

## Local

# Parents weigh in on online education experience

## Parenting for online students brings new challenges

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Since the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents have slowly accepted the reality that classes will continue to be held online. Students face several challenges, from Internet connectivity, speed, the devices they use, assignments to complete and workbooks to fill, to time spent on the computer, playing computer games and social media use. Also, teachers are reportedly giving more homework than they would if classes were held on campus.

Online school is more than just a huge change - it's an emotional burden on many students and parents. Raquel, a Filipino mother of three, has embraced the changes, but is hoping for normalcy and on-campus classes to return soon. "I stopped pushing my kids to their limits. I don't want to add more burden on them. This is an extraordinary time and requires understanding," said Raquel, who is a working mother.

Before the pandemic, Raquel said she used to challenge her children to do well in school in exchange of rewards. "I stopped being a pushy parent because I see their daily struggles with online classes. I hate seeing my kids getting exhausted on the computer. Once my eldest daughter, who is 16 years old, was crying and hiding in the room. She said was that she was very tired and experiencing difficulties in studying online. I never experienced

what they are going through, so after giving her a big hug, I went straight to the bathroom and cried too," she admitted.

"I understand her perfectly because I am a working mother. I have tasked her to watch over and help her two younger siblings (a 14-year-old sister and 8-years-old brother). When I come home from work, we review all their subjects and help them in their assignments," Raquel said. Her husband helps in performance-based assessments and projects.

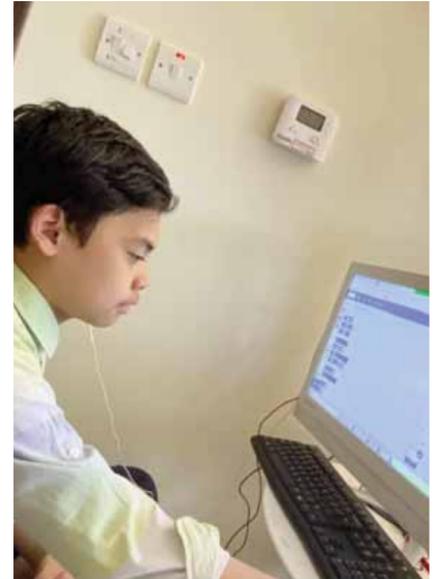
For a Syrian-Lebanese couple, studying online is tough. Mona said most of the time she looks after the needs of her two children. She is also a working mother, while her husband runs a small auto mechanic business. "After I come home from my job, I immediately cook dinner; if I'm too exhausted, I order from a restaurant. I do not bother my husband if he is relaxing or watching Netflix or football matches, as he would be angry," she said.

Mona's children are in grades 8 and grade 10 respectively. "Once I had a problem with my daughter, who said she doesn't want to attend online classes at all. I came to know that for two days, she only showed herself during attendance, but would switch off the camera and play games with friends on social media. When I confronted my daughter about it, she said she was fed up and doesn't understand anything. I didn't know what to do - I just cried," she recalled.

“ I stopped pushing my kids to their limits ”



KUWAIT: Students participate in online classes.



But there are some who see the advantages of online classes. Romeo, a father of two, said while there are many negative comments about remote learning, he sees more benefits for his children. "My kids no longer travel back and forth to school, so there is less hassle. I also save money on trans-

portation and no longer have to give them an extra allowance," he said. Romeo added because they are now studying at home, his children can concentrate more on their assignments. But he conceded that overexposure to the computer can have a negative impact.

## Kuwait's social affairs minister discusses ties with several envoys



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Social Affairs Minister Mubarak Al-Aro meets Tajikistan's Ambassador Zabidullah Zabidov. — KUNA photos



Kuwait's Social Affairs Minister Mubarak Al-Aro meets India's Ambassador Sibi George.



Kuwait's Social Affairs Minister Mubarak Al-Aro meets Egypt's Ambassador Osama Shaltout.

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Social Affairs Minister Mubarak Al-Aro held separate talks with several ambassadors to the country, focusing on plans to improve bilateral relations and bolster cooperation across numerous fields. Tajikistan's and

India's ambassadors to Kuwait, Zabidullah Zabidov and Sibi George respectively, discussed bilateral ties with the Kuwaiti minister, with the latter thanking Kuwait for the aid it had given to New Delhi as it battled a recent surge of COVID-

19 cases. Egypt's envoy to Kuwait Osama Shaltout was also among the ambassadors to have had an encounter with the Kuwaiti minister, discussing efforts to improve his country's ties with Kuwait. The Kuwaiti minister held similar

talks with Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani, with issues ranging from women's empowerment to Canadian investments in Kuwait among the topics discussed, according to a social affairs ministry statement. — KUNA

## Spinal cord implant helps paralyzed...

Continued from Page 1

But the three were able to take steps shortly after the six-centimeter implant was inserted and its pulses were fine-tuned. "These electrodes were longer and larger than the ones we had previously implanted, and we could access more muscles thanks to this new technology," said Jocelyne Bloch, a neurosurgeon at the Lausanne University Hospital who helped lead the trial.

