



Coast Guard rescues six individuals from sinking boat

TDT | Manama

Six people were rescued from deep water after their boat sustained damage and was about to sink, the Ministry of Interior reported last night.

The ministry said that Coast Guard patrols managed to save the six individuals following an accident that led to damage on their boat, which resulted in seawater seeping into the vessel. The incident was said to have taken place in the marine area near the Dry Dock. The Coast Guard reported they received a distress call from a boat with six people on board. Patrols were able to respond immediately and pull the individuals out of their vessel. They were brought back to shore while their boat was towed.

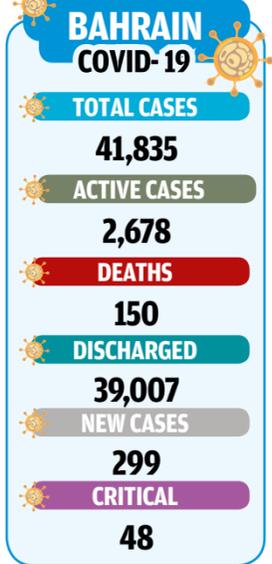
Following the incident, the Coast Guard called on all seafarers to adhere to all regulations and to operate their automatic identification devices. It added that it is available around the clock for any assistance on 17-700000 or through the hotline 994.

Kuwait PM assures cabinet of Emir's health

Reuters | Cairo

Kuwait's prime minister assured the cabinet yesterday of the 91-year-old Emir's health, which he said had remarkably improved, Kuwait's Council of Ministers said in a tweet.

Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah is in the US completing medical treatment following surgery for an unspecified condition in Kuwait.



210 fils (includes VAT)



Virus warning

WHO chief cautions there may never be a 'silver bullet' for COVID-19; urges to maintain 'basics of public health'



A representative image showing a man walking past a poster advertising coronavirus precautionary measures

AFP | Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday it had completed the groundwork in China to probe the origins of the new coronavirus—as it warned there might never be a "silver bullet" for COVID-19.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged governments and citizens to focus on known basic steps to suppress the pandemic, such as testing, contact tracing, maintaining physical distance, and wearing a mask.

"We all hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection," Tedros told a virtual press conference.

"However, there's no silver bullet at the moment—and there might never be.

"The basics of public health" are most effective for now, Tedros added, saying that wearing a mask in particular was sending a "powerful message to those around you that

we are all in this together".

Infections are surging in some countries around the world, but Tedros insisted that, however bad the situation was, past examples such as South Korea showed it could be turned around.

"When leaders step up and work intensely with their populations, this disease can be brought under control," he said.

China mission

The coronavirus has killed over 690,000 people and infected at least 18.3 million since the outbreak emerged in Wuhan in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

The WHO began pressing China in early May to invite in its experts to help investigate the animal origins of COVID-19.

The UN health agency sent an epidemiologist and an animal health specialist to Beijing on July 10 to lay the groundwork for a probe aimed at identifying how the virus entered the human species.

Their scoping mission is now complete, said Tedros.

"The WHO advance team that travelled to China has now concluded their mission," he said. Tedros said WHO and Chinese experts had agreed the terms of reference and a programme of work for a WHO-led international team of scientists and researchers from around the world.

"Epidemiological studies will begin in Wuhan to identify the potential source of infection of the early cases," he said.

Working backwards

Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, possibly from a market in the city of Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat.

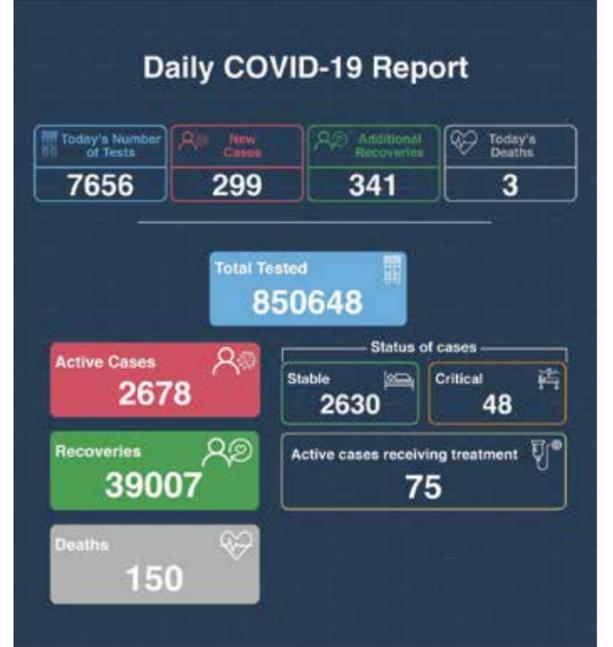
WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan paid tribute to the work already done by Chinese experts but stressed that the search for the disease's origin would require much deeper study. "There are gaps in the epidemiologic landscape, and what is required is going to be a much more extensive, retrospective epidemiologic study to look at those first cases and clusters in Wuhan and to fully understand the links between those cases," he said.

From there, "we can then determine at what point, in Wuhan or elsewhere, the animal-species barrier was breached".

Ryan said that without detailed investigations, the search would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

"The real trick is to go to the human clusters that occurred first and then to work your way back, systematically looking for that first signal" where the virus jumped species, the Irish epidemiologist said.

Three COVID-19 deaths; total active cases decline continues



Health Ministry reports 341 additional recoveries from COVID-19 yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's total discharged to more than 39,000 individuals

TDT | Manama

The coronavirus (COVID-19) took three lives in Bahrain yesterday, the Ministry of Health reported.

The deceased included a 43-year-old expatriate woman, a 52-year-old Bahraini man, and a 68-year-old expatriate man.

Their passing brought the total coronavirus-related deaths in the Kingdom to 150.

The Health Ministry expressed its condolences to the victims' families.

Meanwhile, the ministry announced early this morning that out of 7,656 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 299 new cases were detected. These included 121 expatriate work-

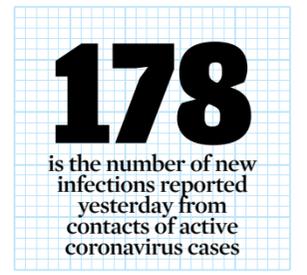
ers and 178 contacts of active cases. There were zero new travel-related cases.

The new active cases brought the overall number of confirmed registered cases in Bahrain to 41,835, dating back to when the first case was reported in February of this year.

There were also 341 additional recoveries from COVID-19 yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's total number of discharged individuals to more than 39,000 at 39,007.

Following those recoveries, the current total of active cases continued to drop, as the number went to 2,678. Of these, 48 are in critical condition and 75 are receiving treatment. The remaining 2,630 cases are stable.

The total tests conducted in Bahrain increased to 850,648.



RENAISSANCE DAM DILEMMA

Nile basin countries resume talks over disputed dam

AP | Cairo

Three key Nile basin countries resumed their negotiations yesterday to resolve a years-long dispute over the operation and filling of a giant hydroelectric dam that Ethiopia is building on the Blue Nile, officials said.

The talks came a day after tens of thousands of Ethiopians flooded the streets of their capital Addis Ababa in a government-backed rally to celebrate the first stage of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renais-

sance Dam's 74 billion-cubic-metre reservoir.

Ethiopia's announcement sparked fear and confusion downstream in Sudan and Egypt. Both Khartoum and Cairo have repeatedly rejected the filling of the massive reservoir without reaching a deal among the Nile basin countries.

Ethiopia says the dam will provide electricity to millions of its nearly 110 million citizens, help bring them out of poverty, and also make the country a major power exporter.

Egypt, which depends on the Nile River to supply its booming population of 100 million people with fresh water, asserts the dam poses an existential threat.

Sudan, between the two countries, says the project could endanger its own dams—though it stands to benefit from the Ethiopian dam—including having access to cheap electricity and reduced flooding. The confluence of the Blue Nile and the White Nile near Khartoum forms the Nile River that then flows the length of

Egypt and into the Mediterranean Sea.

Irrigation ministers of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia took part in yesterday's talks, which were held online amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The virtual meeting was also attended by officials from the African Union and South Africa, the current chairman of the regional block, said Sudan's Irrigation Minister Yasir Abbas. Officials from the US and the European Union were also in attendance, said Egypt's

irrigation ministry.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attributed the reservoir's filling to the torrential rains flooding the Blue Nile—something that occurred naturally, "without bothering or hurting anyone else."

However, Egypt's Irrigation Minister Mohammed Abdel-Atty said the filling, without "consultations and coordination" with downstream countries, sent "negative indications that show Ethiopian unwillingness to reach a fair deal".

HH Shaikh Khalid launches talent competition

TDT | Manama

A “Your Talent at Home” competition is being organised for Bahrain’s youth.

This follows the directives of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports first deputy chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee president His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who has instructed his media office to organise the event.

It is part of HH Shaikh Khalid’s initiatives that aim to support young Bahrainis, and HH Shaikh Khalid has ordered to allocate prizes worth more than \$60,000 for the winners.

On this occasion, HH Shaikh Khalid commented: “We have instructed our media office to organise ‘Your Talent at Home’ competition, which comes as part of our initiatives implementing



“
The ‘Your Talent at Home’ competition comes as part of our initiatives implementing the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to embrace young Bahrainis and encourage them to unleash their talents and creativities in various fields, to reflect a perfect image of Bahrainis’ great capabilities and potentials.

HH SHAIKH KHALID BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA

the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to embrace young Bahrainis and encourage them to unleash their talents and creativities in various fields, to reflect a perfect image of Bahrainis’ great capabilities and potentials.”

Furthermore, HH Shaikh Khalid revealed that this announcement was made in support of the decisions of the National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19), led by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, to cement the social-dis-

tancing measure in an effort to mitigate the virus’ spread.

“The event represents an ideal platform for young people to invest their energies in the right way,” HH Shaikh Khalid indicated.

“I invite all young people in Bahrain to participate in this

\$60,000
 is the amount of prize money directed by HH Shaikh Khalid to allocate for the contest’s winners

event and showcase their talents.”

The “Your Talent at Home” competition will cover acting, singing, performing, magic, strumming, painting and acrobatics.

The event will feature two categories: the first one of which is for people aged 16 and above, and the other for those aged 15 and below.

Registration for the event opens today and continues until August 15.

Interfaith summer programme to be held in Rome

TDT | Manama

The second edition of the summer programme of the King Hamad Chair in Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Co-Existence will be held from August 31 to September 5, the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Co-existence has announced.

The programme will take place at Sapienza University of Rome in Italy.

Students from Bahraini universities and well-reputed European institutions will take part in the programme, which will enable them to broaden the scope of their knowledge about the historical, cultural and social aspects of religions and study them from the perspectives of dialogue, peace, acceptance of others, and mutual respect.

The programme is in line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to enhance the role of the youth in fostering tolerance and peaceful co-existence by instilling the most sublime humanitarian concepts in them.

Health Ministry continues training on dealing with COVID-19

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health has held further training sessions and workshops on dealing with

the coronavirus (COVID-19) for health professionals, including doctors, nurses, support staff, and other specialists.

The courses are in line with

the Health Ministry’s keenness to ensure the safety of patients, visitors and employees, develop its services, and strengthen commitment to the precautionary

measures taken by the Kingdom to limit the spread of COVID-19.

They focused on infection control such as ways to prevent COVID-19 transmission, and the

best means to deal with active cases.

The Health Ministry has held training sessions for various health care departments

with the aim of qualifying their personnel on ways to deal with active or suspected cases, as well as on ways to protect themselves from contracting the virus.

