and 682,324 new cases were recorded worldwide. The countries with the most new deaths were India with 3,449, followed by Brazil with 983 and Argentina with 540. The United States is the worst-affected country with 577,500 deaths from 32,471,116 cases. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 408,622 deaths from 14,779,529 cases, India with 222,408 deaths from 20,282,833 cases, Mexico with 217,345 deaths from 2,349,900 cases, and the United Kingdom with 127,539 deaths from 4,421,850 cases. India's healthcare infrastructure has struggled to cope with the huge number of cases, with deep shortages of medicines, hospital beds and medical oxygen. But the glitzy Indian Premier League, the world's richest Twenty20 cricket tournament, had carried on in empty stadiums, sparking criticism that it was inappropriate under the circumstances.



**MUMBAI:** An elderly man gets inoculated with a dose of Covishield vaccine against the COVID-19 coronavirus at a drive-in vaccination facility in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

Organizers said they did not want to compromise the safety of staff and players, including some of the world's biggest cricket stars from India, Australia, England and New Zealand. "These are difficult times, especially in India and while we have tried to bring in some positivity and cheer... it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended," they said in a statement. The wave in the South Asian nation-spurred by huge gatherings including the Hindu festival Kumbh Mela-has highlighted the danger of COVID-19, which has already claimed more than 3.2 million lives worldwide.

### EU eyes travel resumption

Leaders in Europe, meanwhile, were looking to take further steps towards recovery with a proposal to revive international travel and tourism as early as next month. The European Commission proposed Monday that travellers who are fully vaccinated with EU-approved shots

or those coming from countries where Covid-19 is under control should be allowed to enter the bloc.

The EU has so far approved the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca vaccines. But in a sign that the pandemic is not yet over in Europe, Germany cancelled its world-famous Oktoberfest beer festival for a second year running.

Americans are among those eyeing possible European vacations this summer, with more than 100 million people in the United States now fully vaccinated.

US media reported Monday that authorities were expected to authorize the Pfizer shot for children aged 12 and up. The successful drive has allowed authorities in many parts of the world's biggest economy to start relaxing curbs, including New York and Florida. And in China, where the virus first emerged in 2019, millions of tourists have flocked to domestic tourist attractions with the country's outbreak largely under control.—AFP

## India's young fight the pandemic with apps and oxygen

**MUMBAI:** Her exam revision done, schoolgirl Swadha Prasad gets on with her real work: finding life-saving oxygen, drugs and hospital beds for Covid-19 patients as India reels from a brutal second wave of infections. As their government struggles to tackle the pandemic, young Indians have stepped into the breach, setting up apps to crowdsource aid, delivering key supplies and using social media to direct resources to people in need.

Prasad works with dozens of volunteers—all aged between 14 and 19 — as part of the youth-led organization UNCUT, building online databases packed with information about medical resources available across the country. It is a 24/7 operation, with the teenagers constantly on their phones as they verify the availability of supplies, update information in real-time and field calls from frantic relatives.

"Some of us do midnight to morning shifts, because the calls don't stop at 3 am," said Prasad, 17, who works a 14-hour stretch from before midnight until one in the morning. It is a long and often tiring affair, the Mumbai-based student said, but added: "If I can help save a life, there is no part of me that is going to say no." And lives have been saved, she said, pointing to a case where the team was able to source oxygen for a young Covid-19 patient in the middle of the night after an agonizing two-hour wait.

"It's not only about providing resources... sometimes people just need to know they are not alone", she said.—AFP

## N Korea founder's memoir triggers debate in South

**GOYANG, South Korea:** A South Korean publisher's defiant move to release the memoirs of the North's founder Kim Il Sung has triggered a heated debate over Seoul's decades-old ban on Pyongyang's propaganda under national security laws.

Critics of the measure say Southerners are politically mature enough to judge such material for themselves and argue it amounts to unnecessary censorship in a vibrant democracy that is one of the most wired and educated countries in the world. But the South remains officially at war with its nuclear-armed and impoverished neighbor, with legislation to match.

The national security law dates from 1948, before the outbreak of the Korean War, and still blocks ordinary citizens from accessing most North Korean-produced content, including its official Rodong Sinmun newspaper. Reproducing or possessing banned pro-Pyongyang materials is punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Even so publisher Kim Seung-kyun in April released the North Korean founder's eight-volume memoirs, titled "With the Century", telling AFP he did so to promote inter-Korean reconciliation. An anti-North civic group filed a criminal complaint, police launched an investigation and within days the country's major bookstores—who had received it via a publishers' association—pulled it from their shelves.

It briefly remained available online for 280,000 won (\$250) for the full set, but by last week it was no longer available from popular web portal Naver, while searches on local bookselling platforms Kyobo and Yes24 showed no results. The moves triggered a debate over censorship and whether people really needed to be protected from reading the words of Kim Il Sung.

"South Koreans already have a high level of judg-

### News in brief

#### Chinese Navy to help Indonesia

**JAKARTA:** Chinese navy ships have arrived off Bali to help haul up a submarine that sank last month killing 53 crew, the Indonesian Navy said yesterday as it geared up for a deep-sea salvage operation. The help arrived after other foreign ships from Australia, Singapore and Malaysia left the archipelago, having assisted Indonesian authorities in finding the stricken vessel. The KRI Nanggala 402 — one of five submarines in Indonesia's fleet-disappeared last month while it was scheduled to take part in live torpedo training exercises. An underwater rescue vehicle supplied by neighboring Singapore gave visual confirmation that the German-built sub was lying on the sea floor more than 800 meters (2,600 feet) deep, broken in three parts, confirming there was no hope of finding survivors. — AFP

#### Virus-hit PNG starts vaccine roll-out

**PORT MORESBY:** Papua New Guinea's prime minister launched a nationwide coronavirus vaccine roll-yesterday, hoping to quell a runaway outbreak and counter widespread public hesitancy about jabs. James Marape said a batch of 100,000 vaccines had arrived in Papua New Guinea and would be distributed countrywide, as he urged skeptical health workers and the general public to get vaccinated. "We want to reduce and prevent deaths of our people," he said, launching the "Sleeves Up" campaign. After weathering the initial stages of the pandemic, the country has recorded most of its 11,262 COVID-19 cases and 115 known deaths since February 2021. — AFP

#### Mexico to extradite drug fugitive

**MEXICO CITY:** A Mexican judge has approved the extradition to the United States of a fugitive drug trafficker who is accused of killing a US federal agent, judicial sources said Monday. The ruling, which came from a Mexico City criminal court Friday, rejected an appeal from lawyers for Rafael Caro Quintero, who is on the FBI's 10 most wanted list with a \$20 million bounty on his head over the murder of a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent. His lawyers argued that the crime had already been adjudicated in a Mexican court so he could not be tried for the same act in the United States.

#### Person shot trying to enter CIA HQ

**WASHINGTON:** An armed person was shot by FBI agents Monday after a standoff of several hours at the entry gate to the CIA headquarters, the federal investigation agency said. The unidentified person was prevented from driving past the initial gate into the CIA's sprawling wooded compound just outside Washington early Monday afternoon. Security personnel reportedly tried to negotiate with the person to surrender for several hours. The FBI said in a statement that the individual "emerged from his vehicle with a weapon and was engaged by law enforcement officers." "The subject was wounded and has been transported to a hospital for medical attention." —AFP

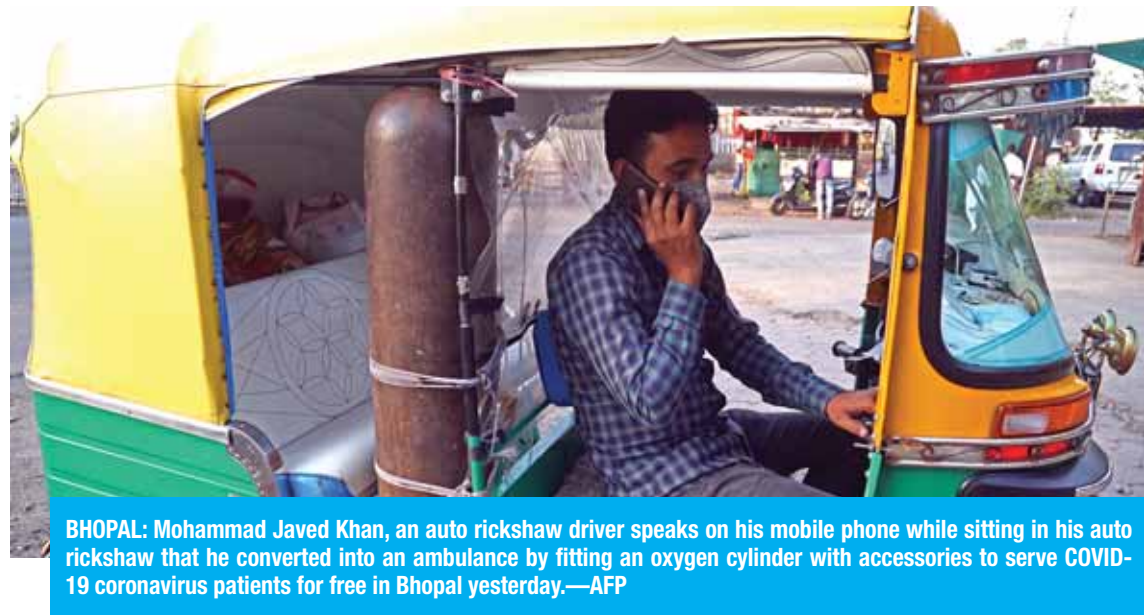


**This picture taken on April 30, 2021 shows South Korean publisher Kim Seung-kyun holding a copy of the eight-volume memoirs of North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung, titled "With the Century", during an interview at his home in Goyang. — AFP**

ment," said Ha Tae-keung, a lawmaker from the conservative People Power Party—who was jailed under the national security law as a student activist.

"No one is going to be deceived by a fantasy-like memoir of Kim Il Sung anymore," he told AFP. "We now need to actively guarantee freedom of expression."

Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of the North's current leader Kim Jong Un, ruled the world's most reclusive country for nearly five decades until his death in 1994, with a mixture of his own brand of Stalinism and an unabashed personality cult. The memoir, first published by Pyongyang in 1992 and available in around 20 languages around the world, portrays him as a heroic Korean guerilla leader against Japanese colonial forces, often denying and downplaying his Chinese and Soviet connections.—AFP



**BHOPAL:** Mohammad Javed Khan, an auto rickshaw driver speaks on his mobile phone while sitting in his auto rickshaw that he converted into an ambulance by fitting an oxygen cylinder with accessories to serve COVID-19 coronavirus patients for free in Bhopal yesterday.—AFP

## Rickshaw 'ambulance' offers free oxygen, transport for patients

**BHOPAL:** When Indian auto-rickshaw driver Mohammad Javed Khan saw people carrying their coronavirus-stricken parents to hospitals on their backs as they were too poor to afford an ambulance, he knew he had to help. Khan, a 34-year-old driver in the central Indian city of Bhopal, sold his wife's jewelry and converted his three-wheeled vehicle into a small ambulance, fitting it out with an oxygen cylinder, an oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood, and other medical supplies. As India grapples with a harrowing COVID-19 crisis that has seen infections skyrocket and the healthcare system stretched to breaking point, individuals like Khan have stepped forward to try and help their local communities.

"A critically ill patient cannot be brought to the hospital without oxygen support. So, I thought, why not turn my three-wheeler into an ambulance. It's not as spacious as an ambulance, but it can surely save lives," Khan told AFP.

"I see young people struggling without oxygen. Even when they call ambulances, the ambulances are charging 5,000-10,000 rupees (\$70-140). How will a poor person be able to afford it? Especially during this pandemic when most people don't have an income?"

## Myanmar charges Japanese journalist over 'fake news'

**YANGON:** The Myanmar junta has charged a Japanese journalist under a "fake news" law, a report said yesterday, in the latest blow to press freedom since the military seized power. Freelance reporter Yuki Kitazumi was arrested last month and charged on Monday-World Press Freedom Day—with spreading fake news, according to a report by Kyodo news agency. He is one of 50 journalists currently held in Myanmar as part of the junta's crackdown on widespread protests against its February 1 coup. The country has been in turmoil since civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's government was ousted, with more than 750 people killed as security forces struggle to quash near-daily demonstrations against their rule.

