



An employee works making typical Pinatas at a workshop in Xochimilco.



A man sells typical Pinatas and poinsettia plants.



View of poinsettia plants.

go forward," she told AFP.

Apart from pinatas, sales of poinsettias, a red flower indigenous to Mexico used for Christmas decorations, are also doing well this year. Some 16 million plants have been

sold in Mexico, according to the Agriculture ministry. "We feared that sales would fall, but thanks to local consumption we sold almost 30,000 plants," Edgar Lopez who manages the San Marcos greenhouse told AFP. But Julieta

Lopez, who sells both pinatas and poinsettias, said she fears sales will decrease if more restrictions are put in place. Mexico has recorded 1.27 million Covid-19 cases and 115,099 deaths since the start of the pandemic.—AFP

Nativity scene lights up Italy's Cinque Terre coast



The Manarola Nativity Scene is pictured on the hill of Manarola, Cinque Terre, Northwestern Italy. —AFP photos

One of the world's largest nativity scenes lights up the hilltop town of Manarola in Italy's famed Cinque Terre, joined this year by a statue honoring medics who battle coronavirus. More than 150 figures depict shepherds and fishermen, sheep, camels and angels gathered around Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. Lit up with eight kilometers of electricity cables, they are visible from the sea as well. A new addition this year is a statue of a nurse with a heart next to it, a tribute to the medics working in the Covid-19 pandemic. Italy has been hard hit by the virus, which has killed more than 65,000 people so far.

Watching the lights go on, local school

teacher Elisabetta Colarusso said it was a welcome reminder of normal life. "We need signs of hope and at least an appearance of normality," she told AFP. The nativity scene dates back to 1961, when local railway worker Mario Andreoli placed a cross onto the hill opposite the town to fulfill a wish by his dying father. He had the idea of lighting it up with a car battery, and was delighted with the result. He used iron bars and recycled materials to create many more figures over the years, each weighing up to 20 kilograms. At first, Andreoli—now 92—had to carry them up the steep hill himself, but now there is a whole team putting them up each Christmas.—AFP



The Manarola Nativity Scene shines from a hill next to Manarola, Cinque Terre, Northwestern Italy.



Stefano Cassigoli, member of "Associazione Presepe di Manarola" (Manarola's Nativity Scene association), checks the illumination of the statues during the night on the hill of Manarola, Cinque Terre.



Stefano Cassigoli a member of "Associazione Presepe di Manarola" (Manarola's Nativity Scene association), sets a figure of a doctor, dedicated of healthcare personnel, on the hill of Manarola.