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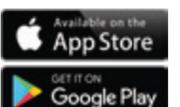
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Oil falls as OPEC+ set to boost output

Reuters | LONDON

Oil prices fell yesterday on fears about the economic fallout from rising COVID-19 cases around the globe and on oversupply worries as OPEC and its allies are set to wind back output cuts in August.

Brent crude fell 18 cents, or 0.4 per cent, to \$43.34 a barrel by 1123 GMT, and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was down 19 cents, or 0.5 per cent, at \$40.06.

In the last month, Brent has been trading in a range between \$41 and almost \$45.

OPEC+ members have been cutting output since May by 9.7 million barrels per day (bpd). From August, cuts will officially taper to 7.7 million bpd until December.

Russian oil and gas condensate output increased to 9.8 m bpd on Aug. 1-2 from 9.37 m bpd in July, a source familiar with data said on Monday.

However, oil prices found some support after a survey showed that manufacturing activity across the euro zone expanded for the first time since early 2019 last month.

Chinese company files \$1.4 billion lawsuit against Apple

Reuters | Shanghai

Chinese artificial intelligence company Shanghai Zhizhen Intelligent Network Technology Co., Ltd., also known as Xiao-i, has filed a lawsuit against Apple Inc, alleging it has infringed on its patents.

The company is calling for 10 billion yuan (\$1.43 bn) in damages and demands that Apple cease “manufacturing, using, promising to sell, selling, and importing” products that infringe on the patent.

Xiao-i argued that Apple’s voice-recognition technology Siri infringes on a patent that it applied for in 2004 and was granted in 2009.

Gold retreats from record peak as dollar firms



Gold bars are seen at the Austrian Gold and Silver Separating Plant ‘Oegussa’ in Vienna, Austria

Reuters

Gold hit a record high yesterday as fears over the economic fallout from rising coronavirus cases bolstered its safe-haven appeal, before inching lower as an uptick in the dollar fuelled some profit-taking.

Spot gold had eased 0.2 per cent to \$1,971.52 per ounce by 0952 GMT, after hitting a record high of \$1,984.66 in early Asian trade. U.S. gold futures were 0.1pc higher at \$1,988. “The dollar’s correction from a two-year low is taking some shine off gold,” independent analyst Ross Norman said. “We seem to be in a period of consolidation and we’ve seen some profit-taking.”

However a move to \$2,000 is on the cards in the near-term, Norman added, with a host of factors, including weaker economic data and a resurgence in the geopolitical spat between the United States and China, contriving to take gold higher.

Rising COVID-19 cases and simmering U.S.-China tensions have dented hopes for a swift economic recovery, driving inflows into safe-haven assets such as gold, which has climbed about 30% so far this year.

COVID-19 cases have topped 18 million globally, and White House coronavirus experts

said on Sunday the U.S. is in a new phase of the outbreak, with infections “extraordinarily widespread” in rural areas as well as cities.

Weighing on bullion, the dollar index .DXY was up 0.3% against its rivals, making assets priced in the U.S. unit more expensive for holders of others currencies.

Also on investors’ radars was the new U.S. stimulus plan that lawmakers are struggling to hammer out. White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said on Sunday he was not optimistic on a near-term deal for coronavirus relief bill.

Spot gold may retreat into a range between \$1,943 and \$1,954 per ounce as it failed again to break resistance at \$1,982, said Reuters technical analyst Wang Tao.

Elsewhere, silver slipped 0.6pc to \$24.22 per ounce, platinum inched up 0.1% to \$907.51, while palladium rose 1.1pc to \$2,113.19.



Microsoft nears big bet on TikTok after LinkedIn deal

● About 11pc of US adults use TikTok at least once per week, versus 49pc for YouTube and 62pc for Facebook, showed a survey last month by tech consultancy Vorhaus Advisors.

Reuters | Oakland, California

Microsoft Corp’s potential acquisition of short-video app TikTok carries myriad risks, thrusting it into the politically fraught social media business and Sino-US conflict amid increased scrutiny of big-tech companies.

But the deal could help Microsoft build on its \$27 billion purchase of LinkedIn to become a bigger player in internet advertising now dominated by Facebook Inc and Alphabet Inc’s Google.

Microsoft on Sunday said it aims to complete a deal by Sept. 15 for TikTok’s US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand operations. It is likely to have an edge in pricing negotiations as the US is effectively forcing TikTok’s Chinese parent, ByteDance, to sell by threatening to ban.

TikTok has taken teenagers around the world by storm and emerged as a significant competitor to Facebook and Google’s YouTube. But like rivals, TikTok faces substantial new costs for content moderation as the spread of misinforma-

tion and allegations of political bias roil social media.

Increased oversight costs accounted for much of the 10-percentage-point drop in gross profit margins for Facebook and Alphabet over the last 3-1/2 years, Refinitiv data showed.

“Does Microsoft really want to own an app that breeds conspiracy theories in tweens?” said Hank Green, YouTube star and chief executive of educational media company Complexly. He said TikTok removes content to maintain “a certain feel”, and could face public challenges over such decisions more often under a bigger name such as Microsoft.

At \$1.55 trillion, Microsoft is the world’s second-largest company by market capitalization after Apple Inc but has in recent years faced less criticism than peers over antitrust, data protection and China projects.

Nadella’s deals

Microsoft has done several big



Satya Nadella

Trump sets Sept 15 deadline for TikTok sale

AFP News

US President Donald Trump said Monday that popular Chinese-owned video app TikTok would be “out of business” in the United States if it did not sell its US operations by September 15, preferably to an American buyer.

“I set a date of around September 15, at which point it’s going to be out of business in the United States,” he told reporters.

“It’ll close down on September 15th unless Microsoft or somebody else is able to buy it and work out a deal.”

deals since Satya Nadella became chief executive in 2014, with acquisitions including world-building game Minecraft and job-search social network LinkedIn. They have fared better than those under predecessor Steve Ballmer, whose failed deals included Nokia Oyj’s phone business.

The LinkedIn acquisition in 2016, for 50pc above its share price, was Nadella’s biggest and riskiest. Microsoft shares fell 3pc when it was announced.

Microsoft has avoided antitrust and privacy scrutiny with a cautious approach to connecting LinkedIn to other products, such as Outlook, and analysts have largely viewed the deal as a success in terms of synergies.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed sales, LinkedIn ad revenue was among Microsoft’s fastest-growing over 2017-2019 as the global economy roared.

Overall, LinkedIn has generated \$14.3 billion in revenue for Microsoft through ads and subscriptions, though analysts estimate it remains unprofitable.

Sanofi formally investigated over epilepsy drug Depakine

● Sanofi has repeatedly said it has no intention to compensate

Reuters | Paris

Healthcare company Sanofi Aventis France said it had been placed under formal investigation on charges of manslaughter over Depakine, which is an epilepsy drug that caused birth malfunctions and slow neurological development when taken during pregnancy.

Sanofi Aventis France denied the charges and is challenging the merits of the investigation, it said in a written statement to Reuters.

“All these elements do not in any way prejudice the responsibility of the company,” Sanofi Aventis France said.



In 2018 aggrieved parents protested against Sanofi. (Courtesy of BBC)

The company said it had respected all its obligations re-

garding information provided on Depakine.

In France, being put under formal investigation means that

a dedicated investigative judge considers the case is serious enough to warrant an investigation.

Such legal cases can take years and do not necessarily result in significant amounts of compensation in France compared to other jurisdictions such as the United States.

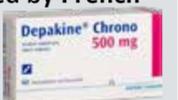
Sanofi has repeatedly said it has no intention to compensate or take part in a state-backed compensation mechanism for Depakine.

Marine Martin, president of victims association APESAC, said on Twitter the new formal investigation was a “a great victory” for the families she represents.

France’s social affairs inspection agency IGAS has estimated that between 2006 and 2014, 425 to 450 babies suffered congenital birth defects or were stillborn following exposure to Depakine.



Depakine, an epilepsy drug that caused birth malfunctions and slow neurological development when taken during pregnancy, lost its patent in 1998, is prescribed in more than 100 countries. News about the formal investigation was first reported by French newspaper Le Monde.





Afghan soldiers arrive during an attack on a prison in Jalalabad.

IS storm Afghan jail

Hundreds of prisoners freed, at least 29 killed

● **IS's news outlet Amaq said its fighters were behind the raid**

AFP | Kabul

At least 29 people have been killed in a raid on an Afghan prison claimed by the Islamic State group, officials said yesterday, as the country waited to see if a government ceasefire with the Taliban would rupture after its formal expiration.

Fighting was still raging at the jail in the eastern city of Jalalabad, where some 1,700 IS and Taliban inmates were being held.

IS's news outlet Amaq said its fighters were behind the raid, which saw hundreds of inmates escape before many of them were recaptured.

The ongoing attack was Afghanistan's most violent incident since the Taliban and Afghan security forces held a three-day ceasefire over the Eid al-Adha festival which ended Sunday.

IS was not part of that truce which Afghan authorities hope will pave the way for peace talks with the Taliban as soon as this week.

Under a deal signed by the Taliban and the United States in February, the "intra-Afghan"

talks were slated to start in March, but were delayed amid political infighting in Kabul and as an agreed prisoner swap dragged on.

Both Kabul and the Taliban have signalled they could be ready to start talks after Eid, and the Afghan government on Sunday offered to extend the ceasefire.

The insurgents have not formally responded.

Ongoing attack

In Jalalabad, Nangarhar governor's spokesman Attaullah Khogyani told AFP that gunman remained holed up at the prison a day after the raid began.

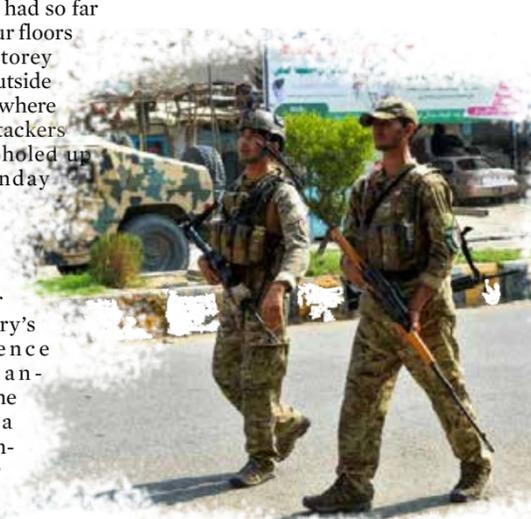
Khogyani said special forces had so far cleared four floors of a five-storey building outside the prison where several attackers had been holed up since Sunday night.

The raid came a day after the country's intelligence agency announced the killing of a top IS commander near Jalalabad. Assadullah Orakzai was involved in several deadly attacks against Afghan security forces, the National Director of Security said Saturday.

Nangarhar province has seen some deadly IS attacks this year including a May 12 suicide bomb that killed 32 mourners at a funeral for a police commander.

The IS attacks continue despite government officials claiming last year that the group's Afghan branch had been completely defeated in Nangarhar.

Some local officials have, however, cautioned that elements of the group remained.



WHO urges mothers to breastfeed even if infected with COVID-19

Reuters | Geneva

Mothers should breastfeed their babies even if they have contracted COVID-19, the World Health Organization's head said on Monday, as the benefits outweigh the risks of infection.

"WHO recommends that mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged the same as all other mothers to initiate or continue breastfeeding," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news conference.