Kyodo cited an unnamed Japanese embassy official saying Kitazumi had no health problems, despite spending several weeks in Yangon's Insein prison, which has a long and unsavory reputation for holding political prisoners. Kitazumi has been in custody since April 18 — the second time he had been arrested since

the coup. In February, he was beaten up and briefly held during a crackdown on protesters but was later released. Japan, for years a top aid donor to Myanmar, has been pressing for his release.

"Naturally, we will continue to do our utmost for the early release of the Japanese national being held," Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told Japanese journalists during a trip to Britain, according to national broadcaster NHK. A total of 766 civilians have been killed in the military crackdown on protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a local monitoring group.

Kitazumi is the first foreign journalist to be charged since the coup. A Polish photographer arrested while covering a protest in March was freed and deported after nearly two weeks in custody.

As well as arresting journalists, the generals have sought to clamp down on news of the crisis by shuttering independent media outlets and throttling internet speeds. The AAPP says there are 50 journalists in custody at the moment, 25 of whom have been prosecuted, while arrest warrants are out for another 29. Despite the dangers, protesters continue to take to the streets, with early-morning demonstrations yesterday yesterday in the second-biggest city Mandalay, as well as northern Kachin state. The military has defended its seizure of power, pointing to fraud allegations in the November election, and condemned protesters as rioters and terrorists. — AFP



WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021

## Business

## Gulf Cable approves distribution of cash dividends at 50 fils per share

## Bader Al-Kharafi: Gulf Cable maintained business leadership and operational expansion

KUWAIT: Chairman of Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries Co Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi said the company was able to face the coronavirus pandemic ably and efficiently to meet the demands of the local market in both the public and private sectors. He said Gulf Cable was able to achieve a host of operational achievements that proves its stability and flexible strategy, pointing to the company's continued expansion and diversified investments that reflect its prestigious history.

Al-Kharafi said the company's investment map and its promising assets locally and abroad guarantees its competitiveness at the highest level and makes it always ready to aim for more success. Gulf Cable, with its extensive technical and administrative expertise, maintains its usual leadership, he said. Al-Kharafi said an investment team looks for expansion that goes along with the company's strategy, adding the shareholders are more deserving of liquidity through worthy distributions unless there is a need for it.

Al-Kharafi was speaking on the sidelines of the company's 44th ordinary general assembly yesterday. He said the company's policy in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic had a positive effect on profitability, which is reflected on its financial results for 2020.

## Company capabilities

Al-Kharafi said the company's capabilities and man-

## Al-Kharafi:

- Company's performance and solid assets guarantee competitiveness at highest level.
- The company achieved 26.5% growth in production despite crises.
- We were able to meet demands of the public and private sectors efficiently.

power retention had deep implications that confirm the solid status of the company and its ability to deal with crises. He said the company carried out an evaluation on the effect of coronavirus on its basic operational activities and does not expect any effect on its continuity, although it is not possible to measure the future behavior of the coronavirus accurately at this stage. He said the administration believes work will not be adversely affected.

## Cash dividends

Al-Kharafi said the general assembly approved the board of directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends to shareholders at 50 percent of the face value of a share, which is 50 fils per share, for the fiscal year that ended Dec 31, 2020 compared to distributions last year of 40 percent. He said net shareholders' dues for the

year ending Dec 31, 2020 is nearly KD 185.86 million compared to KD 174.68 million in 2019, which is an increase of KD 11.18 million or 6.4 percent.

## Net profits

Al-Kharafi said net profit for 2020 was nearly KD 5.57 million compared to KD 4.23 million for 2019, which is a 31.61 percent rise after deducting around KD 0.88 million for the group's contribution to Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, national labor support tax, zakat and rewards for board members of KD 0.55 million in 2019.

Al-Kharafi said the company overcame all difficulties that it faced during the coronavirus crisis and continued with its balanced strategy. He said despite the repercussions of the crisis that dominated 2020 and 2019, total production of copper and aluminum cables reached 54,784

tons, an increase of 26.5 percent from 2019 (43,302 tons), while production of aluminum cables almost doubled due to an increase in demand for its low cost compared to copper cables.

## Sales

Al-Kharafi said total sales of the group during 2020 reached KD 76.148 million compared to KD 67.717 million in 2019, an increase of 12.5 percent despite Jordan sales being adversely affected due to the situation in Jordan's neighboring countries, the pandemic and a total shutdown. He said the company was able to compensate for the drop in Jordan sales by increasing Kuwait sales by 23 percent.

## Investment revenues

Al-Kharafi said investment revenues were around KD 3.11 million compared to KD 4.41 million in 2019. He said the drop in revenues was mainly caused by a drop in dividend revenues by around KD 1.24 million.



Bader Al-Kharafi

## Aramco Q1 profits jump 30% on oil market recovery

RIYADH: Energy giant Saudi Aramco yesterday posted a 30 percent jump in first quarter profits, beating forecasts in a sign of recovery from last year's oil market crash fueled by the coronavirus pandemic. Aramco said its net profit rose to \$21.7 billion in the first three months of the year, compared to \$16.7 billion in the same quarter of 2020, owing to a stronger oil market and higher refining and chemicals margins.

The bumper results follow strong profits posted last month by major oil firms - from American giants ExxonMobil and Chevron to Britain's BP and France's Total - as a recovery in crude prices fuelled their rebound from the pandemic. "The momentum provided by the global economic recovery has strengthened energy markets," Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser said in a statement.

"Given the positive signs for energy demand in 2021, there are more reasons to be optimistic that better days are coming. And while some headwinds still remain, we are well-positioned... as economies start to recover." Oil prices tumbled midway through last year's first quarter as the pandemic shuttered large parts of the global economy, piling pressure on petro-states including OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia.

The strong earnings provide relief to Aramco, Saudi Arabia's cash cow, which has revealed consecutive falls in profits since it began disclosing earnings in 2019. The company's low earnings last year piled pressure on government finances as Riyadh faces a ballooning budget deficit and pursues multi-billion dollar projects to diversify its oil-reliant economy. The first quarter profit beat a forecast of around \$20 billion by RBC Capital Markets, which said the results highlight "Aramco's leverage to rising commodity prices".

Aramco declared a dividend of \$18.8 billion for the first quarter. That is in line with the company's plan to pay an annual dividend of \$75 billion - a key revenue source for the government, Aramco's biggest shareholder. Saudi Arabia is currently seeking to monetize its energy assets, as it explores new revenue streams to fund its ambitious diversification drive.

Last month, Aramco said it had struck a \$12.4-billion deal to sell a minority stake in a newly formed oil pipeline business to a consortium led by US-based EIG Global Energy Partners. Long seen as the kingdom's "crown jewel", Aramco and its assets were once tightly government-controlled and considered off-limits to outside investment.

But with the rise of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is accelerating efforts to implement his "Vision 2030" reform program, the kingdom has shown readiness to cede some control. In late April, Prince Mohammed said Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, was in talks to sell one percent of Aramco to an unnamed foreign energy firm. —AFP

## US to see growth boom, but Fed says inflation not a worry

WASHINGTON: The US economy is likely to see its fastest growth in nearly four decades this year, but the short-term inflation spike that will come with the rebound is not a cause for concern, a top Federal Reserve official said Monday. The world's largest economy still needs to see several months of strong employment growth to achieve a full recovery, said John Williams, president of the Fed's influential New York branch, stressing that the central bank will be in no hurry to alter its stimulative policies.

US GDP will expand by around seven percent this year as it bounces back from the COVID-19 pandemic, Williams said, calling it "welcome progress after the toughest period for the economy in living memory". But "While I am optimistic that the economy is now headed in the right direction, we still have a long way to go to achieve a robust and full economic recovery," Williams said in a speech to the Women in Housing and Finance annual conference.

He credited the Fed's stimulative policies, including interest rates near zero, with having "positive effects" on the economy, enabling Americans to purchase homes and big-ticket goods. "In fact, with accommodative financial conditions, strong fiscal support and widespread vaccinations, I expect that the rate of economic growth this year will be the fastest that we've experienced since the early 1980s," he said.

But as economic activity and consumer demand picks up after months of shutdowns, rising energy prices and the rebound from the pandemic downturn are pushing prices higher, fueling concerns about an inflationary spiral. But

## 'It's arithmetic'

## WHO begs G7 to step up and combat COVID

GENEVA: The WHO pleaded Monday with the G7 to dig deep and fund the global COVID-19 recovery, warning the crisis cannot be resolved worldwide if they do not step up. The World Health Organization said the Group of Seven industrial powers had the ability to fund the vaccines, tests and treatments needed to conquer the pandemic - and knock down the barriers blocking faster production.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged the G7 to take decisive action at their June 11-13 summit, being hosted by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in Cornwall, southwest England. "The G7 countries are the world's economic and political leaders. They are also home to many of the world's vaccine producers," Tedros told a news conference. "We will only solve the vaccine crisis with the leadership of these countries."

Tedros was backed up by former British prime minister Gordon Brown, who warned the pandemic was becoming a "man-made catastrophe". The Access to COVID-19 Tools

organizations traditionally hold rallies and marches on May 1 but those in Greece staged their strike three days late because this year's date coincided with Easter on the Orthodox calendar. In a statement, the GSEE trade union said that the industrial action was aimed at "protecting the real needs of workers". While the Greek government is currently debating a draft law to extend working hours, the union insisted that the five-day, 40-hour week must be respected and overtime pay should be increased. "The celebration of this May 1st comes at an unprecedented moment of pandemic and health crisis, which is being used as a pretext to question our collective rights, our working hours, our dignity at work," media unions said in a joint statement. —AFP

## Greece unions stage 24-hr strike

ATHENS: Public transport in Greece faced major disruption yesterday as the country's biggest private-sector trade union called for a 24-hour strike, angry over proposals to lengthen the working week. Media, including the ANA news agency and ERT public broadcaster, also took part in the industrial action, called by the GSEE trade union to mark the traditional Labor Day or May Day public holiday.

All across the globe, trade unions and labor



WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve building is seen on March 19, 2021. —AFP

Williams said, "it's important not to overreact to this volatility in prices resulting from the unique circumstances of the pandemic." He projected inflation will fall back to the central bank's two percent target in 2022 "once the price reversals and short-run imbalances from the economy reopening have played out."

Fed Chair Jerome Powell last week made the same point as he tried again to quell rising concern among investors and some economists, saying there is a difference between "one-time price increases" and a persistent rise in inflation. Speaking to reporters after the speech, Williams said market expectations also point to a decline in inflation.

In the near-term, "a sizeable chunk" of the price spikes are due to comparison to the sharp declines in the early months of the pandemic shutdowns. But those effects will go away. "Some of it really ... is arithmetic," he said, but stressed that the Fed will be watching all the factors driving prices.

Accelerator program for finding, developing and distributing coronavirus jabs, tests and therapeutics, is \$19 billion short of its \$22-billion target this year. And a further \$35 to \$45 billion will be needed next year to ensure most adults around the world get immunized.

Brown, who chaired the wider G20 in 2009 as it plotted its way out of the global financial crisis, called for immediate decisive action from world leaders. "I say to the G7... you have the power and the ability to pay for nearly two-thirds of the costs and secure a historic breakthrough by agreeing an equitable burden-sharing formula," the former finance minister said.

Brown said that based on national income, wealth and benefits from the resumption of trade, the United States would pay 27 percent of the cost; Europe 23 percent; Japan six percent; Britain five percent; and Canada - plus South Korea and Australia, who will also attend the G7 - two percent each. Brown added that he detected a change in Washington's attitude in recent days towards vaccine production licensing agreements and temporary intellectual property rights waivers, which could expand production capacity.

## Vaccine shortage

Nearly 1.2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have so far been injected worldwide, according to an AFP count. But just 0.2 percent of them have been administered in the 29

## Lufthansa jets don 'shark skin' to take bite out of emissions

FRANKFURT: German airline group Lufthansa on Monday said it plans to coat its cargo planes with a film that mimics the properties of streamlined shark skin to improve fuel efficiency and cut carbon emissions. In a joint project with German chemical giant BASF, Lufthansa will from 2022 equip its 10 Boeing 777 freighters with a newly developed film known as AeroSHARK, estimating it

will lead to a drag reduction of "more than one percent". This would in turn save around 3,700 tons of jet fuel annually and slash the fleet's CO2 output by nearly 11,700 tons, the companies said in a statement, "the equivalent of 48 individual freight flights from Frankfurt to Shanghai." The skin of sharks is covered in tiny riblets that reduce turbulent vortices and the drag they cause, thereby diminishing surface resistance when moving at speed.

