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ice hockey



baseball

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emergency number 112

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16 PAGES

150 FILS

America-back Biden backs off ‘end it’

Day by Day

I HOPE that Prime Minister will tell us who is the agent for ‘Pfizer’ who has the ability to convince the authorities to go for this vaccine and bypass the other brand vaccines especially since all countries in the world use all vaccines and some countries even manufacture them in their factories?
In Kuwait, it is strange. If a citizen wants to return to his country, he must be vac-

inated with the ‘Pfizer’ vaccine in the country where he presently is before setting foot in his homeland, or else he cannot enter Kuwait because the Pfizer agent is powerful enough to control and enforce his opinion.
No one is more powerful and stronger than Allah.
... Yet, tomorrow is another day.
Zahed Matar

DJ Aki puts his own spin on life
See Page 2

Opinion

End of Israel not in war, but peace

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IN the memory of the “Nakba” (catastrophe) or partition, as in the Arab literature, and independence as per the Israeli point of view, and under the raging fire in the Gaza Strip, and the uprising in the 48 Arab regions, the truth reemerges in the forefront, which is the inevitability of peace and agreement in order for the Palestinians to come out of the furnace where a group of mercenaries who work for a foreign agenda in Gaza put them from time to time.

From 1948 until date, the rhetoric of liberation has been preached. Instead of settling with the areas that Israel acquired through occupation in accordance with the international Resolution No. 181, those areas expanded to include the entire Palestine.

This rendered the Palestinians to be scattered around the world because none of the Arabs and Palestinians approached the matter realistically or pragmatically. Instead, they were taken by the vanity of being able to liberate what was stolen.

However, it became clear in time that this liberation will be achieved through slogans and false victories, which reveal, when the situation settles, the horror of the tragedy, leaving the Palestinians in a more displaced, scattered, impoverished, destitute and weak state than they were, while Israel continues to grow stronger with unlimited support from the western world.

Today, in light of the tragedy that the people of the Gaza Strip are experiencing, it has become necessary for the concerned parties to sit at the negotiating table, as proposed by the new US administration, and establish two states living side by side, given that there is no other way out.

Enough are the deaths caused by adventurers who trade in the blood of defenseless while they live in other coun-

tries, just like Khaled Meshal and Ismail Haniyeh, who boast from Doha about the resistance and insult the Arabian Gulf states even though they and their children are outside the circle of fire.

The Arabs missed many opportunities, and even betrayed those who guided them on the right path, starting with Habib Bourguiba, then the late Anwar Sadat, and the Arab rationalists, who believe that getting out of the tunnel needs the light of peace, which alone can stop the Israeli orgy.

In light of the Arab impotence to uproot Israel from existence, it is necessary to return to reason, and to adopt the initiative of the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who peacefully regained the Sinai, the Suez Canal, and the last inch of his country’s occupied land.

The late president told me in a press interview, “What is important is that the Jews sign an agreement, as it would mark the end of Israel, not the war, which it is seeking in order to maintain the world’s sympathy for it by portraying itself as the victim. I am not fighting Israel, but the United States and Europe, which provide it with arms and equipment. If I were to fight Israel alone, the crisis would have ended years ago.”

It is true that Israel has sustained damages from the shelling, and is losing daily, but that does not affect it as much as it affects the Palestinians, who should not bring their nation into a new war that it will not be able to win.

Therefore, there is no solution to their cause except peace, which would diminish Israel and boost the Arabs.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Special Education Administration has issued a decision to cancel the permit of an unidentified American teacher who works in a private school for sympathizing with the Zionist entity on her social media account.

This incident aroused the ire of parents and the Special Education Administration for bypassing the regulations and violating the decisions related to distancing the educational affairs from any unrelated opinions that has nothing to do with education.

The educational sources said the Special Education Department has initiated investigation procedures and sent a letter to the school administration to investigate the teacher and submit a report on the incident, especially since there are regulations and decisions that prevent educational institutions from getting involved in politics.

The Kuwaiti position against normalization of ties with the Zionists and support for the Palestinian cause is crystal clear, explaining that the foreign school in which the teacher works has taken the initiative to terminate the teacher’s services directly and notified the special education to do so.

According to sources the Special Education Administration placed the teacher on the black list, which prevents her from teaching in the State of Kuwait in any of the schools, especially the government.

□ □ □

UNITED NATIONS: The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court urged Libya’s new interim government Monday to arrest the son of longtime dictator **Muammar Gaddafi** and called for mercenaries and foreign fighters to leave the North African nation without delay, warning that they could face prosecution by the tribu-

nal for atrocity crimes.

In her final briefing to the UN Security Council on **Libya**, **Fatou Bensouda** said the ICC continues to receive “concerning information about ongoing crimes, ranging from disappearances and arbitrary detention to murder, torture and sexual and gender-based violence.”

She pointed to serious crimes allegedly committed in official and unofficial detention facilities, as well as reports of secret trials with summary conviction and sentencing of civilians to long prison terms by military courts in eastern Libya without fair trial guarantees.

Bensouda also decried “the violent silencing of public critics as a method to terrorize the civilian population.” She said that reached a low point with the killing of human rights lawyer **Hanaan Al-Barassi** in **Benghazi** in November.

Libya has been wracked by chaos since a NATO-backed uprising toppled Gaddafi in 2011 and split the oil-rich country between a UN-supported government in the capital, Tripoli, and rival authorities based in the country’s east, each backed by armed groups and foreign governments.

In April 2019, east-based commander **Khalifa Hifter** and his forces, backed by Egypt and the **United Arab Emirates**, launched an offensive trying to capture **Tripoli**. His 14-month-long campaign collapsed after **Turkey** stepped up its military support of the UN-backed government with hundreds of soldiers and thousands of Syrian mercenaries.

An October cease-fire agreement that included a demand for all foreign fighters and mercenaries to leave Libya within 90 days led to a deal on the transitional government and agreement to hold elections in December. (AP)



A man inspects the rubble of destroyed commercial building and Gaza health care clinic following an Israeli airstrike on the upper floors of a commercial building near the Health Ministry in Gaza City, on May 17. Inset: Palestinian mourners react during the funeral of Obaida Jawabreh, who was killed in clashes with Israeli forces, in the West Bank refugee camp of Al-Arrub, May 18. (AP)

We can sit, eat inside!

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti Cabinet decided on Tuesday to allow restaurants and cafes to receive people for dine-in orders with the implementation of health safety precautions.

The decision will take into effect as of Sunday, 23rd of May, according to a statement by the Center For Government Communication on Twitter.

Kuwait’s Ministry of Health has announced recording 861 new coronavirus infections and three related deaths in the past 24 hours.

The new figures took the total cases in the country up to 292,490 and deaths to 1,696 respectively, noted the ministry’s spokesman Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad in statements to KUNA on Monday.

He pointed out that some 1,004 more people had been cured of the virus over the past day, raising the total of those who have overcome the disease to 278,824.

He added that the number of people hospitalized with the virus currently stands at 11,970, with 191 of them in intensive care units.

Al-Sanad revealed that some 7,570 swab tests were conducted over the last day, bringing the total to 2,467,673.

He renewed calls for nationals and expatriates alike to abide by health precautions to curb the spread of the virus.

The head of the mobile field vaccination campaigns team, and Director of the Primary Health Care Department, Dr. Dina Al-Dhabib, announced that the third phase of the mobile field campaigns will kick off soon to vaccinate workers at airports and factories that come in direct contact with the public.

Speaking on the sidelines of the conclusion of the second phase of the mobile field campaigns in the ‘Boulevard’ complex, Al-Dhabib said during the second phase between 35-36,000 male and female employees working in 21 commercial complexes in Kuwait were vaccinated.

She disclosed 10 mobile units were distributed in 8 commercial complexes including Boulevard, Symphony, Al Muhallab, Laila Gallery, Al Fanar, Fish Market, Al Awatad Complex and Al Jahra Mall to vaccinate about 8,000 employees.

WASHINGTON, May 18, (Agencies): The Biden administration distanced itself Monday from growing calls by Democrats and others for an immediate cease-fire between Israel and Gaza’s Hamas rulers as fighting entered a second week, with more than 200 people dead, most of them Palestinians in Gaza.

The United States, Israel’s top ally, also blocked for the third time what would have been a unanimous statement by the 15-nation UN Security Council expressing “grave concern” over the intensifying Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the loss of civilian lives. The final US rejection Monday killed the Security Council statement, at least for now.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki and national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States instead was focusing on “quiet, intensive diplomacy.” As missile and rocket exchanges between Israel and Hamas surged to their worst levels since 2014 and the international outcry grew, the Biden administration — determined to wrench US foreign policy focus away from the Middle East and Afghanistan — has declined so far to criticize Israel’s part in the fighting, send a top-level envoy to the region or press Israel publicly to wind down its latest military operation in the thickly populated Gaza Strip, as some past US administrations have done. Appeals by other countries so far show no sign of progress.

The U.S. administration’s publicly tempered response comes despite calls from Security Council partners, some Democrats and others for President Joe Biden and other international leaders to wade more deeply into diplomacy to end the worst Israel-Palestinian violence in years and revive long-collapsed mediation for genuine peace there.

Speaking in Copenhagen, where he was making an unrelated tour of Nordic countries, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken ticked off other, quieter US outreach so far to try to de-escalate hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, and said he would be making more calls Monday.

Cease-fire

“In all of these engagements we have made clear that we are prepared to lend our support and good offices to the parties should they seek a cease-fire,” Blinken said.

He said he welcomed efforts by the UN, Egypt and other nations working for a cease-fire.

“Any diplomatic initiative that advances that prospect is something that we’ll support,” he said. “And we are again willing and ready to do that. But ultimately it is up to the parties to make clear that they want to pursue a cease-fire.”

Pulling back from Middle East diplomacy to focus on other policy priorities — such as Biden’s emphasis on dealing with the rise of China — carries political risk for the administration. That includes weathering any blame when violence flares as the US steps back from conflict zones in the Middle East, and Afghanistan. But a relatively hands-off approach in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict also could spare the US years of shuttle diplomacy in support of a peace process that neither side actively supports.

At least 213 Palestinians had been killed in the strikes as of Monday, including 59 children and 35 women, with 1,300 people wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Eight people in Israel have been killed in rocket attacks launched from Gaza, including a 5-year-old boy and a soldier.

Israel bombs Health ...Toll 213

Blinken also said he had asked Israel for any evidence for its claim that Hamas was operating in an Gaza office building housing The Associated Press and Al Jazeera news bureaus that was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike over the weekend. But he said that he personally had “not seen any information provided.”

Blinken’s comments came after U.N. Security Council diplomats and Muslim foreign ministers convened emergency weekend meetings to demand a stop to civilian bloodshed, as Israeli warplanes carried out the deadliest single attacks Sunday in the week of fighting.

Biden’s ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told an emergency high-level meeting of the Security Council on Sunday that the United States was “working tirelessly through diplomatic channels” to stop the fighting.

She warned that the return to armed conflict would only put a negotiated two-state solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict even further out of reach.

Cessation

However, the United States blocked moves by China, Norway and Tunisia in the Security Council for the statement by the UN’s most powerful body, including a call for the cessation of hostilities. The proposed statement called for an end to “the crisis related to Gaza” and the protection of civilians, especially children.

In Israel, Hady Amr, a deputy assistant dispatched by Blinken to try to de-escalate the crisis, met with officials. Blinken himself has no announced plans to stop in the Middle East on his current trip.

Rep Adam Schiff, Democratic chairman of the House intelligence committee, urged Biden on Sunday to step up pressure on both sides to end the fighting and revive talks to resolve Israel’s conflicts and flashpoints with the Palestinians.

“I think the administration needs to push harder on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to stop the violence, bring about a cease-fire, end these hostilities, and get back to a process of trying to resolve this long-standing conflict,” Schiff, a California Democrat, told CBS’s “Face the Nation.”

Sen. Todd Young of Indiana, the senior Republican on the Foreign Relations subcommittee for the region, joined Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, the subcommittee chairman, in asking both sides to cease fire. Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia separately joined 26 other Democratic senators and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent, on Sunday in urging an immediate cease-fire to prevent further civilian deaths and any further escalation of the overall conflict. More Democratic lawmakers joined the calls Monday.

Biden focused on civilian deaths from Hamas rockets in a call with Netanyahu on Saturday, and a White House readout of the call made no mention of the US urging Israel to join in a cease-fire that regional countries were pushing. Thomas-Greenfield said US diplomats were engaging with Israel, Egypt and Qatar, along with the UN.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health premises in Gaza Strip have been partially damaged by an Israeli airstrike. The ministry HQ houses children’s clinics and some central laboratories to conduct the novel coronavirus tests, MoH Undersecretary Youssef Abu el-Reish said on Monday during a news conference.

Israel’s deliberate targeting of health teams and institutions has proven the occupiers crimes against Palestinians, he said.

He added that this is a heinous crime aiming to impede the ministry from saving the lives of Palestinians and providing healthcare to them.

The emergency service has been suspended due to the Israeli attacks on the ministry, he stressed, calling on the international community to hold the Israeli occupation accountable for its continued crimes against the medical teams and health institutions.



SPECIAL REPORT

Mohammed Musaed Al Mubarak, aka DJ Aki is the star of Super Station FM 99.7. One of Kuwait’s most popular radio jockeys, he continues to rule the airwaves with the Breakfast Show. Last year, during the lockdown, when Kuwait was trying to come to grips with the new virus, DJ Aki maintained a steady and calming presence on the radio, spreading smiles and creating awareness.

A television and radio show host, and Department Head of Super Station 99.7 FM, DJ Aki has lived life on his own term. A multifaceted person, he is a painter, artist, DJ and producer. Over the years, Aki has pushed boundaries, defied expectations, experimented while creating his own space, and found his own voice. He spoke to Arab Times about his journey as a young Kuwaiti creative who has tried to use his voice and role for the greater good of the community.

Arab Times: You grew up in a conservative family that had certain expectations from a single male child. Was it challenging for you to go against the tide?

Aki: I grew up in a very traditional family with my mom and dad. I am the only son in the family with three sisters. My family is traditional. Everything needs to go by a set of rules and by social standards. Yes, it was challenging for me as a child.

AT: Why was that?

Aki: As a child, you want to explore everything around you and then when you hit a certain age, you are put into a box that defines what a boy should do or shouldn’t do. For instance, it is expected that boys should follow certain professions, play certain sports, get married etc.

AT: I understand what you mean. It is about stereotypes, like pink for girls and blue for boys.

Aki: The question for me is, why can’t I do what I want to do? What is wrong with that? As a child, you are innocent, and you don’t think of these restrictions. Last year, my sister was blessed with two beautiful girls. Just watching them grow up in front of me taught me many things, including the fact that you’re born to be who you are. If you want something, then go for it. You need the freedom to experience things. That’s the only way you as a human will learn, and that’s what makes you different or special or more successful than others. I was stopped from expressing myself, and that was very tough because I had this tremendous energy inside of me. I always wanted to do multiple things at the same time. I never set any limits to what I wanted to do. And so it was tough for me to have these kinds of boundaries.

AT: Going back to your childhood, you said that you did something different in your growing up years while other boys were doing something that was expected of them. How were you different?

Aki: Boys of my generation are expected to do certain things. Boys were expected to play soccer, volleyball, football, but I was never interested in that. I wanted to create art. I wanted to be on stage. When I was in kindergarten, I was the head of the band. I used to play the piano. I wanted to perform. I wanted to be around music and art. That was very hard at that time. Not to forget that I am the only son in my family. I had cousins doing things one is supposed to do. But I couldn’t do all of that. So I used that energy in my work. I decided if I want to do something, I have to be the best at it.

AT: Going against social pressure and expressing yourself is not easy. You have done that, and that requires a lot of courage.

Aki: It takes a lot of energy. Don’t ever think that people will ever understand what you’re doing. It will never happen. I don’t think that’s the case, just in our country. This is what is happening everywhere around the world. I always believe that parents want the best for their kids. But you need to know that you’re not in this world to do what everybody else does. So you have to express yourself, you have to do what you are good at because that’s the only way for you to be recognized. A lot of people reach out to me asking about ways to be a DJ or a presenter. Of course, as a teenager, that’s what I wanted. I wanted to be famous. I wanted to travel everywhere. I wanted to be recognized. And that’s fine. There is nothing wrong with this. When you grow older, you start to understand that there are specific goals and objective for you as a human being. As human beings, we have a lot of energy inside of us, and we are capable of doing multiple things in our lives. Once you know what you like, what you don’t like, you’ll start to have a clearer vision of who you



Mohammed Musaed Al Mubarak, aka DJ Aki is the star of Super Station FM 99.7.

DJ Aki Breakfast

host ‘wakes people up’ ... sheds shackles of cultural singularity

By Chaitali B. Roy

Special to the Arab Times

The question for me is, why can’t I do what I want to do? What is wrong with that? As a child, you are innocent, and you don’t think of these restrictions. Last year, my sister was blessed with two beautiful girls. Just watching them grow up in front of me taught me many things,

including the fact that you’re born to be who you are. If you want something, then go for it. You need the freedom to experience things. That’s the only way you as a human will learn, and that’s what’s makes you different or special or more successful than others.

are as a person and how you can channelize your energy.

AT: I think for those who want a career in radio, they have to explore

their creative side— do theatre, music and the things that art offers to find their space. Tell us, Aki, what brought you to the radio?

Aki: I have worked in media since 2010. I started as a trainee in one of the private stations. I began to write scripts for shows and seg-

ments. In 2012, I got the chance to be a TV host. And then I shifted to the radio. I never thought I would join the English station. I presented

a demo that was initially rejected because I was too loud. Then they did a rerun and felt that’s what we need in the morning—someone who wakes people up.

AT: How did the Super Station change your life?

Aki: It changed my life in many ways. The fact that I was promoted to head of department last year meant a lot to me. The radio has taken me to places that I don’t think TV would have taken me. In 2017, I was picked by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to go to Tokyo, Nada, and then to Hiroshima to meet a survivor from the Hiroshima bomb. My visit was a day after Barack Obama visited Hiroshima, which was like the first time a president visited Hiroshima after the bombing. And once I came back, I spoke of my travel and visit to Japan, and it was such a privilege to do so. In 2014, I was selected by the French Embassy to attend an essential and prestigious film making programme in Paris. That trip expanded my vision.

AT: Kuwait is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual country, and we have people of so many different denominations living here. Radio plays a massive role in bringing people together. Do you agree with that?

Aki: I totally agree with you. Kuwait has people from all over the world. It is like the universe in a small place with a fantastic diversity. Many people here don’t speak English or Arabic and don’t have access to the correct information. They probably don’t even speak Arabic, and their only way to gather information is through their language. This is where the radio assumes importance. This is when foreign services come in very handy. We are the source of information for these people. I remember two incidents. One of them was in 2018 when we had this huge rain and flood. My colleagues and I used to come to the station every single day. We would announce and spread the information in five languages on three different shifts during the entire day. This shows the importance of radio and foreign language services. Yes, I entertain people, but my main job is to spread accurate information and answer queries. These two crisis situations — the flood in 2018 and the pandemic last year, defines the essence of my job. During the lockdown the previous year, my colleague DJ Maha and I did our shows every day and gave correct information.

AT: Aki, you were very active at the height of the pandemic. You were at the station every day, sharing important information on air. How challenging was it?

Aki: First of all, I’ve never lived a pandemic. In fact, a lot of us didn’t know what a pandemic was until this hit us. For me, the most important thing was to deliver the right news on the radio. I put my life at risk and that of my family because I knew I had to be there for the people. I went back home every day, not knowing if I had it, but I had to go back to work because I felt many people depended on me. A lot was going on, lots of changes happening. I had to be there.

AT: A lot was going on, and giving the correct information is very important.

Aki: Late last year, I attended a workshop organized by the World Health Organization where they discussed infodemic — the information pandemic. During the pandemic, there has been a lot of misinformation, rumours and misleading information that worsens the situation. Fighting the rumours and wrong information is essential. Sometimes people do it to increase followers on social media — I believe this is a crime. And this has added more responsibility to my colleagues and me. We have to give the correct information to people because they depend on us. Our job is to pass on the information and keep on doing it every day until the pandemic is over, and we can go back to our everyday lifestyle or regular schedule.

AT: Aki, what is it to be regarded as the face of Super Station? What does it feel like?

Aki: I think it’s an honour when people look up to you. It shows how much love, respect and appreciation, people have for you, and for me, that means a lot. I have to tell you that I did not study English. I am self-taught. I learnt the language from books, video games, music and movies. I studied in a government school, and back then, the quality of English teaching wasn’t good. Today, I feel proud that I have reached so far. If you keep working hard and people start giving you the feedback you want, you know you have done it right.

editor’s choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:23	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:54	Maghrib ...	18:35
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:02

Local

VACCINE REGISTRATION WEBSITE: https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD_19_Vaccine_Registration.aspx

Jazeera Airways drops 11 fils, Boubyan Bank gains

Kuwait stock market edges lower in volatile session

By John Mathews
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait stocks fell slightly on Tuesday snapping the two-day gains. The All Shares Index slipped 4.23 points in volatile session to 6,308.97 pts weighed by some of the heavyweights and mid-caps even as the broader sentiment remained mixed.

The Premier Market dropped 7.15 points to 6,830.63 pts whereas Main Market added 2.46 points. The BK Main 50 shed 24 points before closing at 5,483.37 pts. The volume turnover meanwhile ebbed slightly following last session's surge. Over 563 million shares changed hands – down 2 percent from the day before.

The sectors closed mixed. Insurance sector outperformed the rest with 2 percent gain whereas Industries shed 1.72 pct, the biggest loser of the day. Volume wise, Financial Services topped with 270 million shares and Banking dominated with KD 49 million.

In the individual shares, National Bank of Kuwait rose 2 fils to 839 fils on back of over 3 million shares and Kuwait Finance House too extended last session's gains with a 4 fils jump to 740 fils. Boubyan Bank scaled 7 fils to close at 664 fils whereas KIPCO eased 1 fil to 155

fils. Mezzan Holding gave up 6 fils to settle at 674 fils.

Zain fell 3 fils to 600 fils after pushing 6.7 million shares while Ooredoo was down 12 fils at 643 fil. stc dipped 23 fils to 864 fils and logistic major Agility slid 38 fils to KD 1.050. Humansoft Holding jumped 40 fils to KD 3.640 and Boursa Kuwait Securities climbed 6 fils. Mabane Co stood pat at 745 fils.

National Industries Group rose 5 fils to 240 fils on back of 25.6 million shares whereas Gulf Cable clipped 1 fil. Boubyan Petrochemical Co rose 4 fils to 922 fils and Al Qurain Petrochemical Co tripped 1 fil. Sultan Centre shed 8 fils and Combined Group Contracting Co was down 13 fils at 359 fils.

Jazeera Airways gave up most of last session's gains with a 11 fils dip to 688 fils and ALAFCO dialed down 1 fil. NAPESCO dived 30 fils to 920 fils and Kuwait National Cinema Co skidded 34 fils. Integrated Holding Co dropped 5 fils to 423 fils and Aznour inched 1 fil into red.

The market opened firm and ticked up briefly before slipping into red. The main index continued to erode amid selling in some of the counters and plumed the day's lowest level of 6295 points almost half way into the session. It

clawed back most of the losses thereafter in choppy trade before closing in a shallow trough.

Top gainer of the day, Jiyad sprinted 12.66 pct to 61.4 fils and Gulf Investment House scaled 9.75 pct to stand next. Future Kids skidded 12.93 percent, the steepest decline of the day and KPPC topped the volume with 95.5 million shares.

Reflecting the day's downtick, the losers slightly outnumbered the winners. 63 stocks advanced whereas 69 closed lower. Of the 143 counters active on Sunday 11 closed flat. 18,886 deals worth KD 82.59 were transacted during the session.