As the world marks breastfeeding awareness week, Tedros said "the many benefits of breastfeeding for newborn babies and children substantially outweigh the potential risks of COVID-19 infections".

Harry Potter-theme protest



Protestors at the Harry Potter-themed rally vowed to 'cast a spell' for democracy

AFP News

Dozens of mostly young Thais wearing striped "Harry Potter" scarves rallied Monday against the government, vowing to "cast a spell" for democracy as the nascent movement grows increasingly bold in targeting the powerful elite.

For more than two weeks, young Thais across the country have held near daily protests at universities and town halls to denounce the military-aligned government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha.

Some have also waded into sensitive territory in recent weeks by holding up placards opposing Thailand's lese majeste law, one of the world's harshest.

It shields the monarchy and its super-rich King Maha Vajiralongkorn from criticism, making open scrutiny of the monarch virtually impossible.

But younger Thais have grown bolder in lock-step with their rising discontent of Prayut -- whose hold on power is regarded as a legacy of a royalist junta regime.

Teachers protest across US over re-opening schools in pandemic



Pictures courtesy of Daily sabah Reuters | Chicago

Teachers and support staff at more than 35 school districts across the United States yesterday are protesting the re-opening of schools while COVID-19 is surging in many parts of the country.

They are demanding in-person classes not be held until scientific data supports it, safety protocols such as lower class sizes and virus testing are established, and schools are staffed with adequate numbers of counselors and nurses, according to a website set up for the demonstrations.

On Twitter, the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association showed protesters making fake gravestones that said "Here lies a third grade student from Green Bay who caught COVID at school" and "RIP Grandma caught COVID helping grand kids with homework."

Teachers are also demanding financial help for parents in need, including rent and mortgage assistance, a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures and cash assistance.

President Donald Trump has made school re-openings for classroom instruction, as they normally would in August and September, part of his re-election campaign.

News in brief

German children start new school year



◆ Thousands of children in northern Germany became the first in Europe to begin a new

school year on Monday, with the rest of the country watching anxiously as full-time classes began after months of curtailed hours over the coronavirus pandemic. Masks will be a daily accessory for some of the 150,000 children returning to school in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania region, Germany's first state to reopen the school gates after the summer holidays.

◆ **Britain is on track to deliver half a million COVID tests a day** by the end of October and new 90-minute tests will allow the government to accelerate that target, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said yesterday. Millions of COVID-19 tests able to detect the virus within 90 minutes will be rolled out to British hospitals, care homes and laboratories to boost capacity in the coming months, Hancock said. They will comprise 5.8 million tests using DNA and 450,000 swab tests.

◆ **UK says rapid tests help accelerate 500,000 tests a day target**



◆ **India's interior minister and the chiefs of two big states have been hospitalized with COVID-19 as the country's daily cases topped 50,000 for a fifth straight day yesterday.** The country reported 52,972 new confirmed infections in the past 24 hours, taking the

total to 1.8 million - the third highest in the world after the United States and Brazil - data from India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare showed yesterday. With 771 new deaths, the COVID-19 disease has now killed 38,135 people in India, including that of a minister on Sunday in the most-populous state of Uttar Pradesh.

◆ **The government will act if the coronavirus spreads through London as it has done in other parts of Britain,** junior business minister Nadhim Zahawi said yesterday. "If we see the virus spreading in a particular way in London, as

◆ **We will act if virus spreads in London, says UK**

we've seen in Manchester and West Yorkshire where it's spreading through people coming into another person's home, then we will discuss that... and we will not hesitate to act," he told LBC radio.

Virgin seeks to revive supersonic commercial flight



◆ Space tourism company Virgin Galactic yesterday announced a partnership with engine-maker Rolls-Royce to build

a supersonic commercial airplane that flies at three times the speed of sound. The aircraft would travel at Mach 3 -- rather than the Mach 2 speed of Concorde, the pioneering jet that operated from 1976 to 2003.

◆ **Lebanon's president and prime minister signed decrees accepting the resignation of Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti on Monday and appointing Charbel Wehbe to replace him,** the presidency said on its Twitter account. Wehbe is the diplomatic adviser of President Michel Aoun. The decrees were later read out by the cabinet's secretary general in remarks broadcast by local media.

◆ **Lebanon appoints president's diplomatic adviser as new foreign minister**

Global

Covid-19 Cases:

18,344,776

Deaths

694,820

Recovered:

11,542,569

New cases

+111,930

New deaths

+2,372

Middle East

Countries worst affected

| Country | Total cases | New deaths | Total Deaths |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 USA | 4,827,843 | +130 | 158,495 |
| 2 Brazil | 2,736,298 | +96 | 94,226 |
| 3 India | 1,852,156 | +808 | 38,969 |
| 4 Russia | 856,264 | +79 | 14,207 |
| 5 South Africa | 511,485 | | 8,366 |
| 6 Mexico | 439,046 | +274 | 47,746 |
| 7 Peru | 428,850 | | 19,614 |
| 8 Chile | 361,493 | +99 | 9,707 |
| 9 Spain | 344,134 | +9 | 28,472 |
| 10 Colombia | 317,651 | | 10,650 |
| 11 Iran | 312,035 | +215 | 17,405 |
| 12 UK | 305,623 | +9 | 46,210 |
| 13 Saudi Arabia | 280,093 | +32 | 2,949 |
| 14 Pakistan | 280,029 | +8 | 5,984 |

Figures as of closing

| Country | Total cases | new cases | Total deaths | New Deaths | Total recovered | Active cases | Serious, Critical | Tot cases/1m pop |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Egypt | 94,483 | | 4,865 | | 42,455 | 47,163 | 41 | 922 |
| Saudi Arabia | 280,093 | +1,258 | 2,949 | +32 | 242,055 | 35,089 | 2,017 | 8,035 |
| UAE | 61,163 | +164 | 351 | | 54,863 | 5,949 | | 6,178 |
| Kuwait | 68,299 | +388 | 461 | +4 | 59,739 | 8,099 | 126 | 15,973 |
| Oman | 79,159 | | 421 | | 61,421 | 17,317 | 187 | 15,470 |
| Qatar | 111,322 | +215 | 177 | | 108,002 | 3,143 | 75 | 39,647 |

COVID-19 long-term toll signals billions in healthcare costs ahead

With mounting evidence that some COVID-19 survivors face months, or possibly years, of debilitating complications, healthcare experts are beginning to study possible long-term costs.

Reuters | New York

Late in March, Laura Gross, 72, was recovering from gall bladder surgery in her Fort Lee, New Jersey, home when she became sick again.

Her throat, head and eyes hurt, her muscles and joints ached and she felt like she was in a fog. Her diagnosis was COVID-19. Four months later, these symptoms remain.

Gross sees a primary care doctor and specialists including a cardiologist, pulmonologist, endocrinologist, neurologist, and gastroenterologist.

"I've had a headache since April. I've never stopped running a low-grade temperature," she said.

Studies of COVID-19 patients keep uncovering new complications associated with the disease.

With mounting evidence that some COVID-19 survivors face months, or possibly years, of debilitating complications, healthcare experts are beginning to study possible long-term costs.

Bruce Lee of the City University of New York (CUNY) Public School of Health estimated that 10 per cent of the US population contracts the virus. One-year post-hospitalization costs would be about \$50 billion, before factoring in longer-term complications. Without a vaccine, if 10 per cent of the population became infected, that cost would balloon to \$204 billion.

Some countries hit hard by the new coronavirus - including the United States, Britain and Italy - are considering whether these long-term effects could be considered a "post-COVID syndrome," according to Reuters interviews with about a dozen doctor health economists.

Some US and Italian hospitals have created centers devoted to the care of these patients and are standardizing follow-up measures.

Britain's Department of Health and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are each leading national studies of COVID-19's long-term impact. An international panel of doctors will suggest standards for mid- and long-term care of recovered patients, the World Health Organization (WHO) in August.

Years before the cost is known

More than 17 million people have been infected with the new coronavirus worldwide, about a quarter of them in the United States.

Healthcare experts say it will be years before the full costs for those who have recovered can be fully calculated, not unlike the slow recognition of the health impacts to first responders of the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

They stem from COVID-19's toll on multiple organs, including heart, lung and kidney damage that



A healthcare worker conducts a COVID-19 test at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in the Harlem neighborhood of New York.



Fake blood is seen in test tubes labelled with the coronavirus.

OBIT

The politician's campaign for peace was seen as a driving force behind an end to 25 years of sectarian conflict in the territory

John Hume, champion of peace

Reuters | Belfast

John Hume, a Catholic nationalist and Nobel peace laureate who died on Monday aged 83, will be remembered as a man who championed peace even during the darkest days of Northern Ireland's guerrilla war.

His home in Londonderry looked out on the Bogside, a Catholic zone which was racked by bombs and bullets as Irish Republican Army (IRA) gunmen battled British troops.

Just across the border in the Irish Republic, his hideaway holiday home by the placid waters of Lough Foyle, in County Donegal, was full of mementos of a lifetime's struggle.

A text of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, given to Hume by the U.S. civil rights leader's wife Coretta, was a personal treasure.

"The reason I went into public life in the North (of Ireland) was to work to try and solve the problem... I didn't go in there to get myself a job," he told Reuters in an interview.

Hume, a former teacher who rejected violence as a means to achieve his goal of a united Ireland, was rewarded in December 1998 with the Nobel Peace Prize, which he shared with David Trimble, the British-ruled province's moderate Protestant leader who had decided the future lay in co-operation with Catholics.

Northern Ireland's Good Friday peace deal, signed in April 1998, was a personal triumph for Hume and holds firm today.

It was the culmination of a lonely, and often reviled, quest to bring Northern Ireland the stability that had eluded it since the island was partitioned in 1922.

As leader of the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Hume helped kick-start the peace process in the late 1980s by secretly meeting Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA's political ally, Sinn Fein.

He was fiercely criticised when those contacts became public in 1993. In the Irish Republic, Hume was accused of making common cause with paramilitaries, while a senior Northern Irish unionist politician said he had "sold his soul to the Devil".

Hume said he did not care "two balls of roasted snow" about the criticism, and he felt vindicated when his initiative led to the first IRA ceasefire in 1994.

"Not about flag-waving"

Hume was born in Londonderry in January 1937 at the height of the Depression, the son of an unemployed riveter.

His father, who was his hero, urged him to avoid narrow nationalist chauvinism "because you can't eat a flag".

"What he was saying is what I am saying today, that real politics are not about flag-waving. They are about providing bread on your table and a roof over your head," he said.

Hume joined the civil rights movement in 1968 and fought against discrimination in everything from housing to education just as the "The Troubles", Northern Ireland's 30 years of sectarian



John Hume, second from right.

1265

Battle of Evesham:
English prince Edward beats Simon de Montfort the younger

1821

Russian Antarctic Expedition led by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen returns to Kronshtadt after becoming the 1st to circumnavigate Antarctica

1942

1st train with Jews departs Mechelen Belgium to Auschwitzin Singapore collapses.



1944
Anne Frank arrested in Amsterdam by German Security Police (Grüne Polizei) following a tip-off from an informer who was never identified

'COVID-19 survivors face months, or possibly years, of debilitating experts are beginning to study possible long-term costs

York likely require costly care, such as regular scans and ultrasounds, as well as neurological deficits that are not yet fully understood.

A JAMA Cardiology study found that in one group of COVID-19 patients in Germany aged 45 to 53, more than 75pc suffered from heart inflammation, raising the possibility of future heart failure.