The phenomenon has for decades fascinated research scientists in a wide range of fields, from military applications to aerospace and aeronautics to swim suit technology. "The innovative shark skin technology allows us to support Lufthansa in achieving its sustainability goals and in making the aviation industry a little more environmentally friendly," said Dirk Bremm, head of BASF's coatings division. —AFP



lowest-income countries, home to nine percent of the global population. And the Covax global vaccine-sharing program has largely been elbowed out of the market by rich countries striking their own deals with manufacturers.

Its main supplier is the Serum Institute of India (SII), which is producing AstraZeneca vaccines. But increased demand for doses in India itself, where the pandemic is raging, has also interrupted Covax supplies. Bruce Aylward, the WHO lead on Covax, said the stoppage had so far deprived Covax of some 100 million doses it had been anticipating, and acknowledged it still had no firm date for when SII would resume deliveries. —AFP



## Business

# Safat Investment Co overcomes crises with promising performance

## General assembly agrees to relist company on Boursa Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Al-Safat Investment Company Chairman Abdullah Hamad Al-Terkait said the company succeeded in overcoming obstacles it faced earlier to return to its previous strength. He said 13 years after the last distribution of its shares, the general assembly approved the board's proposal to distribute a free grant of 5 percent shares (5 shares per 100), according to the rules of the Capital Markets Authority.

Al-Terkait said the distribution is a positive indication of the company restoring its solid status and the effectiveness of its strategy, adding that despite the coronavirus pandemic that affected many sectors since its onset, 2020 brought good news for Al-Safat Investment Company with many achievements that pave the way for a promising phase of balanced performance.

Al-Terkait, speaking on the sidelines of the general assembly, said the company has various operational assets that qualify it to compete in the market, adding that it is contemplating a merger with promising operational entities to serve the goals of increasing the shareholders' benefits in the future.

Al-Terkait said holding the general assembly of the company at this time has special value that indicates overcoming a difficult stage and the start of normal life gain under the state's precautionary measures that almost reached the point of social coexistence with the coronavirus.

He said health precautions and following important instructions in compliance with the concerned authorities' instructions reflected positively and will have an effect to return to normalcy again. He lauded the efforts of the government, especially the health ministry, during the pandemic.

Al-Terkait said Al-Safat Investment Company supports the measures the Kuwait government took to safeguard the health of all those living in the country. "We are confident in the measures taken to protect and support the local economy, which will reduce the severity of the crisis on economic activity in the country," he said.

### Important achievements

Al-Terkait spoke about the most important achievements during last year despite the difficulties and the many obstacles. Attendees were briefed on plans and steps taken in order to develop the company's work. "Despite the effect of the pandemic on various activities, particularly small and medium projects, the company implemented its plans and completed many duties," he said. "The final ruling in the case by the Qatar National Bank, which was in our favor, reflected positively on the company's legal and financial position with large profitability for 2020. Safat ended its debts and commitments with local and foreign banks," he said.

### Relisting

Al-Terkait said Al-Safat Company is able to start a new phase, most importantly after the general assembly's approval to relist the company on Boursa Kuwait and take all measures to reach this goal. About notable company achievements during the last year, Al-Terkait said they are completing the process of the compulsory takeover by Al-Khair Global for Buying and Selling Shares of all remaining shares in Arkan Al-Kuwait Real Estate Company in its capacity as takeover general manager.

He said the process was done during the partial and total curfew in Kuwait out of the company's employees keenness to maintain work continuity and achieve the required goals despite the pressures that dominated the business sector.

### Takeover

Al-Terkait said the group, through one of its subsidiaries, took over an effective percentage in the liquid capital general contracting company, and hoped the deal has a positive effect in the future on

\* Distributing a free basket of sanitizing and cleaning products to all company employees and providing them with masks regularly, which is produced by one of the group's companies.

Al-Terkait said the group's quick response to face the effects of the pandemic and its efforts drew the attention and appreciation of International Finance magazine, which gave Al-Safat Investment Company the "Best health and safe work environment award during the pandemic" award.

Al-Terkait thanked the executive department and group employees for their efforts to overcome the pandemic, adding that last year was full of positive events at the group, which returned Al-Safat



Abdullah Al-Terkait

opportunities for diversifying investments, which the company will add to its direct portfolio, including financing of small and medium business, in view of the current hostile business environment," Al-Terkait said.

Al-Safat adjusted the budget for departments in view of the current difficult circumstances and achieve the largest percentage of what could be achieved. Al-Terkait said the company is focusing on its strategy and mounting efforts to build an integrated team of experienced and competent Kuwaitis.

### Ahmadi project

"Despite the difficult situation we all faced during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company remained committed to completing the construction of the building for the Ahmadi project in East Ahmadi industrial area, block 20, lot 57, covering an area of 5,000 sq m. With 90 percent of construction over, the project is expected to be completed this year as per schedule," Al-Terkait said.

### Social responsibility

Al-Terkait said Al-Safat Investment Company attaches special attention to its social responsibility through sponsorship of developmental initiatives and programs that contribute to the sustainable development of the society. The first initiative was to introduce a plan to increase the number of citizens in the company and its subsidiaries.

He said the company has registered with Mosahamat, a government platform, and presented many products of one of its companies - Middle East Chemicals Manufacturing Company - and supplied sterilizers and sanitizers. He said the company also received orders from the ministry of health, ministry of electricity and water, ministry of finance and ministry of interior for its products, while thousands of liters of sanitizers were donated.

Carpet Manufacturing Company donated 340 carpets to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare in Britain and could even manufacture inoculations in the UK in future, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday. Johnson's Downing Street office said the £240 million (\$334 million) project would include a sales office, "clinical trials, research and development and possibly manufacturing of vaccines".

Al-Terkait thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for their continued support and guidance. Al-Terkait thanked all the shareholders for their confidence in the board of directors and management during the past year as well as the company's employees for their sincere efforts.

- General assembly approves distribution of free grant of 5% shares
- Abdullah Al-Terkait: We are confident in measures taken to protect and support the local economy

the status of Al-Safat group through the verification of its investments and revenue sources.

Al-Terkait gave a detailed presentation of Al-Safat Company's quick and effective procedures since the start of the pandemic to prevent it from spreading. He said concerned teams in the company were seeking the latest information and right means followed in the world to transform Al-Safat Towers into a strong fortress against the spread of the virus among employees and visitors.

The company followed a series of precautionary measures, including:

- Placing advertisements and guiding signs all over the tower on preventive measures in use.
- Implementation of strict protocols in informing and self-quarantining of anyone suspected of being infected.
- Imposing wearing of masks, sanitizing hands and keeping crowds away from lifts and waiting areas.
- Checking temperature daily before entering the tower.

Investment to the right path. He said the company seeks to return to its position before the global crisis and return to its golden era despite the effects of the pandemic on the company's activities and operations.

### Increase in profits

Al-Terkait said the company made KD 7,227,530 in profits for the fiscal year ending Dec 31, 2020, which is equal to 28.22 fils per share, compared to KD 866,511 (3.38 fils per share) for the fiscal year ending Dec 31, 2019. He said shareholders' dues reached KD 22,389,234 as of Dec 31, 2020, which is equal to 87.4 fils per share compared to KD 20,621,049 for the fiscal year ending Dec 31, 2019 (80.21 fils). He said the group's debts as of Dec 31, 2020 stood at KD 11,943,421 compared to KD 28,636,257 for the fiscal year ending Dec 31, 2019, a decrease of KD 16,692,836.

"We are looking to the future with optimism after enduring many legal challenges that burdened the company for many years. He said the achievements made in 2020 will open a new chapter of

## Economic crisis fueling Argentine crypto craze

**Buenos Aires:** Argentina's economic downturn, with high inflation, a deflating currency and a shortage of US dollars to invest in, has in fact proved a shot in the arm for one sector: Cryptocurrency. As they seek safe havens for their dwindling nest eggs, Argentines - used to buffering against economic crises - have been putting their money into bitcoin, tether, etherium or dai.

"The number of user accounts for investing in 'cryptos' has multiplied by ten in Argentina since 2020," said Maximiliano Hinz, Latin American director of cryptocurrency exchange Binance, the world's largest by trade volume. There are now an estimated two million crypto trading accounts in the country of 45 million people.

Argentina has been in recession since 2018, with inflation averaging 45 percent over the last three years, and a GDP contraction of 9.9 percent in 2020. Poverty haunts two in five people, and unemployment is at 11 percent. For those wishing to put money aside for a rainy day, cryptocurrencies offer relief from low interest rates and a government-imposed limit on greenback purchases of \$200 per month in a population accustomed to dollarizing savings.

One bitcoin is now worth about \$60,000, or 5.6 million pesos. "It is no coincidence that Argentina and Venezuela, countries with high inflation, are the



main crypto poles in South America," said Marcos Zocaro, a specialist in digital assets.

### 'Digital gold'

Where previously cryptocurrency may have been the reserve of tech wizards, trading platforms "have evolved to create bridges to a public without financial education," said Sebastian Valdecantos, an economist and founder of Moneda PAR, an online Argentine credit system. On some platforms it requires just two clicks to make a purchase or sale.

Monday. Under the terms of their proposed partnership, Vivendi, the parent company of French TV channel Canal+, was to have bought all of Mediaset's Premium pay-TV channel.

But Vivendi claimed it had been misled about the true value of Mediaset Premium and ripped up the deal, and instead snapped up a 28.8-percent stake in Mediaset in a move both the Italian government and the Berlusconi family deemed as hostile. As a result, Mediaset and Fininvest sued Vivendi for 3.0 billion euros in damages and interest in June 2017.

Vivendi's acquisition also ran into trouble with the Italian telecoms regulator which said the French group had breached media ownership rules and ordered it to reduce its stake. However, last September, the European Court of Justice said the Italian regulator's ruling ran contrary to EU law and that the complex limits to the market share any company can control did not ensure plurality in the media.

Then in April this year, a court in Milan ordered Vivendi to pay Mediaset 1.7 billion euros in damages and interest. As part of their newfound truce,



Vivendi said it had "committed to sell on the stock market, over a five-year period, (its) entire 19.19-percent Mediaset equity stake held" via an independent subsidiary called Simon Fiduciaria. — AFP

## Serum Institute 'to invest in UK'; London, Delhi to start FTA talks

**LONDON:** Vaccine maker the Serum Institute of India is set to invest in facilities in Britain and could even manufacture inoculations in the UK in future, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday. Johnson's Downing Street office said the £240 million (\$334 million) project would include a sales office, "clinical trials, research and development and possibly manufacturing of vaccines".

The Serum Institute of India (SII) is the world's largest vaccine maker by volume, and has been at the forefront of producing the lower-cost AstraZeneca coronavirus shot. SII has also begun phase one trials in the UK of a one-dose nasal vaccine for coronavirus. Downing Street said the vaccine maker's plans were part of a wider package of trade and investment deals with India worth £1 billion that it expects to create over 6,500 jobs.

Britain and India will begin formal free trade deal talks later this year, the UK government said yesterday, after they agreed an initial package to boost bilateral trade and investment. UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said India and Britain would start negotiations on an agreement "in the autumn", following the announcement of a preliminary "Enhanced Trade Partnership" deal.

"We want to get these negotiations completed as soon as possible," she told Sky News during a round of broadcast interviews touting the partnership package worth £1 billion (\$1.4 billion). "Of course, FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) take longer, this is the immediate gains that we can get for both countries, driving jobs here in Britain and in India," Truss added.

She said both countries were looking for "early wins" reducing barriers to trade from an FTA, noting Britain wants tariffs lowered or removed on various exports to India, from cars to whiskey. The comments come ahead of virtual talks between Johnson and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi later yesterday. — AFP

## Vivendi, Mediaset end feud over Netflix rival in Europe

**PARIS:** French media conglomerate Vivendi and Italian rival Mediaset have agreed to bury the hatchet in their long-running legal battle over failed plans to set up Europe's answer to US streaming giant Netflix, the two groups said. The feud had pitted two European heavyweights against each other: Mediaset is controlled by the family of Italy's flamboyant former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi and their financial holding Fininvest while Vivendi's billionaire chief is France's top corporate raider Vincent Bolloré.