In the banking sector, Gulf Bank was unchanged at 222 fils after pushing 5.2 million shares and Burgan Bank too did not budge from its earlier close of 229 fils. Kuwait International Bank dialed down 2 fils with a volume of 9.3 million.

Ahli United Bank BSC clipped 2 fils whereas Warba Bank stood pat at 256 fils after moving 16.9 million shares. Al Ahli Bank trimmed 1 fils and Ahli United Bank Kuwait gave up 2 fils before ending at 290 fils.

National Investment Co was flat at 185 fils and Al Intiaz Investment Co took in 1 fil.

Weather

By Night: Rather hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south westerly wind with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	44	31

Kuwait Airport	45	26
Abdaly	45	27
Jahra	46	28
Salmiyah	39	30
Ahmadi	42	31
Nuwaisib	48	25
Wafra	45	24
Salmiyah	44	28

Direct flights begin to 'banned' nations

'Arrivals remain on hold'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has approved the resumption of direct outgoing flights to five banned countries – India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka from Tuesday, May 18, but decided to continue to ban on incoming passenger flights from these five countries, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to reliable sources, the approval was issued to facilitate the travel of residents of these nationalities, which was hindered due to the decision to suspend commercial flights to those countries.

Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways, in addition to the airlines of those countries, will operate the flights.

DGCA is currently awaiting the issuance of new directives from the Cabinet regarding the removal of some countries from the list of banned countries, in preparation for the resumption of direct flights to them.

The sources chose not to disclose the names of those countries until an official decision is issued regarding them.

They said DGCA recently discussed the resumption of flights during the summer season to new destinations in Turkey, such as Bodrum and Trabzon, as well as flights to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan.

They indicated that the flight movements to most of these destinations will be implemented as of June after obtaining the official approvals, adding that some of them will resume during the current month.

Regarding the implementation of the decision to increase the number of passengers coming to the country from May 22, the sources said DGCA is still working on

determining the number of passengers on each incoming flight, taking into account the removal of any country from the list of banned countries, where the travel density increases, knowing that the trips of domestic workers are excluded from that number.

Meanwhile, even though some government agencies have started depositing bonuses for excellent performance into the accounts of their employees, these bonuses contribute to a legal and administrative crisis in some government agencies, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting informed sources.

They indicated that they expect the mechanism for disbursing excellent performance bonuses in some government agencies, which decided not to disburse them to those exempted from work due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020, will create problems.

The sources explained that some government agencies have already started depositing the bonuses in the bank accounts of their employees except for those exempted based on the decision issued by these authorities.

Some parties may enter into the cycle of grievances and administrative complaints because of these bonuses, based on the guidelines issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) regarding the policies, procedures and rules for gradual return to work in government agencies.

CSC had specified the mechanism of flexible working hours in the authorities, according to the stages of the plan for return to normal life, as specified in the categories of those exempted from working hours. The guide explicitly states that, "The exemption does not cancel any financial or administrative benefits for employees, as exemption days are considered as actual working days."

The decisions to exclude those exempted from the payment of bonuses issued by some parties bear the suspicion of a legal violation, as they are retroactive.

The sources indicated that most of these bodies asked CSC about the possibility of canceling the bonuses for those exempted from work.



KUNA photo
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah during the video conference.

Support pledged

Minister seeks info on troops in Saudi

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah on Tuesday inquired in a video conference about status of the Kuwaiti forces partaking in the "Operation Restore Hope" in Saudi Arabia and Kuwaiti Army personnel in the joint forces in Bahrain.

The kingdom security has remained inseparable from security and stability of the State of Kuwait, Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber stated, according to a Kuwait Army statement, noting that he conveyed greetings from Their Highnesses the Amir and the Crown Prince to the Kuwaiti forces.

The Kuwaiti military forces have always supported the armed forces in the other GCC countries, the Kuwaiti defense minister affirmed.

The video conference was attended by the Kuwait Army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Fahad Al-Nasser and a number of senior military commanders.

Later on, the minister met a number of ranking officers, expressing belated congratulations in Eid Al-Fitr and lauding the personnel for their dedication for serving the homeland.

'Prove two doses'

'Get your jab certificate'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Ministry of Health, over the next few days, citizens who have taken the vaccine against Covid-19 outside the country can apply to obtain the vaccination certificate, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting health sources.

The same sources said people who have received one or two doses of the vaccine will have to register their data on the 'Immunity' application on the Ministry of Health website, and prove that they have received the vaccination outside Kuwait.

Those applying for the certificate will have to produce a valid vaccine document to prove they have taken the dose/s of vaccine approved by Kuwait – 'Pfizer Biontech', 'AstraZeneca Oxford', 'Moderna' or 'Johnson & Johnson'.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health announced it has received this month the third batch of the Oxford vaccine from one of the local agents in Kuwait. However, the vaccines will be analyzed in the laboratory and tested for safety reasons to ensure proper shipping and transportation procedures were applied, in the interest of the health and safety of everyone.

Greece's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) announced that citizens of 21 countries, including Kuwait, would be allowed to enter Greece until May 24, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to Greece's Athens News Agency (ANA), the CAA issued a press statement in which it stated that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Russia, Britain, China and Canada are among the countries included in the decision.

Citizens of countries outside the European Union, except for permanent residents of the Union and the member states of the Schengen Agreement, will not be allowed to enter Greece during that period.

Long 'first dose' wait ends

New batch of 'Oxford' here: MoH

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Despite the recent increase in the daily vaccination rate in the country, the scarcity of 'Oxford' vaccine has been a major cause for concern for the health authorities in the country, after a large number of citizens and residents who should have received their second dose after waiting for more than three months and took to '#Win_My_Dose' to demand their right to complete the vaccination.

In an official statement in response to the hashtag, the Ministry of Health confirmed it has received the third batch of Oxford vaccines from a local agent this month and the vaccines have been sent for analysis and laboratory tests to ensure their safety and to ensure the vaccines were shipped and transported taking into account all procedures in the interest of everyone's health.

The ministry said confirmed sending text messages with the dates to receive the second dose which does not exceed 4 months between the two doses. The ministry added the four-month extension of the time period between the two doses for the Oxford vaccine has occurred in many countries, including Canada, Turkey, Spain, France, Denmark and others, noting that studies have shown that the acquired immunity after the first dose of the Oxford vaccine remains high for a period of up to 4 months,

but in order for the immunity to remain effective, it must be supplemented with the second dose.

The Ministry of Health affirmed it will not hesitate to do everything to ensure the health and safety of everyone, and it appreciates everyone's understanding of all international developments regarding the manufacture and production of Covid-19 vaccines and ensuring continued supplies to countries of the world, and the conditions affecting a large number of countries in the world and countries in the region including Kuwait.

On the other hand, a number of doctors have confirmed that the efficiency of the first dose of the Oxford vaccine begins to gradually decrease after more than 12 weeks of receiving the first dose, according to studies conducted by the University of Oxford in this regard.

The doctors on their personal Twitter accounts posted the recent recommendations of the vaccination committee in the UK, which indicated the need to advance the date of the second dose of the Oxford vaccine to be after 8 weeks instead of 12 weeks, for those over the age of 50 years and for patients with chronic diseases as well, and to speed up the pace vaccination to reduce the spread and the possibility of the emergence of mutations resulting from the large number of infection transmission.



Employees waiting for vaccination at one of the malls.

40 industrial plots withdrawn by PAI

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The total number of industrial plots withdrawn by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) in the last five years was 40 plots in various industrial zones in Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to official data, the reasons for PAI to withdraw the plots were varied. Its Board of Directors signed decision No. 1/2017 on February 18, 2017 to withdraw 12 industrial plots for reasons related to non-implementation of the projects for which these plots were allocated, or because the plots were discovered to be non-operational. On August 15 of the same year, the board issued another decision No. 4/2017 to withdraw two other plots due to non-implementation of the necessary projects.

On February 15, 2018, PAI's board of directors issued a decision No. 1/2018 to withdraw six industrial plots for the same

mentioned reasons including the non-operational status of the plots. On June 11 of the same year, the board issued another decision to withdraw five other plots due to failure in implementing the necessary project.

On September 17, 2018, the board issued decision No. 3/2018 to withdraw seven industrial plots for a different reason this time, which is their owners' failure to pay the land rates.

On May 22, 2019, the PAI board issued a decision No. 1/2019 to withdraw five violating industrial plots. On January 28, 2020, the decision No. 1/2020 was issued to withdraw three plots for non-implementation of the necessary project. It is worth mentioning that all the aforementioned decisions issued by PAI were published in detail in the official gazette (Kuwait Today) with their numbers throughout the last five years.

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Total number of employees reaches 1.993m at '20 end

Domestic workers number totals 2.133 million at end of 2019



Nepalese Ambassador Bhandari, with the Chairman of KRCS, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, and a number of officials of the society. KUNA photo

Nepalese envoy praises Kuwait Red Crescent Society

By Arwa Al-Wugayyan

The Ambassador of the Republic of Nepal to the State of Kuwait, Durga Prasad Bhandari, has lauded Kuwait Red Crescent Society's efforts to relieve victims of catastrophes particularly amid the coronavirus crisis.

Ambassador Bhandari, in remarks to KUNA on Tuesday, said following a meeting with the KRCS'

Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer that his discussions with the society chief dealt with humanitarian issues concerning the two countries.

Kuwait plays a distinctive and pioneering role at the humanitarian level, he said, praising its apparatuses' efforts in fighting the virus and immunizing the population.

He indicated that the talks also touched on prospects of aiding his

country against the coronavirus; noting the need for medical supplies.

For his part, Dr Al-Sayer expressed readiness to help Nepal at this level in coordination with the Nepalese Red Cross.

In the past, the Kuwaiti association dispatched a medical team to Nepal where they conducted 40 surgeries for low-cash patients. (KUNA)

Power consumption index continues to rise

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The electricity consumption index continues to rise daily -- up to 12,000 megawatts recently when the highest temperature recorded was 41 degrees Celsius, reports Al-Rai daily quoting the Meteorological Department.

Reliable sources from the Ministry of Electricity and Water said the index was expected to reach the 13,000-megawatt mark Monday as a result of increased consumption due to the resumption of official working hours in government buildings, in addition to the rising temperatures. They warned this could cause minor

faults in the underground cables and overhead lines of the electrical distribution network. Sources affirmed all teams are ready to deal with any emergency in order to restore electricity immediately through the use of backup diesel generators or repair the damage quickly.

Sources said "the highest power consumption rate this year is expected to reach 15,677 megawatts, while the ministry has a total production capacity of 18,470 megawatts, meaning there will be a surplus of 2,793 megawatts." They stressed that the ministry is fully prepared to

deal with electricity related issues during summer.

On the other hand, sources revealed the rate of fresh water production exceeded consumption by about 40 million gallons; indicating the recent production reached 484 million gallons, while the consumption reached 442 million gallons.

Sources clarified the surplus production is usually used to increase the strategic reserve; which currently contains 3,765 million imperial gallons -- an affirmation that the ministry has a strong fresh water reserve.

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The latest statistics issued by the Central Statistical Bureau on employment as at the end of 2020 (classified according to number, gender, nationality, wage, age and others) show that the number of employees reached 1.993 million excluding the domestic workers whose number totaled 2.133 million at the end of 2019, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting the economic weekly report.

According to the report, if workers in the family sector -- domestic workers and the like -- (about 669,000) are added; the total number is around 2.662 million compared to 2.865 million in 2019. Domestic workers constitute about 25.1 percent of the total number of employees in 2020 compared to 25.5 percent in 2019.

Also, the average monthly salary of male Kuwaiti workers in the government sector in 2020 was KD1,871 compared to KD1,834 in 2019 while their female counterparts received an average salary of KD1,302 in 2020 compared to KD1,287 in 2019 -- a difference of 43.7 percent in favor of the men.

The average monthly salary for non-Kuwaiti males in the government sector was KD757 in 2020 compared to KD742 in 2019; while the non-Kuwaiti females received an average salary of KD681 in 2020 compared to KD676 in 2019 -- a difference of 11.3 percent in favor of the men. Therefore, gender equality in terms of salary is seen in the case of non-Kuwaitis.

The average monthly salary of Kuwaitis of both genders in the government sector was KD1,533 in 2020 compared to KD1,510 in 2019, while the non-Kuwaitis received an average salary of KD719 in 2020 compared to KD710 in 2019 -- a difference of 113.2 percent in favor of Kuwaitis.

Salary

The average monthly salary of male Kuwaitis in the private sector was KD1,474 in 2020 compared to KD1,468 in 2019 -- 21.3 percent lower than the average salary of males in the government sector. Kuwaiti females in the private sector received an average salary of KD938 in 2020 compared to KD919 in 2019 -- 28 percent lower than the average salary of their counterparts in the government sector. Without a doubt, the labor subsidy for nationals narrowed the gap between the salaries of workers in both sectors.

The average monthly salary of non-Kuwaiti males in the private sector was KD289 in 2020 compared to KD277 in 2019 -- 38.1 percent lower than the average salary of their counterparts in the government sector. Non-Kuwaiti female employees in the private sector received an average salary of KD402 in 2020 compared to KD394 in 2019 -- 39.1 percent higher than the average salary of their male counterparts in the private sector, but 41 percent lower than the average salary of their counterparts in the government sector.

If the government and private sectors are merged, the average monthly salary of Kuwaiti males was KD1,787 in 2020 compared to KD1,754 in 2019; while the average salary of Kuwaiti females was KD1,245 in 2020 compared to KD1,227 in 2019 -- a difference of 43.5 percent in favor of the males.

The average monthly salary of male and female Kuwaitis was KD1,474 in 2020 compared to KD1,450 in 2019; while the non-Kuwaitis received an average salary of KD318 in 2020 compared to KD306 in 2019. If these figures are taken into account, there is a huge impact on the lowest salary of non-Kuwaitis; but the labor subsidy for Kuwaitis working in the private sector is not taken into consideration here.

In addition, the number of Kuwaiti workers in the government sector reached 334,000 in 2020 compared to 322,000 in 2019; while their counterparts in the private sector reached 72,980 in 2020 compared to 73,230 in 2019. It can be deduced from these figures that 82.1 percent of the Kuwaiti workers are in the government sector compared to 17.9 percent in the private sector.

The percentage of Kuwaitis working in the government sector who hold university degrees is 43.1 percent, while 4.4 percent hold post-graduate degrees, 14.6 percent hold post-secondary and undergraduate degrees, and 21.5 percent hold a high school diploma or its equivalent. Based on these figures, 83.6 percent of Kuwaitis working in the government hold high school diploma and doctorate degrees.

Despite this, the productivity of the government sector remains low for various reasons such as crowded and unorganized working environment, low educational level, disparity between educational outcomes and manpower needs of the labor market, or spread of the fake certificates phenomenon.



HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad.



Head of the Diwan of HH the Premier (right).

Audiences of HH the Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace, Tuesday, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the

Amir received at Bayan Palace, Tuesday, Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel on occasion of his appointment as head of the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister. (KUNA)

Opening of cinemas, eateries ups sales

Malls, shopping centers witness heavy rush during Eid holidays

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Malls and shopping centers were bustling during the Eid Al-Fitr holidays as citizens and expatriates thronged to various establishments in different parts of the country, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources from big companies.

Sources said the opening of cinemas and allowing restaurants and beverage shops to provide delivery and takeaway services while prohibiting dine-in led to recovery of sales. Complexes like the Avenues, 360 and Marina malls witnessed 30 to 70 percent increase in the number of visitors, sources revealed.

Sources attributed this to the long vacation -- five days, opening cinemas which show more than one movie per day, extending the working hours up to 7:00 pm during the holiday and allowing commercial establishments to

open until 8:00 pm daily. This came after lifting the partial curfew as a measure to curb the spread of coronavirus, which lasted for more than 70 days.

Sources revealed the average spending per visitor ranged from KD 1 and KD 50 in many shops in the corridors of commercial complexes; while more than half of the visitors in the morning were women, and the youths came in the afternoon and evening.

Sources added more than 70 percent of the payments were made through digital channels in line with the precautionary measures in place to curb the spread of coronavirus. Sources said the stores also limited the number of visitors -- five customers for small spaces and between 15 to 20 people for larger stores, especially those selling clothes or accessories.

Special session eyed to discuss grillings

3 MPs plan to grill interior min over cancelling students demonstration

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: MPs Abdulkareem Al-Kandari, Khalid Al-Obaidi and Thamer Al-Suwait have announced their plan to file a grilling motion against Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah due to his decision to cancel the demonstration organized by students to express support for the Palestinian cause.

Al-Suwait disclosed that he decided to grill the minister due to his selective attitude in enforcing laws and for preventing citizens from expressing their support for the Palestinians in the latter's struggle against the Israeli occupation.

Al-Kandari said it is obvious that the minister got used to opening and closing Al-Erada Square according to his whims and irrespective of the Constitution. He pointed out the minister's discriminatory implementation of laws and failure to maintain security of the society are reflected in the rising number of crimes; hence, the need to question him.

Deterioration

"The deterioration of democracy in Kuwait does not mean turning it into a police State. This will never happen," the lawmaker asserted.

Al-Otaibi explained that his decision to grill the interior minister does not change his opinion on prioritizing the grilling of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid in order to protect the Constitution.

In a related development, MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi revealed that he informed his colleagues, who intend to grill the interior minister, about his desire to participate in the grilling. He took this decision based on his conviction that citizens have the right to gather and express their opinion especially in terms of supporting the Palestinian cause -- a religious and national duty which reflects the official position of Kuwait; indicating this right is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Commenting on the cancellation of the students' demonstration, MP Osama Al-Shaheen said this is a reckless and unacceptable decision.

He praised the response of the students who agreed to postpone the demonstration to avoid a clash with the police as this might negatively affect the image of Kuwait.

He added the government should be held politically accountable even if the interior minister issued the decision on his own.

MP Hamad Al-Matar wondered

why the minister took such a decision despite the approval of the Ministry of Health as per the request of the Interior Ministry.

On the other hand, 11 MPs submitted a proposal to hold a special session at 9:00 am on May 23, 2021 to discuss the grilling motions against Minister of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Muhammad, and Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Development Khalifa Hamada.

In their signed statement, these MPs pointed out the calls for holding an ordinary session are not in the interest of the public as the real aim is to protect His Highness the Prime Minister from grilling for almost one and a half year. They said this unconstitutional procedure will never happen.

Suspended

In their proposal, the MPs emphasized that the ordinary session will be suspended until HH the Prime Minister stands on the grilling podium.

In another development, MP Khalil Al-Saleh asked Health Minister Dr Basel Al-Sabah to speed up the vaccination of domestic workers, indicating this step is necessary for the country to achieve community immunity.

Furthermore, MP Ahmed Al-Hamad asked the health minister about the number of overseas health offices as well as the number of Kuwaiti and foreign employees in these offices. He also requested for details like the names, qualification and experience of the directors of these offices including the training courses they have completed and the marks they obtained.

MP Saad Al-Khanfour forwarded queries to Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Communication and Information Technology Affairs Rana Al-Fares about the criteria for selecting roads and streets that will be repaired and if the conditions of the roads and streets are part of such criteria. He wants to know the date of the last maintenance works carried out on the roads, streets and infrastructure in Jahra and Farwaniya.

He also urged Minister of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah to exempt Kuwaiti students on scholarship outside the country from the condition to get vaccinated against coronavirus before traveling.

He underscored the need to help these students and facilitate procedures for them.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Why Palestinians remain bloodied while other hot spot issues solved?

“WE and the entire world is shedding blood and tears over the tragedy of the Palestinians, and the question that deserves to be answered is: Why similar issues were resolved in South Africa, Algeria, Rhodesia, etc, but the Palestinian issue remains bloodied – and it appears there is no seeming solution on the horizon?” columnist **Sami Al-Nisf** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

“In the whole world except for our Arab nation, as soon as the issues heat up and confrontations begin minds rule, emotions get lost, big mouths are silenced and people of reason, intelligence, experience and wisdom are given ear so that urgent, wrong, emotional decisions bring logical defeats and are frequently transformed in the media in our Arab surroundings into dazzling victories.

“How can one say that those who are killed, captured, displaced, their homes destroyed are called victorious and the untouched party is looked upon as the defeated party, so the true victor is happy and the unreal victor is also happy?

“We have been shedding blood for a century and our buildings are being destroyed and not their buildings, and the lands that are being lost are our lands not theirs, and the soldiers who are defeated in the battlefields are ours not theirs and those whose smart political and military plans are realized are theirs not ours.

“We are the victims because our emotions are tickled with sweet words while their blood that is shed has become precious and women have become bereaved widows and orphans and it is us who are repeating mistakes and not them.

“Every war between the parties has goals that each team wants to achieve and the victor is the one who achieves them, so we have to pay attention to the goals of the other team in order to be aware and make sure whether they have been achieved or not?

“I think their goals from what is going on are several, including strengthening the hardline extreme right while we are on the verge of new elections, strengthening the Jewishness of the state and getting rid of 1.8 million Arabs from within, renewing American and European support for them and trying their modern weapons, destroying the opponent’s human, scientific and cultural resources and what have been reconstructed over the past five years so despair fills the hearts after the end of the short period of futile emotional reaction.

At last, sometimes we are preoccupied with history, geography and hot passion for cold facts. I visited Gaza three times, and the Strip is a narrow area of an area no more than 360 km and is overcrowded with infrastructure, people and no natural resources, and it is 100% surrounded by sea, air and land.

“The tunnels were demolished nearly 8 years ago, so one may ask, ‘Where do all these missiles come from and it is known that they must be warned up before they are launched, and then it is easier for the enemy to hunt them down



Sami Al-Nisf

before they are launched.

“I listened to the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in his office in Ramallah in the West Bank and to Dr. Ismail Haniyeh, at his home in Gaza, and knew their personal opinions regarding the ongoing confrontations.”

Also:

Kuwait is an oil producing country that depends mainly on oil as a single source of income. The majority of jobs are in the public sector and this unfortunately has not been matched by a clear government vision and parliament for the future of Kuwait,” columnist **Mahmoud Ali Rasheed** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

“There are various legislations to diversify other sources of revenue, but to no avail.

“The establishment of factories and non-oil investments is very small and on the other hand there is a permanent failure in implementing the laws and a simple example of this is the failure to protect small and medium enterprises, therefore we are under obligation to change our anonymous approach to our bitter reality.

“If we turn to the non-oil countries in the world, we see that the economic situation is based on scientific foundations and a clear-cut vision of the state’s components and the diversification of income sources.

“If we compare Kuwait with the oil-producing countries, we will see that we are far from all economic, industrial, and commercial standards, and even security ones.

“Is the problem in the minds that manage our human resources or in the state’s curricula?

“Although the Kuwaiti economy is one of the most important economies of the region in the Middle East, being one of the largest oil-exporting countries in the world, the unemployment rate is 2.3%.

“Kuwait is a consumer country and the type of its imports is varied, such as food, building materials, vehicles, spare parts and clothes.

“We are a country with all this potential, so why do not we have factories or farms to be self-sufficient in all consumable materials?

“Is it the lack of a clear government vision or the lack of competent minds of national human resources, or is there a secret we do not know?

“In fact, we have brilliant minds, however they are not used while all commercial activities are dependent on the individual in the public sector and consumption from imports is based on per capita income in moving the local market.

“When comparing Kuwait with oil and non-oil countries that are economically successful, we will find a clear difference in managing the components of revenues compared to expenditures, and how to control resources due to the difference in management between Kuwait and developed countries according to the statistics announced during budget time.

“Even the World Bank got tired of us after providing consultations in both economic and scientific terms, but to no avail, to the extent that we would say that even the economy of the fictional ‘Waq Waq’ islands is considered solid compared to Kuwait.