A Kidney International study found that over a third of COVID-19 patients in a New York medical system developed acute kidney injury, and nearly 15pc required dialysis.

Dr. Marco Rizzi in Bergamo, Italy, an early epicentre of the pandemic, said the Giovanni XXIII Hospital has seen close to 600 COVID-19 patients for follow-up. About 30pc have lung issues, 10pc have neurological problems, 10pc have heart issues and about 9pc have lingering motor skill problems. He co-chairs the WHO panel that will recommend long-term follow-up for patients.

"On a global level, nobody knows how many will still need checks and treatment in three months, six months, a year," Rizzi said, adding that even those with mild COVID-19 "may have consequences in the future."

Milan's San Raffaele Hospital has seen more than 1,000 COVID-19 patients for follow-up. While major cardiology problems there were few, about 30pc to 40pc of patients have neurological problems and at least half suffer from respiratory conditions, according to Dr. Moreno Tresoldi.

Some of these long-term effects have only recently emerged, too soon for health economists to study medical claims and make accurate estimates of costs.

In Britain and Italy, those costs would be borne by their respective governments, which have committed



Laura Gross sits down after feeling weak while posing on her balcony in Fort Lee, New Jersey

to funding COVID-19 treatments but have offered few details on how much may be needed.

In the United States, more than half of the population is covered by private health insurers, an industry that is just beginning to estimate the cost of COVID-19.

CUNY's Lee estimated the average one-year cost of a US COVID-19 patient after they have been discharged from the hospital at \$4,000, largely due to the lingering issues from acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which affects some 40pc of patients, and sepsis.

The estimate spans patients who had been hospitalized with moderate illness to the most severe cases, but does not include other potential complications, such as heart and kidney damage.

Even those who do not require hospitalization have average one-year costs after their initial illness of \$1,000, Lee estimated.

'Hard just to get up'

Extra costs from lingering effects of COVID-19 could mean higher health insurance premiums in the United States. Some health plans have already raised 2021 premiums on comprehensive coverage by up to 8pc due to COVID-19, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Anne McKee, 61, a retired psychologist who lives in Knoxville, Tennessee and Atlanta, had multiple sclerosis and asthma when she became infected nearly five months ago. She is still struggling to catch her breath.

"On good days, I can do a couple loads of laundry, but the last several days, it's been hard just to get up and get a drink from the kitchen," she said.

She has spent more than \$5,000 on appointments, tests and prescription drugs during that time. Her insurance has paid more than \$15,000 including \$240 for a telehealth appointment and \$455 for a lung scan.

"Many of the issues that arise from having a severe contraction of a disease could be 3, 5, 20 years down the road," said Dale Hall, Managing Director of Research with the Society of Actuaries.

To understand the costs, US actuaries compare insurance records of coronavirus patients against people with a similar health profile but no COVID-19, and follow them for years.

The United Kingdom aims to track the health of 10,000 hospitalized COVID-19 patients over the first 12 months after being discharged and potentially as long as 25 years. Scientists running the study see the potential for defining a long-term COVID-19 syndrome, as they found with Ebola survivors in Africa.

"Many people, we believe will have scarring in the lungs and fatigue ... and perhaps vascular damage to the brain, perhaps, psychological distress as well," said Professor Calum Semple from the University of Liverpool.

Margaret O'Hara, 50, who works at a Birmingham hospital is one of many COVID-19 patients who will not be included in the study because she had mild symptoms and was not hospitalized. But recurring health issues, including extreme shortness of breath, has kept her out of work.

O'Hara worries patients like her are not going to be included in the country's long-term cost planning. "We're going to need ... expensive follow-up for quite a long time," she said



is (COVID-19) in this illustration

UARY

in Northern Ireland's darkest days



and the Northern Irish Protestant leader David Trimble, second from left, in Oslo in 1998

John Hume's efforts were recognized when he shared the Nobel with the Protestant leader David Trimble in 1998, the year of the Good Friday peace agreement, which crowned his commitment to ending the seething unrest that had claimed more than 3,000 lives

bloodshed, began.

Two years later, he co-founded the SDLP, which coupled his social democratic leanings with the Catholic minority's wish to reunite the island.

In 1979, Hume was elected to the European and British parliaments and also became SDLP leader, a post he held till 2001, when he stood down citing ill health.

In an ironic twist, Hume's successors have been unable to prevent the SDLP being eclipsed by Sinn Fein - the party he did so much to bring into the political mainstream - as the chief political voice for Northern Irish Catholics.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



So Crazy Nancy Pelosi said horrible things about Dr. Deborah Birx, going after her because she was too positive on the very good job we are doing on combatting the China Virus, including Vaccines & Therapeutics. In order to counter Nancy, Deborah took the bait & hit us. Pathetic!

@realDonaldTrump

02



Dear @SpeakerPelosi & @SenSchumer I'm only 1 voter. But I beg you, please DO NOT pass another Relief Bill without clear+strong protection for the @USPS & mail in voting. 155,000 Americans are dead Don't let Trump kill more by making them stand in long voting lines for hours.

@donwinslow

03



One year ago, a white supremacist armed with a semi-automatic rifle targeted the people of El Paso. He thought his hatred of Latinos and immigrants would prove more powerful than the culture and vibrancy of the community. He was wrong.

@JoeBiden

04



It's Monday. There are 92 days until the presidential election. Trumpland still has no plan as the death toll closes in on 160,000, Congress raises warning flags about foreign attacks on our democracy and the whole world knows Trump is gonna cheat to try and win this election..

@AdamParkhomenko

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Next big COVID treatment may be manufactured antibodies

Reuters

As the world awaits a COVID-19 vaccine, the next big advance in battling the pandemic could come from a class of biotech therapies widely used against cancer and other disorders - antibodies designed specifically to attack this new virus.

Development of monoclonal antibodies to target the virus has been endorsed by leading scientists. Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious diseases expert, called them "almost a sure bet" against COVID-19.

When a virus gets past the body's initial defenses, a more specific response kicks in, triggering production of cells that target the invader. These include antibodies that recognize and lock onto a virus, preventing the infection from spreading.

Monoclonal antibodies - grown in bioreactor vats - are copies of these naturally-occurring proteins.

Scientists are still working out the exact role of neutralizing antibodies in recovery from COVID-19, but drugmakers are confident that the right antibodies or a combination can alter the course of the disease that has claimed more than 675,000 lives globally.

"Antibodies can block infectivity. That is a fact," Regeneron Pharmaceuticals executive Christos Kyrtasous told Reuters.

Regeneron is testing a two-antibody cocktail, which it believes limits the ability of the virus' to escape better than one, with data on its efficacy expected by late summer or early fall. "Protection will wane over time. Dosing is something we don't know yet," said Kyrtasous.

The US government in June awarded Regeneron



Pipettes and sample vials are seen inside a laboratory at Sorrento Therapeutics where efforts are underway to develop an antibody, STI-499, to help in

'Instant Immunity'

Unlike vaccines, which activate the body's own immune system, the impact of infused antibodies eventually dissipates.

Still, drugmakers say monoclonal antibodies could temporarily prevent infection in at-risk people such as medical workers and the elderly. They could also be used as a therapeutic bridge until vaccines become widely available.

"In a prophylactic setting we think we may achieve coverage for up to six months," said Phil Pang, chief medical officer of Vir Biotechnology, which aims to start testing an antibody in non-hospitalized patients next month with partner GSK.

Safety risks for monoclonal antibodies are considered low, but their cost can be quite high. These type of drugs for cancer can cost over \$100,000 a year.

There is also concern that the coronavirus could become resistant to specific antibodies. Researchers are already

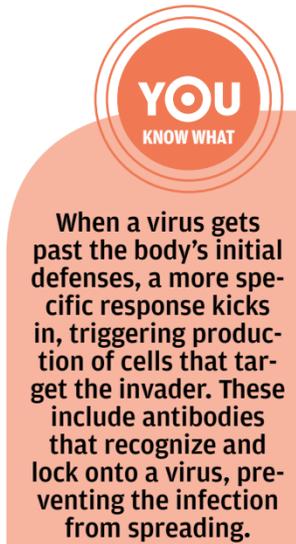
at work on second-generation compounds with targets other than the crown-like spikes the virus uses to invade cells.

"We are trying to develop something that is complementary," Amgen research chief David Reese said. Amgen is working with Adaptive Biotechnologies Corp.

Researchers in a recent paper published in the journal Nature said they had discovered several new, very potent, antibodies directed to an area where the virus attaches to human cells and to a region of the spike that has not attracted attention.

"To avoid development of resistance you want to target different sites," study author and Columbia University professor David Ho told Reuters.

"Giving an antibody later on after infection might not be that helpful, said Florian Kramer, microbiology professor at New York's Icahn School of Medicine. "Given early, they probably work well."



When a virus gets past the body's initial defenses, a more specific response kicks in, triggering production of cells that target the invader. These include antibodies that recognize and lock onto a virus, preventing the infection from spreading.

a \$450 million supply contract. The company said it can immediately begin production at its US plant if regulators approve the treatment.

Eli Lilly and Co, AstraZeneca, Amgen, and GlaxoSmithKline were cleared by the US government to pool manufacturing resources in order to scale up supplies if any of these drugs prove successful.

Even with that unusual cooperation among rivals, manufacturing these medicines is complex and capacity is limited. There is also a debate over whether a single antibody will be powerful enough to stop COVID-19.

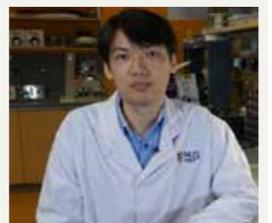
AstraZeneca said it plans to start human trials of its dual-antibody combination within weeks. Lilly, which began human testing in June of two antibody candidates in separate trials, is focusing on a one-drug approach.

"If you need a higher dosage or more antibodies, fewer people can be treated," Lilly Chief Scientific Officer Dan Skovronsky said.

Scientists inspired by 'Star Wars' create artificial skin able to feel



Dr Benjamin Tee, Assistant Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at the National University, demonstrates how this device can detect the texture of a squishy stress ball at a lat in NUS, Singapore



Reuters | Singapore

Singapore researchers have developed "electronic skin" capable of recreating a sense of touch, an innovation they hope will allow people with prosthetic limbs to detect objects, as well as feel texture, or even temperature and pain.

The device, dubbed ACES, or Asynchronous Coded Electronic Skin, is made up of 100 small sensors and is about 1 sq cm (0.16 square inch) in size.

The researchers at the National University of Singapore say it can process information faster than the human nervous system, is able to recognise 20 to 30 different textures and can read Braille letters with more than 90% accuracy.

"So humans need to slide to feel texture, but in this case the skin, with just a single touch, is able to detect textures of different roughness," said research team leader Benjamin Tee, adding that AI algorithms let the device learn quickly.

A demonstration showed the device could detect that a squishy stress ball was soft, and determine that a solid plastic ball was hard.

"When you lose your sense of touch, you essentially become numb... and prosthetic users face that problem," said Tee.

"So by recreating an artificial version of the skin, for their prosthetic devices, they can hold a hand and feel the warmth and feel that it is soft, how hard are they holding the hand," said Tee.

Tee said the concept was inspired by a scene from the "Star Wars" movie trilogy in which the character Luke Skywalker loses his right hand and it is replaced by a robotic one, seemingly able to experience touch sensations again.

The technology is still in the experimental stage, but there had been "tremendous interest", especially from the medical community, Tee added.