Those initial steps, while breathtaking for the researchers and their patients, were difficult and required support bars and significant upper body strength. But the patients could start rehabilitation immediately, and within four months Roccati could walk with only a frame for balance. "It's not that it's a miracle right away, not by far," cautioned Gregoire Courtine, a neuroscientist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology who led the research with Bloch.

Roccati is now "able to stand for two hours - he walks almost one kilometer without stopping". The Italian described being able to look clients in the eye, have a drink at a standing table and take a shower standing up thanks to the implant. He and others in the trial were also able to climb stairs, swim and canoe.

The improvements depend on the electrical stimulation, which is triggered via a computer carried by the patient that activates a pattern of pulses. Two of the patients can now activate their muscles slightly without

electrical pulses, but only minimally. The three men had all been injured at least a year before the study and Bloch said the team hopes to trial the technology with people sooner after an accident. "What we all think is that if you try earlier it will have more effect," she said.

There are challenges: In early recovery a patient's capacity is still in flux, making it hard to set a baseline from which to measure progress, and ongoing medical treatment and pain could hamper rehabilitation. So far, the implants are also only suitable for those with an injury above the lower thoracic spinal cord, the section running from the base of the neck to the abdomen, because six centimeters of healthy spinal cord is needed.

The idea of using electrical pulses to address paralysis stemmed from technology used to regulate pain, and the researchers said they see scope for further applications. They have also shown it can regulate low blood pressure in spinal cord injury patients and plan to soon release a study on its use for severe Parkinson's disease.

The team cautioned that significant work remains before the implant is available for treatment outside clinical studies, with Bloch saying she and Courtine receive around five messages a day from would-be patients seeking help.

They next plan to miniaturize the computer that activates the pulses so it too can be implanted in patients and controlled with a smartphone. They expect this to be possible this year, and have plans for large-scale trials involving 50-100 patients in the United States and then Europe. "We believe there is a bright future for neurological stimulation technology," said Courtine. "We'll do (it) as fast as we can." — AFP

have the right to speak. They suffer from repression and violence, and we want to deliver their voice," he told Kuwait Times.

The protest came after a women's yoga retreat that was denounced as "immoral" was postponed over the weekend after authorities said it needed a permit. The defense ministry last month imposed new rules on women in the military, saying they have to wear a hijab, need permission from a male guardian to join and are not allowed to carry weapons. Kuwaiti women, who earned the right to vote in 2005, have long been pushing the boundaries of their society, considered one of the most open in the region. Last year, they defied conservative norms and a culture of "shame" to speak out against harassment for the first time.

## Protests over classroom hijab...

Continued from Page 1

Two other schools that had implemented a hijab ban declared a holiday and were closed yesterday.



BANGALORE, India: Muslim women hold placards during a demonstration after educational institutes in Karnataka denied entry to students for wearing hijabs yesterday. — AFP

## Morocco lays Rayan to rest...

Continued from Page 1

hundreds of mourners attended his funeral, AFP journalists said. Rayan's father Khaled Aourram said he had been repairing the well when his son fell in, close to the family home. The shaft, just 45 cm across, was too narrow for Rayan to be reached directly, and widening it was deemed too risky - so earth movers dug a wide slope into the hill. Rescue crews, using bulldozers and front-end loaders, excavated the surrounding red earth down to the level where the boy was trapped, before drill teams carefully dug a horizontal tunnel to reach him from

the side to avoid causing a landslide.

Vast crowds came to offer their support, singing and praying to encourage the rescuers who worked around the clock. But the boy's death left Moroccans in shock. Mourad Fazoui in Rabat mourned what he said was a disaster. "May his soul rest in peace and may God open the gates of heaven to him," the salesman said.

The Arabic daily newspaper Assabah criticized the digging of unauthorized wells, saying many were used to irrigate cannabis widely grown in Morocco's north. Social media across the Arab world were flooded with messages of support, grief, and praise for rescue workers. "He has brought people together around him," one Twitter user said. But one deplored a "dystopian world" where "Arab nations are moved" by the Morocco rescue operation for the child while vast numbers of infants die in conflict or famine in Yemen and Syria. — AFP

## Protesters rally for women's...

Continued from Page 1

Men too participated in the demonstration. Mishaan Al-Barrak, member of the Kuwait Progressive Movement, said people are participating to counter attacks on public and private freedoms. "Recently, we have noticed increasing violations of women's rights. We came to represent and speak on behalf of marginalized women such as bedoons, domestic workers and others who don't