“Are government officials, parliamentarians and the people working to make Kuwait a temporary state – fear God and stop playing with the elements of the state.”

□ □ □

“I witnessed vibrant scenes in the month of Ramadan that you hardly hear about in any other country,” columnist **Dr Naji Saoud Al-Zaid** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“The first scene: The Chinese ambassador cooks and serves breakfast to the workers at a checkpoint in Yarmouk area ...

“Yes, the ambassador of a superpower appreciates and returns the favor, as he said, to those who regulate traffic movement, and provide security and re-surance.

“The second scene: This scene is different in location and circumstances. It involved the family of a patient who is in critical condition lying in the intensive care unit at Jaber Hospital ...

“This family saw with their own eyes how dedicated the medical and nursing staff are in taking care of patients in that unit. They are available round the clock to take care of their patients.

“This family rewarded the doctors and nurses in the ward with scrumptious Iftar meals as an expression of appreciation for the frontline workers who did not have time to break the fast with their families.

“Unfortunately, until now, the government is reluctant to spend for the incentive of frontline workers ... Have you seen the difference?!”

□ □ □

“What should we do now that the doors are shut in our faces, and the entire world is unable to deter Israel and stop the massacres it is committing against the defenseless citizens in Gaza Strip?!” columnist **Abdulrahman Al-Awwad** wrote for **Al-Sabah** daily.

“The United Nations Security Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Arab League and the international community cannot do anything in front of the Zionist killing and destruction machine.

“The Israeli violence – its brutality and barbarity – exceeded all civilizational, human and moral limits and standards. Today, such excessive violence challenges the whole world which does not move even a finger to stop it.

It seems what is happening in Gaza is happening on another planet. It seems Israel is above all international laws and conventions, such that what is permissible for it is not permissible for other countries.

“Some political analysts believe that the only solution is to continue and escalate the Palestinian resistance in all of its forms and manifestations, including a slow and fatal war of attrition on the Zionists to destroy their lifelines, strike their stability and peace, and deprive them of a sense of security and safety.”

— Compiled by **Ahmad Al-Shazli**



The officers present a trophy to their officer-in-charge.

223 DGFD officers graduate

The Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) Tuesday announced the graduation of 223 non-commissioned officers with the rank of Sergeant in five specialties.

The event was held under the auspices of the Chief of the General Fire Force Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad, in the presence of a number of senior officials of the Training Department.

The DGFD Public Relations and Information Department said in a press release the batch includes 51 marine firefighting sergeants, 35 firefighting instructor sergeants, 38 sergeants for protection inspections; 60 sergeants for

fire-fighting vehicle operations and 39 supervisors for airport machinery operators.

The department explained the Vice President for the Human Resources Development Sector at the DGFD, Major-General Muhammad Ibrahim, congratulated the graduates and urged them to preserve the dignity of the department, serve their country, preserve people’s lives, properties, and honor, and their secrets.

Ibrahim concluded by saying the field of actual work needs cooperation, sincerity and diligence in developing functional and practical capabilities.

Top officials, MPs at event

March for Palestinians gets nod

By **Muhammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: After Al-Irada Square was closed to abort the solidarity march with Palestine, and all car parks surrounding the National Assembly and the backyards of the Grand Mosque were closed, the Ministry of Interior withdrew its forces and allowed citizens to participate in the march.

The ‘march’ was attended by MPs who called on the Ministry of Interior to allow citizens to express their solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali was present among the people and emphasized his concern for citizens and their health and said it is important to take into account social distancing and other health precautions.

The minister, who arrived at the scene said, “Kuwait’s position is clear in supporting the Palestinian people,” referring to the position of HH the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and reminded that the National Assembly session will be held next week in this regard.

For his part, MP Hassan Johar stressed that the stand is part of the global victory for the people of Palestine, saying he was surprised that the Interior Ministry had refused to allow a peaceful sit-in at the Irada Square, even though those in charge of organizing it had obtained all the necessary licenses.

He indicated the Interior Ministry’s decision was arbitrary to prevent the meeting and said the Minister of Interior bears responsibility for the random and selective decision.

For his part, MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi said, Kuwait is the line of defense for the Palestinian cause, and we will not give up an inch, and the state has a firm position on

Director’s post

Doctor wins case

By **Marwa Al-Bahrawi**
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Health is preparing to transfer officials in a number of health areas in implementation of several court verdicts, including the verdict issued by the Administrative Court of Cassation headed by Counselor Fouad Al-Zuwaid, which stipulates that Dr Dalal Al-Wadaani is entitled to assume the position of Director of the Capital Health District.

In the case of Al-Wadaani the judgment was issued more than two weeks ago, and the Ministry of Health is working in full swing to take necessary legal measures to implement the ruling to cancel the ministerial decision, with regard to the plaintiff’s transgression in the promotion of the position of Director of the Capital Health District with its implications.

Attorney Manal Al-Abdan, who proved Al-Wadaani’s eligibility for this position due to her competence and experience in the field of health institutions management, pleaded in the case, and obliged the Ministry of Health to pay the necessary expenses.

this matter.

MP Thamer Al-Sweiti pointed out Kuwait has supported the Palestinian cause since day one, and said: “Here is the glory, here is victory, here is the country that supported the Palestinian cause from its inception, and Palestine will remain the biggest and only lesson for Arab steadfastness.”

Wife says it’s accident as stabbing kills Egyptian man in ‘home brawl’

750 cyber crime cases recorded in '21 first quarter

By **Munif Nayef**
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: In a horrific murder an unidentified Egyptian was killed by his wife following a marital dispute between them inside their apartment in Salmiya.

The wife stated she did not kill the man but rather the man accidentally fell on the kitchen knife which she had in her hand and caused his death.

The case has been referred to the Public Prosecution.

According to a security source, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received a report on the incident police and paramedics rushed to the spot and found the 46-year-old Egyptian dead inside the apartment.

There was a deep cut on his left hand and the man was lying in a pool of blood. The 40-year-old wife, stated she had a quarrel with her husband due to disagreements and she had a knife in her hand and at this time when the husband was attempting to take the knife from her hand, he accidentally got stabbed in the hand and fell to the ground.

The body of the victim has been transferred to the Forensic Medicine office.

□ □ □

60% at work: On the first working day after the Eid Al-Fitr holidays, 60 percent of the employees have reported for work at the Ministry of Interior in all sectors -- traffic, public security, service centers, citizenship and passports -- in implementation of the Cabinet decisions to raise the percentage of employees in all state ministries, says Al-Seyassah.

The various centers, departments and sectors of the Ministry of the Interior witnessed a smooth flow in work and attending to the visitors, especially since most of the transactions are being carried out ‘online’, such as renewing driver’s licenses, residence permits, home treatment transactions, payment of traffic violations and other transactions at various departments and centers of the Ministry of Interior.

Under the directives of the Minister of Interior

‘Opening in second half of year’

‘Capital project ongoing as per schedule’

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Al-Asimah Real Estate Company and the CEO of Sahlia Real Estate Company Anwar Al-Osaimi affirmed that the Capital project is proceeding according to the planned schedule, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, he explained that the total leased area in the commercial complex of the Capital project is more than 61,500 square meters, which is equivalent to about 86 percent of the leasable areas in the complex. This is a very good percentage, especially in light of the current conditions that the market is witnessing locally and globally as a result of the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis.

Al-Osaimi revealed that the company expects to open the project during the second

half of this year, indicating that most of the exterior and finishing works of the commercial complex have been completed, and the concrete works of the hotel building and parking area have also been completed, in addition to the first 38 floors in the office tower.

He said the company is waiting for the government’s decision to enter the fifth stage of the plan for return to normal life, and for the vaccination plan to reach the levels that can ensure community immunity and allow resumption of many recreational activities.

Al-Osaimi stressed that recreational activities constitute 20 percent of the components of the project, adding that about 12 percent of the project are restaurants and cafes, and the activities of restaurants, cinemas and entertainment centers are still suspended to this day.

Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior Lieutenant-General Issam Al-Naham, the Ministry of Interior seeks to complete all transactions for citizens and residents online which does not necessitate the presence of the presence of auditors in the departments is almost non-existent which means the visitors don’t need to attend in person to complete transactions which can be done online.

□ □ □

Cyber crime cases: Director of the Cyber Crime Department at the Ministry of Interior Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa revealed that 750 cyber crime cases recorded in the first quarter of 2021, reports Al-Rai daily.

In 2020, the number of cybercrime cases totaled 3,300 and most of which were related to the corona pandemic; while the total number of cases recorded in 2019 was 4,550.

During his first meeting with the media since assuming his position, Al-Mutawa emphasized that the department spares no effort in educating the society about the dangers of committing such crimes, especially since users of electronic

accounts may not be aware that they are committing crimes.

The department has instructed officers and engineers specialized in electronic accounts administration to intensify their efforts in supporting educational and social institutions through awareness seminars, courses and lectures; as well as cooperating with State institutions in raising public awareness about cyber crimes.

□ □ □

Decision canceled: The Administrative Section of the Cassation Court, headed by Judge Fahd Al-Mutairi with judges Ahmed Halawa and Muhammad Abdulaziz Al-Rabiah as members, cancelled the Interior Ministry’s decision on requiring a citizen to pay the fine stipulated in a judicial ruling as a condition for renewing his passport, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The court affirmed that the abovementioned decision is a violation of the Constitution.

In its ruling, the court pointed out that the implementation of laws, regulations and decisions do not entail requiring citizens to pay fines before renewing their passports.

Career Opportunities at Private American University:

School of Film and Digital Media	University Management & Administration	Non-Academic Positions
Full-Time Faculty, Screenwriting Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Production Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Production Design Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Postproduction Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Directing Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Cinematography Instructor Full-Time Faculty, Audio Instructor	Associate/Assistant Registrar* Associate VP for Academic Affairs* Assistant VP for Academic Affairs* Academic Advisor* Head Trainer – Female (Athletics Center)* Writing Center Coordinator* Tutors*	Security Coordinator – M/F (US or UK Nationals)* Scholarship Coordinator* Senior System Analyst – Canvas* Sr. Cyber Security Analyst* Computer Labs Manager* Web Application Developer* Marketing Specialist (Kuwaiti Nationals)* Assistant Maintenance Coordinator* HR Manager (US or UK Nationals)* Administration Manager* Government Relations & Licenses Officer* HR Learning & Development Officer* Administrative Assistant* Recruiter* Nurse* Café Manager/Operator* Library Assistant* Plumber* Receptionist (Bilingual)* Driver*
School of Education	School of Business	
Dean – School of Education* Faculty for Education/Principles of Teaching	Dean – School of Business* Associate Dean of Business* Faculty for Business Administration/ Supply Chain Management	
School of Architecture & Design	English Foundation program	
Dean – School of Architecture & Design* Faculty for Interior Design	English Foundation Program Instructors	
School of Engineering	School of Arts & Science	
Faculty for Civil Engineering Faculty for Chemical Engineering Faculty for Computer Science Faculty for Mechanical Engineering	Faculty for Chemistry Faculty for Physics Faculty for Biology Faculty for Mathematics Math Foundation Program Instructors Faculty for Psychology Faculty for Communications	
Interested applicants may apply through our career page: https://aiu.edu.kw/careers/jobs to submit CV with Photo and Cover Letter *Positions required for immediate start.		

Ministry to launch award for e-newspapers, news services

Kuwait's Ministry of Information has made headways, says Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Monday affirmed that the ministry has made significant headway on the path of upgrading the Kuwaiti media.

The ministry has achieved this objective by encouraging creative staff, applying digital media in various sectors and governance, said the minister in a statement addressed at the virtual forum, "Kuwait Media Day," organized by the Kuwaiti Society for Media and Commu-



KUNA photo
Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

nications.
Minister Al-Mutairi started

his statement by affirming support for the Palestinian people who have been facing flagrant attacks on their rights and freedoms.

He condemned criminal acts carried out by the occupation Israeli forces against the Palestinians, their lands and sanctities.

The State of Kuwait, he has affirmed, has put all possible efforts at disposal of backing the Palestinian cause.

Alluding to some objectives of the ministry strategy, the minister has affirmed that it will focus on the media as a "soft power," and boosting the official media rhetoric.

The strategy essentially aims to achieve integration for the years 2021-2026 for sake of "a sustainable and pioneering media in the making of the purposeful content."

Minister Al-Mutairi has affirmed the efforts for boosting "the development and creative" role of the Kuwaiti media in the shadow of global developments where the social and virtual media have become widely influential.

He expressed satisfaction at the current status of the national media noting its role in the execution

of Kuwait development vision 2035.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Information announced Sunday that it will launch an annual award for licensed electronic newspapers and news services, part of plans to support electronic media.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Press, Publishing and Publications Sector, Adel Al-Azmi told KUNA the award - upon directives of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi - aims at enhancing e-journalism and

publishing in Kuwait.

The award's categories are: social responsibility, visual design, content, social interaction and content creation, he added.

He stressed the ministry is keen to enhance communication and achieve sustainability in improving message delivered to public, as well as holding forums specialized in e-journalism in cooperation with the NGOs on an annual basis.

Al-Azmi said the ministry was also keen on forming special committees and teams of experts to develop and support print media.

Kuwait tops among GCC peers on govt response to Covid-19: report

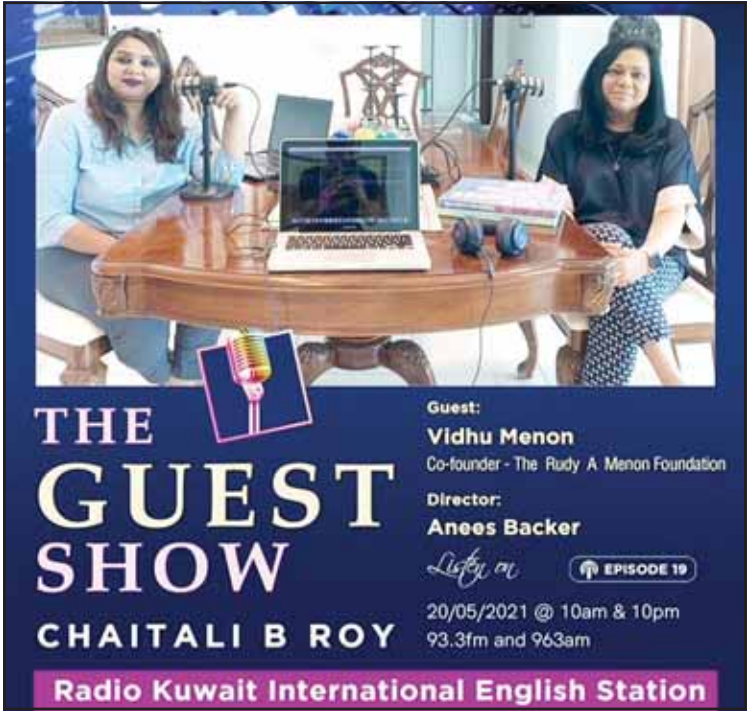
KFAED, OBG discuss Kuwait's response to pandemic

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: In a report issued in cooperation with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), the Oxford Business Group discussed how Kuwait responded to the conditions imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic, noting that the country had taken large-scale measures to contain the spread of the epidemic, and that it faced the pandemic with a prosperous and diversified economy, not to mention the existence of a well-resourced healthcare system with low risk factors in the population, reports Al-Anba daily.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Kuwait ranked third in the Arab world, after Qatar and the UAE, in terms of per capita GDP, which amounted to about \$30,000 per person.

The report said that Kuwait scored the highest average score among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as it reached 70.51 points, compared to the 66.67 points in Qatar, on the index of stringency of procedures that measure the response of governments to the Corona virus between March 2020 and March 2021, and 64.53 points in Oman, 60.97 in Bahrain, 60.3 points in Saudi Arabia, and 53.1 points in the UAE, and therefore the measures taken by the Kuwaiti government are considered the most severe during the Corona crisis.

The state budget deficit as a percentage of GDP, according to estimates by Oxford Business Group, reached



The Guest Show poster

The Guest Show features Vidhu Menon

This Thursday, The Guest Show on Radio Kuwait presents Vidhu Menon. Vidhu is the Co-founder of Rudy A Menon Foundation, a charity based & registered in the United Kingdom that works towards funding research on Gliomatosis Cerebri (GC) and other rare and inoperable brain cancers. Vidhu lost her son, Rudy, a young, vibrant man of 26, to GC in 2013. To celebrate his spirit of giving, keep his memory alive, and prevent families from suffering a similar loss of their loved ones, Vidhu took up the herculean task of establishing a charity that actively participates in and funds

the research of a deadly and understudied cancer. At present, the Foundation supports the research of Shauna Crampsie, a PhD student dedicated to the study of GC at the Institute of Cancer Research in London, UK, under Prof Chris Jones. Her project is an international collaboration that brings together resources and knowledge from research organisations around the world. On The Guest Show, Vidhu Menon shares Rudy's story, her memories of him and traces the Foundation's journey and its pioneering work at the cutting edge of cancer treatment.

serves at the end of last year amounted to \$ 45.5 billion, a strong record level.

The report spoke about Kuwait's rapid response to the virus, saying that, about a month after the first confirmed case of Coronavirus in the country, the Council of Ministers began implementing a number of monetary and financial policies to support affected industries, sectors and families, as well as to achieve stability in the macroeconomic environment.

The General Reserve Fund has strengthened the country's ability to manage the fiscal deficit during this unprecedented crisis by mitigating the effects of low oil prices and increasing targeted spending to address the health and economic crisis.

According to the report, the rise in oil prices in the first quarter is supposed to partially address deficit concerns in the year 2021.

On the other hand, the report considered the initiative to use digitization necessitated by the pandemic as one of the catalysts for creating new opportunities for the economies of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, indicating that nine out of 14 countries in this region -- including Kuwait -- were able to make significant progress in digital competitiveness in 2020, and the importance of the pandemic is certain as a catalyst for digital transformation across the region.

The results of a survey that included the CEOs of Kuwaiti companies conducted by Oxford Business Group in 2020 showed that these changes, according to those who participated in the survey, affect the flexibility of employees and attract talent, as well as companies' investments in digitization to boost revenues.

Regarding the role of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the report said that in addition to supporting developing economies abroad, it is assumed that it will play a major role inside Kuwait to help upgrade skills among the workforce, especially in the engineering fields, and to ensure the provision of effective government housing.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

FM commends transitional govt

Kuwait ready to fund Sudan's development amid Paris talks

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's foreign minister and representative of His Highness the Amir said his country stands ready to finance continued development in Sudan at debt-restructuring talks in Paris that aim to lure foreign investment into Khartoum, a measure needed to resuscitate its ailing economy.

Commending Sudan's transitional government, formed under a military-civilian power-sharing deal, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said the efforts of Sudan's international partners and creditors show a "brighter future ahead" for Khartoum, with "significant development projects" on the way funded by Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

The minister hoped the talks would help propel Sudan into a new era of development and stability, citing "illustrious" bilateral ties that date back more than six decades, which witnessed more than \$one billion worth of development projects come to fruition in the African nation.

Sudan," he added, as International Monetary Fund member countries agreed to relief Sudan's arrears, allowing it access to more international financing.

In Paris, French President Emmanuel Macron announced Monday that his country plans a full clearance of Sudan debts, estimated at \$5 billion.

"We (France) are in favor of an outright cancellation of our debt to Sudan" which amounts to "nearly \$5 billion", Macron in news conference following the Paris-hosted international conference to support Sudan today.

Loan

He also disclosed that France would provide Sudan with a \$1.5 billion bridge loan to help clear Sudan's arrears to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The French president noted the IMF member countries have agreed to clear Sudan's arrears to the institution, removing the final hurdle to the African nation getting wider relief on its external debt of at least \$60 billion.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia announced that it would be donating \$20 million to Sudan to cover some of the latter's funding gap at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A statement Monday by the Foreign Ministry, carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) Tuesday, said that the sum would be transferred to the IMF's emergency and deferred fees accounts to help relief Sudan's debt.

Debt

He emphasized his country's support for broader relief on Sudan's external debt, clearing the way for wider economic relief efforts in the country, in line with the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative.

"The talks today are only the beginning of a new and more resilient

Offers Fridges in Five Governorates and Golf Carts in Mishref

NBK Continues to Support Vaccination Centers in Kuwait

Al Turki: NBK is a key supporter of government vaccination efforts

NBK provided fridges to five different vaccination centers in addition to Kuwait International Fair Grounds in Mishref Area. These five centers are located in Farwaniya, Al Assimah, Hawally, Al Ahmadi and Al Jahraa governorates.

NBK Volunteers will tour around to ensure that water is delivered on daily basis to the fridges in the

Talal Al Turki

selected governorates.

The fridges are part of NBK's donation that included previously Golf Carts to provide free rides for elderly patients and people with disability from and to the parking

area as well as shelters to the outdoor waiting areas at the Kuwait Vaccination Center in Kuwait International Fair Ground, Mishref.

"NBK is a key supporter of government vaccination efforts", said Talal Al Turki, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager. "NBK has long been engaging in launching and managing numerous campaigns and social development initiatives."

Al Turki expressed his sincere appreciation to the national efforts in providing support to face the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Throughout the bank's history, we have been committed to meeting our responsibilities towards society and to support the efforts of governmental institutions and civil society for the farewell of our community", he noted.

"Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, NBK continued to fulfill its social responsibility in line with its sustainable growth".

It's worth mentioning that in response to the pandemic, NBK donated KD1 million to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to purchase medical devices and ventilators in addition to deploy a field hospital fully equipped with the latest medical equipment, an ICU, a medical laboratory, a radiology center, and a fully-equipped pharmacy.

NBK maintains its leading position among the private sector institutions through its commitment to fully support social programs in the areas of healthcare, childcare, social, environmental, sports and education.

Embassy of Japan

Study in Japan

Japanese govt opens 'scholarship' for 2021

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Embassy of Japan is pleased to announce that the Government of Japan offers scholarship to those who wish to study at Japanese universities as undergraduate and research students.

The Japanese Government Scholarship was established in 1954 in order to increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries as well as to make an international contribution to the intellectual field.

All Kuwaiti citizens who meet the qualifications below are eligible to apply:

Undergraduate Students			
Requirements	Age	Years of Study	Fields of Study
• Completed 12-year school curriculum • Good academic standing	Born on or after April 2, 1997	5 years From April 2022 to March 2027	•Natural Sciences •Social Sciences and Humanities

* Five years of study including one year for studying the Japanese language.

Research Students			
Requirements	Age	Years of Study	Fields of Study
• Completed 16-years of school education	Born on or after April 2, 1987.	From September 2022 to Mar 2024.	Field of study majored at university or related to it.

*Years of study might extend depending on the major category.

Application forms, detailed information and other conditions can be downloaded from Embassy's Website: (https://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/11_000001_00157.html).

The deadline for submitting applications is MondayJune21, 2021. ONLY soft copies, PDF format, and sent by email to the Embassy, will be accepted.

The application process consists of document screening, written exams, and personal interview.

Applicants are advised to prepare for it by referring to the past exams.

(<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/planning/scholarship/application/examination/>)

For inquiries, please contact cultural section, Embassy of Japan at:
Tel: 2530926
Email: danazibar@kw.mofa.go.jp

Climate

Shift from Trump

Blinken ‘praises’ Biden admin climate policies

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, May 18, (AP): On a trip overshadowed by the crisis in the Middle East, US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** on Tuesday touted the Biden administration’s abrupt shift in its predecessor’s climate policies as he visited Iceland for talks with senior officials from the world’s Arctic nations.

In Reykjavik for a meeting of foreign ministers of the eight members of the Arctic Council, Blinken heralded President Joe Biden’s return to the Paris climate accord and determination to combat climate change.