Similar patents developed by his team include a transparent skin that can repair itself when torn and a light-emitting material for wearable electronic devices, Tee said.

Honouring tradition, French artisans harvest salt from the sea

Reuters | Guerande, France

In the salt marshes of north-west France, Franch Durot, a rake in his hand and a hat to keep off the baking sun, is following in a time-honoured tradition, harvesting salt from the sea by hand.

It is a craft that has been practised at Guerande, in the French region of Brittany, for hundreds of years and has made the salt that comes from here into a delicacy that commands

high prices around the world.

The low-lying marshes have been criss-crossed with a grid of earth mounds that creates a network of rectangular lagoons. Sea water from the Atlantic is flushed into the lagoons through ditches, then allowed to evaporate.

When the salt in the water reaches the right concentration, it forms into snowflake-like crystals which the workers rake out of the water into small white heaps and load

into wheelbarrows. They then move onto the next lagoon and repeat the process.

Durot, who has been doing the job for 23 years, said the high temperatures this month meant more work, as the evaporating water yields more salt.

"This year, in 2020, we're seeing really good productivity," he said on a break from raking up salt. "We're facing a peak of heat at the moment."



A salt farmer harvests salt during sunset in the salt marshes in Batz-sur-Mer, France

Lebanese foreign minister quits over lack of reform as crisis spirals

Reuters | Beirut

Lebanese Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti resigned on Monday, blaming a lack of political will to enact reforms to halt a financial meltdown which he warned could turn Lebanon into a failed state.

Foreign donors have made clear there will be no aid until Beirut makes changes to tackle state waste and corruption - roots of the crisis, which poses the biggest threat to Lebanon's stability since a 1975-1990 civil war.

"Given the absence of an effective will to achieve structural, comprehensive reform which our society and the international community have urged us to do, I have decided to resign," Hitti said in a statement.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab accepted the resignation and was making phone calls as he sought a replacement, his office said on Monday.



Lebanon's Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti gestures during a cabinet meeting at the presidential palace in Baabda, Lebanon

A former ambassador to the Arab League, Hitti was appointed in January when Diab's cabinet took office with the support of the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement and its allies.

"I took part in this government to work for one boss called Lebanon, then I found in my country multiple bosses and contradictory interests," Hitti said. "If they do not come together in the interest of res-

cuing the Lebanese people, God forbid, the ship will sink with everyone on it." He also had differences with Diab and was frustrated at being sidelined, sources close to the foreign ministry told Reuters. Diab appeared to criticise France's foreign minister for tying aid to reforms and a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) when visiting Beirut last month.

Detained 'drug smuggler' cat escapes Sri Lanka prison

A prison officer shows off a cat detained while entering the high-security Welikada Prison in Colombo with drugs and cell phone SIM cards. The cat later escaped

AFP News

A cat detained at Sri Lanka's main prison while allegedly trying to smuggle drugs and cell phone SIM cards has escaped, media reports said Monday.

The feline was detected by jail intelligence officials on Saturday at the high-security Welikada Prison, a police official said. He said nearly two grams

of heroin, two SIM cards and a memory chip were found in a small plastic bag tied around the cat's neck.

But it escaped on Sunday from a prison room where it was kept, the *Aruna* newspaper said.

There was no immediate comment from prison authorities.

The prison had reported an increase in incidents of peo-

ple throwing small packets of drugs, cell phones and phone chargers over the walls in recent weeks.

Sri Lanka is battling a major drug problem with some anti-narcotics detectives also implicated in selling confiscated drugs.

Police last week seized an eagle allegedly used by drug traffickers to distribute narcotics in a suburb of Colombo.

Brits enjoy half-price meals thanks to coronavirus subsidy

Reuters | London

People across Britain enjoyed half-price meals on Monday as the government launched its "Eat Out to Help Out Scheme" aimed at driving up business in the shattered hospitality industry after months of coronavirus lockdown.

Diners are entitled to a 50 per cent discount on food and non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in, up to a maximum of 10 pounds (\$13) discount per head every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday between Aug. 3 and Aug 31.

The offer - expected to cost half a billion pounds (\$650 million) - is open to diners in participating restaurants, cafés, bars, pubs, work and school



Diners are entitled to a 50 per cent discount



canteens and food halls. More than 72,000 restaurants have registered, finance minister Rishi Sunak said. Matt Healey, 23, who works in digital marketing for Warner Bros., was glad his cooked "English breakfast" would cost him half the usual

price at Maggies, a cafe in Lewisham, south east London.

But he said the priority for him remained the health risks over the discount. "It's a bit of a balancing act," Healey said. "I think the risks will probably outweigh the 50pc off."

Russia to produce 'millions' of vaccine doses by 2021



At more than 850,000 infections, Russia's coronavirus caseload is currently fourth in the world after the United States, Brazil and India

AFP News

Russia said yesterday it aims to launch mass production of a coronavirus vaccine next month and turn out "several million" doses per month by next year.

The country is pushing ahead with several vaccine prototypes and one trialled by the Gamaleya institute in Moscow has reached advanced stages of development and is about to pass state registration, officials said.

"We are very much counting on starting mass production in September," Industry Minister Denis Manturov said in an interview published by state news agency TASS.

"We will be able to ensure production volumes of several hundred thousand a month, with an eventual increase to several million by the start of next year," he said, adding that one developer is preparing production technology at three locations in central Russia.

The head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, which finances the trials, said he expects official registration of the vaccine to be complete "within ten days."

"If this happens in the next ten days, we will be ahead not just of the United States but other countries too, it will be the first registered coronavirus vaccine," RDIF chief Kirill Dmitriev said in televised remarks.

Another vaccine, developed by Siberia-based Vektor lab, is currently undergoing clinical trials and two more will begin human testing within the next two months, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said on Saturday.

Gamaleya's vaccine is a so-called viral vector vaccine, meaning it employs another virus to carry the DNA encoding the needed immune response into cells.

Gamaleya's vaccine is based on the adenovirus, a similar technology to the coronavirus vaccine prototype developed by China's CanSino, currently in the advanced stage of clinical trials.

- 'Who will buy it?'

The state-run Gamaleya institute came under fire after researchers and its director injected themselves with the prototype several months ago, with specialists criticising the move as an unorthodox and rushed

way of starting human trials.

Vitaly Zverev, laboratory chief at the Mechnikov Research Institute of Vaccines and Sera, said it was too early to register a vaccine.

"I believe a vaccine that is not properly checked must not be registered, no matter in what country," he said.

"It is impossible to ensure the vaccine's safety in the time that has passed since the beginning of this pandemic," he told AFP.

"You can make anything, but who is going to buy it?"

Zverev added that the three firms named as future producers of Russia's vaccines are well-known pharmaceutical firms that do not normally make vaccines, let alone high-tech ones using DNA technology.

"No adenovirus-based vaccine has been proven effective before," he said. "How are they going to grow it? Nobody explains this."

Moscow has dismissed allegations from the UK, the United States and Canada that a hacking group linked to Russian intelligence services tried to steal information about a coronavirus vaccine from labs in the West.

Restaurant offers 'COVID curry' to scared customers

AFP News

An Indian restaurant is hoping to win back customers afraid of eating out during the pandemic with a special "COVID Curry" and "Mask Naans".

"This has been a really tough time for us and for our entire sector," Yash Solanki, owner of the vegetarian Vedic eatery in the western city of Jodhpur, told AFP.

The fried vegetable balls have been shaped to look like the "crowned" coronavirus, while the accompanying breads look like surgical masks.

Solanki said that they had also added, and advertised, that their COVID curry had extra Indian herbs and spices that are good for people's health.

"Even with recently relaxed curbs, the fear still dominates. People are still very reluctant to



A waiter carries "COVID curry" and "mask naan", two coronavirus-themed dishes, to customers at a restaurant in Jodhpur

eat out," Solanki said.

Almost 800 people are dying

daily from coronavirus in the world's second-most populous

nation, with around 50,000 new infections reported every

The fried vegetable balls have been shaped to look like the "crowned" coronavirus, while the accompanying breads look like surgical masks.

24 hours.

The country has had 1.8 million cases, the third-highest in the world behind the United States and Brazil, and more than 38,000 deaths.

One person is dying of COVID-19 every seven minutes in Iran: state TV

Reuters | Dubai

One person is dying from COVID-19 every seven minutes in Iran, state television said on Monday, as the Health Ministry reported 215 new deaths from the disease and state media warned of a lack of proper social distancing. Health Ministry spokesman Sima Sadat Lari was quoted by the state TV as saying the 215 deaths in the past 24 hours took the combined death toll to 17,405 in Iran, and the number of confirmed cases rose by 2,598 to 312,035.

Musk 'prayed for this' SpaceX splashdown



Screen grabs taken from a NASA video shows Elon Musk speaking and the successful landing of crew dragon capsule

Reuters

“I’m not very religious, but I prayed for this one.”

Elon Musk’s SpaceX saw the successful landing of its Crew Dragon capsule on Sunday (August 2) after a two-month voyage.

It was NASA’s first crewed mission from home soil in nine years.

Speaking at a homecoming event in Houston, Texas Sunday, astronaut Doug Hurley said he was proud to be part of the experience.

“You know, this has been a quite an odyssey the last five, six, seven, eight years, five years since Bob and I started working on this program. And to be where we are now, the first crewed flight of Dragon is just unbelievable.”

Hurley and fellow astronaut Bob Behnken flew aboard the capsule to the International Space Station and spent 64 days in space before splashing down in the Gulf of Mexico.

Their homecoming was the first crewed splashdown in an American capsule in 45 years.

The successful splashdown was also a final key test of whether SpaceX could trans-

port humans to and from orbit -- a feat no private company has accomplished before.

And Musk said he hoped the news would bring some much-needed light to dark times.

“You know, I think this is something that the whole world can take some pleasure in and can really look at this as an achievement of human-

The landmark mission, which took off from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center on May 31, marked the first time the US space agency launched humans from American soil since its shuttle programme retired in 2011



ity. These are difficult times when, you know, there’s there’s not that much good news. And I think this is one of those things that is universally good no matter where you are on planet Earth. This is a good thing.”

Former pope Benedict XVI ‘extremely frail’: report



Former pope Benedict XVI became seriously ill after visiting his sick brother in Germany in June and is “extremely frail”,

AFP | Berlin

Former pope Benedict XVI became seriously ill himself after visiting his sick brother in Germany in June and is “extremely frail”, according to a report in the Monday edition of the German Passauer Neue Presse newspaper.

Benedict, 93, is suffering from erysipelas of the face, a virus that causes a facial rash and episodes of severe pain, the newspaper reported, citing the former pope’s biographer Peter Seewald.

“According to Seewald, the Pope emeritus is now extremely frail,” the report says. “His thinking and his memory are quick, but his voice is hardly audible at the moment.”

Seewald reportedly visited Benedict in Rome on Saturday to present him with his biography.

“At the meeting the emeritus Pope, despite his illness, was optimistic and declared that if his strength increased again he would possibly take up his pen again,” the paper said.

Benedict visited his sick brother Georg in Germany in June, marking his first trip out of Italy since his shock resignation in 2013. Georg Ratzinger died just two weeks later, aged 96.

The former pontiff, whose original name is Joseph Ratzinger, now lives in a small former monastery inside the Vatican.

He has largely stayed out of the public eye since he became the first pope in 600 years to resign, citing health reasons.

A traditionalist in the Catholic Church, he was replaced by the reformist Pope Francis.