"Vivendi, Fininvest and Mediaset are pleased to announce that they have come to a global agreement to put an end to their disputes by waiving all litigation and claims between them," the companies said in a joint statement late



## Business

# stc leads MENA region in launching innovative end-to-end commercial 5G SA infrastructure

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the successful commercialization step of implementing 5G Stand Alone (5G SA). The milestone is considered to be the second and most disruptive development of the comprehensive 3GPP 5th generation compliant network. stc also successfully accomplished the widest scale of 5G deployment coverage on Sub-3GHz and 2.1GHz amongst other mobile service providers in the MENA region. Besides these two achievements, the Company enhanced its infrastructure with the deployment of the most advanced automated Business Support System.

In a statement released by the Company, stc indicated that it has been progressing with major 5G SA developments to advance its 5G network architecture, enabling the radical transformation of the telecom industry into an as-a-Service model in line with Kuwait's 2035 vision. 5G SA technology will enable stc's subscribers to enjoy higher uplink bandwidth, especially catering to specialized use scenarios, such as enterprise applications where uplink throughput is equally important as downlink. Additionally, the technology will lower user-traffic latency to address key issues related to interruptions in gaming experience, while kicking off market interest in new rich forms of gaming technology like Virtual Reality (VR). 5G SA will also feature higher levels of security that utilize the best industry know-how to provide robustness to telecom networks.

Further empowering Multi-Access Edge Computing (MEC) deployment, 5G SA will enable stc to become not only Cloud

Native, but Edge Native as well. This transition will allow service aggregation near subscriber premises. From massive data processing in enterprise campus scenarios, real-time data processing in industrial control, and autonomous driving, to massive IoT use cases requiring analytics localization and better user experience for AR/VR/cloud. 5G SA enables different verticals to gain advantage from stc's infrastructure by creating end-to-end isolated logical networks that share resources in a secured, isolated, and efficient way, also known as Network Slicing.

This allows public and private corporations increase their levels of efficiency and increase revenue when building their private networks, without the hassle of investing in new infrastructure, acquiring new spectrums, developing coverage, and getting capital assets. stc will also be able to offer diversified digital services to verticals, such as guaranteed voice over 5G applications (VoNR), dedicated data access, dedicated internet access, as well as, on-demand services such as, cloud CCTV capabilities to empower enhanced smart city services to citizens, and assist businesses in innovating and generating new revenue streams in untapped markets. Focusing on the user experience and enhanced 5G coverage, especially indoors and in weak coverage spots, stc started delivering Sub-3GHz 2.1GHz 5G NR with national wide implementation since mid-2020. The Company foresaw the fundamental need of deploying national Sub-3GHz 5G NR over the 2.1GHz band. Upon doing so, stc became the first telecom operator to commercially launch such an advanced technology on a large scale in the MENA Region. Currently, 2.1GHz 5G NR sites have been strategically installed in dense districts. To further boost its infrastructure

coverage, stc plans to deploy more sites in 2021.

The new deployment will play an important role for a number of years to come, providing enhanced Quality of Experience (QoE) for multiple 5G use cases, such as HD voice, 4K video streaming, online gaming, telemedicine and collaborative applications. The services are offered over the most popular 2.1 GHz 5G NR supported smartphones and other 5G devices including Apple, Samsung, and Huawei devices. This will enable smoother access to 5G Carrier Aggregation (CA) Services and mass deployment for Internet of Thing (IoT) and Machine-to-Machine (M2M) over stc's 5G infrastructure offering enhanced smart city services to users, while assisting businesses in launching new-to-market solutions.

stc has been systematically working on monetizing its 5G infrastructure with advanced Business Support Systems toward native cloud Network architecture. The systems aim to introduce innovative Network-as-a-Service models capable of integrating 3rd party APIs and utilizing DevOps Tools to suit wide-ranges of industry transformations. Vertical owners will be able to save their top and/or bottom lines by quickly transforming their businesses through differentiated scalable capacities and characteristics, with different charging criteria of services in line with their digital transformation and business model demands. Engineer Fahad Abdulrahman Al Ali, Chief Technology Officer at stc, said, "stc positions itself to provide state-of-the-art 5G intelligent connectivity and agile 5G SA cloud native infrastructure to ensure mapping of business and government transformations. We offer enhanced coverage services through Sub-3GHz 2.1GHz 5G NR which add 4G/5G collaborations, 5G Carrier Aggregation and

precise indoor/outdoor inter-operability to our 5G network. We aim to provide the best service experience for 5G consumers, such as iPhone 12 5G users, by providing improved 5G indoor service accessibility, higher quality video streaming, uninterrupted gaming experience, and battery power saving solutions.

Al Ali added, "stc strides to accelerate vertical transformation by constructing advanced Business Support Systems tolerated to fulfill a wide-range of industry transformations and business model requirements. This stems from our commitment to fulfill the needs of startups, SMEs and larger enterprises by offering flexible, automated, scalable, guaranteed, and reliable service solutions that can accelerate their digital strategies into the 5G platform allowing the introduction of new solutions and business processes." The Company's strategic plans tie in new opportunities by utilizing new generation 5G infrastructure with rich multi-dimensional designs and a native cloud architecture to offer enterprises with guaranteed Service Level Agreements (SLAs). After the large-scale deployment of Sub-3GHz 5G, stc projects high levels of improved in-depth coverage and user experience of stc's 5G network, laying a solid foundation for the sound development of 5G MBB services. Supporting the business growth of enterprise customers comes as a key contribution from stc to the transformation of businesses in line with Kuwait's 2035 Vision.



Fahad Al-Ali

## Stream and watch from AppGallery

**KUWAIT:** Today, online streaming apps have revolutionized the way video content is viewed, and millions of users have switched to watching their favorite TV shows or movies from the convenience of their mobile devices. The video-on-demand (VOD) apps offer various benefits to users. For instance, users don't have to adjust their schedule anymore to watch their favorite show or movie; they can watch on the go anytime and anywhere! Additionally, users can choose from a wide variety of video content and tailor their watch list according to their interests, kids, or family members. Also, Subscription video-on-demand services are usually cost-effective and allow users to unsubscribe easily anytime.

As we've seen an increase in video consumption during Ramadan, AppGallery, Huawei's official app distribution platform and one of the top three marketplaces globally, has released its list of the top VOD apps available in the region. Depending on if you want new originals, classic TV shows, blockbuster movies, or shows for kids - we think there is a great pick for you.

### HUAWEI Video:

HUAWEI Video aims to provide a high-quality and All-Scenario media experience, with a vast video catalog for streaming. It offers diverse selections of TV Series, movies, documentaries, live channels, and short videos for you to explore.

### Jawwy TV:

Jawwy TV is an entertainment app that provides a vast library of the top movies and Arabic, Western and Turkish series, along with subtitles and dubbing in multiple languages, in addition to a massive collection of top free-to-air and encrypted TV channels, documentaries, and kids programs. All in one place, using HD technology.

### PopcornTime:

Popcorn Time is a free well-known movie & TV-series streaming and downloading app that includes an integrated media player. The application provides a free alternative to subscription-based video streaming services. Popcorn Time uses sequential downloading to stream videos listed by several torrent websites. No more downloads hassle! The best movies & TV shows, for free!

### Shahid:

Shahid is one of the leading Arabic streaming services globally, with access to more than 20,000 hours of original productions, premieres, movies right after cinema, and new series from MENA, Turkey, Bollywood, and the world - All in one place! Available with English and Arabic interfaces.

### STARZPLAY:

STARZPLAY is a subscription video on-demand service that streams Hollywood and Arabic movies, TV shows, documentaries, kids' entertainment, and STARZPLAY original content - to 20 countries across MENA and Pakistan.

### VIIU-TVShows:

With Viiu, you can stream & download your favorite shows, movies, TV series, and music! Viiu gives you instant access to all your favorite dramas, comedies, horror, and more! Watch Viiu Originals and hit TV shows from Korea, Japan, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, the Middle East, and India. Stream the best entertainment in HD with subtitles in English, Arabic, and more.

## LuLu Hypermarket launches special Ramadan promotion

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, has embarked on a special promotion drive to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. The promotion, which will run throughout the entire month of Ramadan has already begun with a precursor 'Ahlal Ramadan' offer being launched on March 31. During the promotion period, special offers will be available on all item categories at the hypermarket, including on items from the grocery, fresh fruits and vegetables, and household sections, as well as on items from the hot-foods and roastery sections.

The annual special Ramadan promotion at LuLu Hypermarket is a widely anticipated promotional campaign that shoppers in the country eagerly look forward to each year. The promotion allows shoppers to purchase their extra needs during the holy month in a convenient and easily accessible environment, while being assured of the finest quality products at very competitive prices. This year, in view of the ongoing pandemic and the need to adhere to all health guidelines issued by the authorities, the hypermarket is requesting all shoppers to use face-masks and maintain proper social distancing within the hypermarket. This would make the special Ramadan shopping time a safe experience for everyone.

## Vaccination, upbeat earnings fuel market euphoria: Markaz

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" recently released its Monthly Markets Review report for the month of April 2021. Markaz report noted that Kuwait equity markets continued to rally following upbeat earnings reported by corporates for the quarter ending March 31, 2021. Kuwait All Share index extended its good run and gained 5.8 percent for the month. Market liquidity in April, as indicated by the average daily traded value, stood at USD 171million, an increase of 25 percent compared to the earlier month.

Among Kuwait sectors, Technology was the top gainer, rising 30.5 percent followed by industrials at 15.6 percent, while utilities declined by 4.9 percent for the month. Among blue chips, Agility Public Warehousing leapt 30.6 percent for the month. DSV Panalpina, Demark-based company has agreed to

## Ooredoo main supporter of agreement between B. Online and co-op

**KUWAIT:** Lately, Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, has been taking gigantic steps toward a quantum leap in the digital transformation, community security and cybersecurity. These steps have positioned Ooredoo as a leading telecom company that provides the latest innovative digital services in the State of Kuwait.

On the map of societal and governmental initiatives, Ooredoo Kuwait is known for its diversified portfolio resulted from launching and participating in numerous initiatives that support community, increase safety for all, and support government to potentially provide a giant leap for the national economy. Hence, digital infrastructure gradually saturate our lives, and this movement is set to continue. With that being said, and in presence of Ooredoo Kuwait as a main supporter, B. Online and Dahiyat Abdullah Al Salem & Mansouriya Cooperative Society have signed an agreement which states that all parties will work hand in hand to provide an integrated security system for residential areas starting from Abdullah Al-Salem and Mansouriya Co-operative Society. Ooredoo's main role will be supporting the security system by exploiting its 5G network connectivity, due to its best interconnection and Internet of Things (IoT) networks in the country. Complementing the wired and wireless internet services provided through B.online, this is what made Ooredoo Kuwait the best choice for this huge national security project. On April 7, 2021, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies in coordination and collective agreement of the cooperative societies, approved on selecting and contracting with B.Online after winning the lowest prices to install the integrated security system that includes the installation of a surveillance camera.

B.Online will provide both areas - Dahiyat Abdullah Al Salem and Mansouriya - with surveillance cameras on entrances and exits around the existing electrical power substations of the residential areas, and security systems that are directly connected with the Ministry of Interior in order to raise the level of security

### Gulf Bank Insight Report

## Consumer credit growth in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Consumer credit comprises of consumer loans and instalment loans. Consumer Loans are availed for financing personal requirements such as consumer durables, or for covering expenses on education, health etc. Instalment Loans are utilized particularly for restoring or purchasing private residence. These loans help individuals enjoy the benefits of goods and services in the near term and pay for it over a period of time. This enables consumer spending, a key part of the economic engine. It benefits banks by providing an avenue for risk diversification and liquidity management.

In Kuwait's banking sector, consumer credit constitutes a considerable portion of the total loans at 34 percent. Since 2001 and up to end of 2019, consumer credit has grown at a CAGR of 12.2 percent. This has been driven mainly by instalment loans, which have grown at CAGR of 14.4 percent. Consumer loans have increased by a slower rate at 4.7 percent. Customer base for consumer credit is largely public sector employees. 60 percent of consumer loans and 72 percent of housing loans were lent to Kuwaitis.

Consumer credit brings in diversification to a banks' loan book. Risk associated with consumer credit is minimized through credit of salary directly to the customer's account in a bank where loan has been taken, blocked deposits etc. Capping of loan amount in terms of salary of the borrower also aid in minimizing risk.

In terms of risk weighting of assets for the calculation of capital adequacy ratio which is the amount of capital that banks have to set aside to hold the loan, consumer loans car-

ry 100 percent risk weighting. In comparison, risk weights assigned for a corporate range from 20 percent to as high as 150 percent, depending on their credit quality grade. Additionally, the different loan tenures for consumer credit (ranging from 1 to 15 years) aid in liquidity management.