Yet the worsening violence between Israel and the Palestinians hung over the discussions. Blinken made at least three phone calls on the matter from his Reykjavik hotel and discussed the issue with Icelandic officials as a small group of pro-Palestinian demonstrators holding banners and flags protested outside the meeting venue.

As he did on his first stop in Denmark, Blinken basked in praise from his hosts about the Biden administration’s rejection of former President Donald Trump’s “America First” policies that included withdrawing from the Paris climate accord, the UN Human Rights Council and the Iran nuclear deal, questioning the value of NATO and minimizing dangers posed by climate change.

“There is no doubt, the policy change is very clear and we welcome that because the United States is the leader of the free world,” said Icelandic Foreign Minister Gudlaugur Thor Thordarson. He said Iceland was particularly grateful for the new approach as it relies heavily on the U.S. and other NATO allies for security and defense.



Blinken

Focused

“We are very focused on reinvigorating our closest alliances and partnerships, and also our engagement in multilateral institutions, and being here really represents both aspects of that effort,” Blinken said. He lauded Iceland for its strong support for human rights, climate change mitigation and the role it plays in NATO. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the world and has been particularly hard hit by rising sea levels from melting sea ice and glaciers. Trump had alienated Arctic countries and others with his dismissal of the phenomenon and his withdrawal from the 2015 Paris agreement.

Trump’s former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, also stunned many in the environmental community at an Arctic Council meeting two years ago in Finland with a call for countries to embrace and harness climate change, particularly the opening of new sea lanes due to melting ice, for commercial gain.

Blinken will tour several Icelandic geo-thermal energy sites later Tuesday before holding a series of bilateral meetings with other Arctic Council foreign ministers on Wednesday. Among them will be Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in what will be the highest-level face-to-face talks between the two countries since Biden took office.

Blinken will see Lavrov amid a sharp deterioration in ties between Washington and Moscow sparked by Russia’s buildup of troops along the border with Ukraine, cyberattacks, Moscow’s actions against dissident Alexey Navalny, and allegations that Russia interfered in U.S. presidential elections in 2016 and 2020. The two nations are also at odds over influence in the Arctic, with Russia insisting its large Arctic landmass makes it the pre-eminent power in the region.

Blinken said his meeting with Lavrov would be an important opportunity to test the proposition that the US and Russia can work collaboratively on certain issues, like climate change, the Mideast, Iran and North Korea, despite bitter disagreements on others.

Cyclone Tauktae kills dozens in India

NEW DELHI, May 18, (Agencies): India said on Tuesday that cyclone Tauktae killed at least 21 people and several others were injured in the western Indian states of Gujarat and Maharashtra and southern state of Karnataka.

Press Trust of India said quoting officials from Gujarat that seven people were killed in cyclone Tauktae related incidents in the state as hundreds of houses, roads and bridges were destroyed at the coastal regions of the state.

In Maharashtra, six people were killed Monday but the state’s capital, Mumbai, was largely spared from major damage even as heavy rains pounded the city’s coastline and high winds whipped its skyscrapers. Over the weekend, the cyclone killed six people in Kerala, Karnataka and Goa states as it moved along the western coast.

The IMD added that the cyclone Tauktae weakened around midnight after crossing the Gujarat coast as an extremely severe cyclonic storm. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had instructed all the concerned authorities in the state and central governments to take all necessary measures during a high level meeting last Saturday.

Teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Air Force and Navy rescued several stranded people as they were kept ready for operation.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had warned that the cyclone would touch Gujarat coast around 18th May with the wind speed ranging upto 175 kmph. Five other states along the western and southern Indian coast including Kerala, Maharashtra witnessed to heavy rainfall, strong winds and huge sea waves due to the cyclone.

Meanwhile, the Indian navy is working to rescue crew members from a sunken barge and a second cargo vessel that was

adrift Tuesday off the coast of Mumbai after a deadly cyclone struck the western coast.

The navy said it has rescued 177 of the 400 people on the two barges in the Arabia Sea. Three warships, maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters joined the rescue operations and were scouring the sea, the navy said.

Both barges were working for Oil and Natural Gas Corp., the largest crude oil and natural gas company in India.

The company said the barges were carrying personnel deployed for offshore drilling and their anchors gave away during the storm.

The cyclone has weakened, but the India Meteorological Department forecast heavy rainfall for many parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra in the coming days.

Ahead of the cyclone, about 150,000 people were evacuated from low-lying areas in Maharashtra and Gujarat states. S.N. Pradhan, director of India’s National Disaster Response Force, said social distancing norms were being followed in evacuation shelters and rescue teams were clearing debris from affected areas.

Both states, among the hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic, had scrambled disaster response teams, fearing the storm could endanger India’s fight against the virus with supply lines cut, roads destroyed and lockdown measures slowing relief work.

Tropical cyclones are less common in the Arabian Sea than on India’s east coast and usually form later in the year. Experts say changing climate patterns have caused them to become more intense, rather than more frequent.

In May 2020, nearly 100 people died when Cyclone Amphan, the most powerful storm to hit eastern India in more than a decade, ravaged the region.

Al Hamra Launches On-site Vaccination for all its Employees in Cooperation with the Ministry of Health



Driven to achieving Kuwait’s community’s immunity, Al Hamra Real Estate Company, the leading company in real estate management, recently launched a vaccination campaign for all its employees, including Al Hamra Real Estate Management and Shopping Center personnel, to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Aimed at providing optimal health and safety, Al Hamra Real Estate Company partnered with the Ministry of Health’s field vaccination team for the COVID-19 vaccination drive which helped inoculate a total of 1,000 personnel along with staff members of Al Hamra Shopping Center following their pre-registration for the vaccine on the Ministry of Health’s online website. The initiative was launched due to the nature of its employees’s direct interaction with customers and tenants in the Shopping Center and Business Tower which serves over 6,000 tenants across several governmental,

diplomatic & international bodies, and visitors who come in contact with the management’s employees.

Speaking about this campaign, the Chief Administrative Officer - CAO of Al Hamra Real Estate Company, Mrs. Abrar Abdulaziz Al Habeeb announced: “Since the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, Al Hamra Real Estate Company had sought to adopt the highest safety standards. Stemming from its commitment to social responsibility principles and its role within the society, the company preserves the health and safety of its employees and customers equally to achieve a solid and sustainable partnership with the community. Today, the company reinforces its core values and mission towards building a healthy and safe work environment through the launch of the employee vaccination campaign, held in cooperation with the Ministry of Health who has supported the cause tremendously nationwide.”

She also added: “The drive to administer the vaccine at our premises was to maintain our employees’ quality of

life, ensure they enjoy better health and protection, in addition to simplifying their process of getting the vaccine. The vaccination campaign was organized within the guidelines stipulated by the concerned health bodies in Kuwait, who continue to encourage community members to get the Covid-19 vaccine.”

With the vaccination campaign set in motion, the Director of the Central Department for Primary Healthcare and the Head of Mobile Vaccination campaign at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Dina Al-Dhabib, explained: “On the third day of the Ministry of Health’s mobile vaccination campaign launch targeting workers at commercial complexes in Kuwait, employees of the Shopping Center were inoculated, as well as the staff working at Al Hamra Real Estate Company. We were able to vaccinate a 1,000 employees during the day thanks to the efforts of two mobile field units. The campaign included doctors, nurses and paramedics and was organized in coordination with Al Hamra Real Estate Management.”

Al Hamra Real Estate Company

continues to safeguard against the virus by sterilizing the buildings and facilities daily, in addition to applying a number of preventive and precautionary measures for employees and customers, in accordance to the instructions outlined by the Ministry of Health and the specialized bodies in Kuwait. A special health, safety and protection task force oversee the facilities’ sanitization processes along with the stringent implementation of health guidelines by all visitors, tenants, and employees in both the Business Tower and the Shopping Center.

Arising from its social responsibility and as an active member of the community, Al Hamra Real Estate Company believes in fostering a sense of initiative among all community members’ and unifying efforts in the battle against the persistent virus. Al Hamra Real Estate Company urges everyone to hurry and register for the vaccine appointment on the designated site and protect themselves and their families to revive the country and return to normal life.

AIU: Finalist in SBID International Design Awards



The Society of British & International Interior Design (SBID) highlighted the American International University, Kuwait (AIU), for excellence in the 2020 category of ‘Public Space Design’. The Society spoke on the innovative design of AIU in their recent addition to their ‘Project of the Week’ article series.

The AIU campus was designed to be the new hub for Kuwait’s next generation of leaders. The team of designers from the London-based practice, NBBJ, implemented a variety of ideologies and drew inspiration from the natural landscape and the vibrant youth of Kuwait. Breathing life into a design that was expected to re-define educational spaces in the region was no easy feat. Through deep collaboration between AIU Management and the design team, the campus interiors were curated to embody the notions of progress and vision.



Spaces were designed to embrace the needs of the modern student, allowing for collaborative thinking, innovative classroom teaching and the use of state-of-the-art integrated technology. SBID recognizes AIU as a university campus that fosters community building and student wellness; an oasis of learning that provides a serene and picturesque backdrop for the dissemination of high quality American-based education. To see the campus be brought to life with students, has been incredibly rewarding to all involved in the creation of this stunning campus.



In this file photo, a woman, wearing a protective face mask due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, wheels a cart with her purchases out of a Walmart store, in Derry, New Hampshire. (AP)



Walmart sales still boom as pandemic eases, stimulus helps

Walmart blew past Wall Street projections in the first quarter with US stimulus payments to Americans helping to boost sales and the company raised its expectations for the year.

Sales at stores opened at least a year rose 6%, slowing from the 8.6% increase during the fiscal fourth quarter. But it topped last year's 10% spike when Walmart turned into a

pandemic lifeline for millions of people. Online sales rose 37% down from its 69% during the fourth quarter.

"Our optimism is higher than it was at the beginning of the year," said CEO Doug McMillon. "In the US, customers clearly want to get out and shop."

McMillon said that government stimulus money boosted sales and that there is a lot of

pent-up demand as the nation emerges from the pandemic.

Shares rose nearly 4%, or \$3.52 per share to \$143.78 before the opening bell.

It bumped up spending by \$14 billion to speed up its distribution network and in February said it would raise its average hourly wage to more than \$15 per hour, a \$1 increase. Amazon and Target have already increased

hourly wages to \$15 for all workers.

First quarter net income was \$2.73 billion, or 97 cents per share in the three month period ended April 30. That compares with \$3.99 billion, or \$1.40 per share in the year-ago quarter. Adjusted earnings was \$1.69 per share. Analysts were expecting \$1.21 per share, according to FactSet. (AP)

Market Movements

18-05-2021

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts		
▲	AUSTRALIA	- All Ordinaries	+43.23	7,299.07	▼	GERMANY	- DAX	-10.04	15,386.58
	JAPAN	- Nikkei	+582.01	28,406.84		FRANCE	- CAC 40	-13.68	6,353.67
	S. KOREA	- KRX 100	+82.18	6,649.57		PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-38.84	6,244.74
	INDIA	- Sensex	+612.60	50,193.33		EUROPE	- Euro Stoxx 50	-1.50	4,005.34
	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+185.51	45,981.82					
	CHINA	- Shanghai SE	+11.40	3,529.01					

Business

Japan's economy shrinks 5.1% in Q1

Pandemic dries up spending

TOKYO, May 18, (AP): The Japanese economy contracted at an annual rate of 5.1% in January-March, slammed by a plunge in spending over the coronavirus pandemic, according to government data released Tuesday.

The Cabinet Office's preliminary seasonally adjusted GDP, or gross domestic product, showed household consumption dropped at an annualized rate of 5.6%, while government spending declined 6.9%.

Gross domestic product is the sum value of a nation's products and services. The annualized rate shows what the rise or drop would have been if that same pace had continued for a year.

Much of Japan has been under a state of emergency, centered around early closures of restaurants and bars, to curb the spread of the virus at places where crowds gather.

Still, COVID-19 illnesses and deaths have been rising amid one of the slowest vaccine rollouts in the developed world. About 4% of the population has gotten at least one shot so far.

Analysts say a more thorough vaccination effort is the only realistic way economic activity can resume close to normal and growth can recover to pre-pandemic levels. Japan's GDP drop over the last fiscal year is the worst since the end of World War II, surpassing the global financial crisis.

The world's third-largest economy managed to eke out growth in the last two quarters, slowly recovering from earlier pandemic damage. It grew 2.8% in October-December, compared to the previous quarter, and expanded 5.3% July-September on-quarter. It had shrunk the quarter before that, at a minus 8.1% in April-June. These are all not annual rates but compared to the previous quarter.

For the latest quarter, the contraction on quarter stood at minus 1.3%.

For the 2020 calendar year, Japan's economy sank 4.7%, the first year of contraction in 11 years, the Cabinet Office said. Economic growth was flat in 2019.

Robert Carnell, Regional Head of Research Asia-Pacific at ING, said the latest results were slightly worse than what analysts had expected, highlighting the negative effects of restrictions on movement during the emergency.

"The prospects for growth in the rest of the year are looking much weaker," he said.

Lockdown measures eased

UK jobs market improving

LONDON, May 18, (AP): Further evidence emerged Tuesday to show that the British economy is recovering strongly, with the number of people on payroll increasing as coronavirus lockdown measures are eased.

The Office for National Statistics found that the number of payroll workers rose by 97,000 between March and April, a period when some lockdown restrictions were eased. At the end of March, pubs and restaurants were allowed to reopen in an outdoor setting, for example.

The reopening meant many workers who had been idle over the previous months of lockdown could return to their jobs even though activity levels weren't as high as they would have been if indoor serving was allowed.

Though the most recent figures show an improvement, the U.K. has clearly seen jobs lost during the pandemic, with 772,000 fewer people on the payroll than before it struck in spring 2020.

The statistics agency also found that the overall rate of unemployment in the U.K. fell once more, to 4.8% in the three months to March, down from the equivalent figure for February of 4.9%. This came despite the country being in tight lockdown in the first three months of 2021, with the statistics agency say-

ing many unemployed were no longer looking for work.

The agency also said there were 1.6 million people unemployed in the three months to March, down 121,000 on the previous three-month period.

The figures add weight to the Bank of England's recent prediction that the anticipated peak in unemployment will be far lower than anticipated as lockdown restrictions are eased further following the sharp fall in coronavirus infections and the rapid rollout of vaccines. It now expects the jobless rate to peak at 5.5%, against 7.75% previously.

On Monday, the lockdown was eased further across most of the U.K., with pubs and restaurants allowed to reopen indoors. Cinemas and theaters were also allowed to reopen while the ban on foreign holidays was partially lifted, though the number of destinations deemed safe remains limited.

The extension of the job retention program, which has seen the government pay the bulk of workers unable to work because of lockdown restrictions, has helped soften the blow to unemployment. The growth rebound, which the Bank of England expects to hit 7.25% this year, is set to see most furloughed employees return to work when it ends.



People visit the Arabian Travel Market exhibition in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on May 16, 2021. The Middle East's largest airlines saw its passenger levels plummet by 70% last year and furloughed more than 25% of its staff due to the coronavirus pandemic, Emirates' chairman and chief executive said Monday. (AP)

Passenger levels drop 70% as virus looms over travel

Emirates Airlines faced 'tough year': chairman

DUBAI, May 18, (AP): Passenger levels for the Middle East's largest airlines plummeted by 70% last year and it furloughed more than a quarter of its staff due to the coronavirus pandemic, Emirates' chairman and chief executive said Monday.

Despite the turbulence of last year and the continued uncertainty around global travel, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said he expects passenger levels for Dubai's flagship carrier to climb back to nearly three-fourths of what they were before the COVID-19 outbreak by the end of the year.

"It's been a very tough year," Al Maktoum said. "Our focus today is more on really putting back Emirates on the map the way it used to be." Al Maktoum acknowledged, though, it's been difficult to get approvals and waded through the myriad of regulations and other health authority rules of every country.

"And sometimes it's a nightmare," he said.

He spoke to reporters at Dubai's Arabian Travel Market, billed as the world's first travel and tourism event to take place in person since the global outbreak. The event highlights Dubai's open embrace of tourists amid the pandemic still roiling parts of the world. Visitors to Dubai are not required to quaran-

tine upon arrival or prove they've been vaccinated. In most cases, only a negative PCR test is required.

The United Arab Emirates, which is home to the city-state of Dubai, has been aggressive in inoculating its population of more than 9 million people against COVID-19. As a major transit point, however, the UAE remains on the UK's "red list" and the US "do not travel" list.

Al Maktoum said the carrier has been engaged in explaining to various countries the measures the UAE has taken to keep its population and visitors safe. He said Emirates is ready to return to its full schedule of routes once governments give it the green light.

"We have to remain optimistic that the world will open. No government will be able to sustain that forever," he said, referring to lockdowns and border closures.

He expressed support for an electronic travel passport or certificate for passengers who've been vaccinated from the coronavirus, saying it should be something that is "easy and simple" and available on people's mobile phones. Emirates is experimenting with trials of the International Air Transport Association Travel Pass. The association says its mobile app aims to help passengers manage their travel in line

with any government requirements for COVID-19 testing or vaccine information.

Although Emirates is expected to announce the past year's fiscal results soon, Al Maktoum said the carrier's passenger levels fell to 30% of what they were in the previous year. The airline carried around 58 million passengers in 2019.

The long-haul carrier, which is state-owned, was thrown a \$2 billion lifeline from Dubai's government to stave off a liquidity crunch last year - a clear indication of how dire the situation had become for one of the world's leading airlines.

The airline was forced to ground all passenger flights in March 2020 amid a temporary closure of the UAE's airports, including transit flights through Dubai - the hub for Emirates. The airline resumed limited passenger services within weeks. It continued to deploy its fleet of Boeing 777 freighters for the transport of air cargo and vital goods throughout the pandemic.

Al Maktoum did not rule out the possibility of more government assistance to the airline, but said cash on reserve is "good so far" and added that the company's liquidity is assessed monthly.

Economic Update

NBK Economic Research Department | 18 May 2021

Monetary developments

Kuwait: Robust household but weak business credit in 1Q2021

Highlights

- Domestic credit started the year on a relatively weak note as it increased by 1% q/q, with y/y growth at 2.8% through March.
- Business credit continued to be muted, with y/y growth of just 0.6% by the end of March.
- Household credit remained robust growing by 8.1% y/y, the highest annual expansion in 4.5 years.
- Domestic deposit growth was weak in 1Q2021, driven by both private-sector deposits as well as government ones.
- The six-month deferral of household credit instalments of Kuwaiti borrowers, all else equal, is expected to strengthen even further the net growth of household credit.

Domestic credit started the year on a relatively weak note as it increased by 1% q/q, with y/y growth at 2.8% through March. For the third consecutive quarter, household lending was the main growth driver, while business credit remained muted. The pandemic-related uncertainty and disruptions continued to weigh on business lending so far this year. In addition, business lending was supported last year by the emergency tapping of credit lines, which expectedly is playing a less important role so far this year. On the other hand, ongoing high demand/resilient valuations in the residential real estate sector and robust consumer spending are supporting household lending growth, which has touched multi-year highs.

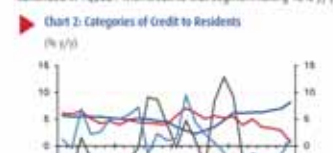


Business credit growth stood at just 0.6% y/y by the end of March 2021, impacted by very high growth in March of last year that was likely driven by emergency tapping of credit lines given the onset of the pandemic. Nevertheless, growth was resilient in some sectors, such as industry (+3.4% y/y) and oil/gas (+3.2% y/y). On the other hand, credit to the trade sector continued to be

among the weakest since mid-2020, falling by 7.6% y/y through March. Credit to real estate, the sector's heavyweight, increased by 2% to account for around 43% of total business credit by the end of 1Q2021.

Household credit remained robust in 1Q2021, with y/y growth at 8.1% through March, the highest annual expansion in 4.5 years, the accelerating expansion was driven by housing loans, which increased by 8.7%. In contrast, personal consumption loans were broadly flat in 1Q2021 and y/y growth softened to 8.9%, likely impacted by the shrinking expatriate population.

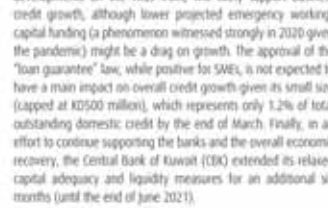
Credit for securities purchase supported overall growth in 1Q2021 as it expanded by the fastest quarterly rate in 1.5 years. On the other hand, deleveraging by non-bank financial institutions continued in 1Q2021 with credit to that segment falling 16% y/y.



Looking ahead, we still expect credit growth of around 4-5% in 2021. The six-month deferral of household credit instalments of Kuwaiti borrowers, all else equal, is expected to strengthen even

further the net growth of household credit, given that the deferral results in loans staying longer on banks' balance sheets. An improvement in the operating environment, including positive developments on the virus front, will likely support business credit growth, although lower projected emergency working-capital funding (a phenomenon witnessed strongly in 2020 given the pandemic) might be a drag on growth. The approval of the "loan guarantee" law, while positive for SMEs, is not expected to have a major impact on overall credit growth given its small size (capped at KD200 million), which represents only 1.2% of total outstanding domestic credit by the end of March. Finally, in an effort to continue supporting the banks and the overall economic recovery, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) extended its relaxed capital adequacy and liquidity measures for an additional six months (until the end of June 2021).

Chart 3: Change in Credit to Residents (q/q) (KD millions)



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Weak deposit growth in 1Q2021

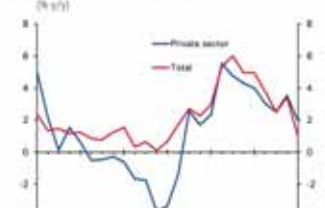
Domestic deposit growth continued to be muted (+1% y/y), driven by both private-sector deposits as well as government ones. Private-sector deposits dropped (-2%) for the second quarter in a row, pressuring the y/y growth to just 1.9%. Government deposits were even weaker, falling by 8.2% (KD655 million) q/q, which may be related to the liquidity constraints that the government has been facing.

Looking at the breakdown of KD private-sector deposits, however, shows a more favorable view for the banks with sight and savings accounts actually soaring by around 20% y/y, the steep fall in interest deposits and the deferral of credit instalments last year are two drivers for the changing composition of private sector deposits. Money supply (M2) broadly tracked private sector deposits, increasing by 1.9% y/y.

The weakness in domestic deposits so far this year was partially compensated by higher non-resident deposits, which have increased by 7.2% q/q, while the sector's simple loans-to-deposits ratio inched up to 90% by the end of 1Q2021 from 83% at the end of 2020. Finally, the deferral of household credit

instalments of Kuwaiti borrowers is expected to provide some support for the growth of private-sector deposits going forward.

Chart 4: Deposits from Residents (% y/y)

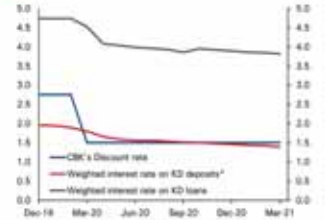


Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Policy interest rates on hold

The CBK's discount rate has remained at 1.5% since March 2020 and will probably stay at that level for now given that the US Federal Reserve is unlikely to hike its policy rate anytime soon. Commercial interest rates (weighted averages as calculated by the CBK) on KD-denominated loans and deposits continue to very gradually trend lower after the relatively sharp decrease witnessed last year, partly reflecting, on the lending side, the ongoing downward repricing of household loan portfolios.