Some COVID-19 survivors suffer psychiatric disorders, Italian study says

Reuters | Milan

COVID-19 survivors suffer higher rates of psychiatric disorders including post-traumatic stress (PTSD), anxiety, insomnia and depression, according to a study conducted by San Raffaele hospital in Milan yesterday.

The survey showed that more than half of the 402 patients monitored after being treated for the virus experienced at least one of these disorders in proportion to the severity of the inflammation during the disease.

The patients - 265 men and 137 women - were examined at a one-month follow-up after hospital treatment.

“It was immediately clear that the inflammation caused by the disease could also have repercussions at the psychiatric level,” said professor Francesco Benedetti, group leader of the Research Unit in Psychiatry and Clinical Psychobiology at San Raffaele, in a statement.

The report was published on



Outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Belgrade

Monday in the scientific journal Brain, Behavior and Immunity.

Based on clinical interviews and self-assessment questionnaires, physicians found PTSD in 28 per cent of cases, depression in 31pc, anxiety in 42pc of patients and insomnia in 40pc, and finally obsessive-compulsive symptoms in 20pc.

The study shows that women in particular suffered the most from anxiety and depression,

despite the lower severity of the infection, the statement said.

“We hypothesise that this may be due to the different functioning of the immune system,” said Professor Benedetti.

Finally, less serious psychiatric repercussions have been found in hospitalised patients than in outpatients.

The psychiatric consequences of COVID-19 can be caused both by the immune response to the

“It was immediately clear that the inflammation caused by the disease could also have repercussions at the psychiatric level

PROFESSOR FRANCESCO BENEDETTI, GROUP LEADER OF THE RESEARCH UNIT IN PSYCHIATRY AND CLINICAL PSYCHOBIOLOGY AT SAN RAFFAELE

virus itself and by psychological stress factors such as stigma, social isolation and worries about infecting others, it said.

The results will underscore growing concerns about potential debilitating health complications for survivors of the disease.

Earlier this month, scientists warned of a potential wave of coronavirus-related brain damage in people who have had the disease.

Verdict looms in killing of Lebanon ex-PM Hariri

The Hague

A UN-backed tribunal will give its verdict Friday on the 2005 murder of former Lebanese premier Rafic Hariri, but questions will remain over a long and costly trial whose suspects remain at large.

Four alleged members of the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist group Hezbollah are on trial in absentia at the court in the Netherlands over the huge Beirut suicide bombing that killed Sunni billionaire Hariri and 21 other people.

The court is billed as the world’s first international tribunal set up to probe terrorist crimes, and it has cost at least \$600 million since it opened its doors in 2009 following a



former Lebanese premier Rafic Hariri



They didn't show up for their trial

UN Security Council resolution.

But the tribunal faces doubts over its credibility with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah refusing to hand over the defendants, and the case relying almost entirely on

mobile phone records.

And while Hariri’s son Saad looked forward to a “day of truth and justice”, many Lebanese people are meanwhile more preoccupied with the country’s economic crisis, the worst since the 1975-1990 civil war.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the judgment “will be delivered from the courtroom with partial virtual participation” at 0900 GMT on Friday.

The four defendants went on trial in 2014 on charges including the “intentional homicide” of Hariri and 21 others, attempted homicide of 226 people wounded in the bombing, and conspiracy to commit a terrorist act.

Millions return to lockdown in Philippines as cases soar

AFP News

More than 27 million people in the Philippines -- about a quarter of the population -- will go back into lockdown Tuesday after overwhelmed health workers warned the country was losing the battle against the coronavirus.

Since the beginning of June, when much of the country emerged from one of the world's longest stay-at-home orders, confirmed infections in the archipelago have increased fivefold, surging past 100,000.

The new restrictions announced by President Rodrigo Duterte late Sunday apply to the capital Manila and four surrounding provinces on the main island of Luzon.

For the next two weeks, public transport, including the ubiquitous jeepney minibuses, will be halted and domestic flights grounded to try and slow the



Authorities in the Philippines have ordered people to stay home unless they need to buy essential goods or exercise outdoors

spread of the virus, which has killed more than 2,000 people in the country.

People have been ordered to stay home unless they need to

buy essential goods or exercise outdoors.

Only a limited number of businesses will be allowed to operate and restaurants will be

permitted to do take-aways only.

"We really fell short. Nobody anticipated this," Duterte said, as he rejected calls for the Health Minister Francisco Duque to be sacked.

"Nobody expected that thousands will get sick on a single day."

The move comes after 80 medical associations representing tens of thousands of doctors on Saturday called for Duterte to tighten virus restrictions as hospitals, unable to cope with the influx of patients, turned people away.

On Monday, they welcomed Duterte's decision, saying it will give medical workers breathing room and buy time for the system to handle the surge.

The Philippines announced a record 5,032 new infections on Sunday.

More than 5,000 medical workers have contracted the virus -- including 500 in the past week, health department figures show.

Top coronavirus advisor warns US in 'new phase' of pandemic



People practice social distancing at Washington square park in San Francisco

AFP | Washington

The United States has entered a "new phase" of the pandemic, White House coronavirus advisor Deborah Birx warned Sunday, with rural areas just as threatened as major cities.

Birx, who heads the White House coronavirus task force, told CNN's "State of the Union" that local virus mitigation procedures were starting to work, but added that "what we are seeing today is different from March and April".

"It is extraordinarily widespread. It's into the rural as equal urban areas," she added. "To everybody who lives in a

rural area, you are not immune or protected from this virus."

"We are in a new phase," Birx said. She added that sticking to health and safety guidelines -- such as wearing a mask, maintaining personal hygiene and observing social distancing -- was crucial.

As of Sunday, the US had tallied more than 4,665,000 cases of COVID-19 and 154,834 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University, making it by far the hardest-hit country in the world.

The US notched 47,508 new cases on Sunday -- a slight dip from the previous five days, which had all recorded more than 60,000 new infections.

Back on track: Europe's fading night trains win reprieve

AFP | Paris

It was one of the quintessential European travel experiences.

With passengers cradled to sleep by the clank of the wheels on the rails, the network of night trains that spanned the continent inspired travelogues, thrillers and films.

But the cost required to keep them running, coupled with the growth of high speed day trains and the popularity of budget airlines, meant that the era of the couchette and wagon lit was quietly fading into the night.

Key routes were cut and the intricate network of overnight routes across Europe was reduced to just a handful of services.

But increasing awareness among passengers and governments of the carbon footprint from air travel -- coupled with shrinkage in the airline sector due to the coronavirus epidemic -- means that night trains may be in line for an unexpected renaissance.

Austria, France and Sweden are among countries pressing for a return to night train travel that may yet see more of us tucking up for the night in a cosy wagon lit.

President Emmanuel Macron of France -- which over the last years stripped down its overnight domestic services to just a pair of routes -- announced in July the government would "re-develop" night trains as part of a campaign to reduce emissions.

Secretary of State for Transport Jean-Baptiste Djebbari said that overnight connections between Paris and the Mediterranean city of Nice, as well as with Tarbes in the Pyrenees, would be restored by 2022.

"I think there is a real demand," said Christophe Fanichet, the chief executive of French rail operator SNCF's passenger arm SNCF Voyageurs.

He said there was in particular a "young population that is paying attention to carbon emis-



Austria, France and Sweden are among countries pressing for a return to night train travel that may yet see more of us tucking up for the night in a cosy wagon lit.

sions" and is prepared to take a little more time to travel.

Austrian 'trailblazer'

Overnight trains were cut one after another in France over the last years, hardly surprising in a country where the high-speed TGV now whisks passengers from Paris to Marseille in just over three hours.

Just two lines survive due to a lack of alternatives for passengers between Paris and Briançon in the Alps and Cerbere in the Pyrenees.

They cost the state 20 million euros (\$24 million) to keep running annually, plus 30 million to renovate the trains.

Signs of a

revival in overnight travel are even more apparent elsewhere in Europe, notably in Austria where state railway operator OBB has been blazing a trail for international services.

OBB bought up old night train operations of German operator Deutsche Bahn and is now planning to buy 20 new trains for 500 million euros.

It is now possible to hop on a train in Vienna and wake up in Brussels.

"Over the coming years we want to focus on building up the network of night trains," Austrian Environment Minister Leonore Gewessler told the Kleine Zeitung newspaper.

"We want to strengthen this role as a trailblazer," she added, referring to the fact that Vienna is served by more night trains than any other city in Europe.

'Reinvent the night train'

Another model for night trains is Sweden, the home of the concept of flygskam (flight shame) advocated by teen anti-global warming activist Greta Thunberg who won't take planes and makes much of travelling to conferences aboard night trains.

The government is planning to invest 400 million krona (39 million euros, \$46 billion) to relaunch daily connections between Stockholm and Hamburg and Malmo and Brussels by summer 2022.

It is too early to declare a night train revolution in Europe,

with some operators much more wary about bringing them back.

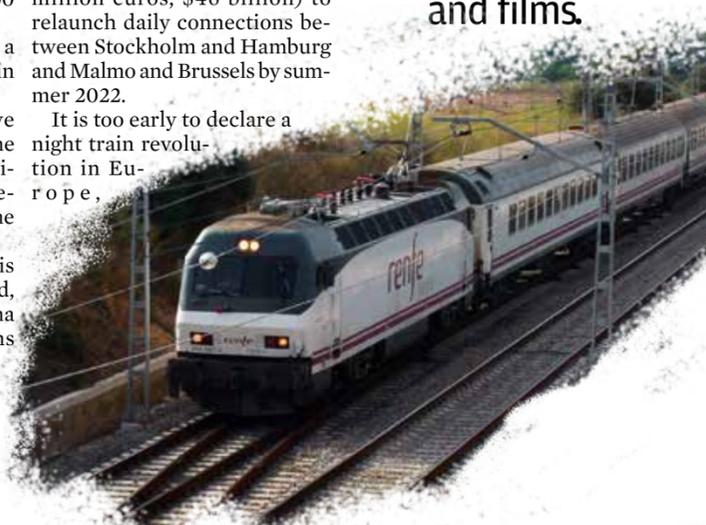
Industry participants acknowledge there has to be a better solution than the standard six-person European sleeping couchette, which contains two sets of three bunk beds separated by a small gap.

This is all the more important in the era of the coronavirus, where few passengers will want to spend the entire night in a confined space with potentially five complete strangers.

"We can't just say that we want night trains. We need to reinvent the night train," said Fanichet of SNCF.

"We can't just have yesterday's night train again," he added.

With passengers cradled to sleep by the clank of the wheels on the rails, the network of night trains that spanned the continent inspired travelogues, thrillers and films.



GET THE celebs



Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ben Affleck 'banned from attending No Time to Die premiere'

Ben Affleck has reportedly been asked not to attend the premiere of 'No Time to Die'.

The upcoming James Bond film stars Ben's girlfriend Ana de Armas, but movie bosses fear that their pres-

ence on the red carpet could overshadow Daniel Craig and the film's release in November.

A source in Los Angeles told The Sun on Sunday newspaper: "This film premiere has been a long time coming and franchise bosses want the spotlight to be on the stars of the film."

"It would be a disaster if it was all about Ben's mushy PDAs with Ana overshadowing the event. A circus

sideshow is strictly off the menu and the head honchos want to keep it all on-brand."

'No Time to Die' will be Craig's fifth and final outing as the fictional MI6 agent.