Banks adopt different strategies to boost consumer credit. A popular strategy is providing cash back, reward points or other offers on usage of their credit cards. They also offer loan top up option for customers who have repaid 30 percent of their initial loan.

### Key drivers of consumer credit

Several factors may influence consumer credit. Of this, a set of 10 factors and a few policy measures have been considered for analysis. Statistical analysis has been conducted on consumer credit and each of these 10 factors such as economic growth, unemployment rate, etc, to gain insights into their impact on consumer credit. Broadly, the time period covered in the analysis is 2001 to 2019. The following factors have a significant impact on consumer credit growth.

### 1. Vehicle sales

Financing for vehicles has been a thrust area for both conventional and Islamic banks alike with initiatives such as zero-interest auto loans and special offers in tie-up with brands. This was reflected in the data with vehicles sales having a significant impact on consumer credit growth

### 2. Unemployment rate

The rate of unemployment has a statistically significant impact on consumer credit growth. They share a negative relationship whereby, with increase in unemployment, less people would be eligible for consumer credit.

### 3. Population Growth

The increase in population over the years has had a significant impact in expansion of consumer credit. There is also high correlation between increase in population of nationals and the growth in consumer credit.



Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "We are fully aware of the importance of confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data in such huge project, and thus, it is our social duty to protect our people, and ensure a safe environment for them. Network security is our responsibility."

"At Ooredoo, we intend to continue developing our digital and security services, in a way that also serve the country's security needs. We are beyond pleased and proud to be the first telecommunications company in Kuwait to achieve such a success through such collaborations that bring more security and prosperity to the country and its people" Al-Babtain added.

From her side, Dina Al-Essa, Chief Executive Officer, B. Online, said: "We are honored to have such a strong partner who will perform as a main supporter in leveraging the national development, which goes in line with one of the core pillars of Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait"; that aims to promote human development and improves the quality of life for all through an improved infrastructure that acts as a direct economic stimulus. "We have a high confidence in Ooredoo and its capabilities as a pioneer and leader in digital and security services, and we are expecting nothing but positive outcomes. Through our shared vision, we will provide the both areas of Abdullah Al-Salem and Mansouriya with the best security systems; and it goes without saying, we aim to provide such services in all areas of the State of Kuwait in the future" Al-Essa added.

### 4. Economic Growth

Economic growth has a significant impact on consumer credit growth with a lag of one year. For example, consumer credit had grown 18.7 percent in 2012, following a real GDP growth of 9.6 percent in 2011. But it had slowed to 6.6 percent in 2016, following a 0.6 percent real GDP growth in 2015.

### 5. Policy Measures

Central Bank of Kuwait had increased ceiling on consumer loans from KD 15,000 to KD 25,000 in November 2018. This had resulted in significant uptake in credit. There have been instances of the state's grants in the past such as distribution of grants (2011) and waiver of public debt for some citizens (2013). While distribution of grants has had a significant impact on consumer credit, waiver of public debt did not significantly impact consumer credit.

A reduction in interest rates is generally seen as enabler of credit growth. In the context of consumer credit growth in Kuwait, interest rates have a significant impact on consumer loans but do not significantly impact instalment loans. This difference could be due to the duration of loans and conditions for re-financing.

Though interest rate on existing consumer loans is fixed at the beginning of the loan period and is not re-priced in tandem with changes of interest rates, being short-terms loans, they are more susceptible to interest rate changes as loans are settled and refinanced as interest rates decline. For instalment loans, though re-pricing could be done once in 5 years, the change is to be not more than 2 percentage points.

The option to re-finance is accompanied by the caveats such as 30 percent of the existing loan should have been repaid, payment of earlier instalments on due dates etc. Therefore, it could be likely that the propensity to re-finance is higher in the case of consumer loans given their lower value and ease of refinancing relatively.



# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

## Scope of Clinical Practice:

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

- Coloric Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- Laparoscopic mini bypass
- Transanal minimally invasive surgery

## Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care



**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon



مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tel: 1802 555

daralshifa  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

## WELCOME

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

Fellowship of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.  
10 years work experience in Ear Hospital MOH Kuwait.  
Ex Head of ENT department in Farwaniya Hospital MOH Kuwait  
10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.



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



1 888 883  
www.qmc-kuwait.com

qmc Kuwait

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American  
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian  
Board in Pediatric Emergency



Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - SL1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

**Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**

ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

- Kuwait Board of Otolaryngology.
- Laryngology Fellowship, McGill University- Canada.
- Fellow of the European Board of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck surgery.
- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.
- Member of the British Laryngological Association.
- Member of the European Laryngological Society.
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.

## Experienced In:

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Diagnosis and treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Myringotomy and ventilation tube insertion.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Diagnosis and treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- Tympanoplasty.
- Diagnosis and treatment of vertigo.
- Thyroid surgery
- Diagnosis and treatment of snoring.



مستشفى رويال هايات  
ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL

2536 0000  
www.royalehayat.com

royalehayat royalehayat royalehayat

مستشفى السلام الدولي  
Al Salam International Hospital  
Telephone: 1830003 Ext: 2400

alsalam.int.hospital

**DR KHALED ALMERRI**

Consultant Interventional Cardiology  
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

## Specialized in:

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



مستشفى آل حبيب  
AL HABIB HOSPITAL

**DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY**

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

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



@Malhajry

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

INTERNATIONAL CLINIC  
INTERNATIONAL CLINIC  
INTERNATIONAL CLINIC



**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant

American Board Certified in General Surgery

Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)

Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation

Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

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

http://www.international-clinic.com

Tel: 1886677

ic\_kwt

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



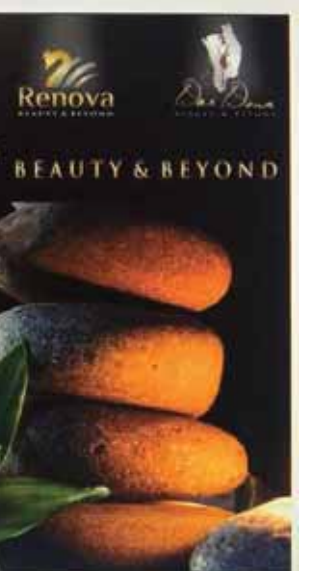
SHARQ, Ahmad Alalber st., Building B8,  
Floor 13.  
Tel.: (+965) 22060777  
@Drbuhaimeed, @Renovab, @dardonab  
Email: drbuhaimeed@beautybeyond.com.kw  
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

## ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

## SPECIALIZED IN:

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



**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laprosopic and Bariatric Surgery



## Academic Certificates – Training

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

## Scope of clinical Practice.

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



email: wbuhaimeed@gmail.com

Tel.: 965 2269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228

Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

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

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



مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tel: 1802 555



daralshifa

To advertise on this Page Call: 24833199 ext:101,102  
or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617 or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com



## Lifestyle | Gossip



# Billie Eilish loved 'thrifting' growing up

**T**he Grammy-winner - who wowed fans with her transformation on the cover of British Vogue magazine at the weekend - has opened up about where she got her style inspiration from over the years. And the 'Your Power' hitmaker revealed that she loved buying her clothes from a thrift store because there is no "genre of clothing" and "limit" on what you can buy regardless of gender. Asked where she got her style inspiration from by actress Barbie Ferreira in a video for British Vogue, Billie said: "Ah, Barbie, girl you so cute. Oh my

gosh, [I get] fashion inspo all over the place. I mean, everywhere. "Tyler had a lot of impact on me growing up. I used to like just only thrift like growing up ... I just did it because I really, really loved thrifting and I felt like what was nice about it is that there wasn't any real genre of clothing. It's like, all just there and so you kind of have no limit to what's, you know, there's no like women's blank or like women's ... there's just clothes and they're kind of in sections, but not really. That's kind of how I got my style." The 19-year-old superstar posed in a lingerie-

style corset and skirt for the cover of the fashion bible, and in the interview, she insisted that women should feel "empowered" whether they show off their skin or hide their body behind oversized clothes. She said: "Suddenly you're a hypocrite if you want to show your skin, and you're easy. If I am, then I'm proud. "Let's turn it around and be empowered in that. Showing your body and showing your skin - or not - should not take any respect away from you." Billie is "taking back that power" and has vowed to wear and do whatever she wants to make herself "feel

good". On wearing a corset while promoting body positivity, she said: "My thing is that I can do whatever I want. "It is all about what makes you feel good. If you want to get surgery, go get surgery. If you want to wear a dress that somebody thinks that you look too big wearing ... if you feel like you look good, you look good. It is about taking that power back, showing it off and not taking advantage with it. I'm not letting myself be owned anymore."



## The Spice Girls are in talks for a 'Spice World: The Movie' sequel

**G**eri Horner - who is currently managing her band - has taken charge of the potential project and has been in talks with a renowned screenwriter about a possible script for a follow-up movie ahead of the 25th anniversary of the cult musical hit next year. According to The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column, Melanie C, Emma Bunton and Mel B are tentatively on board for the film while they are all hoping the idea could tempt back Victoria Beckham, who opted out of the group's reunion tour in 2019. A source said: "The girls have been talking about how to mark the film's anniversary and are actively considering making a tongue-in-cheek

sequel. "They have approached a screenwriter who is considering working on the project and making tentative steps forward. "It is still in the early stages but they are talking to established names in the business, which proves they are taking a big screen comeback seriously." In 2019, it was announced all five Spice Girls would be involved in an animated film project, with the quintet voicing superheroes. Paramount Animation president Mireille Soria said at the time: "[Spice Girls] had an idea that we've been developing. They are very involved." The animated motion picture was expected to feature new songs as well as classic Spice Girls hits, but

progress is believed to have stalled after the planned 2020 release never materialized. It was previously explained that the heart of the project would be the group's long-standing message of 'girl power', and each of the quintet's animated alter-egos would possess a special power which reflects their personality. The original 'Spice World' became the highest-grossing movie of all time by a musical group after making over £70 million at the box office. As well as the band, it also featured huge stars including Sir Elton John, Meat Loaf, and Richard E. Grant.



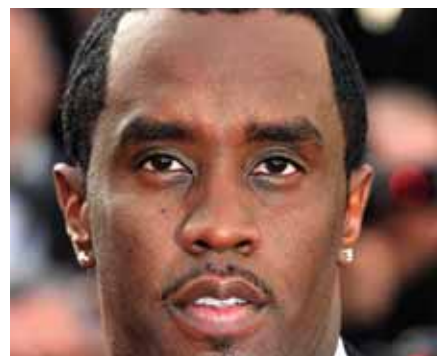
## Sir Elton John has 'really gotten fit' in lockdown

**T**he 'Rocket Man' hitmaker has spent the last 14 months focusing on his fitness as he wants to "be the fittest he has ever been" when he goes back out on tour following the coronavirus pandemic. He shared: "In lockdown I've really gotten fit. I walk in the pool, I play tennis. I wanted to come out the other side not overweight. When I go back on tour I am going to be the fittest I have ever been. A lot of shame comes from the way I've put on weight. It's been with me all my life. "I am Type B diabetic so I have to watch what I eat. I have two kids I want to see and be around as much as possible. You have to do something about [weight gain] and sit down with a doctor or nutritionist and say, 'How do I do it?' It comes down to, what do you want for the rest of your life? I have had a lot of help. My doctor said, 'Elton, get yourself together, do as you're told' and you will see the benefits of it." Whilst the 74-year-old singer has had a positive lockdown experience, he slammed those who use social media to make derogatory marks towards other, admitting it has become rife in the pandemic. Speaking on the Deeney Talks podcast, he added: "During lockdown, we've seen social media being used to abuse people racially. Not just being gay, but racially as well. People are so cruel to each other and it's because they hide behind their social messaging or whatever they do. If they had to write their names on it, they wouldn't do it. And I just think it's just awful that people can write anonymous things about people being gay, being of another political persuasion, religious persuasion, or just plain racial."