Chart 5: Interest rates (%)



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait; * Private sector deposits

Table 1: Monetary indicators

	KD millions				% m/m				% y/y			
	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Total system liquidity (M2)	38,987	38,288	38,950	38,745	-1.3	-0.7	-0.8	-0.5	3.8	3.2	4.1	1.9
Currency in circulation	2,238	2,188	2,178	2,140	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	-1.2	18.2	17.4	14.3	1.1
Private sector deposits	31,332	31,120	30,775	30,598	-1.3	-0.6	-0.9	-0.5	3.0	2.6	3.5	1.9
KD deposits	38,270	38,058	37,710	37,538	-1.0	-0.6	-0.8	-0.5	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.3
Sight deposits	15,540	15,580	15,606	15,849	1.1	0.4	0.3	3.2	22.8	23.8	23.9	17.1
Savings deposits	6,430	6,560	6,552	6,609	0.9	2.1	-0.2	0.9	25.8	25.7	24.7	34.1
Time deposits & CDs	16,302	17,862	17,552	17,540	2.8	-2.4	-1.7	-2.9	-8.5	-8.8	-8.8	-8.9
Foreign currency deposits	2,088	2,110	2,060	1,980	-0.2	2.7	-2.4	-3.8	-18.7	-18.8	-17.1	-16.8

Table 2: Consolidated banks' balance sheet

	KD millions				% m/m				% y/y			
	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Total bank assets	73,331	73,969	73,735	73,897	-0.2	0.9	0.2	0.2	3.9	3.1	2.8	1.6
Core liquid assets	6,880	6,455	6,331	7,721	-2.1	-4.9	-0.7	8.1	35.3	20.7	20.2	14.9
Cash and CBK deposits	3,225	2,826	2,826	3,207	-1.4	-8.3	13.9	0.8	14.2	47.6	17.0	47.4
CBK bonds	2,864	2,864	2,864	2,864	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2
Time deposits with CBK	2,790	2,566	2,100	1,600	-0.7	-8.1	-18.2	-21.0	38.0	35.2	49.6	-0.7
Public debt instruments	1,348	-1,347	1,340	1,348	-0.2	-0.1	-0.5	0.4	-43.1	38.0	35.6	-32.8
Interbank deposits	2,519	2,883	2,820	2,888	-0.7	8.7	-6.1	14.9	1.9	8.8	7.8	-15.8
Credit facilities	38,782	38,917	40,119	40,181	-0.7	0.3	0.3	0.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.8
Foreign assets	18,443	18,740	18,790	18,284	0.5	1.6	0.3	2.9	-1.4	-1.7	-0.4	0.0
Other assets	-4,353	-4,422	-4,589	-4,470	-2.9	-1.9	-3.9	-4.3	2.3	5.1	5.5	3.1
Total bank liabilities	62,894	64,082	64,146	64,293	-0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	3.7	3.6	3.2	1.4
Total deposits	47,722	47,353	46,714	46,718	-1.1	-0.8	-1.3	0.0	3.9	2.9	2.9	0.0
Private sector deposits	37,332	37,120	36,775	36,598	-1.3	-0.6	-0.9	-0.5	3.0	2.6	3.5	1.9
Government deposits	1,943	1,609	1,677	1,288	-0.8	-4.2	-1.7	-2.5	1.5	2.4	2.8	-0.6
Interbank deposits	2,448	2,424	2,483	2,832	-0.1	7.2	-6.1	16.0	3.9	11.8	4.1	-12.8
Foreign liabilities	9,294	9,720	10,271	10,894	6.0	4.9	6.7	4.9	6.4	6.2	6.4	9.3
Other liabilities	8,888	7,019	7,881	8,894	-2.8	2.2	0.7	-0.2	-0.7	2.3	8.7	-1.0
Shareholders' equity	9,487	9,481	9,590	9,604	-0.3	-0.1	1.1	0.1	0.8	-0.3	0.7	2.7

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait



KFH headquarters in Kuwait City.

Air-France-KLM launches 1st flight with eco-fuel

Air France-KLM is sending into the air what it calls its first long-haul flight with sustainable aviation fuel Tuesday. The plane is said to be using petroleum mixed with a synthetic jet fuel derived from waste cooking oils.

The company said the move toward sustainable aviation fuel or SAF is to support the creation of an industry that guarantees increasingly eco-responsible air transport.

The jet is flying from Paris to Montreal, with a fuel mixture including 16% of sustainable fuel.

It's part of efforts by the industry worldwide to experiment with alternative fuels as regulators and governments tighten emissions rules for the coming decades.

Other airlines and plane-makers are also experimenting with using varying levels of biofuels or different kinds of sustainable fuel.

Air France-KLM unveiled the initiative at an event by the tarmac at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris. Attended by journalists, it was presented by key aviation figures including Air France-KLM chief executive Benjamin Smith, Total oil company CEO Patrick Pouyanne and Airbus President Guillaume Faury. (AP)

KFH BAGS 4 MORE AWARDS

KFH wins World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution ’21 award

KFH-Turkey, KFH-Germany recognized by Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Global Finance Magazine has awarded Kuwait Finance House (KFH) World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2021 Award in its 14th annual awards for the World’s Best Islamic Financial Institutions for this year.

In addition to this award, KFH has also received 4 prestigious awards which are: World’s Best Islamic Project Finance Provider, World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2021 in Turkey for KFH- Turkey, World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution in Europe for KT Bank AG-Germany, and World’s Best Islamic Takaful for KFH Takaful.

All selections were made by the highly professional team of Global Finance, after extensive consultations with bankers, corporate finance executives and analysts throughout the world. The stringent criteria of giving the awards included new business development and product innovation, meeting all customer’s requirements, geographic reach and strategic relationships. Also, among the criteria considered were reputation, the adherence to ethical standards and customer satisfaction.

World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution Award confirms the success of KFH’s efforts in providing the highest standards of Islamic financial services, while contributing to the development of the banking industry. This is in line with the methodological and Shariah support that KFH is keen to provide to spread the Islamic finance industry.

The awards KFH received were well-deserved in view of the bank’s contribution to the growth of the Islamic finance industry in the markets it operated in, its success in meeting the customers’ needs of Sharia-compliant products and establishing sustainable future growth with high efficiency for the Islamic finance industry and keeping up with the latest financial and banking technology.

The excellence of KFH Group is reflected in its keeping pace with the development of digital banking services, adoption of technology, commitment to the high-

est levels of professionalism.

KFH is moving forward in its digital transformation strategy, adopting the state-of-the-art technological financial services “FinTech” and applying AI and robotic technology in banking transactions. KFH succeeded in offering several digital services on the mobile app KFHonline and on various alternative channels including KFH Go smart branches in several areas of Kuwait. This helps enhance the customer’s digital experience and lead digital development in the banking industry.

World’s Best Islamic Project Finance Provider award confirms the wide experience of KFH in Islamic finance industry, Sukuk issuance for many banks, corporates and governments and arranging major financing deals for mega infrastructure development projects including vital sectors as well as contributing to driving economic growth and developing many financial products and alternative funding options, which are currently used in international markets.

The awards indicate the capability and efficiency of the Group subsidiaries, while reflecting their consistent performance based on specific rules, clear systems and sound foundations. This reflects the successful efforts in coordination and cooperation among the Group subsidiaries.

KFH succeeded in strengthening its roles and expanding its activities locally and globally, represented by Kuwaiti market and Group’s markets. Being the first Islamic bank in Kuwait, KFH achieved many successes in several areas, including building solid economic basics depending on developing human resources, and offering products and services that meet the market’s requirements.

It is worth noting that Global Finance magazine is headquartered in New York and founded in 1987. It has readers in more than 190 countries and 34 years of experience in international financial markets.

The magazine is an international reference in the financial sector, covering topics of corporate finance, joint ventures, capital markets, currencies, banks and risk management.



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Your continued trust is vital for our continued success.

BUSINESS

new year, same results; 1Q sales roar at Home Depot

An overcharged housing market is keeping aisles full at Home Depot and the company reported sales that blew past Wall Street expectations Tuesday.

Sales hit \$37.5 billion, up 32.7% from the same year, far better than analyst projections of \$34.88 billion, according to Zacks Investment Research

Sales at stores open at least a year, a critical indicator of a retailer's health, jumped 31%. In

the U.S., those sales rose 29.9%.

"The number of people undertaking projects around the home continues to increase. There is a very clear pattern of investing in living spaces whether through full remodeling or partial decoration," said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData.

Home Depot's profit nearly doubled, hitting \$4.1 billion, or \$3.86 per share. That compares with \$2.2 billion, or \$2.08 per share, a year ago.

Wall Street expected \$3.04 per share.

Home improvement stores have bustled during the pandemic with millions working and attending school remotely. Many families found that larger homes, or at least different homes, were a necessity. That has fueled sales at Home Depot.

Home Depot Inc. also updating its face mask policy, following the eased guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (AP)



In this file photo, worker Javad Memarzadeh, of Needham, Mass., right, dusts washers on a display, at a Home Depot location, in Boston. Orders for big-ticket manufactured goods rebounded 0.5% in March as U.S. factories recovered from frigid February weather disruptions. (AP)

Stocks wobble between ‘small’ gains and losses

Earnings from big retailers in focus

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Stocks wobbled between small gains and losses in early trading on Wall Street Tuesday as the market continues to be pulled between concerns about the potential for inflation and the hopeful signs that more parts of the economy are reopening. The S&P 500 index was up less than 0.1% in the early going. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was up 0.2% and the Dow was little changed. Earnings from big retailers were in focus. Walmart rose 4% after easily beating Wall Street's forecasts for earnings and sales as stimulus payments helped bring Americans out to shop. Treasury yields rose.

France's CAC 40 gained 0.4% in early trading to 6,390.95, while Germany's DAX gained 0.5% to 15,467.48. Britain's FTSE 200 added 0.5% to 7,065.67. U.S. shares were set for gains, with Dow futures up 0.3% at 34,352.0. S&P 500 futures rose 0.4% to 4,172.88.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 surged 2.1% to finish at 28,406.84. South Korea's Kospi gained 1.2% to 3,173.05. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.6% to 77,066.00. Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 1.4% to



In this photo provided by the New York Stock Exchange, traders work on the floor of the NYSE, May 18, 2021. Stocks were mixed, moving between small gains and losses on Tuesday morning, as investors remain focused on the possibility for more inflation later this year as well as the economic recovery as the coronavirus pandemic comes to a close. (AP)

28,593.81, while the Shanghai Composite edged up 0.3% to 3,529.01.

Regional markets shrugged off data showing Japan's economy contracted at 5.1% annual pace in the last quarter as numbers of new coronavirus cases surged. Analysts expected the results and don't expect improvements in the situation anytime soon.

Although Asia so far has fared better in curbing COVID-19 infections, compared to the U.S., South and Central America and parts of Europe, worries are growing about the latest surges in cases in India, Japan, Thailand and other countries.

Yeap Jung Rong, market strategist at IG in Singapore, said Asian markets were seeking "to rebound from weakness over concerns on virus re-

surgences."

The market has recently been swept up in worries about whether rising inflation will prove to be temporary or will endure. Prices are rising for everything from auto insurance to restaurant meals as the economy leaps out of last year's pandemic-induced coma.

The fear is that the Federal Reserve will have to dial back the extensive support it's providing to markets if inflation persists. That includes record-low interest rates and the monthly purchase of \$120 billion in bonds meant to goose the job market and economy.

Higher interest rates drag on most of the stock market, but they are particularly painful for stocks considered the most expensive and those bid up for profits expected far into the future.

Kuwait Insurance Company Net Profit for First Quarter KD 5.3 Million (USD 17.4 Million)

Kuwait Insurance Company announced the financial results of the first quarter of 2021. The Gross Written Premium (including full Life insurance premium) for the current period amounted to KD 14.2 million compared to KD 11.9 million for the same period last year, which shows an increase of 19%. The net earned premium for the current period amounted to KD 5.8 million compared to KD 5.2 million for the same period last year, which shows an increase of 12%.



Sami Sharif

The net operating profit after deducting the general and administrative expenses amounted to KD 1.9 million for the current period compared to KD 1.6 million for the same period last year, which shows an increase of 19%.

Investment income decreased to KD3.78 million in the current period compared to KD 5.7 million for the same period last year. The decline is due to the drop in the dividends from companies and banks where we hold shares. However, the company succeeded in mitigating the effects of this decline by profits made from trading transactions, as these profits increased by 43.6%.

Thus, the net profit for the first quarter of 2021 amounted to KD 5.3 million (US\$ 17.4 million) and Earnings Per Share of 28.6 fils.

Mr. Sami Sharif, Chief Executive Officer, stated that we have achieved these operating results in order to fulfill our obligations towards shareholders and customers. He also mentioned that, we will continue to follow a conservative policy and will successfully manage the crisis, like we did last year .

Mr. Sharif added that besides the sales, the first quarter was also full of other accomplishments, such as, the reaffirmation of our company's credit ratings from AM Best and Moody's credit rating agencies with an A-

(Excellent) and A3 respectively, both with a stable outlook.

Aiming to focus on the importance of corporate social responsibility, the company took an initiative to encourage customers to take the Corona vaccine by giving a 10% discount on comprehensive car insurance to vaccinated customers. Also, we encouraged all our employees to take the Corona vaccine, as we consider them as one of the most important assets of the company. The Management took the role of addressing the reluctance and fear of some of the staff and were successful in breaking their psychological barrier created from misleading information.

With regard to the company's plan to keep pace with the current technologies in providing insurance services, the company has made qualitative leaps in this regard.

The company's IT department is being enhanced to help the company keep in touch with the customers, and in meeting their various needs related to claims or renewals of insurance policies.

We still look forward to accomplish a lot in the coming years and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed in achieving our goals, including the Board of Directors, the shareholders, and the company's employees.

Macy's swings to profit, boosts guidance for '21

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Macy's emerged from an unprecedented year with a surprising swing back into the profit column and it boosted its guidance for all of 2021.

Sales were fueled by government stimulus checks and the massive rollout of vaccines that have emboldened Americans to head outdoors again, the company said.

"Clearly our customer is ready to get on with life," Jeff Gennette, Macy's CEO, told analysts during the earnings call on Tuesday. "We don't see this as a short-term pop."

Sales of merchandise that was strong during the pandemic, such as home goods, continue to move well, and customers are spending more in other categories as well, Gennette said. He noted that customers are feeling increasingly confident to get dressed up to venture outside. So, sales of special occasion items like prom dresses are doing well. Luggage sales are also starting to show solid improvement. At Bloomingdale's, business in dressy sandals and tailored suiting are starting to tick up.

Net income hit \$103 million after massive losses during the same period last year when stores were forced to lock their doors.

On a per-share basis, the New York company's net income was 32 cents, or 39 cents if one-time charges are removed. Wall Street was looking for losses of about 41 cents per share, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue of \$4.71 billion also exceeded analyst projections.

Macy's expects full-year revenue in the range of \$21.73 billion to \$22.23 billion, up from its previous projections of \$19.75 billion to \$20.75 billion.

Macy's has pushed much of its sales online and expects digital sales to reach \$10 billion within the next three years, but noted that online sales are two to three times higher in markets where Macy's stores exist.

During the pandemic, the company pared back inventory and closed some stores. It also launched curbside pickup last year and is expanding its off-price concept BackStage.

Shares of Macy's Inc. rose 26 cents, or more than 1%, to \$19.44 in late morning trading on Tuesday.



In this file photo, shoppers arrive at a Macy's in Charlotte, NC. Macy's emerged from an unprecedented year by swinging to a profit and it upped its expectations for the year. The retailer on May 18, 2021, posted net income of \$103 million, after reporting a loss in the same period a year earlier. (AP)

Huawei HarmonyOS, a unique Operating System

Huawei HarmonyOS is about to be made available to smartphone users. On September 10, 2020, Huawei released beta versions of HarmonyOS for TVs, watches, and automotive head units, and invited app developers to experiment and develop apps for the operating system. At the time, Huawei also announced their intention to bring HarmonyOS to its phones. The beta version of HarmonyOS for phones was released in December, together with the SDK, development documents and tools, and simulators, giving developers the chance to create HarmonyOS-based mobile phone apps before the official launch.

Wang Chenglu, President of Huawei's Consumer Business Group Software Engineering Dept, a major contributor to HarmonyOS, said that HarmonyOS is the ideal operating system for the Internet of Everything era. He said that HarmonyOS will provide users with more access to apps and services and a smart life experience, disrupting the market and creating huge opportunities.

To understand the significance of HarmonyOS, it is useful to zoom out and see how it fits into the overall development of the Internet.

The Internet of Things (IoT) was invented long ago. Why hasn't it become popular yet?

Throughout the history of the information technology industry, there have been companies involved in technological revolutions. Many companies have capitalized on such transformations of information technology to achieve enormous commercial success

The concept of the Internet of Things is an increasingly familiar one, but it has so far failed to change the world. Less than 20% of smart devices are actually connected to a mobile or Wi-Fi network. The installation rate of apps from household appliance vendors is less than 10%, and the usage rate of smart features is not even 1%. The potential of the smart appliances is going to waste. Projecting a phone screen to another device is still quite complicated, and the Internet of Everything is still just a dot on the horizon.

Why?

The main reason has been the lack of communication technologies and hardware devices that support the effective communication of a large number of connected devices. Progress on AI and big data is still a constraint on the development of IoT. However, in recent years, with the rapid upgrade of hardware such as smartphones and the popularization of 5G and AI, a viable Internet



of Things is gradually coming into view. According to Huawei's Global Industry Outlook Report, by 2025, the number of smart personal devices is expected to reach 40 billion, the total number of connections globally will reach 100 billion, and the number of wearable devices such as smartwatches and glasses will reach 8 billion. Data from Statista also shows that from 2015 to 2025, the number smart devices per capita is expected to increase from two to nine.

However, ecosystem fragmentation means that different devices cannot collaborate with each other, and user experience suffers as a consequence. Different devices have their own operating systems, making communication between them quite a complicated proposition. Household appliances such as smart refrigerators and robot vacuum cleaners are supported by such a motley bunch of operating systems that many cannot communicate with each other at all.

What's more, mobile Internet app innovation is still limited to isolated operating systems. For example, watch apps are mainly limited to sports, health, and personalized watch faces. TV apps focus on entertainment and education. Almost all in-car apps are related to navigation and video. In a world where an increasing number of individuals own multiple smart devices, fragmentary single device ecosystems simply don't cut it any more. App developers need to develop different versions of the same app for different devices, generating heavy adaptation workload. Consumers often find that the experience of an app is not consistent across different devices.

But problems also bring opportunities. There is a gap in the market for an operating system that enables the interconnection of different devices, and whoever delivers this system can float atop the rising tide of IoT.

In the IoT era, what does an operating system need to be?

Today, the opportunities brought by IoT mark another turning point in the history of operating systems. This time, HarmonyOS aims to be the first mover, and a number of parties are working to rapidly develop an ecosystem around this next-generation OS.

HarmonyOS aims to be the ideal operating system

for the Internet of Everything era. It can support smartphones and other smart devices including TVs, automotive head units, and wearables. In the past, users enjoyed personalized apps. With HarmonyOS, users can have personalized devices, which better satisfy their needs. In the era of feature phones, the hardware and software of a phone were fixed. In the smartphone era, hardware was still fixed, but new ability to download apps offered users a more personalized experience. Now, the revolutionary distributed technology of HarmonyOS means that capabilities can be decoupled from hardware, allowing multiple physically independent devices to converge into one "Super Device". It can flexibly invoke and combine the software and hardware capabilities that are most suitable for the current use case, providing users with a smooth, seamless AI experience. HarmonyOS enables devices to provide services based on users' requirement and defines devices based on use cases to deliver optimal experience.

For example, if you open a map app on your phone and select a destination, then as soon as you get in your car, the map is automatically synchronized to the screen of the head unit. When you get out of the car, the map switches seamlessly over to your watch. Hardware equipped with HarmonyOS offers new levels of convenience. Connection is as simple as tapping a phone against another household appliance. In this way, you can check the status of your oven from the screen of your phone. You can find a recipe in an app, and with a single tap on the screen, set the corresponding temperature and time on your oven, making it easier than ever to cook like a master chef. Household appliances also actively communicate with you, reminding you to clean the oil filter of the range hood, for example.

In the ecosystem construction of HarmonyOS, the biggest challenge is to obtain the support of app developers and vendors. For app developers, the distributed technology of HarmonyOS brings a platform for developing innovative cross-device apps. For hardware manufacturers, HarmonyOS presents dizzying range of opportunities.

This unique operating system is set to navigate on the rising tide of IoT.

Health

‘Long COVID’ clinics work

Long-haul patients get help in London’s ‘COVID triangle’

LONDON, May 18, (AP): Gary Miller drove a London taxi. Rohit Patel worked behind the till in a supermarket. Barry Bwalya was in customer service.

When the coronavirus tore through their London neighborhoods in early 2020, they all got sick. More than a year later, they are still struggling.

“It’s like a rollercoaster,” said Miller, a previously fit, gym-loving 57-year-old who is coping with leg and joint pain, headaches and breathlessness. “There are times that I see light at the end of the tunnel. I feel like I’m taking one step forward, and then all of a sudden — bang — I’m ill again and I take two steps back.”

Even as London looks to life after lockdown, thousands of people are still grappling with long-term



Stevens

physical and mental effects of the virus. Help is coming through “long COVID” clinics, where medics, patients – and Britain’s overstretched health system – are confronting the virus’s enduring effects.

Plagues, fires, war — London has survived them all. But it has never had a year like this. The coronavirus has killed more than 15,000 Londoners and shaken the foundations of one of the world’s great cities. Amid a fast-moving mass vaccination campaign, The Associated Press looks at the pandemic’s impact on London’s people and institutions and asks what the future might hold.

Expertise

At King George Hospital in the east London district of Ilford, respiratory consultant Adam Ainley began noticing last summer that some coronavirus patients who had been discharged were not getting better. They had a wide range of symptoms, including fatigue, muscle pain, breathlessness, headaches, anxiety and depression.

The hospital serves an area dubbed the “COVID triangle,” three outer London boroughs that have had some of Britain’s highest infection rates. It’s a multi-ethnic area, home to many Black and South Asian Londoners, groups that saw higher rates of serious COVID-19 illness and death than white Britons.

High rates of poverty, crowded housing and residents in frontline jobs — including medics, taxi drivers and retail workers — all helped the virus spread.

Ainley began drawing on the expertise of colleagues from multiple disciplines to treat what has been labeled “long COVID,” or long-haul COVID. His clinic was one of the first of 83 set up across England, backed by the state-funded National Health Service.

Ainley said it aims to offer “a one-stop approach” to a complex problem.

“We will try and address all the components of your illness,” he said. “When you get to the clinic you’ll see myself, you’ll see a physiotherapist, the occupational therapist, our clinical psychologist. I have access to other specialist members from cardiology, rheumatology, as I need to, based upon your symptoms.”

Some patients have even begun singing lessons as therapy.

There is no universal definition of long COVID, a term applied to a range of persistent post-viral symptoms. While most people recover from coronavirus infections within a few weeks, Britain’s statistics office says almost 14% still report symptoms 12 weeks later.

Ainley’s clinic has seen 700 patients, with another 120 on the waiting list. Their symptoms are often mental as well as physical. Psychologist Marc Kingsley said many experience memory loss and “brain fog,” as well as loneliness and low moods.

“Some of the people I’ve spoken to have survivor guilt,” Kingsley said. “They actually feel guilty about having survived where they saw people in front of them passing away.”

“A lot of our patients say to us they don’t feel that they can just talk to friends and family,” he said. “They don’t want to upset people.”

As well as home visits from physiotherapists, Miller gets phone calls from a therapist where he can talk about the frustration he feels.

“It’s nice to talk to other people and get a load off my chest,” he said. “And to find out through her that there are people in the same boat as I am.”