The eagerly-awaited movie - which had its release date pushed back due to the coronavirus pandemic - sees Ana play a CIA agent assisting Bond.

Meanwhile, a source claimed earlier

this year that Ana enjoys spending time with Ben's kids.

The 32-year-old actress has relished the opportunity to get to know Ben's three children - Violet, 14, Seraphina, 11, and Samuel, eight - as their romance has gathered pace.

A source said: "Ben and Ana are happy together and have enjoyed spending time with his family."

Ben, 47, and ex-wife Jennifer Garner

are determined to make their co-parenting arrangement work for the benefit of their children.

And the current dynamic is one that works well for everyone involved - including Ana, who met Ben on the set of 'Deep Water' in 2019.

The insider explained: "He and Jen continue to work together on co-parenting. They make it work. Everyone is in a good place."

Ben Affleck

Katherine Schwarzenegger is "ready to pop," says husband Chris Pratt

Wonderwall | Los Angeles

Katherine Schwarzenegger and Chris Pratt are enjoying their final days of freedom before welcoming their first child together.

In anticipation of the baby's upcoming due date, the "Guardians of the Galaxy" star shared a photo of himself and his wife hiking on Saturday, Aug. 1.

"Ready to pop," he wrote on an Instagram story photo of the couple, who were both wearing workout gear. "Still don't stop."

The 41-year-old, who is already a dad to Jack, 7, who he shares with ex-wife Anna Faris, added, "Kinda grateful it didn't go down on the trail tho to be real."

The couple, who married in June 2019, have been dealing

with the COVID-19 pandemic during their pregnancy, but the 30-year-old daughter of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver, has found a silver lining



Chris Pratt and Katherine Schwarzenegger

around the situation.

"It's been amazing having him home and also very understanding about my need to sanitize everything, having everyone wear masks all the time," the author said in June, adding that Pratt is a "very wonderful husband."

Schwarzenegger also praised her spouse in a Father's Day post in June, which was also Pratt's birthday.

"Happy birthday and Father's Day to my wonderful, loving, exceptional husband. What an amazing year you've had and I know this year will be filled with more fun, adventure and love," she wrote on Instagram. "I thank God every day for you. blessed to live life with you, watch you grow, and one of the greatest gifts has been watching you be the most loving and fun father."

Katie Holmes divides fans with latest news during lockdown with daughter

Hello | Los Angeles

Katie Holmes had a big announcement over the weekend, as her latest film, The Secret Dare to Dream, dropped on Apple TV.

The Dawson's Creek star shared the exciting news on Instagram, alongside a picture of herself in character on set.

The movie was released on 31 July, and while those who have watched it have given it rave reviews, a number of international fans are disappointed that they aren't able to watch it, as it's currently only available to view in the US.

After Katie shared a teaser trailer of her film on Instagram, one follower commented:

"It's only available in the US," along -

side a sad face, while another wrote: "Hope we can see it in Sweden soon." A third added: "When does this come to the UK?"

However, those who have been able to watch it in the United States have been more than positive about Katie's film. "Such a great movie," one wrote, while another commented: "I saw this last night. It was excellent! I love it, truly a feel good movie. Much needed, thank you."

Katie stars alongside Josh Lucas in The Secret Dare to Dream, and had been dropping previews of the film ahead of its release date.

In one post, she opened up about working on the project:

"We

had a wonderful time making #TheSecretMovie Thank you @thesecret365 for making it such a special experience. @mrjerryoc @joshlucas @therealandytennant. If you know what you want, you can manifest your dreams. Believe again with #TheSecretMovie available on Apple TV and everywhere you rent movies July 31st."



Katie Holmes

Alicia Keys, husband get romantic on their 10-year anniversary

IAN5 | Los Angeles

Singer Alicia Keys and husband Swizz Beatz have been married for a decade but cannot stop gushing over each other.

On Friday, Keys and Beatz celebrated their 10-year wedding anniversary and shared loving notes on Instagram, reports people.com.

The singer posted a photo of the couple leaning in for a kiss, calling Beatz her "love" and a "dream come true".

"You always make me smile. You make me laugh and think and grow and dream and reach and stretch and I am in awe of

our love! 10 jiiiiwwnnntttttzzzzzz!!!!!!," she wrote.

"It's so fast bc it's so much fun!" Keys said of her marriage.

"And so true and real and genuine! I adore you!!!"

"Here's to so much more of the greatness we create together!!! Deeply appreciating and loving every moment," the singer concluded.

Beatz replied saying: "Feels like 10 weeks Wow wow wow, Let's Keep going Queen Love you."



Alicia Keys

Beatz also shared a social media post, including some of his favourite photos of the couple.

In the corner of each picture, Beatz added a sticker that reads "10 years" in honor of their milestone.

"One full decade of love & life wow," Beatz wrote.

"Never raised our voice at each other in 10 years, wow. Thank you for everything my love, you're truly everything my Love."

ANI | Washington

American reality TV star Kim Kardashian's marriage to Kanye West may be going from a tough phase, but the mother of four is choosing to focus on the well-being of the rest of her family to cope.

According to Page Six, the 39-year-old star recently put out a post on Instagram wherein she shared photos from a birthday party she threw for her grandmother - Mary Jo.

Kim's granny celebrated her 86th birthday the same week when

West called out both Kim and her mother Kris Jenner during a bipolar episode.

K a r -



Kim Kardashian

Kim Kardashian focuses on family amid Kanye West marital hustle

dashian shared alongside several photos of the festive family gathering, "Happy 86th birthday to my grandma Mary Jo."

The TV star added, "Last week we celebrated my sweet grandma and she hasn't left her house since January. First, she was sick and then COVID lockdown. So we got her best friends tested and driven up from San Diego to celebrate MJ. We even had her favourite piano player and singer from San Diego come to perform. It was such a magical day and grandma you deserve the best!"

Page Six reported earlier, during a public rally at California, West claimed that he wanted to divorce Kardashian, while also accusing her mother, Jenner, of engaging in "white supremacy." He has since apologized to his wife.

SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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How to play
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

CROSSWORD

Across
1- Polite refusal; 6- Donkey's uncle; 9- Iraqi port; 14- Rice...; 15- Nipper's co.; 16- Fuel transport; 17- Pertaining to the thyroid or adrenal, e.g.; 19- Courageous; 20- Neighbor of Leb.; 21- Polo of "Meet the Parents"; 22- French beans; 23- Poker declaration; 25- Backing for an exhibit; 26- French fashion designer; 29- Wife of a rajah; 31- Add fizz; 32- Worship as a god; 36- Chief; 37- Back in time; 38- Team; 40- Fill up; 43- Lessened; 45- PDA entry; 46- Granular; 47- Swell; 50- Durable wood; 51- Horn-shaped bone; 52- Anna of "Nana"; 54- She's a she; 57- Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"; 58- Ninth month of the year; 61- Vacation; 62- "Cats" monogram; 63- Former Russian rulers; 64- Ford flop; 65- Vane dir.; 66- Until now.

Down
1- Badgers; 2- Air France destination; 3- Fly; 4- Roadhouse; 5- Disencumber; 6- Senator Specter; 7- "The Lion King" villain; 8- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 9- Bells on a ring, making spirits bright...; 10- Buenos Aires; 11- Roofing stone; 12- Party; 13- Son of Zeus in Greek mythology; 18- Of some benefit; 23- Silly; 24- Was introduced to; 25- Brian of rock; 26- Engine part; 27- Pile; 28- Seed cover; 29- Appropriate; 30- Flurry; 33- Singer Chris; 34- Tubular pasta; 35- Elysium of Genesis; 37- Horned viper; 39- Dreyer's partner in ice cream; 41- Chemical-free; 42- Wall St. debut; 43- Representative; 44- Lingerie item; 47- Snooped (around); 48- Some Art Deco works; 49- Cathode's contrary; 50- Home on the range; 51- Bamboo stem; 52- Fast fliers; 53- Actress Harper; 54- Auction site; 55- Used to be; 56- Formerly, formerly; 59- Greek hit; 60- Ed.'s pile.

Yesterday's solution

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Murray wants assurance on quarantine issues before US Open

Andy Murray said he is willing to take the travel "risk" as he missed playing in big events

AFP | London

Players need assurance that they would not face mandatory quarantine upon returning to Europe from the US Open before travelling to New York amid the COVID-19 pandemic, former world number one Andy Murray has said.

Organisers United States Tennis Association (USTA) will set up a strict bio-security 'bubble' to minimise the risk of contracting the novel coronavirus during the Grand Slam, which will be played from Aug. 31-Sept. 13.

The Western & Southern Open, which was relocated from Cincinnati this year because of COVID-19, will also be held in New York from Aug. 20-28 and will serve as a tune-up for the hardcourt Grand Slam.

Mandatory quarantine would rule out players' participation in other ATP and WTA claycourt events scheduled in Europe before the French Open from the end of September.



Andy Murray hits a return during a match (file photo)

The two major claycourt events in the leadup to Roland Garros are in Madrid (Sept. 13-20) and Rome (Sept. 20-27).

While Spain does not require mandatory quarantine, Italy would need travellers to quarantine for 14 days if coming from the US. The USTA has said the organisers are working with relevant authorities to resolve issues.

"My understanding is that it would be sorted before we go to

America. But things can change in the next 10 to 12 days," Murray told British media.

"Hopefully before we leave, the players will have the assurances that, when they come back from America, they won't have to quarantine for two weeks.

"If that is the case, and if you do well in the US Open, you can't just arrive on the Sunday before the French Open starts on the Monday. That's not going to work."

Unites States has over 4.68 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 with more than 155,000 deaths.

Murray, a three-times Grand Slam winner, has not played competitively since November due to hip problems but took part in some exhibition events recently with the professional circuit shut.

The 33-year-old said he is willing to take the travel "risk" as he missed playing in big events.

"The situation I've been in the last few years, I've not had opportunity to play in many Slams. I don't know how many I'll have left," Murray said.

"So, while I'm feeling relatively decent ... obviously there is a risk there, but I want to try and play in them and enjoy the biggest events again."

German Zverev yet to decide on playing US Open



Alexander Zverev

Reuters | Berlin

World number seven Alexander Zverev has said he is still unsure about travelling to New York amid the COVID-19 pandemic to play in the US Open.

Zverev, who reached his maiden Grand Slam semi-final at the Australian Open this year, told the Tennis Majors website he was undecided.

"I will see because the situation right now in the US is not that great so I don't know what we will decide with my team," the 23-year-old added.

"I want to play tournaments, but I think the US right now is a little bit of a funny place."

Zverev faced criticism after a video appeared to show him dancing in a crowded club at the end of June, soon after he said he would self-isolate after playing in Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour event, where numerous players tested positive for COVID-19.



Murray, a three-times Grand Slam winner, has not played competitively since November due to hip problems but took part in some exhibition events recently with the professional circuit shut

Mercedes deserved to win and no regrets, says Verstappen



Max Verstappen of Red Bull Racing climbs out of his car in parc ferme

AFP | London

Max Verstappen said Mercedes deserved to win Sunday's British Grand Prix and he had no regrets about a late pitstop that brought him a point for fastest lap but may have cost him victory.

The Red Bull driver was in third place with Mercedes drivers Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas seemingly heading for a comfortable one-two when he decided to go for the fastest lap bonus point on fresh tyres.

Bottas then suffered a puncture on the penultimate lap that dropped him to 11th while championship leader Hamilton hung on to win after his front left tyre went on the last lap.

Verstappen was too far behind to make up the distance, closing from 31 seconds to five at the finish.