## Sean 'Diddy' Combs announces new name change

**S**ean 'Diddy' Combs has officially changed his middle name to Love. The 'I'll Be Missing You' hitmaker - who has previously been known by various other monikers including Puff Daddy and P. Diddy - has showed off a picture of his driver's license, revealing he has dropped John from his legal name. Alongside an Instagram post featuring his license and another photo of him writing "Love" inside a heart alongside different versions of his signature, he wrote: "Look what I just got in the mail today... IT'S OFFICIAL!!! WELCOME TO THE LOVE ERA.(sic)" He also shared an extract from a court document - which was dated 21 January 2020 - in a second Instagram post and wrote: "Imma need y'all to take me seriously on this one!!! #TheLoveEra LOVE (sic)" The 51-year-old rapper first filed a petition in Los Angeles in 2019 for the name change, but two years before then, he announced

on Twitter he'd decided he wanted to be known as Brother Love. He declared in November 2017: "I decided to change my name again! My new name is LOVE aka Brother Love. #TakeDat (sic)" In an accompanying video, he said: "Hey what's up y'all? I have some very, very serious news. I've been praying on this, and I decided - I know it's risky, it could come off as corny to some people, like yo - I decided to change my name again. "I'm just not who I am before. I'm something different. So my new name is Love, AKA Brother Love. I will not be answering to Puffy, Diddy, Puff Daddy, or any of my other monikers but Love or Brother Love, okay? It's my birthday, I feel good. God is the greatest, I give all the glory, and I thank my momma and daddy."



Young, Pamela Anderson and Deepak Chopra. He added: "This is a ground breaking opportunity to recognize creative artists, musicians, authors, poets, and visionary thinkers. Johnny Depp is one of the most multi-talented creative artists of our generation, making him the ideal creative personality to launch creative NFTs for the common good. "I represent many wonderful authors whose books have raised awareness of important global issues. I anticipate that the success of Johnny Depp's Official NFT series will create opportunities for many authors and artists to help millions of people throughout the world." Johnny and Winona were engaged for three years between 1990 and 1994. The pair starred alongside each other in 'Edward Scissorhands' in 1990 and were known for their mutual love of poetry.

—Bang Showbiz



## Graham would never change a thing

**A**shley Graham would "never change" a thing about her body. The 33-year-old model is encouraging her TikTok followers to celebrate their bodies and give a shout-out to the parts of themselves they love the most. In the clip, she said: "The strongest part of my body? My legs," she starts off. "The sexiest part of my body: my eyes. My favorite part of my body. My jawline lol. The most important part of my body? My smile :). The part of my body I would never change. EVERYTHING!!! (sic)" Ashley told her fans to recreate the video - which has over 1.4 million views at the time of writing. The challenge quickly took off and the catwalk beauty got emotional seeing the videos. She wrote on Instagram: "I'm not crying you're crying. So many beautiful people have been using my sound on TikTok to celebrate their bodies take a second today to celebrate yours!" The challenge comes after Ashley vowed to be an advocate for body positivity but



admitted she has trouble constantly talking about her body shape. She said: "I hate that I constantly have to discuss my body, because I don't know any man that has to do that. But what motivates me to continue to talk about my body is that I didn't have someone talking about their body when I was young." However, she is determined to keep her appearance "real" on social media as she wants to show her fans that there is no such thing as a "perfect" body type. She added: "This is why I don't post like the 'perfect' Instagram photos. I keep it real and raw constantly because I want [people] to know that there are women with cellulite, with back fat, with stretch marks.... There are a lot of curvy women, plus-size women, fat women, whatever you want to call them."



## Khloe Kardashian has had doubts about surrogacy

**T**he 36-year-old star previously revealed she has been warned against getting pregnant again but when discussing options for expanding their family with partner Tristan Thompson - with whom she already has three-year-old daughter True - she admitted she wasn't sure getting another woman to carry their baby was the right option for them. In a promo video for upcoming episodes of 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians', Tristan and Khloe discussed the subject, with the 30-year-old sportsman pointing out Kim Kardashian West had gone through the process for her and Kanye West's two youngest children, Chicago, three, and Psalm, 23 months. He said: "Your sister's done it before, so it's not like foreign to us." But Khloe replied: "I'm starting to wonder if surrogacy is really gonna work for me and my family." Despite previous struggles in their relationship, Khloe's family are on board with their reunion, even after Tristan signed to the Boston Celtics in November, meaning having to relocate away from Los Angeles. The Good American founder's mother, Kris Jenner, told her in the trailer: "There's nothing that I would love more than to see you grow old with the dad of your children." Khloe previously revealed she's been declared a "high-risk carrier" and said there is "an 80-something percent chance" she'll suffer a miscarriage if she carries another baby. Speaking to her sister Kim about starting the process of freezing her eggs during the recent premiere of 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians', Khloe said: "I have to wait until the mixing process is done before I know how many embryos I have. But I spoke to Dr. A and she was just a little concerned about like, I did a check and blood panels and all this stuff, and she just said that I would be a high-risk carrier for a pregnancy." Khloe also explained she "almost miscarried" whilst expecting True, and admitted the setbacks she's faced in trying to expand her family have been "hard to digest".

## Molly Sims takes 'three-minute showers'

**T**he 47-year-old fashion model and actress has revealed she has become a "pro" a multitasking since becoming a mom and has learnt the art of balancing taking time for self-care and being a parent. Speaking to Yahoo Life for 'The Unwind' series, Molly - who has Brooks, eight, Scarlett, six, and four-year-old Grey with husband Scott Stuber - said: "I take three-minute showers [laughs]; it was 12 minutes when I didn't have children. I do everything really quickly, I multitask a lot. I'll make coffee and get my kids ready for a school with a sheet mask on. I'll put conditioner in my hair and wear it for two days and no one knows. If I'm on a Zoom call, I dress from the bottom up." The 'Yes Day' Hiring Executive is a massive skincare and make-up fan and revealed she still battles on a "daily basis" with hyperpigmentation and melasma skin conditions. She said: "Skincare! I love make-up, and there are certain products I can't live without, but I love skincare - probably because I've have always had problems with my skin. In my early 20s I had cystic acne and once I cured that, I wound up having hyperpigmentation and melasma (and I'm



still dealing with that on a daily basis). Whether it be an exfoliating toner or a cleansing balm or the best foaming wash, I truly love talking about vitamin C and your AHA and PHA balance - I love it." Elsewhere, Molly revealed getting her nails and hair done instantly makes her "feel better", while she admitted she had been a "people pleaser" until she learned to say "no". She added: "I do think self-care is important. It's going to sound superficial, but getting my nails done once a month makes me feel better. Getting my hair coloured or a [taking] walk outside - those little things make me feel better. Recently, I had back problems and I had to stop exercising; I [struggled without it]. So I do think that taking those small moments is really important. I also learned that "no" is a complete sentence - and I'm a people pleaser."





Workers sort roses in a house in the city of Kelaat Mgouna in Morocco's central Tinghir Province in the Atlas Mountains.



A worker harvests roses in a field by the city of Kelaat Mgouna.



Workers carry sacks of roses harvested from a field by the city of Kelaat Mgouna.

# Hard but sweet-smelling slog in Morocco's Valley of the Roses

To earn a dollar, rose picker Izza in Morocco's Atlas Mountains wakes up at dawn to collect three kilos of flowers—eventually distilled into precious oil costing \$18,000 per kilo. “We earn just enough to live on,” she says, her hands gloved against the thorns and her head covered against the hot sun bearing down



A worker harvests roses in a field by the city of Kelaat Mgouna.

on the Valley of the Roses in the kingdom's south. The harvest begins at dawn, and it takes about six hours before the sunshine damages the shocking pink petals to fill the big bags that the women carry on their heads to the weighing station.

Izza Ait Ammi Mouh, a Berber woman of “about 40”—she doesn't know her exact age and can't spell her name—doesn't complain. The work allows her to feed her family of five, picking 20 kilos (45 pounds) to take home just under \$7 a day during the short April-May season. A kilo of essential oils requires between four and five tons of flowers. The heady aroma of the Rosa Damascena, a variety introduced in the days of the caravan trade, perfumes hedges and fields irrigated by two wadis between the mountains and the Sahara desert.

Everything revolves around roses: the names of hotels, cosmetics sold in countless stores, necklaces offered by children in the streets. The annual festival in the town of Kelaat Mgouna—with a rose statue at its centre — attracted thousands of visitors before Covid-19.

## ‘Lucky to be poor’

“The rose is the only way to work in the valley,” says Najad Hassad. The 35-year-old happily left her job in a packaging factory to manage the Rosamgoun cooperative, a small distillery set up by two sisters who grow roses. The work is much better paid, 2,500 dirhams (\$280) a month, almost the official minimum wage in



A worker spreads rose petals outside a house in the city of Kelaat Mgouna (or Tighremt Nimgunen) in Morocco's central Tinghir Province in the Atlas Mountains. — AFP photos

Morocco, instead of 400 dirhams a month at the factory. And the unit of five employees feels “like a family”. The distillery produces rose water and essential oils sold in the cooperative's store, along with cosmetic derivatives such as soap, creams, perfumes and ointments.

Rochdi Bouker, head of the Moroccan growers and processors association, Fimarose, sees the rose as “an engine of local development”, banking on the global vogue for natural raw materials and organic products. It aims to register an “organic” label for the valley to boost the value of local roses on a world market dominated by Bulgaria and Turkey, the leaders in rose-based perfumes.

“We are lucky to be poor,” he said. “We don't treat our valley, or very little — (it) isn't filled with pesticides or insecticides”. To increase income and combat an exodus

from rural areas, Morocco must “develop the derivatives that bring in the most” income, essential oils and “concrete”, an extract obtained by solvent which, once filtered, is highly prized by the luxury perfume industry, Bouker added.

## ‘Looking for more’

Moroccan rose exports are currently restricted mostly to rose water and dried flowers. Essential oils account for only about 50 kilos of annual exports and “concrete” for 500 kilos, a fraction of the industrial volumes sold by Bulgaria and Turkey, according to Fimarose. “Here, the main buyers are tourists passing through,” explains Mohamed Kaci. The 40-year-old started with a still, and he now employs 30 people in his company, “La Valle des Roses”, specializing in cosmetics. But “unfortunately, Covid-19 is blocking every-

thing,” he says. With the pandemic, the price of fresh flowers has sunk by about 30 percent in the past two years.

The downturn came after a buoyant period, driven by the agriculture ministry's efforts to develop the sector. “We're looking for more and more investors,” says Hafsa Chakibi. The 30-year-old Franco-Moroccan set up her own business, Flora Sina, in 2016 on the back of a university degree in chemistry, banking on the appeal of organic produce, small volumes and “traditional” distillation in copper stills. Her “pure and natural” rose water has quickly found customers who are “looking for something more” in Canada, China, Britain, France and the Netherlands. — AFP

## Chinese tourists out in force as virus fears recede

Slipping bubble tea and dressed in their holiday finest, millions of Chinese travellers flocked to domestic tourist attractions over the May 1 long holiday with COVID-19 fears already a distant memory. Beijing's historic alleyways were packed with camera-wielding visitors

yesterday while a bride dressed in red tulle took wedding photos with her groom outside the Forbidden City. Out-of-towners also mobbed popular sites in Shanghai over the weekend, many dragging roller bags and snapping selfies against the city skyline.

In Wuhan, where COVID-19 was first reported in late 2019, thousands of maskless revelers cheered and danced shoulder to shoulder at the outdoor Strawberry Music Festival. China has largely brought the virus under control with strict lockdowns and border controls since mid-2020, with only 17 cases among quarantined travellers reported in the country yesterday. The Chinese economy recorded an explosive 18.3 percent increase in GDP in the first quarter, and life in China has largely returned to normal aside from occasional small outbreaks, even as a devastating new wave of infections overwhelms neigh-

boring India.

Limits on flights abroad, and quarantine requirements for anyone entering the country, mean foreign holidays are almost entirely out of the question. The scenes of merrymaking over the five-day holiday, which ends Wednesday, contrasted starkly with the fear and silence in Chinese cities early last year after millions were told to stay home in the world's first COVID-19 lockdowns. Travel booking platform Ctrip said it expected up to 200 million people to make trips across China during the five-day period, with hotel bookings up more than 40 percent from before the pandemic.

Pent-up demand, including from tourists who cancelled plans after several small outbreaks during the Lunar New Year period in February, has pushed flight prices above 2019 prices, according to the company. But Chinese authorities remain wary of a virus resurgence, urging tourist attrac-

tions to limit visitor numbers and requiring travellers to register in advance before entering popular sites. Zhang, a man from Shijiazhuang in Hebei province visiting Beijing with his family, said he had been looking forward to seeing historic architecture and monuments in the capital.