The UK, which has seen almost 128,000 coronavirus-related deaths, has recorded almost 4.5 million infections, so long COVID is likely to be a burden for years to come. But the clinics face competition for resources in a health service facing a backlog of undiagnosed and untreated

cancers and other ailments. Some long COVID sufferers say they can’t get referred to one of the specialist clinics.

The NHS has allocated 34 million pounds (\$48 million) to the clinics, and chief executive Simon Stevens has promised more funds will be coming.

Britain was relatively quick to devote resources to long COVID, but it was still months before many patients received specialist help. The King George clinic is still treating patients who fell sick in spring 2020. Now it is starting to see those infected during Britain’s even bigger winter outbreak.

“The first wave, I feel gutted for,” said physiotherapist Jane Clark. “It is lovely to see them improve so quickly and you think, ‘I just wish I was aware of you earlier.’”

Ainley says “there’s no gold standard or evidence-based treatment yet for long COVID,” but he’s encouraged to see many patients getting better.

“I’ve followed some of their journeys from their first admission,” he said. “People admitted last April we have now discharged from our clinic because now they’re back to functioning in life. We’ve had people attend weddings ... people reunited with their families ... people who were essentially housebound, who are now going out.”

Progress can feel agonizingly slow. Bwayla, 66, struggles with his breath and his memory and relies on around-the-clock support from his wife, Barbara.

“I never thought I would walk, but now at least I can walk with a stick,” he said. “But at times I get so frustrated. ... I love my granddaughter, but I can’t even play with her.”

Miller, Bwalya and Patel all know many people – workmates, relatives, friends -- who became ill with COVID-19, and some who died.

“Sometimes it makes you wonder, how come I survived and a lot of people couldn’t?” Patel said.

The 62-year-old supermarket cashier spent three months in King George Hospital with the virus last year, including six weeks in an induced coma.

Almost a year after being discharged, he still is short of breath and suffers from numbness in his feet. But he can make a cup of tea, and he’s able to walk slowly around the block. He hopes to return to work next month.

“It’s been a long haul, but I think I’m getting there,” Patel said, defiantly optimistic. “I am seeing this as a second life.”

Also:

LONDON: British health workers, aided by the army, distributed coronavirus tests door-to-door Saturday in two towns in northern England, seeking to contain a fast-spreading variant that threatens plans to lift all lockdown restrictions next month.

Cases of a variant first identified in India have more than doubled in a week, defying a sharp nationwide downward trend in infections won by months of restrictions and a rapid vaccination campaign. Government scientific advisers say this variant is likely more transmissible than even the UK’s dominant strain, though it’s unclear by how much.

“If the virus is significantly more transmissible, we are likely to face some hard choices,” Prime Minister Boris Johnson said at a news conference on Friday. “I have to level with you that this could be a serious disruption to our progress.”

He said the next stage of lockdown-easing measures would take place as planned on Monday, but warned the variant might delay plans to lift all restrictions, including social distancing and face-covering rules, on June 21.

Johnson said soldiers would help carry out “surge testing” in Bolton and Blackburn in north-west England, where pop-up vaccination sites were also being set up to speed the inoculation drive.

The government’s scientific advisory committee says there is no evidence so far that the variant causes more severe disease or that existing vaccines won’t work against it. More than two-thirds of British adults have received a first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, and 37% have had both doses.

The government is shortening the gap between doses for people over 50 from 12 to eight weeks in a bid to give them more protection.

The government’s Scientific Group for Emergencies says the Indian-identified variant, formally known as B.1.617.2, could be up to 50% more transmissible than one first recorded in south-east England last year that is now the UK’s dominant strain. But they say there is a high level of uncertainty about the exact figure.

Mark Walport, a member of the advisory group, said the new variant had “intensified” the race between the virus and vaccines.



Long COVID patient Gary Miller receives treatment from physiotherapist Joan Del Arco at the Long COVID Clinic at King George Hospital in Ilford, London, May 11. (AP)

Do I still have to wear mask? What about kids?

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): The government’s new guidance on masks for vaccinated people has left some Americans confused and sent businesses and states scrambling to adjust their rules.

Target and CVS on Monday became the latest retailers to say vaccinated shoppers and workers don’t have to wear masks in stores. New York said it will adopt the new mask advice this week, while California said it will wait a month.

About 123 million Americans – 37% of the population – are fully vaccinated against coronavirus, and more than 157 million, or 47%, have received at least one dose.

What’s The New Advice?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last week said people who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear a mask indoors or outdoors and can stop social distancing in most places. Fully vaccinated means two weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or two weeks after the one-dose Johnson & Johnson shot.

“If you are vaccinated, we are saying you are safe, you can take off your mask, and you are not at risk of severe disease or hospitalization from COVID-19,” Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said on “Fox News Sunday.” “If you are not vaccinated, you are not safe. Please go get vaccinated or continue to wear your mask.”

Discovery

Sat launch fails: California-based Rocket Lab said a launch of satellites from its facility in New Zealand failed Saturday.

The problem occurred during ignition of the Electron rocket’s second stage, the company said in a statement.

The rocket was carrying two Earth-observation satellites for BlackSky, a global monitoring company.

“Today’s anomaly occurred after 17 successful orbital launches of the Electron launch vehicle. With multiple launch vehicles currently in production, Rocket Lab is prepared for a rapid return to flight as soon as investigations are complete and any required corrective actions are in place,” the statement said.

Rocket Lab said the rocket’s first stage successfully parachuted into the ocean and crews were working to recover it. The company is trying to develop a capability to recover and reuse Electron first stages.

Rocket Lab is headquartered in Long Beach, California, and has launch sites on New Zealand’s Mahia peninsula and Wallops Island, Virginia. (AP)

‘End coal mines investment’: A report by the International Energy Agency says immediate action is needed to reshape the world’s energy sector in order to meet ambitious climate goals by 2050, including ending investments in new coal mines, oil and gas wells.

The Paris-based agency said in a report released Tuesday that it has determined there is a narrow but viable pathway for building a global energy sector with net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Several countries, including the United States and the European Union, have pledged to achieve net zero emissions – meaning only as much planet-warming gas is released into the atmosphere as can be absorbed – by mid-century.

The IEA report sets out 400 steps needed to transform how energy is produced, transported and used. These include no investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, an end to the sale of new internal combustion engine passenger cars by 2035 and a four-fold increase in the deployment of solar and wind power by 2030 compared to last year’s record level.

The IEA’s executive director, **Fatih Birol**, said the transformation would create millions of new jobs and boost economic growth worldwide.

But he warned that while countries and companies have begun to set bold targets targets for cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the coming decades, actual emissions continue to rise substantially. The IEA said last month that 2021 will see the second-largest annual increase in emissions since 2010 as the world economy bounces back from the pandemic.

“There is a growing gap between the rhetoric we hear from governments and industry leaders, and what it’s happening in real life,” Birol said. (AP)



Birol

Are There Exceptions?

Yes. The CDC says everyone – vaccinated or unvaccinated – should continue to wear a mask in certain places. Masks are still required on public transportation – buses, trains and planes – and in other settings like hospitals, prisons and homeless shelters. Some states and businesses and stores are dropping their mask rules for fully vaccinated people because of the CDC change, while others are keeping them in place. California is waiting until next month to give the public and businesses time to prepare.

Why The Change?

The CDC director says there was new science in recent weeks that supported easing the advice on masks and social distancing. She said there was new evidence that COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world settings, are effective against virus variants and prevent the spread of the virus. In announcing the new advice, she also cited the drop in infections in the U.S., the wide availability of vaccines and the expansion to ages 12 and up for the shots.

“I want to be clear that we followed the science here,” she said at a White House briefing.

What About Kids?

Children who haven’t been vaccinated should still wear masks and keep 6 feet apart. The CDC recommends masks for children age 2 and older in

public settings and when with people outside their household. Masks are also advised in schools. That won’t change for the rest of this school year and “we’ll be working on school guidance for the fall,” Walensky said on Fox. Child care and camp guidance will also be updated, she said.

She noted that some children may not understand why they have to wear a mask if the rest of the family isn’t. “I think that that’s going to have to be a family by family decision,” she said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Can I Still Wear A Mask Anyway?

Sure. Even though the guidance has changed, “there’s no need for everybody to start ripping off their masks,” Walensky said on NBC.

“Those behaviors are going to be really hard to change, and there is no mandate to take it off,” she said. “What we’re saying is, now this is safe.”

Who’s Going To Be Checking?

In general, there’s no system yet for checking vaccination records of those not wearing masks. Schools, businesses and other places may require proof of vaccination. The federal government has no plans for a “vaccine passport.”

“What we are really asking the American people to do is to be honest with themselves and to not remove their masks until they are safe,” Walensky said on Fox.

‘Variant of concern’

How worrying is the variant seen in India

LONDON, May 18, (AP): For the first time in months, people across England are meeting indoors at pubs, restaurants, cinemas, gyms and elsewhere as coronavirus rules were relaxed this week.

But Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Britons to be cautious and some of the scientists advising him say restrictions might need to be reimposed quickly because of a worrying variant first detected in India.

Here’s a look at what we know and don’t know about the variant:

What Is This Variant?

The COVID-19 variant first identified in India has been classified as a “variant of concern” by Britain and the World Health Organization, meaning there is some evidence that it spreads more easily between people, causes more severe disease, or might be less responsive to treatments and vaccines.

“The absolute numbers of cases (of the variant) in the UK remain quite small, but the growth rate is quite high,” said Nick Loman, a professor of microbial genomics at the University of Birmingham.

To date, there have been more than 2,300 cases identified in Britain. Figures released by Public Health England show cases of the variant first detected in India have tripled in the past week and experts say it’s on track to become the most dominant COVID-19 variant in the country.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO’s COVID-19 technical lead, said more information was still needed about the variant’s spread globally.

“We need more sequencing, targeted sequencing to be done and to be shared in India and elsewhere so that we know how much of this virus is circulating,” she said.

How Transmissible Is The Variant?

We don’t entirely know. But according to the minutes of an expert group advising the government last week, scientists said “it is a realistic possibility that (the variant first seen in India) is as much as 50% more transmissible” than the variant first reported in Britain – whose explosive spread led to the country’s longest lockdown in January.

“There are plausible biological reasons as to why some of the mutations present could make this variant more transmissible,” they concluded. If the variant proves to be 40 to 50% more transmissible, the scientists predicted that would “lead to a much larger peak” of cases, hospitalizations and deaths than previous waves of coronavirus – particularly if the government continues with its existing plans to exit lockdown.

Signature Yashmagh’s Advent into the GCC Market
Emirati Brand’s Inspiring Success Story



How did the idea to launch the brand come up? Who are the founders behind the brand?

When we decided we wanted to start a business together, we knew we wanted to do something that highlights our passion for our background, and the Emirati culture relating to men’s fashion. We wanted a product or a story that we cared about, something that drove us to better every day. This is how Signature Yashmagh was found. With our Emirati background, we have been very dedicated about showcasing the authentic Emirati culture, the real grace of Emirati menswear and their fashion sense in the modern world of today. We started thinking about the brand and we did a thorough study for over 6 months after which we launched the brand online in May 2019. While the brand initially was aimed at young Emirati clientele, we soon started attracting both tourists, expats and just anyone who wanted to learn more about the real Emirati Men’s fashion.

We are three founders of Signature Yashmagh; Ahmad Al Hashemi, Mishal AlMarzouqi & Khalid Belhouli, we have been friends since college and our passion for entrepreneurship brought us together. However, we have different career backgrounds, Ahmad is in the communication sector with the government, Khalid is an electronics engineer while Mishal is an engineer working for energy sector. We’ve worked towards our individual passions and education, and furthered to pursue these careers. We truly feel that the country fosters this love for growth and excellence in every individual, the means to work towards and achieve several goals.

What sets your brand apart from other brands?

What sets us apart from other brands is our mission to showcase only the most authentic Emirati fashion for men, especially relating to our culture and the importance of Yashmagh. Of course, there are many forms of head covers for men around the Arab world, our focus remains on showing the Emirati style, with pure whites and high-quality fabrics. Since the beginning, we have been marketing the brand as a start-up, as a young brand, dedicated to making a

difference. We ensure we provide the best of quality at a reasonable pricing that ensures everyone can afford our products.

We pride in our quality and that remains our focus throughout. The cotton we use is of the finest quality and woven to perfection to create a smooth texture, that facilitates comfort, breathability for our customers. We are so involved towards giving our customers only the best experience; in line with this vision, the brand launched everything needed for a perfect yashmagh.

What were some of the challenges that came along the way to launching this brand?

The field we’re in, or the product we’ve chosen, is one that is very commonly used and it is a consumer product hence available at most places along with the traditional Arab attire, not necessarily as a brand but generally as a widespread product. Our challenge was establishing the uniqueness of our offering, presenting the authentic Emirati Yashmagh and highlight the difference between the Emirati Yashmagh and the other kinds. We had to change the image of how this was perceived and give people the right information relating to our product.

Technical challenges included the cost of high-quality production while keeping the base price as an affordable for our customers, to get in touch with the best of manufacturers and ensure the best quality and then the challenge with logistics and being able to deliver all around the UAE. Definitely, time was also a big part of the start and execution of all these operational tasks. However, we are truly blessed and grateful that the brand did pick the momentum and effectively ran operations, growing customer base daily and slowly evolving from a virtual to a physical business, all within two years of starting out.

With the on-going pandemic, how did the project survive in one of its earliest years?

We know how the pandemic affected several businesses and especially with the implementation of strict lockdown measures last year, local

and global markets were affected greatly. However, this wasn’t the case with us. Because Signature Yashmagh started online and was a virtual business, we were already perfectly operating our business and operations in a timely manner. While other businesses were now adapting to the new measures and online/virtual based operations, we were already operating smoothly and very efficiently.

What is upcoming from Signature Yashmagh? What is your next step?

Signature Yashmagh provides the finest in Yashmagh, the white ghutras and all the products are tailored to enhance this experience for our customers. We have launched the Yashmagh shampoo, the Yashmagh spray all to help our customers ensure the full regal experience of wearing the Emirati style of Yashmagh. We have also expanded and we have another brand called ‘SUBHA’ that is very much in line with our roots and creates high-end subhas. For Eid this year, we launched our new gift boxes for men and children. We are very eager to keep innovating and keep coming up with new products based on our precious customer feedback.

We are so honored and grateful of all that we have achieved in the last two years, how we started and where we have reached now makes us feel so good. Our next step is to expand within the Gulf Countries, especially in Kuwait and Bahrain markets. Kuwait, being one of the prominent markets in the Middle East, has so much potential for us as a brand. We think the presence of our brand there is so important. Ofcourse, the bigger goal is to expand internationally with different retailers. We also aim to just grow the brand and build the image where people can understand the essence and our mission better, we want our customers to get top quality Emirati headgears in our region as well as internationally.

Books

ALBANY, N.Y., May 18, (AP): New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo disclosed Monday that he was paid a \$3.1 million advance to write his COVID-19 leadership book last year and under his publishing contract will make another \$2 million on the memoir over the next two years.

That total windfall of more than \$5.1 million further inflamed critics who have said it was inappropriate for Cuomo to personally enrich himself with a self-congratulatory book, published just as the state was seeing a deadly resurgence in infections last October.

At least 52,987 people have died of COVID-19 in New York, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University of Medicine.

Cuomo, a Democrat, had for months declined to say how much money he made from writing “American Crisis: Leadership Lessons From the COVID-19 Pandemic,” published by Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House. The book largely recounts the governor’s once-daily press conferences on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The disclosure of the big payday was made on the day Cuomo’s mandatory financial disclosures were due to a state ethics agency. Cuomo also let reporters view a copy of his tax returns, which were also due Monday.

Cuomo spokesperson Richard Azzopardi said Monday that after taxes and expenses, Cuomo had netted \$1.5 million on the book last year. He said Cuomo donated \$500,000 of his profits from the book to the United Way of New York State and is putting the rest into a trust for his three daughters. Azzopardi didn’t immediately provide a response Monday to a question about what the governor plans to do with the future \$2 million in book payments.

From the moment Cuomo’s book came out he was criticized for penning a book touting his performance while the crisis was ongoing.

Critics slam self-congratulatory book

Since then he’s come under more criticism over the involvement of some of his staff in preparing the book for publication.

In April, the state’s comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, authorized New York Attorney General Letitia James to investigate the role some of Cuomo’s aides played in “drafting, editing, sale and promotion” of the book.

Azzopardi has repeatedly said that state employees who helped with the book did so on their own time in a “volunteer” capacity.

The Democrat has also been criticized by some over his administration’s decision to withhold data on COVID-19 deaths among nursing home patients for months as the book was being finalized and sold.

Criticism

Critics say the administration was purposely obscuring the true death toll to boost the governor’s image and mute criticism that Cuomo hadn’t done enough to protect nursing home residents. Cuomo often used the smaller death toll to argue that New York lost far fewer nursing home residents than other states, based on a percentage of overall deaths.

The governor and the state’s health commissioner have said the numbers were withheld because the state had trouble verifying them.

Sochie Nnaemeka, state director of the Working Families Party, a liberal group that has clashed often with Cuomo over policy, said the revelation about his book payday showed he was “unfit to lead.”

“Last June, millions of New Yorkers were struggling to keep their families safe, and thousands of seniors were struggling to survive in the state’s nursing homes, while the governor was having his staffers write a book that would make him millions off of the still-raging public

health crisis,” Nnaemeka said.

The top Republican in the state senate, Sen. Rob Ortt, said “the fact that Governor Cuomo lined his own pockets with more than \$5 million while thousands of New Yorkers were dying horrific deaths is a national disgrace.”

Azzopardi sniped back at the critics.

“The governor worked night and day to try to save lives and lead New York out of this crisis. Lord knows where they were,” he said.

The book revelations come as Cuomo is also under fire over sexual harassment allegations made by several women who worked for him. One aide has also accused him of groping her breasts beneath her shirt.

The state’s attorney general is investigating those allegations and the state Assembly’s judiciary committee is probing whether there are grounds to impeach the governor. The Assembly committee’s investigation is also examining whether Cuomo provided members of his family with priority access to COVID-19 tests in spring 2020.

The state’s ethics commission approved Cuomo’s request to write the book last summer, but only if he followed several conditions, including making sure it was written on his own time and not using state property, personnel or other resources for “activities associated with the book.”

The governor was also barred from advertising, promoting or endorsing his book when performing his state duties.

John Kaehny, executive director of pro-transparency group Reinvent Albany, has called for Cuomo to release his full contract with the book publisher so the public knows whether Cuomo will receive additional compensation if more copies of his book are sold.

Azzopardi said Monday he’d ask Cuomo if he will release the contract.

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Angelina Jolie and Finn Little in a scene from ‘Those Who Wish Me Dead.’ (AP)

Film

De Niro says leg injury may prevent Tribeca fest appearance

Jolie leads tense ‘Wish Me Dead’

By Lindsey Bahr

It would be an understatement to say that Angelina Jolie is put through the wringer in writer-director Taylor Sheridan’s new film “Those Who Wish Me Dead.”

In just 100 minutes, she is beaten and bruised by nature, men and even some of her own choices - like a crazy stunt involving a parachute and a pickup truck. Jolie has always thrown herself into physically demanding roles, but her Montana firefighter Hannah Farber may take the cake for most cuts and shiners sustained in 24 hours. This is a film in which she’s running from hitmen, raging forest fires and past traumas. Apparently her face and body are the physical representation of that. Even so, it’s always a pleasure to see her back on screen, which has become rarer and rarer lately.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead” was adapted from a novel about Connor, a 12-year-old boy on the run from a pair of assassins who killed his dad. Screenplay credits go to the author Michael Koryta, Charles Leavitt (“Blood Diamond”) and Sheridan, who seems to be cornering the market on bleak and bloody Western thrillers. Sheridan wrote the screenplays for “Sicario,” “Hell or High Water” and “Wind River,” which he also directed.

This outing is not quite as grim as “Wind River” but it’s still very much in that vein. And like his folksy-poetic dialogue or not, he knows how keep a film moving and give his actors juicy moments to chew on. (It should be no surprise that he too cut his teeth acting). He’s populated this film with solid talent including Jon Bernthal as a local sheriff, and Aidan Gillen and Nicholas Hoult as the hitmen. Finn Little, who plays Connor, can turn on the waterworks and internalized trauma as effectively as Jolie.

The film is a little scant on key details - the whole chase is set off by Connor’s dad discovering

some criminal conspiracy big enough to warrant blowing up the district attorney’s home (yes, with the family inside). But because there was only one team sent to kill off the two people with knowledge of the conspiracy, Connor and his dad get a few days’ head start to drive from their Florida home to Montana to seek help from his brother-in-law sheriff (Bernthal).

Jolie’s Hannah meanwhile has been relegated to tower duty after she failed to save three boys in the woods during a massive fire. It might be a bit of a stretch, but she sells it with her steely gaze and cool swagger. Yes there probably aren’t many firefighters who look like Jolie, but there also aren’t many people who look like Jolie. At least here everyone acknowledges her otherworldly beauty. And she gets her chance to help another young boy when she spots Connor running through the woods.

Scrutiny

“Those Who Wish Me Dead” doesn’t hold up to much scrutiny. There are too many threads left dangling and characters left unexplored, including Hannah herself. We get to see her as one-of-the-boys at the beginning with as much ego as a test pilot and a few flashbacks to the tragedy that seems to define her, but otherwise she’s an enigma. Some of the forest fires are also distractingly digital. And yet, it’s an effective and watchable chase film that keeps you on the edge of your seat enough to make it worthwhile. And it’s a great breakout role for Medina Senghore, who gets to play a kick butt survival expert who’s also six months pregnant. It’s just not a film you’re going to be thinking much about five minutes after it ends.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead,” a Warner Bros. release in theaters and on HBO Max Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America

for, “strong violence and language throughout.” Running time: 100 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

NEW YORK: A leg injury may keep **Robert De Niro** from celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Tribeca Film Festival. The accident happened last week in **Oklahoma** while on location for the upcoming **Martin Scorsese** film, “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

The two-time Oscar-winner immediately flew back to New York to get it checked out.

“My leg is fine ... I ripped a ligament I guess in my quad, so I have to have it reattached to my knee. But it’s OK,” De Niro said Saturday during an interview promoting this year’s Tribeca events. “It’s all manageable. That’s all. All good.”

The accident happened at his on-location home, and the actor was not due to shoot additional scenes for several weeks.

While his scenes for the film can be pushed back further to accommodate his recovery, he may not have the same luxury when the Tribeca Film Festival kicks off on June 9. De Niro co-founded the event with producer **Jane Rosenthal**.

“Yeah, I don’t know because I have (surgery on) my leg, I got the whole thing. I’m not sure we’ll have to figure that out,” De Niro said. “We’ll figure that out once we get closer.”

Based on **David Grann**’s non-fiction novel, Scorsese’s film tells the story of the 1920s investigation into the Osage Indian murders by the newly former Federal Bureau of Investigation.

De Niro stars as **William Hale**, a powerful Oklahoma rancher. “Killers of the Flower Moon” marks the 10th feature film collaboration between De Niro and Scorsese. The film also stars another Scorsese regular, **Leonardo DiCaprio**, as Ernest Burkhart, one of the key figures in the murders. (AP)

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz: An **Andy Warhol** canvas found years ago in the garage of rocker **Alice Cooper** could become the highest selling artwork ever in Arizona.

The music legend, who has a home in metro **Phoenix**, announced that he would auction off “Little Electric Chair.”

It will be up for bidding on Oct 23 at an auction organized by the Larsen Gallery in Scottsdale. The gallery estimates it could fetch anywhere from \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million.

The red acrylic and silkscreen on canvas was part of Warhol’s “Death and Disaster” series between 1964 and 1965. The pop artist often collected images from newspapers and magazines to use as inspiration for his work. Among them were images of the electric chair.

