



5 Kuwait opens interim camp for IDPs in Yemen's Maareb



6 Trump's Tulsa rally defies virus risk in search of campaign buzz



14 Arab Israeli woman draws surfers to fishing village



20 Solskjaer delighted by Pogba performance in draw at Spurs



WHO warns world in 'new and dangerous phase' of pandemic

Saudi virus cases exceed 150,000, Makkah mosques reopen



TABATINGA, Brazil: An indigenous girl of the Ticuna ethnic group receives medical assistance at a health post in Umariacu village in Amazonas state on Friday amid the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

RIO DE JANEIRO: The World Health Organization has warned of a "new and dangerous phase" of the coronavirus pandemic, as infections continued to surge in the Americas, with Brazil registering more than one million cases, Colombia and Mexico also passed bleak milestones, as their death tolls topped 2,000 and 20,000, respectively, showing how the virus continues ravaging the Americas and parts of Asia even as Europe starts to ease out of lockdown.

The measures imposed to halt the spread of the disease have caused crippling economic damage, but the WHO warned against giving in to isolation fatigue. "The world is in a new and dangerous phase. Many people are understandably fed up with being at home... but the virus is still spreading fast," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference.

The virus has now killed more than 458,000 people and infected 8.6 million worldwide. A vaccine remains months off at best despite several trials, and scientists are still making daily discoveries about the virus, its symptoms and the extent to which it may have spread before being identified.

The number of coronavirus cases in Saudi Arabia exceeded 150,000 on Friday following a rise in new infections over the past 10 days. The Saudi Ministry of Health reported 4,301 new cases on Friday, taking the total to 150,292, with 1,184 deaths. The country

hit more than 100,000 cases on June 7. The number of new infections has continued to rise in recent weeks, as authorities began phasing out restrictions on movement and travel on May 28.

Saudi Arabia planned to reopen from yesterday mosques in Makkah, the holiest city in Islam, after they were closed for three months due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, state television reported. The kingdom has taken restrictive measures against the virus, particularly in Makkah, but the number of new coronavirus cases has notably increased in recent days.

"The mosques in the holy city will begin to reopen their doors to the faithful on Sunday after three months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic," the state-run Al-Ekhabriya channel reported, citing a decision by the Islamic affairs ministry. Some 1,500 holy sites are preparing to welcome visitors, the channel reported, showing footage of workers disinfecting floors and carpets. The decision comes weeks before the hajj. While the hajj is set to be held in late July, authorities are yet to announce if it will go ahead or be cancelled.

Brazil, which has the second-highest number of infections and deaths after the United States, reported a one-day record of nearly 55,000 new infections, becoming the second country to pass one million cases.

Continued on Page 16

Modi downplays clash; China hands back 10 soldiers

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi appeared to downplay a clash with Chinese troops in a disputed Himalayan region that left 20 Indian soldiers dead and more than 70 injured, saying on Friday there had been no intrusion across his country's borders. "Nobody has intruded into our border, neither is anybody there now, nor have our posts been captured," Modi said, referring to Ladakh's Galwan valley, where hand-to-hand fighting between soldiers from the nuclear-armed neighbors took place earlier this week.

Amid mounting calls for a boycott of Chinese products and highly-charged public funerals for the dead soldiers, Modi said "the entire country is hurt and angry at the steps taken by China". India and China are attempting to cool tensions after the deadliest clash in at least five decades, with military-level talks taking place in an attempt to deescalate the confrontation. But Modi's comments, made in a televised statement at the end of an all-party meeting to discuss the incident, contrasted with his government's earlier stance.

On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar had told a senior Chinese diplomat that the dispute was triggered after "the Chinese side sought to erect a structure in Galwan valley on our side of the LAC," according to a ministry statement. The LAC refers to the Line of Actual Control, the de facto border that has been a constant source of friction in the region where India

and China fought a brief war in 1962.

With his nation in shock over the loss its soldiers' lives, Modi faces one of the most difficult foreign policy challenges since he came to power in 2014. On Friday evening, some opposition parties questioned why the government was not better prepared. "Does the government not receive, on a regular basis, satellite pictures of the borders of our country? Did our external intelligence agencies not report any unusual activity along the LAC?" said Sonia Gandhi, president of the opposition Congress party.

Earlier on Friday, an Indian government source said that China had returned 10 Indian soldiers captured during the battle. In a briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign

Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian denied any Indian troops had been in its custody. "As far as I know China hasn't seized any Indian

Continued on Page 16



BHOJRAJ, India: Sandeep Kaur and her brother Prabhjot Singh react after laying wreaths on the coffin of their father Satnam Singh during a cremation ceremony in this village near Gurdaspur on June 18, 2020. — AFP

Sleep, Netflix for Malala as she graduates

LONDON: She is known the world over for her campaign for girls' education. Now Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai has finished her degree at Oxford University and, like all students, is just looking forward to some sleep and some movies. With universities in Britain temporarily closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, Yousafzai posted pictures on social media which showed her celebrating with a cake and balloons, and covered in foam, paint and confetti as per tradition for Oxford students on the last day of their final exams.



Malala Yousafzai

"Hard to express my joy and gratitude right now as I completed my Philosophy, Politics and

Continued on Page 16

Iran judge found dead in Romania

BUCHAREST: A fugitive Iranian judge sought by Tehran for alleged corruption was found dead after apparently falling from a hotel room in Bucharest, Romanian police said Friday. The police said an investigation was under way after a foreign national aged 52, who they identified as Gholamreza Mansouri, was found in the early afternoon. The circumstances of his death are not yet clear, but the investigators' first lead

is suicide, according to police sources.

Mansouri had been arrested last week in the Romanian capital but afterwards placed under judicial control, meaning he was banned from leaving the country and should regularly report to police. Mansouri was due to appear before a Romanian court on 10 July regarding the Iranian extradition request. Mansouri was wanted in his homeland over alleged corruption within the country's judicial system amid reports he accepted 500,000 euros (\$530,000) in bribes.

Reporters Without Borders meanwhile has accused him of torture and crimes against humanity following

Protesters rally, topple statue on Juneteenth

WASHINGTON: Protesters in Washington toppled a statue of a Confederate general late Friday, after nationwide rallies to demand racial justice on a day heavy with symbolism — the Juneteenth holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. Demonstrations were held in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington against a backdrop of weeks of protests fueled by the deaths of

African Americans at the hands of police.

In a stark illustration of the tensions roiling the nation, President Donald Trump issued a solemn White House statement commemorating Juneteenth, while also threatening protesters on Twitter ahead of his controversial rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma yesterday. Juneteenth marks the day — June 19, 1865 — when a Union general arrived in Galveston, Texas and informed slaves that they were free — two months after the Civil War had ended and two-and-a-half years after president Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

The date is generally celebrated with prayer services and family

Continued on Page 16



WASHINGTON: People stand around the statue of Confederate general Albert Pike after it was toppled by protesters at Judiciary square late Friday. — AFP