“The virus has been controlled well, and now the vaccine has already come out, so I feel relatively safe,” he told AFP. And Zhao Mengyu, a high-schooler from suburban Beijing making a day trip to the Nanluoguxiang shopping alley, told AFP: “I think we locals feel pretty fortunate. “If we were overseas, we might not be able to go out... we wouldn't feel free, and also it would be quite dangerous.” — AFP



In this file photo US singer-songwriter Billie Eilish arrives for the 92nd Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

## Billie Eilish and Timothee Chalamet among young Met Gala co-chairs

New York's star-studded Met Gala will focus on youth and diversity this year, with four co-chairs under the age of 30 — actor Timothee Chalamet, poet Amanda Gorman, singer Billie Eilish and tennis player Naomi Osaka. Normally held in early May, the charity ball was postponed to September 13 in the hope that many COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted by then. The 2020 edition was canceled due to the pandemic. The honorary co-chairs will be Anna Wintour, the editor-in-chief of Vogue who has turned the gala into a global event, designer Tom Ford and Adam Mosseri, director of Instagram, sponsor of the event.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute relies on the Met Gala to fund its work including exhibitions and acquisitions, and the cancellation of last year's event badly damaged its finances. — AFP



People visit the Forbidden City in Beijing during the Labour Day holidays.



People walk through an alley near Houhai Lake during the Labour Day holidays. — AFP photos



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Jagger Eaton performs a frontside kickflip in Arizona. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# India's IPL cricket suspended over coronavirus

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Premier League, the world's richest Twenty20 cricket tournament, was suspended yesterday and its players sent home as India battles a massive surge in coronavirus cases. The move, which follows growing controversy over the competition, comes a day after two players — Varun Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier — tested positive, forcing a match to be postponed.

safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organizing the IPL," it added. India, which has reported more than 20 million infections so far, with just over 222,000 deaths, is also due to host the Twenty20 World Cup in October and November. The high-paying IPL, which was taking place in biosecure "bubble" conditions, attracts many of the world's top cricketers, including players from

tion and repatriation of Australian players, coaches, match officials and commentators back home."

The governing body added that it was not seeking exemptions from the Australian government's move to ban travellers from India from entering the country until at least May 15. The IPL has been running since early April, even as India's health care system has been overwhelmed by a vicious second wave of virus cases.

This prompted criticism from some who said it was inappropriate, given the suffering in the country, while others defended it as a welcome distraction. Eight teams have been playing behind closed doors in six cities including Delhi and Mumbai, both badly hit by the pandemic.

"These are difficult times, especially in India and while we have tried to bring in some positivity and cheer, however, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the statement said. "The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021."

One unnamed franchise told The Times of India it had approached the BCCI and said: "You can host it after three months, five months, six months. It doesn't matter. But right now, it needs to stop." Broadcaster Star India was also in favor of the suspension, the newspaper added.

## 'Heartbreaking'

Ex-England batsman Kevin Pietersen, who has been commenting on the IPL, tweeted after the announcement that it was "heartbreaking to see a country I love so much suffering". "You WILL get through this! You WILL be stronger coming out of this! Your kindness & generosity NEVER goes unnoticed even during this crisis! #IncredibleIndia," he wrote.

Indian cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle said he hoped the competition would return "stronger when the world is what we knew it to be". "I guess it became inevitable in the last couple of days. Look forward to calling the action in happier times," he tweeted.

Australian players Adam Zampa, Andrew Tye and Kane Richardson had already left their IPL teams before their country imposed a ban on arrivals from India. The English Cricket Board has also said it was talking with staff and players in India. The huge surge in cases has overwhelmed hospitals in major cities and led to severe shortages of oxygen, beds and critical medical supplies. — AFP

## Selby claims fourth world snooker title

**LONDON:** Mark Selby won a fourth world snooker title as he held off a stirring fightback from Shaun Murphy to win 18-15 in front of a capacity crowd at the Crucible. Selby punched the air after sinking the final black under immense pressure to join John Higgins as a four-time champion. The 37-year-old had endured a torrid time after winning his previous crown in 2017, crashing out in the first round as defending champion and surrendering his status as world number one after going over two-and-a-half years without a British-based ranking title.

Selby strode out for the final session with a 14-11 advantage, but well aware of the danger posed by Murphy, who had roared into the final in the kind of free-flowing form that evoked memories of his charge to the title as a fresh-faced qualifier in 2005. After Selby moved to within one frame of victory, Murphy produced back-to-back centuries to set up a nervy finale. He came close to taking another after Selby broke down on a break of 38 in the next, but a difficult red down the cushion proved a step too far, and Selby duly cleared up. "Absolutely incredible. Every time you get to a world final you always try your hardest because it's such a tough tournament to get there and you never know if it's going to be your last or not," said Selby. "A few years ago I had some really, really dark days and times were tough, obviously all the family will understand what I'm going through, so this has been a special one."

Selby's win moved him back up to number two in the world rankings. "My aim is to try and get back to number one," he added. "You still have massive goals in your career and I'm going in the right direction." Murphy paid tribute to the champion, telling the BBC: "He's just super-granite. Unfortunately for me I've known him since we were nine years of age and he's always been the same. "I started the match well and he just went into super-hard mode and broke me last night. It was a tough lead to give him overnight in a match of this caliber and it probably made the difference." — AFP

## London mayor Sadiq Khan eyes new Olympic bid

**LONDON:** London mayor Sadiq Khan said yesterday he will try to bring the Olympic and Paralympic Games back to the UK capital if he is re-elected this week. The Labour party politician said he would establish an exploratory committee for a bid to host the "most sustainable ever" games in 2036 or 2040. London would be the first city to host four summer games in the modern Olympic era if a bid were successful. Khan, 50, is running for a second term in mayoral elections on Thursday and has led the field in polling over his nearest rivals. "Exploring a bid for the 2036 or 2040 Olympic and Paralympic Games is the ultimate demonstration of my plan to build a brighter future for London after the pandemic," Khan said. "It would help fast-track much-needed green infrastructure projects, bringing with them long-term jobs and investment. My ambition is for London to host the most sustainable games ever, showcasing the Green New Deal for London with investment in low-carbon projects, action to clean up London's air and showcasing the city's status as the world's first national park city."

London last hosted the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012, when current British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was mayor. Using the venues and facilities built for that event would contribute to the sustainability targets of a future bid, Khan added. The 2012 games were perceived to have run smoothly thanks to efficient infrastructure, logistics and the punctual completion of new venues following a seven-year planning period.

The Olympic Park site has helped to regenerate the surrounding area of east London, formerly one of the British capital's most deprived neighborhoods. A 2012 poll for the Games' organizing committee found 65 percent of respondents thought they improved London and the UK's global image. Khan's four-year term as mayor of London was due to expire in 2020 but the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK forced local elections to be postponed by a year. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** A policeman walks outside the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on April 28, 2021 during the 2021 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between the Sunrisers Hyderabad and the Chennai Superkings with no spectators in attendance due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. - AFP

The Chennai Super Kings added in a statement Tuesday that its bowling coach L. Balaji and a member of the side's travel support staff tested positive after undergoing tests in India's capital New Delhi on Sunday. "The Indian Premier League Governing Council and Board of Control for Cricket in India in an emergency meeting has unanimously decided to postpone (the) IPL 2021 season, with immediate effect," a statement from organizers said.

"The BCCI does not want to compromise on the

Australia, England and South Africa.

## 'Difficult times'

BCCI Vice-President Rajiv Shukla told AFP that the governing body would "make the arrangements" for the IPL's international players to leave India. "About the foreign players, as we have said, we will try and ensure all of them get to their homes," he said.

Cricket Australia said in a statement that it was in touch with the BCCI to "ensure the safe accommoda-

## Antonio boosts West Ham's Champions League challenge

**LONDON:** West Ham maintained their surprise challenge for a place in next season's Champions League as Michail Antonio scored twice to beat Burnley 2-1 on Monday. Chris Wood's penalty opened the scoring for the Claret, but Burnley failed to guarantee their Premier League survival for another season as Antonio struck twice in eight minutes. The Hammers move into fifth, just three points adrift of Chelsea, who have to travel to run-away leaders Manchester City next weekend. West Ham, by contrast, have a favorable run in with Everton, Brighton, West Brom and Southampton to come in their final four games of the campaign.

The return of Antonio from injury could prove the decisive factor for David Moyes's men, who were battling for survival at this stage of last season. The Jamaican missed back-to-back defeats by Newcastle and Chelsea that had rocked West Ham's bid to finish in the top four. Another slow start saw them fall behind again when Wood was upended by Tomas Soucek and the New Zealander confidently stroked home the penalty. However, Burnley were guilty of uncharacteristic mistakes in defending crosses into their box.

Antonio's outmuscled Matt Lowton to head home Vladimir Coufal's cross on 21 minutes. Moments later he tapped in at the back post from Said Benrahma's low ball into the box. At the other end of the table, West Brom

are set for a return to the Championship after just one season back in the Premier League as a 1-1 draw at home to Wolves on Monday all but ended their chances of survival.

Sam Allardyce's men are now 10 points from safety with just 12 left to play for in the final four games of the season. The former England manager has never previously been relegated from the top flight, but the Baggies have won just four of his 22 games in charge since replacing the sacked Slaven Bilic in December. "We owe it to everyone to keep a professional attitude and go out and try to win every game we've got left and hope every team above us loses every game and then, by some magic miracle and some fairy dust, we stay up," said Allardyce. One of those victories was away to Wolves in the Black Country derby in January. However, Nuno Espirito Santo's side gained some measure of revenge by denying West Brom hope of beating the drop.

Both sides battled horrendous playing conditions under heavy rain and luck also deserted West Brom in first-half stoppage time when Kyle Bartley's attempted clearance ricocheted off Fabio Silva and into the net to give Wolves the lead. Mbaye Diagne levelled on 62 minutes when he headed in Conor Townsend's cross. But West Brom could not find the winner they desperately needed and remain second bottom of the table. — AFP



**BURNLEY:** Burnley's New Zealand striker Chris Wood shoots but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and West Ham United at Turf Moor in Burnley, north west England, on Monday. — AFP



## Sports

# Courtois finally feeling at home ahead of awkward return to Chelsea

**MADRID:** When Thibaut Courtois was sold by Chelsea to Real Madrid in 2018, there was little affection for one of the world's best goalkeepers from either the club he was joining or the one he had just left. Courtois' relationship with the Chelsea fans had soured after he pushed the move through by refusing to report for pre-season training and rejecting an offer of talks with then-coach Maurizio Sarri.

Once at Madrid, he rubbed salt into the wounds, remarking on the difference in quality in training with his new team and expressing hope that Eden Hazard, Chelsea's star player, would soon be there to join him. The welcome, though, was not much warmer than the farewell, Courtois arriving at a club whose goalkeeper was perhaps the most popular player with the fans, having just been key to three consecutive Champions League titles. "You can tell everyone loud and clear, I have as much enthusiasm for leaving Madrid as I do for dying," Keylor Navas said, shortly after Courtois' arrival.

Navas did leave, eventually persuaded to join Paris Saint-Germain a year later, but his departure served only to deepen the distrust of Courtois, whose nadir came in a Champions League game against Club Brugge, when he was taken off at half-time having been whistled by his own supporters. A month before, supporters of Atletico Madrid had even marked the city derby by throwing toy rats at the opposition goal, angered by their former goalkeeper's decision to join their rivals.

In some ways, Courtois might be relieved the stands will be empty at Stamford Bridge tonight, when Real Madrid will attempt to reach their fifth Champions League final in eight years, after a 1-1 draw in last week's opening leg. Certainly, the reception would have been much frostier than the one given to Hazard, whose exit to Madrid in 2019 was more accepted at the time and has become easier to accept since as Hazard's best days continue to be the ones he enjoyed in a Chelsea shirt.

## 'One of the best'

But Courtois might also have been spurred on by the criticism. Never one to dodge controversy, his remarks in the press and decisions in his career have all been made with a singular, uncompromising focus on what he believes he deserves as one of the game's most complete goalkeepers.

"I think I'm one of the best even if the Spanish press want to kill me," he said in his first season at Real Madrid, before last month lamenting a lack of appreciation for his talents back in Belgium. "I survived a tsunami in Madrid and I read (Romelu) Lukaku deserved the trophy for Belgium's best player abroad," he told Belgian newspaper HL.N. "I feel more appreciation in Spain than in Belgium."