According to Cooper, the artwork was a birthday gift in the ’70s from a girlfriend who was friends with Warhol.

Cooper also plans to make the canvas available for public viewing.

The gallery owners say they will donate part of any commission to Cooper’s nonprofit, Solid Rock, which works to bring music, dance and other forms of art to teens.

Cooper is known for outrageous makeup and performances and such hits as “School’s Out.” (AP)

□ □ □

LOS ANGELES: Guitars from **Eddie Van Halen**, **Eric Clapton** and **Aerosmith** as well as autographed memorabilia from The Beatles and even strands of hair from **Kurt Cobain** are some of the highlights of an online rock ‘n’ roll auction that ends over the weekend.

Six strands of blonde hair from the grunge rock icon are part of a series of Nirvana offerings that also includes a Cobain amp and a rare group-signed blue Stratocaster-style guitar. The hair was cut by a friend in 1989 and the minimum bid is \$2,500.

The Marshall amp has “Kurt” written faintly in the top right corner and was used by Nirvana during the ‘90s, as well as while the band filmed its “Live and Loud” video. It was later used by Hole and OPM after Cobain’s death. The minimum bid is \$15,000. (A guitar Cobain used for his MTV Unplugged show recently sold for

\$6 million).

The items are part of a slate of rock items being offered up by Iconic Auction, spanning **Elvis** to grunge. A portion of proceeds will benefit Crew Nation, a relief fund for live music touring and venue crews who are facing hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The item with the highest



Cooper



Cobain

minimum is a collarless, dark blue jacket custom made for **Paul McCartney** that starts at \$25,000. It was worn onstage over a six-night stand at **Bournemouth, England**’s Gaumont Theatre in 1963.

Tricia Eaton, East Coast consignment director at Iconic Auctions, said the jacket is one of the Beatles’ earliest stage-worn

garments ever to come to market and captures the band pivoting from jeans and leather jackets.

There’s also a copy of “Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band” signed by **McCartney**, **George Harrison** and **Ringo Starr**, and a sheet of handwritten “Blowin’ in the Wind” lyrics signed by **Bob Dylan**. The album’s minimum is

\$5,000 and the Dylan minimum is \$15,000.

Other treasures include band-signed copies of “Led Zeppelin II,” Queen’s self-titled debut, **Bob Marley**’s “Kaya,” **Dr Dre**’s “The Chronic,” The Clash’s “Give Em Enough Rope” and **Pink Floyd**’s “Animals.” There’s also a silk shirt worn by Elvis. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Morris leads CMT noms

Jay-Z, Foo Fighters in Rock Hall on first try

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): **Jay-Z**, Foo Fighters and the Go-Go's were elected Wednesday to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame their first time on the ballot, leading a class that also includes Tina Turner, Carole King and Todd Rundgren.

Each will be honored during an induction ceremony in Cleveland on Oct. 30 before what organizers hope is a full house of fans enjoying live music again.

The hall will also welcome LL Cool J, Billy Preston and Randy Rhoads with musical excellence awards, and honor Kraftwerk, Gil Scott Heron and Charley Patton as early influencers.

With Jay-Z, the hall inducts a 23-time Grammy winner and the first rap artist in the Songwriters Hall of Fame. His discography includes "Hard Knock Life," "99 Problems" and "Empire State of Mind." He has had 14 No. 1 albums to his credit.

After serving as Nirvana's drummer, Dave Grohl stepped to center stage with Foo Fighters, becoming one of the few modern rock bands comfortable in arenas. Their hard-hitting sound produced the hits "Best of You," "Everlong" and "Times Like These."

As an all-female band that played their own instruments, the Go-Go's were a relative rarity in the early 1980s. Born from Los Angeles' punk rock scene, they had a string of melodic hits that included "We Got the Beat," "Our Lips Are Sealed" and "Vacation."

Turner, recently celebrated in an HBO documentary, was one of rock's most stirring comeback stories. After escaping from an abusive relationship with husband and musical partner Ike Turner, she became a solo star in the 1980s behind the world-weary "What's Love Got to Do With It," and scored other hits with "Private Dancer" and "We Don't Need Another Hero."

King's life was celebrated in the Broadway musical "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical." Stepping forward following a career writing songs for others, her 1971 album "Tapestry" became one of music's best-selling albums of all time. Hits include "It's Too Late," "You've Got a Friend" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman."

Pioneer

A power pop pioneer, Rundgren is known for melodic hits like "Hello It's Me," "I Saw the Light" and "We Gotta Get You a Woman." With "Bang the Drum All Day," he's also responsible for the song most celebrated by hooky players everywhere.

Clarence Avant, a former manager, label owner and concert organizer, is being given the Ahmet Ertegun Award as a non-performer. His impact on the music industry was highlighted in the 2019 Netflix documentary, "The Black Godfather."

Grohl, King and Turner bring the number of artists inducted into the Rock Hall twice to 26. Prior to King and Turner, Stevie Nicks had been the only woman with that distinction.

Two new inductees - Belinda Carlisle of the Go-Go's and Pat Smear of Foo Fighters - were once members of the LA punk band the Germs before getting the jobs that led to later fame.

Before getting into the hall in their special categories, both LL Cool J and Kraftwerk had each been nominated six times as performers without being elected.

Five of the six inducted performers are still working artists. Only Turner is retired, and no doubt the hall will try recruiting Beyoncé - she should be in town anyway - to pay tribute onstage. Either way, the hall is hoping for one of the first big concerts since the live music business essentially shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We really see it as a true celebration of the reopening of music - not only in America but in the world," John Sykes, chairman of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The induction ceremony, to be held at the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, will simulcast on SiriusXM and air later on HBO.



Former tourmates **Miranda Lambert** and **Maren Morris** are the leading nominees for the 2021 CMT Music Awards, celebrating the best in country music videos.

CMT last Thursday announced the nominees for their June 9 fan-voted awards show, where Morris and Lambert both have two nominations in the top category of video of the year, which has 14 contenders.

They are also nominated for female video of the year and collaborative video of the year. Morris shares two nominations with her husband and fellow singer **Ryan Hurd**, a first-time CMT nominee, on their duet "Chasing After You."

Lambert shares two of her nominations with another former tourmate, rocker **Elle King**, on their rowdy drinking song "Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)." Lambert, Morris and King all toured together in 2019 as a part of Lambert's all-female lineup on the Pink Guitars and Roadside Bars tour.

Other leading nominees include this year's show hosts **Kane Brown** and **Kelsea Ballerini**, with three nominations each, including bids for video of the year. Also nominated for three awards are Little Big Town and **Mickey Guyton**.

One of the genre's top stars, **Morgan Wallen**, didn't pick up any nominations. The chart-topping singer was caught on camera using a racial slur earlier this year and as a result, CMT removed his videos from its programming.

"After removing Morgan Wallen from our platforms earlier this year, his videos were deemed ineligible for the 2021 CMT Music Awards," CMT said in a statement.

Though his videos were removed and he wasn't allowed to compete at last month's Academy of Country Music Awards, Wallen has still had major success on both the pop and country charts, even earning six nominations for the 2021 Billboard Music Awards, airing later this month.

In a normal year he would have been a shoo-in nominee for CMT's video of the year prize. The finalists for that category will be determined in two rounds with the top five nominees announced on June 1 and the top three nominees on June 8, the day before the show airs. Other nominees for video of the year include **Kenny Chesney**, **Sam Hunt**, **Keith Urban**, **Ingrid Andress** and **Carrie Underwood**, the most decorated winner in the history of the CMT Music Awards with 22 wins. She's nominated twice this year thanks to "Hallelujah," her duet with John Legend.



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Millicent Simmonds, (from left), Emily Blunt and Noah Jupe in a scene from 'A Quiet Place Part II.' 'A Quiet Place Part II' is part of the summer movies which will release in the US on May 28. (AP)

Television

'Underground Railroad,' achingly beautiful

Jenkins on his unflinching epic

LOS ANGELES, May 18, (AP): When Oscar-winning director Barry Jenkins was considering adapting Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the Underground Railroad into a limited series, he kept hearing the same thing: Impossible.

It would be emotionally and mentally draining, Jenkins knew. And he questioned the ethics of such a production: Do people really need to be reminded about the horrors of slavery?

Ultimately, Jenkins worked through the doubts. The result is "The Underground Railroad," an unflinching portrayal of Cora, an enslaved woman who escapes a Georgia plantation and its horrors only to be pursued by an unrelenting bounty hunter. Along the way she must confront the anger she feels for her mother, who left her at the plantation when she was 10.

The 10-hour limited series, which premiered last Thursday on Amazon, is at times unbearably painful to watch and at others achingly beautiful. Early reviews have declared the series a triumph and something only Jenkins could have pulled off.

It was "the most satisfying creative experience of my life," said Jenkins, who won an Oscar in 2017 for "Moonlight" and was nominated again the next year for "If Beale Street Could Talk."

It was also the biggest challenge he's ever faced.

"The story is so, so large and wide-ranging. Before doing this, I spoke to Steven Soderbergh and Cary Fukunaga, who did 'True Detective' and 'The Knick,' and they both said 'It's impossible. It's going to kill you because there's no way to properly prep that many hours of any story,'" he said in a recent interview. "It was going to be a test of my skills to do that."

It was also an irresistible opportunity to, as he puts it, "re-contextualize how we view my ancestors."

"When this trailer came out, someone said, 'Oh, I don't want to see another show about slaves. I want to see positive imagery.' And I'm like, 'Oh, that inherently says that any imagery depicting my ancestors is negative,'" Jenkins said. "No, we have to really relearn how to look at these people."

To him, enslaved people showed "one of the greatest acts of collective parenting the world has ever seen." "If everyone had taken up arms and decided they were going to rebel, everyone would have perished and there would have been all these children left behind," he said. "The choice was to protect these children out of faith that at some point this thing would end and these children would go on and carry the legacy."

During production, Jenkins said the most important thing to him was to protect himself, the cast and the crew from being "devoured by the barbarity."

To make sure of that, a counselor was on set at all times. And the cast says Jenkins went to great lengths to make sure that they knew they could say when they were too close to the line or simply needed a break.

Rejection

"I remember Barry saying lots of times, 'Everyone, it looks very real. Everything looks very real. So, when you get on set, just be aware that you are in a position where this could bring up stuff for you,'" said Ugandan actor Sheila Atim, who plays Cora's mother. And bringing up stuff it did. For everyone.

"The emotions that were brought up were all the emotions that the character dealt with, ranging from rejection, abandonment, a huge sense of loss, running from self and all of that," said Thuso Mbedu, a South African newcomer who plays Cora. "I had to be extra aware of who I am and where I

was personally at every step because those are very heavy states of being to carry and being someone who struggled with depression in 2016, I personally couldn't afford to allow myself to get into that space, especially because we're going to shoot for 10 months."

For Atim, "it did bring up a lot of anger" about "injustice and also the understanding that race-based oppression is still a thing and racism is still a thing in the world."

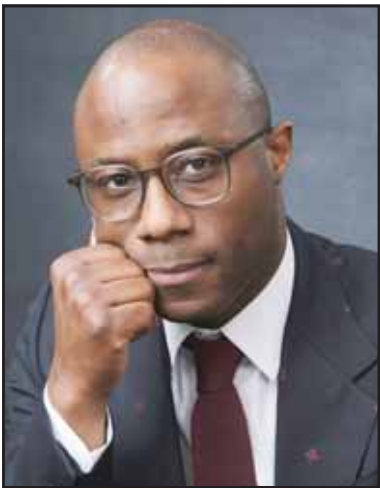
That's part of what drove Jenkins and the cast. They hope their work helps spark more conversations about race, inequality and injustice.

Australian actor Joel Edgerton, who plays the bounty hunter pursuing and tormenting Cora, said it's important to remember that "we're not that far away from what you're seeing in 'The Underground Railroad.'"

"We were able to go to towns and dress them up without too much ... and you go, 'OK, those buildings are still there where things took place, where environments, plantations still exist," he said. "Things have morphed and shifted ... but there's a lot of problems and there always sadly, will be. But I think we need to have conversations and art is a great way of sparking conversations."

The series should lead everyone to question their role in society and whether we could all be doing more, said William Jackson Harper ("The Good Place"), who plays a free-born man in "The Underground Railroad."

"I think that we all would like to think that we would go back to 1850-something and we would all be abolitionists," he said. "And that's not true. We wouldn't. There's a lot of things that are going on right now and a lot of us sitting on the sidelines and I include myself. There's ways in which I'm sitting on the sidelines of things that need to be changed, and I'm like, 'Someone should change that but oh well.'"



Filmmaker Barry Jenkins poses for a portrait at the 91st Academy Awards Nominees Luncheon in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Feb. 4, 2019. Jenkins' latest project, the 10-hour limited series 'The Underground Railroad,' premiered on April 13 on Amazon. (AP)



Grande



Masterson

Variety

NEW YORK: Ariana Grande is a newswed.

A representative for the singer confirmed that she recently married real estate agent **Dalton Gomez**.

Grande's rep told People that they tied the knot in a small and intimate wedding, where less than 20 people attended. It wasn't clear when the wedding took place.

"The room was so happy and full of love. The couple and both families couldn't be happier," the rep told People.

Grande, 27, and Gomez, 25, announced their engagement in December. They began dating in January 2020 and quarantined together during the pandemic.

Grande is currently on the pop charts with the hits "34+35," "Positions," "pov" and the "Save Your Tears" remix with The Weeknd. She will work as a coach on "The Voice" in the fall. (AP)



BEVERLY HILLS, Calif: Janet Jackson's ensembles she wore in the "Scream" music video opposite of her brother **Michael Jackson** are among the items up for bid in a three-day auction.

Julien's Auctions says her black circular bubble textured fabric long-sleeve shirt, black patent leather pants and black patent leather over-the-ankle boots sold for \$125,000 Saturday.

Jackson partnered with Julien's Auctions to sell more than 1,000 items from her career and personal treasures. The auction was held live in Beverly Hills, California, and shown on Julien's website.

A portion of the proceeds will go toward Compassion International, an organization that helps children escape from poverty.

Jackson's floor-length metallic silver coat with lambskin shearing lining, cuffs and collar, designed by **Helen Storey**, was bought for \$50,000. Her silver string bikini and a pair of matching pants worn underneath the coat by Jackson sold for \$25,600. (AP)



MEXICO CITY: The Mexican government said it will take legal measures to try to stop a planned May 18 auction of pre-Hispanic artifacts by the Sotheby's **New York** auction house.

The National Institute of Anthropology and History says some of the artifacts are part of Mexico's cultural heritage, and thus should not be sold.

The institute said it has appealed to Interpol to request legal and diplomatic assistance in the case. The institute did not specify which pieces it wanted returned to Mexico.



The female band The Go-Go's, (from left), Kathy Valentine, Charlotte Caffey, Belinda Carlisle, Gina Schock and Jane Wiedlin pose at their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles on Aug. 11, 2011. The band made this year's list of honorees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The ceremony, to be held at the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, will be simulcast on SiriusXM and air later on HBO. (AP)

But the Sotheby's catalogue for that date includes a serpentine stone carving of an Olmec head, a Maya stone carving which appears to depict a bat or jaguar and a serpent, and a clay pitcher in the form of a waterfowl.

Pre-sale price estimates for the pieces range up to \$70,000. Mexico has had limited success in recent years in its attempts to stop such auctions. (AP)



LOS ANGELES: Prosecutors on Tuesday are set to begin presenting evidence to a judge as they attempt to show "That '70s Show" actor **Danny Masterson** should stand trial in the rapes of three women.

Masterson, 45, who has pleaded not guilty and has been free on bail since his June arrest, is charged in a Los Angeles County court with three counts of rape by force or fear.

At his preliminary hearing scheduled to begin Tuesday morning, prosecutors say they will present evidence that he raped a 23-year-old woman sometime in 2001, a 28-year-old woman in April of 2003, and a 23-year-old woman between October and December of 2003. Prosecutors have said all of the attacks happened in his home.

He could face up to 45 years in prison if convicted. Such hearings generally provide a limited glimpse at the broader evidence that would be presented should the case be ordered to trial.

At a hearing last year, the actor's attorney Thomas Mesereau, who also represented Bill Cosby and Michael Jackson in their sexual misconduct cases, said Masterson "is absolutely not guilty and we're going to prove it." (AP)

SPORTS

Ohtani hits MLB-best 13th HR, Trout hurt, Angels top Indians



Arizona Diamondbacks' Josh Rojas, left, dives back to first as Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman Albert Pujols takes a late throw during the first inning of a baseball game, on May 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Pujols delivers RBI in debut, Dodgers topple Diamondbacks 3-1

ANAHEIM, Calif., May 18, (AP): Shohei Ohtani hit his major league-leading 13th home run and the Los Angeles Angels defeated the slumping Cleveland Indians 7-4 after star outfielder Mike Trout was injured early.

Trout strained his right calf in the first inning. The three-time AL MVP was limping after running to third on an inning-ending popout.

Angels manager Joe Maddon said Trout was undergoing further evaluation, including an MRI, and the team would know more on Tuesday.

Ohtani connected off Sam Hentges (1-1) during a five-run second to give the Angels a 6-1 lead. The Japanese superstar, who hit the go-ahead homer with two outs in the ninth inning Sunday at Boston, has gone deep in consecutive games twice this season.

Tony Watson (2-1), the second of seven Los Angeles pitchers, earned the win and Raisel Iglesias picked up his seventh save.

Cesar Hernandez, Franmil Reyes and Harold Ramirez homered for Cleveland, which has dropped four straight.

Dodgers 3, Diamondbacks 1

In Los Angeles, Albert Pujols delivered an RBI single in his Dodgers debut, and Walker Buehler pitched seven scoreless innings of one-hit ball as Los Angeles topped Arizona.

Pujols went 1 for 4 while playing first base and batting cleanup for the defending World Series champions, who added the 10-time All-Star on Monday after the Los Angeles Angels cut him earlier this month.

After getting loud cheers from the Dodger Stadium crowd and flying out to left in his first at-bat, the 41-year-old Pujols singled off Madison Bumgarner (4-3) to drive in Mookie Betts in the third inning.

Will Smith homered and doubled for the Dodgers, who have won five of six in their nine-game homestand.

Buehler (2-0) struck out seven and walked four.

Cubs 7, Nationals 3

In Chicago, Willson Contreras, Jason Heyward and Javier Báez homered



Los Angeles Angels starting pitcher Patrick Sandoval (43) throws during the first inning of a baseball game against the Cleveland Indians, on May 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

off Jon Lester in his return to Chicago, and the Cubs beat Washington.

Lester and Kyle Schwarber, two key members of Chicago's 2016 World Series championship team, heard loud cheers all night long in their first game at Wrigley Field against their former team. Contreras put his arm around Schwarber's shoulders before he batted in the first inning, and the catcher gave Lester a brief hug when the pitcher was at the plate in the third.

Schwarber celebrated with a two-run homer into the bleachers in the fourth. Per the custom at Chicago's iconic ballpark - even for old friends like the affable Schwarber - the ball was thrown back onto the field.

In between the standing ovations and cheering for Lester and Schwarber, the Cubs were mostly all business during their third win in four games.

Rangers 5, Yankees 2

In Arlington, Texas, Adolis Garcia and Willie Calhoun homered as the Texas Rangers ended a six-game losing streak, beating New York and denying Gerrit Cole's bid to become the American League's first six-game winner.

Cole (5-2) allowed season highs of five runs and seven hits, getting pulled after Garcia led off the sixth with a sharp single on the right-hander's 89th pitch. Cole struck out seven, but also issued two free passes after walking none over his previous five starts.

Garcia hit his 11th home run and later stole home as part of a double steal.

Jordan Lyles (2-3) struck out six in six innings for his first win in eight starts since winning his season debut

April 4. Ian Kennedy worked a perfect ninth for his AL-leading 11th save in 11 chances.

Luke Voit, who led the majors in home runs during the pandemic-shortened season, hit his first of the year after recently coming off the injured list.

Mets 3, Braves 1

In Atlanta, pinch-hitter James McCann broke a scoreless tie with a seventh-inning double, Tomás Nido had three hits and the New York Mets overcame more injuries to beat Atlanta.

With the bases loaded in the seventh, Mets right fielder Kevin Pillar was hit square in the nose by a 95 mph pitch

BASEBALL

from Jacob Webb, forcing in a run. Pillar was knocked to the ground, and blood poured from his nose when he lifted his head.

After the game, Mets manager Luis Rojas said Pillar was at the hospital getting a CT scan. Pillar then provided an encouraging update on his Twitter account. New York starter Taijuan Walker allowed one hit in three scoreless innings before leaving with left side tightness. Sean Reid-Foley (1-0) did not allow a hit in three shutout innings.

Edwin Díaz walked Freddie Freeman with one out in the ninth before closing out the game for his sixth save.

White Sox 16, Twins 4

In Minneapolis, Nick Madrigal had three hits, including his first major



New York Mets' Kevin Pillar is hit in the face with a pitch from Atlanta Braves pitcher Jacob Webb in the seventh inning of a baseball game, on May 17, in Atlanta. (AP)

league homer, and Danny Mendick launched his first career grand slam as the Chicago White Sox routed struggling Minnesota.

Seven players had multiple hits for Chicago, which posted season highs in hits (18) and runs. The White Sox have won nine of their past 11 games, including four straight wins against Minnesota.

Dallas Keuchel (3-1) was the beneficiary, pitching seven innings and allowing three runs on seven hits.

J.A. Happ (2-2) was roughed up again by the White Sox. Happ permitted six runs in 3 2/3 innings and has given up 15 runs to Chicago in his past two starts. The Twins have lost seven of eight.

Giants 6, Reds 3

In Cincinnati, Logan Webb pitched six shutout innings and San Francisco backed him with three home runs to beat Cincinnati.

Wilmer Flores, Mike Yastrzemski and Mauricio Dubón connected for the NL West-leading Giants.

Webb (3-3) gave up six hits, struck out four and walked a batter. Sonny Gray (0-3) took the loss.

Padres 7, Rockies 0

In San Diego, Yu Darvish struck out 10 in seven brilliant innings and also doubled and scored, and Manny Machado hit a two-run homer as San Diego beat Colorado for its fourth straight win.

The Padres are 6-1 since last Tuesday, when star shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. tested positive for the coronavirus before a game at Colorado and right fielder Wil Myers and first baseman Eric Hosmer were pulled from the game. A positive test was returned for Myers while Hosmer was put in the contact tracing protocol.

Tigers 4, Mariners 1

In Seattle, Eric Haase hit two home runs, Casey Mize took a two-hit shutout into the eighth inning and Detroit downed Seattle.

The Tigers, who began the day 12 games under .500, have won six of eight. Seattle's three-game winning streak ended.

Mize (3-3) allowed just three hits and permitted only two runners past first base in a career-high 7 2/3 innings. He struck out seven. Michael Fulmer earned the save, his third.

Kuwait's Hussain Al-Musallam sole candidate to 'claim' FINA top seat

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's Hussain Al-Musallam looks set to become the new chief of swimming's world governing body FINA, after his only challenger pulled out of upcoming elections for the top spot.

The withdrawal of Italy's Paolo Barelli, who declared his support for Al-Musallam, the Asian



Hussain Al-Musallam

SWIMMING

Swimming Federation's candidate, means the Kuwaiti sexagenarian is almost certain to claim the FINA top seat, he told KUNA via telephone on Monday.

Ahead of FINA's elections next month, Al-Musallam said he was proud to become the first Arab to head swimming's governing body, attributing his success to the over-

whelming support at home.

The Kuwaiti government has thrown its weight behind Al-Musallam's campaign, seeing him as the frontrunner to succeed Julio Maglione.