"I know everyone is asking whether we should not have

pitstop for the soft tyre because we could have won but could have, would have, should have. You can always ask these questions with hindsight," said the Dutch 22-year-old, who finished second.

"I don't regret anything and I believe we made the right decision to pit for fastest lap at the end. We did the right thing and who knows if I would also have got a puncture.

"At the end of the day Mercedes deserved to win as they were faster than us, some people are saying Lewis was lucky but he was actually unlucky to get the puncture in the first place and so was Bottas."

Until the punctures, Verstappen's afternoon had been low on excitement.

So lonely was his race behind the two Mercedes that he reversed roles for fun and reminded his race engineer to remember to stay hydrated.

"Other than that I was just counting sheep," he said.

'Didn't think I'd make it': Hamilton's 'heart-stopping' British GP puncture

AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton said he feared he may not have made it home when a last lap puncture almost derailed his charge to a record seventh British Grand Prix victory on Sunday.

"I didn't think I would make it round the last two corners," admitted the world champion.

The front left tyre of his Mercedes had delaminated and deflated on his final lap, leaving the six-time world champion to nurse his car to the finish as second-placed Max Verstappen hunted him down.

"I just can't believe it," said the championship leader.

"It was heart-stopping. I backed off and stayed chilled and was so glad it happened on the straight - not on a high-speed corner like Copse. That would have been a disaster."

Hamilton claimed a record seventh home win - passing Alain Prost's total of six home wins in France - to increase his career total to 87, four short of Michael Schumacher's record of 91.

He also passed Ayrton Senna's record of most races led from start to finish with his 20th lights-to-flag victory, but he conceded it was a race finish like nothing he had previously experienced.

"Up until that last lap everything was relatively smooth-sailing," said Hamilton. "(Teammate) Valtteri (Bottas)



Lewis Hamilton inspects his punctured tyre

was really pushing incredibly hard, I was doing some management of the tyres. Then, when I heard his went, I looked at mine and it seemed fine.

"In the last few laps, I started to back off and then on the last lap it deflated. That was a real heart in the mouth moment.

"You could see it falling off the rim. From then, I was just managing it and I was just praying to get round and not be too slow."

'Survival instincts took over'

"I have definitely never experienced anything like that on

"It was heart-stopping. I backed off and stayed chilled and was so glad it happened on the straight - not on a high-speed corner like Copse. That would have been a disaster"

LEWIS HAMILTON

the last lap and my heart nearly stopped.

"I could hear him (Verstap-

pen) catching me. It was 30 seconds, 20, 19, 15, 10 and then seven. A horrible feeling. I thought he would catch me on the line, but thankfully I got it home.

"I had to stay cool. I had no choice. My survival instincts took over."

Reminded that the weather forecast for next weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix, at the same circuit, is for higher temperatures and, on softer tyres, more wear problems, Hamilton said he was not intending to worry.

"If it's hotter and worse, it's not for me to stress about now."

New Bahrain Esport GT season to begin on Aug 21

● Registration for electronic racing series' second campaign to be held from August 8 to 11

● Championship to feature five rounds starting August 21, with pre-qualifiers on August 14

● Cash prizes of over BDI,500 throughout the season up for the taking

TDT | Manama

The second season of the Bahrain Esport Gran Turismo Championship, the first-of-its-kind electronic sports series in the Middle East, is scheduled to flag off on August 21, the Bahrain Motor Federation (BMF) has announced.

The new campaign is set to be held under the patronage of BMF president Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa.

It follows the success of the inaugural championship, which wrapped up late last month following six highly competitive and exciting rounds.

The Esports competition helps contribute to encouraging people to stay at home amidst the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, which is one of the key measures to help mitigate the virus' spread, in line with the directives of the Government Executive Committee chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

Participants compete in the Gran Turismo Sport video game for the Playstation 4 platform.

The new season is open to all interested racers of all ages.



Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa

Registration is scheduled to take place from Saturday to Tuesday next week. For those wishing to sign up, or for more information, visit begtc.azurewebsites.net.

The second edition of the championship is set to feature five meetings, with cash prizes and trophies or medals set to be awarded to the top three finishers of each race. First place gets BD50, the runner-up takes home BD30 and third place receives BD20. A BD10 prize will also be presented for setting the fastest lap.

Meanwhile, the overall championship winner will win an additional BD500, while second place will get BD300 and third BD200.

Prior to the season-opener, a one-day pre-qualifying event will be held on August 14.

The second round is scheduled for August 28, while round three is set for September 4. The fourth event will be on September 11, followed by the championship-finale on September 18.

Shaikh Abdullah is inviting all those wishing to participate to register for the championship through the series' website.

The BMF chief expressed his thanks to the sponsors of the first season, including Bahrain International Circuit, Batelco, DHL, and Al Hawaj.

The series is being held within the framework established by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) on Esports, which is growing in popularity due to the current times.

Podium success!

Bahraini-British racing team 2 Seas Motorsport take two podium finishes in opening round of 2020 British GT Championship

TDT | Manama

Bahraini-British outfit 2 Seas Motorsport enjoyed a fantastic debut race weekend in the 2020 British GT Championship, after both driver pairings scored podium finishes in the season's opening races at Oulton Park in Cheshire, England, over the weekend.

After starting on the second row of the grid, Angus Fender and Dean Macdonald (sharing the team's no 9 car) took a hard-fought third-place finish overall in the meeting's first event; while the second race saw teammates Jack Mitchell and Jordan Witt (team's no 10 car) move up the order to secure the final podium spot in the silver class in an incident-filled race, which ended behind the safety car.

Following their hugely successful debut, 2 Seas Motorsport team co-owner HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa commented, "An absolutely fantastic result for the team, and to achieve podium finishes for both cars on our debut weekend is something I am hugely proud of—especially against such a strong grid."

"Qualifying on the front two rows of the grid was a huge achievement, and it was great to be battling for the race win within only a few laps against much more experienced competition."

"I'd like to thank the whole 2 Seas Motorsport team which worked tirelessly to put us in the best position going into the weekend. To claim an overall podium on our first ever event, and a further class podium really is the icing on the cake."

A thrilling qualifying saw Witt and Fender ending the session second and third, respectively, as McLaren Customer



The no 9 car of Fender and Macdonald in action in the round's first race

Racing teams locked out the front two rows of the grid. It was one of the closest qualifying results in the championship's history, with Witt's lap time of one minute 34.548 seconds only beaten by 0.001 seconds.

Qualifying for the second of the weekend's races saw Mitchell and Macdonald battling each other, and Mitchell narrowly out-qualified his teammate by another very tight margin.

The opening race saw Witt in the no 10 McLaren and teammate Fender at the wheel of the no 9 hold their respective grid positions and keep the pressure on the leader in the opening stint.

Approaching mid-distance of the 60-minute race, Witt was in a strong position and gaining through every sector before the leader and Fender both pitted, giving the no 10 clean air and an opportunity to open a gap before handing over to Mitchell

“An absolutely fantastic result for the team, and to achieve podium finishes for both cars on our debut weekend is something I am hugely proud of—especially against such a strong grid”

HH SHAIKH ISA BIN ABDULLA AL KHALIFA
2 SEAS MOTORSPORT TEAM CO-OWNER

for the second half of the race.

As the pitstops played out, Mitchell maintained the race lead and started to build a gap to the chasing pack, while Macdonald ran solidly in fourth.

However, a 10-second stop-and-go penalty halted Mitchell's charge, eventually dropping the no 10 down the order but in-turn promoting Macdonald to

third. A further speeding infringement compounded the initial penalty with Mitchell coming home in 12th. Macdonald held on and battled to the chequered flag, claiming an overall and silver class podium on the team's debut.

In the second race, the two 2 Seas Motorsport McLaren 720S GT3s lined up in a repeat formation from the earlier grid. On lap 20, Fender was forced to retire the team's no 9 car after receiving heavy impact from debris caused by an incident, which saw the safety car deployed. Then, with just over 15 minutes remaining and Fender still stranded out on track, the race concluded with Witt and Mitchell promoted to fourth overall and a first podium in the silver class for the pair.

The season resumes with the second meeting scheduled for August 15 and 16 at Donington Park in Leicestershire.

Bernal triumphs in pre-Tour mountain test

AFP | Paris

Defending Tour de France champion Egan Bernal marked out his territory yesterday climbing to a summit finish victory on stage three of the French Route d'Occitanie.

Bernal's Ineos teammate Russia's Pavel Sivakov was second at 10 seconds and Astana's Aleksandr Vlasov third 17 seconds behind less than a month ahead of the rescheduled Tour.

The Colombian punched the air joyously as he soloed over the finish line to rapturous applause from the fans who had defied the vehicle ban by walking or cycling to the mountain summit finale.

Bernal also clinched the overall lead of the four-day race, on a stage typical of those found on the Tour with around 40km of hard climbs.

"This is a test day for all the favourites of the Tour," France's Thibaut Pinot said ahead of the stage in which he finished fourth 31 seconds behind the



Colombia's Egan Bernal celebrates after his win

23-year-old winner.

A household name in his homeland since winning last year's Tour, he warmed up for that by taking overall victory in the Paris-Nice and Tour de Suisse, and looks a nailed on favourite to win this season's race.

Four-time Tour winner Chris Froome was dropped at the bottom of the final climb and ended the day over five minutes adrift of Colombian Bernal.

French climber Romain Bardet, who fell heavily on Sunday, was 1 minute 18 seconds off the winner. After negotiating the narrow lanes in the Pyrenean foothills the race went up the 10km of the Col de Peyresourde at an average of 7.5%, then ascended the slightly longer Col de Beyrede at 7.2%.

Die-hard cyclo-tourists and those fit enough to go up on foot had defied the 24-hour traffic ban on the day's final climb.

Lampard calls for 'fair' treatment for tired Chelsea

AFP | London

Frank Lampard has called on the Premier League to give Chelsea a fair start to next season, saying the September 12 launch date is "too early" for his players.

The Blues lost Saturday's FA Cup final 2-1 to London rivals Arsenal but are still not finished with the current campaign.

Lampard's side take on Bayern Munich on Saturday in the rescheduled second leg of their Champions League round-of-16 tie, trailing 3-0 from the first leg.

Even if they exit the competition, Chelsea will have just 35 days before the new season is due to begin.

Manchester City are also still in the Champions League, the final of which is scheduled for August 23, while Manchester United and Wolves are involved in the Europa League, which ends on August 21.

It is understood that when Premier League clubs agreed a



Frank Lampard

September 12 start date, it was also clear there would need to be at least a 30-day break for Chelsea and any of the other teams playing in the end-of-season European competitions.

Lampard lost Willian and Ruben Loftus-Cheek on the eve of the FA Cup final to injury and Cesar Azpilicueta and goalscorer Christian Pulisic during the game to hamstring problems.

"Even in a worst-case scenario, we don't go through against Bayern, the 12th feels too early for me for the players to start playing again," said the Chelsea boss.

“The players need a break. That is why we have pulled two hamstrings and had players pull out of the game before this. I would like to think the Premier League would look seriously at that”

FRANK LAMPARD

"The players need a break. That is why we have pulled two hamstrings and had players pull out of the game before this."

Lampard implored the Premier League to make sure clubs start the next season with a level playing field.

"I would like to think the Premier League would look seriously at that," he said.

"Hopefully they give us a fair start next season. We deserve to be (given a fair start) as a Premier League club competing in the Champions League."