Courtois would not be the first player to find solace at Real Madrid, to identify more and more with a club that seems to revel in being disliked. Karim Benzema, Toni Kroos and Sergio Ramos have all found comfort at the Santiago Bernabeu, in the face of criticism from outside. Longevity helps, and after appearing for a long time like a player eyeing his next promotion, Courtois now has the look of a Real Madrid goalkeeper for the next decade. He is settled, with a six-year contract, and having bought a plot of land in Boadilla del Monte, a wealthy town to the west of Madrid. He speaks to his two children in Spanish and, on the pitch, scolds his teammates in Spanish too.

Most importantly, the unsure performances of his first two years have given way to a sustained period of excellence, in which Courtois has established himself not only as first-choice goalkeeper but one of the outstanding players in Zinedine Zidane's team.

"He is fundamental, I have no doubts," said Zidane, who was one of those initially loyal to Navas when Courtois first arrived. The contrast with Hazard is certainly stark, even as



**MADRID:** Real Madrid's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois warms up before the UEFA Champions League semi-final first leg football match between Real Madrid and Chelsea at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium in Valdebebas, on the outskirts of Madrid, on April 27, 2021. —AFP

Hazard enjoyed a hero's welcome, his transfer prioritized by Zidane, his presentation celebrated by 50,000 adoring supporters and his place in the team guaranteed. Courtois had

none of those advantages, a signing that was arguably unnecessary and for many unwanted, who against the odds became one of Real Madrid's best signings in years. —AFP

## Time running out for wasteful Werner to prove his worth

**LONDON:** Chelsea welcome Real Madrid to Stamford Bridge tonight still with much to do to reach the Champions League final after failing to land the killer blow when the 13-time European champions were on the ropes in last week's first leg.

A 1-1 draw in the Spanish capital still gives the Blues the upper hand thanks to their away goal, but Thomas Tuchel's men could have had a much more convincing advantage but for a tale of two strikers. In a story of his first season at Chelsea, Timo Werner missed a glorious chance to put his side in front early as the outstretched leg of Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois denied his old club.

That miss even provoked criticism from the wife of Werner's teammate Thiago Silva. "Every team I go to there is a striker who keeps missing goals," Isabelle da Silva posted in a since deleted Instagram message.

At the other end, after Christian Pulisic had put Chelsea in front, Karim Benzema needed barely a half-chance to blast Real back on level terms for his 28th goal of the season and become the joint fourth highest goalscorer in Champions League history.

Those are the sorts of numbers Chelsea expected when they paid £47 million (\$65 million) for Werner last June at a time when other clubs, including Madrid, were scrambling to find the money just to

pay their players as the coronavirus pandemic halted football across Europe.

Backed by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, Chelsea were the club least deterred by the pandemic as they splashed out a total of £220 million in the transfer market last summer. That expense has been rewarded by a return to the last four of the Champions League for the first time in seven years. Yet, none of the attacking trio of new signings, Werner, Kai Havertz and Hakim Ziyech have consistently shown their best form.

Havertz and Ziyech started the first leg on the bench, but Tuchel has remained loyal to Werner since taking charge in January despite his lack of goals.

The German international has scored just three times in his last 38 games for club and country, one of which came against fourth-tier Morecambe in the FA Cup. Tammy Abraham has been linked with a move away from west London due to his limited opportunities under Tuchel, while 34-year-old Olivier Giroud is out of the contract at the end of the season.

## 'No panic'

The need for a prolific goalscorer to back up the significant defensive improvement since Tuchel replaced Frank Lampard has even sparked rumours Abramovich could be forced to spend big again. Chelsea are among a number of clubs interested in Borussia Dortmund's Erling Haaland. But Tuchel remains confident that Werner can prove to be the consistent finisher the club need.

"You will not find one manager who will not add a 20-goal striker to his squad. I cannot have enough of them, if you can guarantee that," said Tuchel when asked about interest in Haaland. "But this is what Chelsea bought, they bought Timo Werner and he is

The new regulations will also allow goalkeepers to be replaced before each match during the tournament in case of physical incapacity even if one or two goalkeepers from the player list are still available. A player that has been replaced on the player list will not later be allowed to return to the competition.

UEFA had already decided that teams would be allowed to make up to five substitutions in games at the delayed Euro 2020 instead of the usual three, in line with current rules across many club competitions.

National teams have named squads of 23 players at the World Cup and European Championship ever since the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. Euro 2020 was postponed last year because of the pandemic but is due to take place at venues across the continent, from June 11 to July 11.

It was set to be held in 12 hosts cities in 12 countries but Dublin and Bilbao were forced to drop out as they could not guarantee the presence of fans at the Aviva Stadium in the Irish capital and the San Mames. The four matches due to be held in the Basque Country — three from Group E and a last 16 game — were kept in Spain by moving them to Seville's La Cartuja stadium.

The three Group E matches originally scheduled to



**LONDON:** Chelsea's German striker Timo Werner stretches for the ball during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Fulham at Stamford Bridge in London on May 1, 2021. —AFP

a 20, 30-goal striker a year. Now he is struggling a little bit, for the first time in his career. In any transfer, there are risks of adaptations, change of country, change of mentality.

It needs time. It's not a puzzle where you identify one piece and you go out and find the exact piece, it's more than that and that's why there is no rush and no panic."

There have been bright moments in the 25-year-old's difficult first year in England. His slick pass into Havertz for his second goal in a 2-0 win over Fulham on Saturday took Werner's tally for assists for the season to 10, to compliment his 11 goals. But he desperately needs a big moment to quieten his doubters. The chance to knock Real Madrid out in the Champions League semi-finals is the perfect stage to prove his worth. —AFP



**BUCHAREST:** In this file photograph taken on November 30, 2019, The Euro Trophy stands on the stage during the UEFA Euro 2020 football competition final draw in Bucharest. —AFP

be held in Dublin were shifted to Saint Petersburg, which had already been assigned three Group B matches and a quarter-final, while London's Wembley Stadium took the last 16 match. —AFP

## News in brief

### Roma coach to leave

**ROME:** Paulo Fonseca will leave his job as Roma coach at the end of the season, the Serie A club confirmed on yesterday. According to media reports former Juventus, Napoli and Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri is favorite to take over the three-time Italian champions who last won Serie A in 2001 and are trophyless since 2008. Fonseca, 48, joined the club in 2019 on a two-year contract with the option for a third year if the club reached the Champions League next season. The club finished fifth in Serie A last campaign and are currently seventh, nine points behind city rivals Lazio who sit sixth and have a game in hand. Roma trail Premier League side Manchester United 6-2 going into tomorrow's second leg of their Europa League semi-final in the Italian capital. —AFP

### Parma relegated

**ROME:** Parma were relegated from Serie A on Monday after a 1-0 defeat at Torino ensured they dropped to the second tier three years after their comeback from a financial meltdown. Mergim Vojvoda tapped home the winner midway through the second half to leave Parma 12 points away from 17th-placed Cagliari with four games to play. During the 1990s, Parma were amongst the top sides in Italy and a force in Europe, winning the UEFA Cup in 1995 and 1999 and Cup Winners Cup in 1993. A financial collapse led to relegation from Serie A in 2015 and rebirth in the semi-professional Serie D, Italian football's fourth tier. Three straight promotions took them back to the top flight but they failed to establish themselves as a force and drop down to Serie B. —AFP

### Sevilla's hopes hit

**MADRID:** Sevilla's chances of winning La Liga could be over after they suffered a heartbreaking defeat by Athletic Bilbao on Monday, with Inaki Williams scoring a 90th-minute winner at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan. Williams' first goal since February snatched a 1-0 win for Athletic and leaves Sevilla six points adrift of leaders Atletico Madrid, with four games left to play. Sevilla's first of those will be against Real Madrid on Sunday at Valdebebas, the second part of a potentially pivotal weekend in the title race, after Barcelona go up against Atletico on Saturday. Atletico are two points clear of Real Madrid and Barca after they beat Elche on Saturday, before Real Madrid saw off Osasuna and Barcelona edged past Valencia on Sunday night. —AFP

# Classifieds

## 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

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaik Ghouse Mohiddin S/O Shaik Mohammed holder of Indian passport no. U0467072, R/07-721 Vayalpaduchittoor Dist., A.P., now changed my name as Malayanur Mohammed Ghouse. Given name: Mohammed Ghouse and Surname: Malayanur. (C 0245) 4-5-2021



## Flat for Rent @ Jabriya Next to Sultan Center

- Super deluxe flat includes 4 rooms (2 Master bedrooms, 2 regular rooms) plus a big hall room and all service points and storage space available.
- maid room and laundry room
- Separate entrance and near to the exit of fifth ring and Fahaheel Street.
- All facilities are near.
- Required small family.

**For contact:**  
**96660788**



# Sport | Times

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021

## Curry leads Warriors as Pelicans playoff hopes fade

**LOS ANGELES:** Steph Curry erupted for 41 points as the Golden State Warriors stayed on course for the post-season with a 123-108 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Monday. Curry's 33rd 30-point game of the season helped the Warriors move to 33-32 to leave the team firmly in the hunt for a Western Conference play-in tournament place.

But the Warriors' road victory all but extinguished New Orleans' chances of reaching the playoffs. The defeat means the Pelicans are now languishing outside the play-in competition places with a 29-36 record, four games adrift of the San Antonio Spurs.

Curry's latest masterclass in a season that has seen him emerge as a front-runner for NBA Most Valuable Player honors was his ninth 40-point game of the season, and the 47th 40-point game of his career. "I'm just playing with confidence," Curry said afterwards. "Every game I'm just trying to sustain the intensity, the effort and the focus. It's been a fun year and a fun ride but we've got a lot left to do, I'm glad I'm playing my part."

The Warriors led from start to finish, rocking the Pelicans by sprinting into a 39-21 lead at the end of the first quarter and stretching into a 25-point lead midway through the second quarter. "For us to come out like we did tonight in the first quarter and impose our will — it helped us maintain momentum throughout the game offensively," Curry told ESPN after the win.

Curry said the Warriors would have to continue to improve to have a chance of

progressing into the playoffs from the play-in tournament. "We understand that if we're going to be in the play-in or the playoffs we've got to play more consistent basketball, night-in, night-out," Curry said. "And we haven't done that. It was a nice test for us tonight."

### "Too big a hole"

Curry was backed by Andrew Wiggins with 26 points while Draymond Green finished with a triple double with 10 points, 13 rebounds, and 15 assists. Pelicans star Zion Williamson led the New Orleans scorers with 32 points, with Brandon Ingram adding 19.

Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy blamed his team's sluggish first quarter performance for the loss. "The game was basically decided in the first quarter," Van Gundy said. "We were just in too big a hole. A frustrating night, disappointing night."

Elsewhere on Monday, the Denver Nuggets clinched their place in the playoffs despite sliding to a 93-89 defeat to the Los Angeles Lakers. The Nuggets booked their place in the playoffs after the Atlanta Hawks defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 123-114.

The Lakers meanwhile halted a three-game losing streak despite the injury absence of LeBron James, ruled out with a sore right ankle just days after returning from his injury layoff. Anthony Davis led the Lakers scoring with 25 points, also producing a crucial late block after the Nuggets closed to within four points in the final seconds.

In other games, Russell Westbrook laid



**NEW ORLEANS:** Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors drives to the basket during the game against the New Orleans Pelicans on Monday at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP

on a remarkable 24 assists to complete his 32nd triple-double of the season in the Washington Wizards' 154-141 home defeat of the Indiana Pacers. Westbrook's latest triple — which also included 21 rebounds and 14 points — means he will average a triple-double for the season for the fourth time in his career. Wizards

coach Scott Brooks said after the win he believes Westbrook is second only to Magic Johnson in the all-time point guard rankings.

"I've been fortunate enough to see him for eight years do a lot of things that are pretty much superhuman at times," Brooks said. "Point guards don't do what

he does. They aren't built that way. There might be some that shoot better, there might be some that probably do certain things better. But there's nobody in the history of the game that can do what he does throughout the stat sheet. That guy is as high as level of a player this league has ever seen." — AFP

Established 1961

The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

## REGISTER TODAY

### for the COVID-19 vaccine

Free for all residents of Kuwait. To register visit:

**[www.moh.gov.kw](http://www.moh.gov.kw)**

**STEP 1:** Click on COVID-19 VACCINE REGISTRATION   **STEP 2:** FILL OUT BASIC INFORMATION   **STEP 3:** SUBMIT FORM

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective and approved by Kuwait's Ministry of Health