



5 Scientists look beyond solar system for traces of life



8 Lebanese dread end to subsidies as crisis bites



13 The unstoppable revenge of the mullet hairstyle



16 Kohli hails India comeback as rout seals England series



 **Kuwait Times** **REGISTER TODAY** for the **COVID-19 vaccine** [See Page 16](#)

Exempting vaccinated arrivals from hotel quarantine mulled

All registered over-65s vaccinated • 12-hr curfew begins • PACI sets new timings



KUWAIT: Nine-martyrs in eight Kuwaitis and a Saudi - who had been missing since the 1990-1991 Gulf War, were buried yesterday after their remains were identified recently. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 2)

KUWAIT: Health ministry assistant undersecretary for public health Dr Buthayna Al-Mudhaf said the ministry is contemplating excluding those who have received the coronavirus vaccine from institutional quarantine upon their return to the country, and they will only have to quarantine at home. She said technical committees are studying the issue according to a methodology based on the latest scientific studies and recommendations of international health organizations, adding that the report will be submitted as soon as the study is completed.

Meanwhile, Mudhaf said all people aged over 65 who had registered for the coronavirus vaccine have been inoculated - both citizens and expats. However, she said only 17.4 percent of those eligible to receive the vaccine have registered, calling upon citizens and expats to quickly register for the job.

Kuwait yesterday said 1,318 people tested positive for COVID-19 with seven related deaths, taking total cases to 199,428, while deaths rose to 1,120, according to the health ministry. On Friday, 1,613 people tested positive with eight related deaths.

Kuwait will impose a 5 pm to 5 am curfew from today until April 8 in a bid to contain the coron-

avirus. Kuwait has since Feb 7 cut opening hours for non-essential retail shops and banned non-citizens from entering the country, but a steep increase in cases in the past week has forced the government to take more stringent measures.

People may walk to mosques to perform prayers during curfew hours, while pharmacies and food shops must use delivery services and all public parks and recreational areas will be closed. Those who break the rules, which also include mandatory use of face masks outside the home, can be fined as much as KD 5,000 and jailed for up to three months.

The country had imposed some of the strictest measures in the Gulf during the first wave of the pandemic over the summer, enforcing a nationwide lockdown with few exceptions. Like most Gulf countries, Kuwait's economy and state budgets have been hit hard by the economic fallout of the pandemic combined with the low price of oil.

Meanwhile, The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced yesterday the working schedule to receive the public during the partial lockdown approved by the Cabinet beginning today

Continued on Page 2

Rapid COVID tests sell out on first day in Germany

FRANKFURT: Germans flocked to supermarket chain Aldi yesterday to snap up the first rapid coronavirus tests to go on sale nationwide, with stocks selling out within hours. Rival discounter Lidl meanwhile saw its website crash after it started offering at-home testing kits for sale online. "We want to assure anyone who left empty-handed that new stocks are coming in the next days," an Aldi spokesman told the Bild newspaper.

The German government is relying heavily on rapid tests to steer country through the next phase of the pandemic as citizens tire of coronavirus shutdowns but the pace of vaccinations remains sluggish. From tomorrow, all Germans will be entitled to one free rapid test a week, carried out by a professional at pharmacies or designated testing centers.

Several manufacturers have also received regulatory approval for DIY tests meant for home use. The goal is to give people more freedom after months of closures and limits on socializing, but experts have stressed that the quick tests are less reliable than standard PCR testing and that the usual hygiene precautions should be maintained even with a negative result.

Aldi is limiting the purchases to one packet per person, containing five tests for €24.99 (\$30). The test is done with a nasal swab and delivers a result within 15 minutes. Lidl's offer is similar and costs €21.99. Tests will also go on sale at major drug store chains and other outlets in the coming days.

Health Minister Jens Spahn, already under fire over Germany's slow vaccination pace, has promised there will be "more than enough" rapid tests for everyone, including 50 million free tests a month. But critics have questioned whether local authorities are ready to cope with the expected huge demand.

Manuela Schwesig, the state premier of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, said supermarkets were better prepared than the federal government. "I fail to understand why rapid tests are now being sold by discounters but have yet to be ordered for daycares and schools," she said. Germany has struggled to bring down COVID-19 rates in recent weeks, with numbers plateauing and even rising on some days. The country added 9,557 new coronavirus cases yesterday and another 300 deaths, according to the Robert Koch Institute. —AFP

Pope, Sistani call for peace

BAGHDAD: Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, one of Shiism's top clerics, told Pope Francis in a historic meeting in Iraq yesterday that the country's Christians should live in "peace". The meeting, on the second day of the first-ever papal visit to Iraq, marked a landmark moment in modern religious history and in terms of Francis' efforts to deepen interfaith dialogue.

Pope Francis later addressed the rich spectrum of Iraq's religious com-

munities at Ur, traditional birthplace of the Prophet Abraham (PBUH), a central figure in the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, where he made an impassioned plea for "unity" after conflict. The 84-year-old pontiff's trip to Iraq is an effort to both reassure the country's ancient but dwindling Christian community and expand his dialogue with other faiths.

His meeting with the grand ayatollah in Najaf lasted 50 minutes, and Sistani's office put out a statement shortly afterwards thanking Francis for visiting the holy city. Sistani, 90, "affirmed his concern that Christian citizens should live like all Iraqis

Continued on Page 2



NAJAF: Pope Francis meets top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani in this Iraqi shine city yesterday. — AFP

Gaza girl dons mask to heal burnt face

GAZA: The moment Maram Al-Amawi gets back from school, she slips on the 3D-printed mask that covers her face and treats her severe burns from a blaze at a Gaza bakery. But she doesn't go out in the streets for fear of being made fun of. Eight-year-old Maram was severely burned a year ago in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nuseirat, in the central Gaza

Strip. The inferno, which local authorities said was caused by a gas leak, left 25 dead and dozens injured, and ravaged several shops.

Today, she and her mother, who was also seriously injured on the face and hands, wear transparent plastic masks developed by medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF). The 3D-printed mask puts pressure on the face and advances the healing process, explains Firas Suergo, head of physiotherapy for MSF in Gaza. The patient's face is copied using a 3D scanner, which then allows the printing of a customized plastic mask.

Since the launch of the project in April 2020, which has also been run in

Continued on Page 2



GAZA: Palestinian girl Maram and her mother Izzidhar Al-Amawi get fitted with a 3D-printed transparent face mask at a clinic run by Doctors Without Borders in Gaza City on Feb 22, 2021. — AFP

Perseverance Mars rover goes for 'spin'

WASHINGTON: The Mars rover Perseverance has successfully conducted its first test drive on the Red Planet, the US space agency NASA said Friday. The six-wheeled rover travelled about 6.5 m in 33 minutes on Thursday, NASA said. It drove four

meters forward, turned in place 150 degrees to the left, and then backed up 2.5 meters, leaving tire tracks in the Martian dust.

"This was our first chance to 'kick the tires' and take Perseverance out for a spin," said Anais Zarifian, Perseverance mobility test bed engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. Zarifian said the test drive went "incredibly well" and represented a "huge milestone for the mission and the mobility team."

Continued on Page 2



This image was captured when NASA's Perseverance rover drove on Mars for the first time on March 4, 2021. — AFP