

News in brief

◆ **Jared Kushner is forming a group to promote relations between four Arab states and Israel**, normalized under agreements he helped broker as a top adviser to his father-in-law former President Donald Trump, the group said yesterday. Kushner is founding the "Abraham Accords Institute for Peace," to work on deepening agreements Israel reached last year with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco. Kushner, who is married to Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump, is writing a book about his experience in helping broker the deals. He will be joined in the new group by former U.S. envoy Avi Berkowitz and ambassadors to the United States from Bahrain, the UAE and Israel.



Kushner launches group to promote Arab states' new ties with Israel

◆ **Syrian air defences downed several Israeli missiles** during pre-dawn raids on the Mediterranean port city of Latakia, the Syrian army said on Wednesday, a rare attack on the ancestral home region of the Syrian leader and close to a Russian air base. A Syrian army statement said



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Syria says Israeli raids target Mediterranean port region of Latakia

aerial strikes soon after 2am hit several areas along the south west coast of Latakia. One civilian was killed and six injured in one of the strikes that the army said hit a civilian plastics factory. State media earlier reported the Israeli attack also hit the town of Hifa, east of Latakia, and Misyaf in Hama province.

◆ Facebook Inc's (FB.O) oversight board on Wednesday upheld the company's suspension of

Trump still banned from Facebook but board demands company review



former U.S. President Donald Trump

but gave the company six months to determine a "proportionate response" going forward, a verdict that may chart how social media will treat rule-breaking world leaders in the future. The company inappropriately imposed an indeterminate suspension without clear standards, the board said, requiring a company review. The Board said Facebook should determine a response that is consistent with rules applied to other users of the platform.

Netanyahu's two main rivals seek chance to form government after he fails

◆ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's two main political rivals** each

asked the president yesterday for the chance to try to form a government, after Netanyahu failed to meet an overnight deadline to assemble a coalition. Israel's longest serving leader, Netanyahu, 71, has been fighting to hold onto office through four inconclusive elections since 2019. The most recent vote on March 23, held while Netanyahu is also on trial for corruption charges he denies, yielded no majority for the prime minister or for a loose alliance of rivals from across the political spectrum aiming to topple him. A 28-day mandate to put together a coalition ran out at midnight after Netanyahu failed to agree terms with potential right-wing partners, opening the way for President Reuven Rivlin to assign the task to another member of parliament.

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	33,276,988	592,456	155,226,035
2 India	20,764,074	226,720	
3 Brazil	14,860,812	411,854	Deaths
4 France	5,680,378	105,387	
5 Turkey	4,929,118	41,527	3,244,842
6 Russia	4,847,489	111,895	
7 UK	4,425,940	127,570	Recovered:
8 Italy	4,059,821	121,738	
9 Spain	3,544,945	78,399	132,655,770
10 Germany	3,457,118	84,457	
11 Argentina	3,047,417	65,202	New cases
12 Colombia	2,919,805	75,627	
13 Poland	2,811,951	68,482	+248,148
14 Iran	2,591,609	73,568	
			New deaths
			+4,137

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	231,803		13,591		173,341	44,871
Saudi Arabia	422,316	+1,016	7,018	+12	405,607	9,691
UAE	529,220	+1,954	1,601	+3	509,658	17,961
Kuwait	279,085		1,601		262,582	14,902
Oman	198,572	+770	2,071	+9	180,547	15,954
Qatar	208,232		483		195,521	12,228

Kurdish leader says he fears Islamic State comeback in Iraq

Reuters | Iraq, Sulaimaniya

A senior Kurdish official has said there are growing indications that Islamic State is trying to make a comeback after an uptick in attacks in Iraq.

At least 19 members of Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdish security forces have been killed in recent days across the country, according to military statements and security officials, prompting calls from Iraq's president to remain vigilant to the threat of a resurgent Islamic State.

The attacks come after Baghdad's deadliest suicide bombing in three years, claimed in January by the ultra hardline Sunni Islamist group, and amid



Lahur Talabany

fears that a reduction of US-led forces could upset stability.

"It seems like (Islamic State) have re-organised," Lahur Talabany, co-president of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party and a former intelligence chief told Reuters in an interview.