Substantial future reforms

US holding \$2.93 mln, still seeking reforms from WADA

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): The US government is holding on to nearly \$3 million earmarked for the World Anti-Doping Agency, with plans to pay only if it sees "real progress and a path for more substantial future reforms" out of the global drug-fighting organization.

The White House drug-control office delivered an updated report to Congress on Monday in advance of WADA meetings scheduled for later this week.

The report comes some 11 months after the US first threatened to withhold its 2021 payment to WADA, which normally would have been delivered in the first quarter of the

year. The \$2.93 million accounts for about 7.3% of WADA's \$40 million budget.

The US has complained that it isn't well represented in the agency — though it has picked up spots on some advisory panels, it has no seat on the 14-member executive committee that shapes most policies — and has been critical of WADA's handling of the Russian doping scandal that upended international sports since before the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Last summer, Congress received its first report from the White House drug-control office, which suggested the US did not get its money's worth from what it gives to WADA each year. WADA responded by suggesting it might sanction countries that do not pay dues. Congress then gave the drug-control office authority to withhold payment to WADA and asked for an updated report on WADA's reforms.

It delivered a 32-page report that noted progress in WADA's long-running attempts to provide more transparency and ethical accountability.

"There is more work to be done in this area and, in collaboration with all of our diverse stakeholders, including the US Government, we will continue to make meaningful improvements," WADA President Witold Bałdka said in a response that highlighted the points of agreement between his agency and the US.

The report also included 10 proposals for WADA to further improve its operation, the most extreme of which would eliminate members of the IOC and other related sports entities from the executive committee.

The report noted that when WADA was formed in 1999, it wasn't unthinkable to hand the IOC half the decision-making seats because it was funding half the operation. But times have changed, the report said, and more independent voices are needed in the highest reaches of WADA's policy-making offices.

"It is important to consider ... whether it best serves sport for WADA to have embedded within its critically important international doping regulator a de facto voting majority by the very industry being regulated," the report said.

The government also asked for more truly independent athletes in important roles — WADA is working on changes, but some athletes are still appointed to committees by the IOC or their own countries' national Olympic organizations — and for WADA to push for reforms at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), which has the ultimate say on most doping cases.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Monday.

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	5	NY Yankees	2	
Chic White Sox	16	Minnesota	4	
Detroit	4	Seattle	1	
LA Angels	7	Cleveland	4	
San Francisco	6	Cincinnati	3	
NY Mets	3	Atlanta	1	
Chicago Cubs	7	Washington	3	
San Diego	7	Colorado	0	
LA Dodgers	3	Arizona	1	

American League

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	25	17	.595	
Toronto	22	17	.564	1-1/2
Tampa Bay	23	19	.548	2
New York	22	19	.537	2-1/2
Baltimore	17	23	.425	7

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	25	15	.625	
Cleveland	21	18	.538	3-1/2
Kansas City	18	22	.450	7
Detroit	15	26	.366	10-1/2
Minnesota	13	26	.333	11-1/2

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	25	17	.595	
Houston	24	17	.585	-1/2
Seattle	21	21	.500	4
Los Angeles	18	22	.450	6
Texas	19	24	.442	6-1/2

National League

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	19	16	.543	
Philadelphia	21	20	.512	1
Atlanta	19	22	.463	3
Miami	18	22	.450	3-1/2
Washington	16	21	.432	4

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
St. Louis	23	18	.561	
Milwaukee	21	20	.512	2
Chicago	20	20	.500	2-1/2
Cincinnati	19	20	.487	3
Pittsburgh	17	23	.425	5-1/2

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	25	16	.610	
San Diego	25	17	.595	-1/2
Los Angeles	23	18	.561	2
Arizona	18	24	.429	7-1/2
Colorado	15	27	.357	10-1/2

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Britain yet to decide on Pfizer offer to vaccinate Olympians

The British government is still deciding whether to accept an offer from Pfizer to fast-track Olympic and Paralympic athletes for coronavirus vaccines. Jabs are only being given to Britons aged 38 or older - though this will be extended to those over 35 from next week - with younger people only getting inoculated if they have an underlying health condition. "It's sensitive because the philosophy has been based on age and that's been proved to be the right thing," British Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston

said. "The biggest indicator is age is the biggest factor and of course Pfizer have offered for the Olympics and we've asked them about that." Pfizer, which developed a vaccine with BioNTech, said earlier this month that it would donate doses to inoculate athletes and officials preparing for the Tokyo games with the rescheduled Olympics due to open on July 23. While the Olympics begin in less than 10 weeks, Britain has a policy of delaying the second dose by up to 12

weeks to free up vaccines for more people. Britain announced Sunday that more than 20 million people have now received both doses. The two shots of the Pfizer vaccines were intended to be given three to four weeks apart. "The government's vaccine rollout has been excellent and, coupled with the IOC's donation of the Pfizer vaccine for athletes, means we are hopeful of getting all athletes vaccinated before they travel to Tokyo," British Olympic Association chairman Hugh Robertson said. (AP)



In this file photo, March 18, 2021, a pharmacy technician draws a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine ready for use at the Wheatfield surgery in Luton, England. (AP)

Sports Plus



Move likely to ratchet up pressure on the IOC, athletes, sponsors and sports federations

Full-blown boycott pushed for Beijing Olympics



In this Feb. 6, 2019 file photo, people walk past a display introducing winter sporting events for the upcoming 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics at a temple fair at Longtan Park in Beijing. Inset: In this Feb. 3, 2021 file photo, activists wearing masks of IOC President Thomas Bach (left), and Chinese President Xi Jinping pose in front of the Olympic Rings during a street protest against the holding of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, in Dharamshala, India. (AP)

By Stephen Wade

Groups alleging human-rights abuses against minorities in China are calling for a full-blown boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, a move likely to ratchet up pressure on the International Olympic Committee, athletes, sponsors and sports federations. A coalition representing Uyghurs, Tibetans, residents of Hong Kong and others issued a statement Monday calling for the boycott, eschewing lesser measures that had been floated like "diplomatic boycotts" and further negotiations with the IOC or China. "The time for talking with the IOC is over," Lhadon Tethong of the Tibet Action Institute said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press. "This cannot be games

as usual or business as usual; not for the IOC and not for the international community." The Beijing Games are set to open on Feb. 4, 2022, just six months after the postponed Summer Olympics in Tokyo are to end. Rights groups have met several times in the last year with the IOC, asking that the games be removed from China. A key member in those talks was Zumretay Arkin of the World Uyghur Congress. Tethong, herself, was detained and deported from China in 2007 - a year before the Beijing Summer Olympics - for leading a campaign for Tibet. "The situation where we are now is demonstrably worse than it was then," Tethong said, pointing out that the IOC said the 2008 Olympics would improve human rights in

China. "If the games go ahead, then Beijing gets the international seal of approval for what they are doing." The push for a boycott comes a day before a joint hearing in the U.S. Congress focusing on the Beijing Olympics and China's human-rights record, and just days after the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee said boycotts are ineffective and only hurt athletes. "People have worked to engage with the IOC in good faith to have them understand the issues directly from the mouths of those most impacted - the Uyghurs at the top of that list and the Tibetans and others," Tethong said. "It's clear the IOC is completely uninterested in what the real impacts on the ground for people are." The IOC has repeatedly said it must

be "neutral" and stay out of politics. The Switzerland-based body is essentially a sports business, deriving about 75% of its income from selling broadcast rights, and 18% more from sponsors. It also has observer status at the United Nations. "We are not a super-world government," IOC President Thomas Bach said recently. China's foreign ministry has criticized "the politicization of sports" and has said any boycott is "doomed to failure." China has denied accusations of genocide against the Uyghur people. A recent U.S. State Department report stated explicitly that "genocide and crimes against humanity" have taken place in the past year against Muslim Uyghurs and other minorities in the western region of Xinjiang.

Tethong said she knows some athletes may be opposed. But she said others, who gained traction from Black Lives Matter movement, may become allies. She acknowledged this as a "gloves-off" moment. "There are obviously a lot of people who are concerned about the athletes and their lifelong work," Tethong said. "But in the end it's the IOC that has put them in this position and should be held accountable." American skier Mikaela Shiffrin, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, spelled out the dilemma for athletes in a recent interview on CNN. "You certainly don't want to be put in the position of having to choose between human rights like morality versus being able to do your job," she said. Tethong suggested coalition members might lobby the IOC's top 15 sponsors, American network NBC, which generates about 40% of all IOC revenue, sports federations, civil society groups "and anyone that will listen." Activists have already singled out IOC sponsor Airbnb for attention. "First is the moral question," Tethong said. "Is it OK to host an international goodwill sporting event such as the Olympic Games while the host nation is committing genocide just beyond the stands?" In meetings with the IOC, activists say they have asked to see documents in which China has given "assurances" about human rights conditions. Activists say the IOC has not produced the documents. The IOC included human rights requirements several years ago in the host city contract for the 2024 Paris Olympics, but it did not include those guidelines - the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights - for Beijing. Paris is the first Olympics to contain the standards, long pushed for by human rights groups. Last week, human rights groups and Western nations led by the United States, Britain and Germany accused China of massive crimes against the Uyghur minority and demanded unimpeded access for U.N. experts. At the meeting, Britain's U.N. Ambassador, Barbara Woodward, called the situation in Xinjiang "one of the worst human rights crises of our time." "The evidence points to a program of repression of specific ethnic groups," Woodward said. "Expressions of religion have been criminalized and Uyghur language and culture are discriminated against systematically and at scale." (AP)

Japanese winger ending his playing career at its zenith to pursue a career as a doctor

Medical career beckons for Japan rugby star Kenki Fukuoka

By Steve McMorran

The final of Japan's Top League club competition on Sunday will mark the end of one of world rugby's most distinguished and influential recent playing careers. Japan winger Kenki Fukuoka will retire after the final between his Panasonic Wild Knights and Suntory Sungoliath, ending his playing career at its zenith to pursue a career as a doctor. Fukuoka retired from international 15-a-side rugby after the 2019 World Cup in Japan and hoped to end his career by representing his country in sevens at the Tokyo Olympics. But the postponement of the Tokyo Games last year made that impossible. In March, he announced he'd passed the entrance exam for the Junendo University School of Medicine in Tokyo. He began his studies in April, forcing his withdrawal from the Japan rugby sevens program. Instead, Fukuoka decided to play to the end of the Top League season before calling time on his playing career aged only 28. As if to demonstrate what Japan and world rugby is losing, Fukuoka scored three tries in the Wild Knights' 48-21 semifinal win over Toyota Verblitz last weekend. Fukuoka is a superstar of Japanese rugby, one of the main catalysts for its recent growth in profile



In this Oct. 13, 2019 file photo, Japan's Kenki Fukuoka scores a try during the Rugby World Cup Pool A game at International Stadium against Scotland in Yokohama, Japan. (AP)

and popularity. The Top League now attracts some of the world's best players, not any longer at the end of their careers, and Fukuoka bears favorable comparison with any of those global stars. He is by nature quiet, thoughtful and self-effacing. But his influence on Japanese rugby hardly can be overstated. He scored four tries in Japan's historic drive to the World Cup quarter-finals in 2019, including two against Scotland and another against

world heavyweight Ireland. Fukuoka would have been a star in any national team with his blazing pace and balanced running. He owns a greater place in the hearts of rugby fans for his humility and perpetual smile. Making the decision to end his rugby career at a relatively young age and to give up his goal of playing at a home Olympics would have been a difficult one for any player. Fukuoka took the decision with quiet resignation.

"Life is a journey," Fukuoka told The Associated Press. "I have had setbacks and changes from the dreams and goals I first set myself. "Still, I think I am the person I am today from making choices that I do not regret with continuous effort to give it all out into the things in front of me. I have no regrets about my own choices. I am very proud of it." Medicine is a natural choice for Fukuoka. His father is a dentist and his grandfather is a doctor. "I always had the idea that I wanted to become a doctor," he said. "My grandfather was a doctor and that gave me the insight to become a doctor. "I haven't decided on any area yet but ... my strength is my experiences of playing sports at world level. I want to take a path where I can use my experiences and I want to give back to sports." Fukuoka regards the World Cup in Japan as the highlight of his career and the match against Scotland in which Japan qualified for the quarterfinals as the individual high point. "We had built up to that moment for a long time so there was a lot of pressure," Fukuoka said. "The whole world was watching." He said coming around the time of a deadly typhoon, Hagbis, "added to the importance around the match."

"It was a chance to give the country a big lift," he said. "We were grateful to play through the support from many people who were involved. Many things came together to make this a special match for Japanese rugby." Fukuoka emphasizes the vital contribution to the Japan national team of players such as Michael Leitch, who captained the Brave Blossoms to the 2015 and 2019 World Cups. He sees the team continuing to improve because many of its current players are only at the mid-point of their careers and likely will go on to the next World Cup. "Belief is hugely important and being able to win games regularly helps with that," he said. "It makes you expect more of yourself each time you play, both individually and as a team. "I was injured before the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and was not in 100 percent condition. But I could give everything I had, just like the rest of the team." Fukuoka expects Japan rugby to continue to develop. "The players are raising their levels and the depth is growing because the bar is being raised and we know we can compete against the top countries now," he said. "The strong Top League has helped with that." (AP)

‘If the games go ahead, then Beijing gets the international seal of approval for what they are doing.’

‘I have no regrets about my own choices. I am very proud of it.’



In this Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2016 file photo, FC Barcelona's goalkeeper Marc Andre ter Stegen exercises during a training session at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, Spain. Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen ruled himself out of Euro 2020 on Monday, May 17, 2021 in favor of medical treatment on his knee. (AP)

Sports

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Santa Clara players pose for photos following their shootout victory over Florida State at the NCAA College Cup championship soccer match in Cary, N.C. Santa Clara won 4-1 in shootout. (AP)

Bruins edge Capitals to even series

Staal, Niederreiter lift Hurricanes past Predators

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): All Brad Marchand had to show for the first 60 minutes of Monday night's game was two penalties for post-whistle antics.

He needed less than a minute to make up for it.

Marchand scored 39 seconds into overtime and the Boston Bruins rallied to beat the Washington Capitals 4-3 Monday night, tying the East Division first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

After a hard-fought victory in which Marchand played a significant role, the Bruins will almost certainly take the good and the bad of their leading scorer who likes to get under the skin of his opponents.

Marchand ripping a one-timer past Craig Anderson to send the series back to Boston tied will be remembered far more than him jabbing Capitals de-

ICE HOCKEY

fenseman Brenden Dillon below the belt at the end of a scrum in the first period or slashing Anthony Mantha when they got into it in the second. But those won't be forgotten, and could have derailed him.

The Bruins are at their best when Marchand is toeing that line and also producing. So it was captain Patrice Bergeron's job to grab him, reel him in and get Marchand re-focused on the task at hand. It worked, and Boston doesn't want Marchand any other way.

This series has helped the NHL playoffs get off to a roaring start with five consecutive one-goal games, including four reaching overtime. The Capitals and Bruins are certainly no strangers to it. They've now played nine consecutive one-goal games in the postseason dating to their 2012 series.

Game 3 is Wednesday night in Boston.

The Bruins were less than three minutes away from pure desperation mode in the series.

Two penalties early in the third period took Boston out of rhythm as Garnet Hathaway scored his second of the game to give Washington the lead with 12:56 left. Anderson — who made 38 consecutive saves after allowing two goals on the first five Bruins shots — was a rock until Taylor Hall whacked a loose puck past him with 2:49 left in regulation.

Hurricanes 5, Predators 2

In Raleigh, N.C., Jordan Staal scored twice and Nino Niederreiter beat Juse Saros for the go-ahead goal early in the third period, helping the Carolina Hurricanes to a 5-2 win over the Nashville Predators in the first game of the teams' first-round playoff series.

Niederreiter hammered the puck past Saros from between the circles at 2:26 of the third, finishing a perfect pass from Martin Necas only moments after Saros had made a terrific stop on Vincent Trocheck.

That broke a 2-all tie as the Hurricanes made their move with a strong final 20 minutes — not to mention a far more physical stretch after the first.

Staal illustrated that with his second goal midway through the second, created partly by his own pressure on the forecheck. After Saros stopped a shot near the post from Warren Foegele, Carolina's captain gathered the loose puck and pushed it past Saros for a 4-2 lead at the eight-minute mark.

Andrei Svechnikov added the clinching empty-netter on a breakaway



Carolina Hurricanes left wing Jordan Martinook (48) pursues as Nashville Predators defenseman Ryan Ellis (4) controls the puck during the second period in Game 1 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup first-round playoff series in Raleigh, NC. (AP)

Hodgson, 73, stepping down as Palace manager

LONDON, May 18, (AP): Roy Hodgson, the Premier League's oldest manager at 73, is leaving his role at Crystal Palace at the end of the season after four years at the club.

Hodgson did not disclose what the next step in his career would be, but said Tuesday he is ready to step being a "full-time manager."

"After more than 45 years of coaching, I have decided that the time is right for me to step away from the rigors of top-flight Premier League football," the much-traveled Hodgson said.

The former England coach's last game in charge of Palace, which is safe from relegation, will be against Liverpool — one of his many old clubs — at Anfield on Sunday.

"I have had so much support from my wife and family throughout my career and I have been contemplating this decision for some time," Hodgson said, "and now I believe the time is right to consider them and to see what the future holds for me."

at 18:13 for Carolina. Teuvo Teravainen also scored a first-period goal. Alex Nedeljkovic got the start in net and finished with 22 saves.

Carolina finished with a 38-24 advantage in shots on goal in a game with plenty of chippy moments and chesty exchanges between the teams.

Filip Forsberg and Erik Haula scored for the Predators. Saros finished with 33 saves.

The Hurricanes host Game 2 on Wednesday night before the best-of-seven series shifts west to Nashville in neighboring Tennessee.

PNC Arena was rowdy again after the state loosened COVID-19 protocols regarding public gatherings and physical distancing earlier this week.

The Hurricanes welcomed a loud, towel-waving crowd of about 12,000 for this one, roughly two-thirds full. The team had roughly 5,000 fans attending home games to close the regular season.

Gov. Roy Cooper — a notable Hurricanes fan who announced the protocol changes — sounded the pregame storm-warning siren for the Hurricanes to take the ice.

Duke football coach David Cutcliffe and North Carolina State women's basketball coach Wes Moore sounded the siren for the second and third periods.

Hodgson joined Palace, the team he supported as a child, in September 2017 for his first job since ending his spell as England coach. The south London club was in last place in the league at the time after losing all four of its opening games that season under Frank de Boer, but Hodgson managed to keep Palace in England's lucrative top division and again in the following three seasons.

"His record with us simply cannot be overstated," Palace chairman Steve Parish said. "He is the only Palace manager to secure four years in the Premier League and he has helped give us stability in the most turbulent of times."

"We will be forever grateful for his immense contribution."

Hodgson is one of the world's most respected coaches, having worked at clubs in Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark and Norway along with Liverpool, Blackburn, Fulham and West Bromwich Albion in the Premier League.

He has also coached the national teams of Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and Finland.



St. Louis Blues left wing Sammy Blais, front, knocks over Colorado Avalanche center Nathan MacKinnon in the first period of Game 1 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup first-round playoff series. (AP)

Avalanche 4, Blues 1

In Denver, Nathan MacKinnon scored the tiebreaking goal 30 seconds into the third period and wrapped it up with an empty-netter, Philipp Grubauer stopped 22 shots and the Colorado Avalanche beat the St. Louis Blues 4-1 in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

Gabriel Landeskog also added a third-period goal by tipping in a blue-

line blast from MacKinnon. Cale Makar got things started for the Presidents' Trophy-winning Avalanche with a power-play goal in the first period.

Game 2 is Wednesday.

Jordan Kyrro scored his first post-season goal for a Blues team missing leading scorer David Perron, who's out due to the NHL's virus protocols.

Colorado kept Jordan Binnington busy through the first two periods, outshooting the Blues by a 32-16 margin. They finally were able to solve him in the third with MacKinnon leading the way.

Binnington finished with 46 saves. MacKinnon showed no signs of rust after missing four of the last five games with a lower-body injury. His three-point night gives the speedy forward 22 goals and 35 assists in 41 career playoff games.

His 1.39 points-per-game average is the fourth-highest in Stanley Cup playoff history (minimum 25 games). He trails only Wayne Gretzky (1.84), Mario Lemieux (1.61) and Barty Pederson (1.53).

Grubauer was sensational all game. He's coming off a regular season in which he won a career-best 30 games.

Kyrro tied the game at 1-apiece with 3:29 remaining in the second period. He beat Grubauer on a one-timer to the stick side.

Bologna rescue draw at Verona

Bournemouth, Swansea hold leads in Champ'ship playoffs

LONDON, May 18, (AP): Bournemouth and Swansea will take 1-0 leads into the second legs of the Championship playoffs as they seek a return to the Premier League.

Bournemouth beat Brentford at home thanks to a goal by Dutch winger Arnaut Danjuma in a match played in front of a crowd of around 2,000 fans.

Hours later, Swansea won away in their first leg against Barnsley, with Andre Ayew scoring the only goal.

The second legs are on Saturday. The playoff final will be staged at Wembley Stadium on May 29.

SOCCER

Bournemouth are looking to clinch an immediate return to the top flight. Swansea were relegated from the Premier League in 2018.

Norwich and Watford secured automatic promotion from the Championship.

□ □ □

Rodrigo Palacio equalized in the 82nd minute to give Bologna a 2-2 draw at Verona in a game between two midtable teams in Serie A.

Palacio met a cross at the far post with an outstretched leg to rescue a point with his fifth goal of the season.

Verona had taken the lead in just the second minute when the ball fell to Davide Faraoni in the box after a corner and he slotted home with his first touch. Lorenzo De Silvestri made it 1-1 in the 32nd by turning a low cross in from close range before Nikola Kalinic restored Verona's lead in the 53rd. Kalinic met a cross from the left with a deft volleyed flick from a tight angle at the near post for his 40th career Serie A goal.

Neither team had much to play for with Verona in 10th place, three points ahead of 11th-place Bologna ahead of this weekend's final round.

□ □ □

Five more footballers at River Plate have tested positive for COVID-19, lifting the powerful Argentine club's total to 20 cases within the squad.

The impact is so high that River Plate have none of their four eligible goalkeepers fit for Wednesday's Copa Libertadores match against Colombia's Santa Fé.

River Plate issued a statement saying Lucas Beltrán, Flabian Londoño Bedoya, Gonzalo Montiel, Leonardo Ponzio and Alex Vigo were the latest to test positive for the virus.

The other 15 cases were revealed on Saturday ahead of the superclasico against Boca Juniors in the quarter-finals of the Argentinian league cup. Boca won on penalties after a 1-1 draw in regulation time.

CONMEBOL, which governs South American soccer, allows clubs to have squads of up to 50 players. River Plate now have 32 available, including several youth team players.

Argentinian media reported the club will ask CONMEBOL to postpone the match.

River Plate are second in the Copa Libertadores Group D with six points from four matches, two behind leaders Fluminense of Brazil. Colombian clubs Junior de Barranquilla are on three points and Santa Fé are on two.

□ □ □

If Harry Kane does want to leave Tottenham, he hasn't told his manager.

Sky Sports, one of the Premier League's major rights holders, reported that Kane has asked to be sold after becoming unhappy with the lack of progress at the club.

That's news to interim Tottenham manager Ryan Mason.

Asked whether the England captain has asked to leave, Mason said on Tuesday: "No, not that I'm aware of."

"All of my conversations with Harry have been about the game," added Mason, speaking ahead of Tottenham's league match against Aston Villa. "All these conversations, I am not so sure. I don't know."



Verona's Mattia Zaccagni (below), and Bologna's Takehiro Tomiyasu battle for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Hellas Verona and Bologna, in Verona, Italy. (AP)