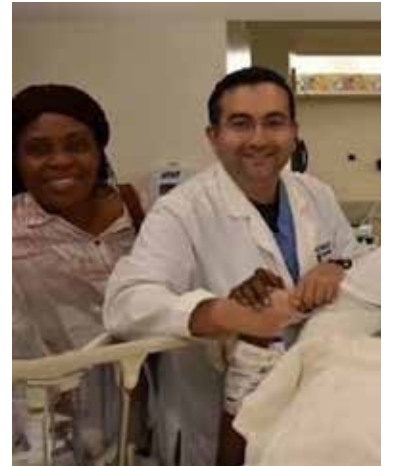
Mali woman gives birth

● **Cases of women successfully carrying septuplets to term are rare -- and nonuplets even rarer**

AFP News

A Malian woman gave birth to nonuplets in Morocco on Tuesday and all nine babies are "doing well", her government said, although Moroccan authorities had yet to confirm what would be an extremely rare case.

Mali's government flew 25-year-old Halima Cisse, a woman from the north of the poor West African state, to Morocco



25-year-old Halima Cisse after delivering nonuplets, courtesy of News18/Facebook) Inset, three babies in a photo released by the Health Ministry for better care on March 30. She

India pumps billions

● **Oxygen shipment from Bahrain, US reach India**

● **India Ambassador to Bahrain thanks associations and community members here for their support**

TDT | agencies

India released \$6.7 billion in cheap financing for vaccine makers, hospitals and other health firms yesterday as US President Joe Biden said 70 % of American adults should have had at least one coronavirus shot by July 4.

Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das also vowed to deploy "unconventional" measures if the crisis worsens.

"The devastating speed with which the virus affects different regions of the country has to be matched by swift and wide-ranging actions," Das said.

The new measures -- making it easier for banks to give cheap loans to hospitals, oxygen manufacturers and even patients -- aim to improve access to emergency health care, he said.

The central bank will also give some general business borrowers more time to repay loans to help underpin the economy, Das added.



Two liquid oxygen cryogenic containers of 20 MT each from Bahrain getting offloaded in India

Deeply appreciate this support from Bahrain. Taking forward our close bilateral ties deep-rooted in shared history & cultural affinities

ARINDAM BAGCHI, POKESPERSON OF INDIA'S MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

We are happy that the Indian associations and community members have come forward to help the people back home at this point when the Government of India is dealing with the second severe wave of COVID 19. The Embassy supports this initiative and is working to coordinate this effort and provide logistical assistance

INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN, PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA.

"The immediate objective is to preserve human life and restore livelihoods through all means possible," he added.

Around 40 nations across the world had said that they would send medical supplies and assistance to help India deal with the pandemic.

The first consignments of medical supplies from foreign nations arrived in India on April 25 from Singapore. Since then, reports say, tonnes of foreign aid in the form of oxygen generators, concentrators and ventilators were received by the Ministry of External Affairs officials in the past week.

The official spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs, Arindam Bagchi, yesterday, tweeted receiving liquid oxygen

US climate envoy Kerry says islands face 'beyond existential' threat

Reuters

US climate envoy John Kerry said Tuesday island nations faced a situation "beyond existential" due to climate change, as he called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and coal plant financing.

The 20 countries responsible for most of the world's emissions had a "special responsibility" to take action, Kerry said -- but warned they were not "moving in the same direction" or fast enough.

"When I talk to some of the island state leaders they are not just considering adaptation and resilience, they are considering where they are going to move to," Kerry told a virtual seminar

during the Manila-based Asian Development Bank's annual meeting.

"It's beyond existential." Kerry, the former secretary of state who has become President Joe Biden's globe-trotting climate envoy, said "adequate finance" was critical for achieving the goal of checking warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times -- the aspiration set in the Paris Agreement to avoid the most severe effects of climate change.

But he said nations were moving too slowly.

"We all know what we have to get done here. I hate to say it but we are sort of inching along, we are not actually getting it done," he warned.

"Emissions are the wrong track back from Covid because of the reason to be there," Kerry's remarks weeks after Biden for cutting green putting the country on climate.

Asian Development Bank's Masatsugu Asakawa said the Asia Pacific region, the world was responsible for global greenhouse gas emissions.

As the market bounces this year 80 percent of the coal demand will