

[Doff your caps to this Lebanese artist's record-breaking Ramadan artwork](#)

Fri, 2020-05-22 16:45

CAIRO: A Lebanese artist is about to set a new world record with a massive mosaic image of the Ramadan crescent moon she made with a million bottle caps.

Caroline Chaptini, who is a Christian, said she decided to create the 240-square-meter artwork featuring the symbol of the Muslim holy month to celebrate the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of Ramadan, and highlight the unity of Lebanese people of all religions and sects.

She opted to think big when planning the project and set out to break the existing world record for bottle-top mosaics, which was set in 2019 when employees of Japanese manufacturing company Sintokogio used 105,840 caps to create a 108-square-meter image.

This is not Chaptini's first world record success. Last year in Chekka, a coastal town in northern Lebanon, she built a 28.1 meter-tall Christmas tree made from 120,000 plastic bottles, which set a new Guinness World Record for the tallest plastic bottle sculpture.



The million blue and white caps used in her latest project were collected by people in Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. They were used to create a blue crescent moon and two stars against a white background.

"I made a video telling people that I was planning to collect one million plastic bottle caps," Chaptini said. "They got my back," she said of her social-media followers, who quickly spread the word.



"Believe it or not, most of the people who helped me were not my friends or people I knew before this project," she said.

Chaptini's plans were unexpectedly threatened when the coronavirus pandemic emerged, but she remained determined to see the project through.

"When we dream, we can make the impossible possible," she said. So she pushed ahead, with a smaller support team and a few minor changes to the project.



"Initially we were planning to get support from the municipality but they

apologized given the coronavirus situation,” she said. “I didn’t want to give up my idea, especially since I had promised people that I would go for it, even though I was still looking for a sponsor.”

Just as she did with the bottles she used in her previous record-breaking project, when this one is complete Chaptini will give the two tons of plastic caps she used to recycling companies who, in return, will donate money to Kids First, an organization in Jbeil that provides support for young cancer patients.



“I’m grateful for the opportunity to help these young patients in any way that can help them feel better,” said Chaptini, who has an 11-year-old daughter of her own.

She added that she is proof that you do not have to fit a certain stereotype to build a following on social media or become an influencer.



“I was surprised to see how much influence I had and how much people appreciated art with an environmental and a humanitarian aim,” she said.

“I did not need to be anything but myself to get support and attention for my initiative. I didn’t need to be a model or a makeup artist or to dress up a certain way seeking attention.”



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KSA gears up for record-breaking retail shopping in RamadanBulgarian singer hits high with record-breaking vocals

[Iran appeals to people not to travel for Eid holiday to avoid COVID-19 spike](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Thu, 2020-05-21 09:17

DUBAI: Iran's top health official appealed to Iranians to avoid traveling during the Eid Al-Fitr religious holiday later this month to avoid the risk of a new surge of coronavirus infections, state TV reported on Thursday. Iranians often travel to different cities around the country to mark the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, something Health Minister Saeed Namaki said could lead to a disregard of social distancing and a fresh outbreak of COVID-19.

"I am urging you not to travel during the Eid. Definitely, such trips mean new cases of infection...People should not travel to and from those high-risk red areas," Namaki was quoted by state television as saying.

"Some 90% of the population in many areas has not yet contracted the disease. In the case of a new outbreak, it will be very difficult for me and my colleagues to control it."

Confirmed cases in Iran of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, rose by 2,346 to 126,949 on Wednesday, the health ministry said. The death toll is 7,183, the highest in the Middle East region.

A report by parliament's research center suggested that the actual tally of infections and deaths in Iran might be almost twice that announced by the health ministry.

However, worried that measures to limit public activities could wreck an economy which has already been battered by US sanctions, the government has been easing most restrictions on normal life in late April.

Infected cases have been on a rising trajectory for the past two weeks.

However President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that Iran was close to curbing the outbreak.



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[Lebanon at risk of major food crisis, PM warns](#)

Author:

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Thu, 2020-05-21 06:37

BEIRUT: Lebanon is at risk of a major food crisis and many Lebanese may soon find it hard to afford bread because of an acute financial crunch and the fall-out of COVID-19, the prime minister warned.

Writing in the Washington Post, Hassan Diab also warned of a global food security emergency triggered by the pandemic. He said attempts to restrict food exports must be resisted and called on the United States and the European Union to set up an emergency fund to help the Middle East avoid a severe crisis.

Otherwise, "starvation may spark a new migration flow to Europe and further destabilize the region," he wrote.

Lebanon was in deep crisis even before COVID-19. The local currency has more than halved in value since October amid a hard currency liquidity shortage. Inflation and unemployment are soaring. Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt in March.

Imported food prices had more than doubled since the start of 2020, Diab wrote. More than half of Lebanon's food is imported.

"Once the breadbasket of the Eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon is facing a dramatic challenge that seemed unimaginable a decade ago: the risk of a major food crisis," Diab wrote.

"A few weeks ago, Lebanon witnessed its first 'hunger protests.' Many Lebanese have already stopped buying meat, fruits and vegetables, and may soon find it difficult to afford even bread."

Diab, who took office this year with backing from the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah and its allies, also blamed decades of political mismanagement and corruption for a lack of investment in agriculture.

COVID-19 and lockdowns had "dramatically worsened the economic crisis and profoundly disrupted the food supply chain."

Eighty percent of Lebanon's wheat had been coming from Ukraine and Russia, but last month, Russia suspended wheat exports, while Ukraine is considering a similar move, he said.



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Lebanese army arrests soldiers who assaulted ER doctorCook and deliver: Dubai restaurants start to get creative

[Kuwait develops PCR solution for coronavirus testing](#)

Author:

Thu, 2020-05-21 08:57

DUBAI: A Kuwaiti medical team has developed a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) solution to used for coronavirus tests, state news agency KUNA has reported.

The new solution developed by the Kuwaiti specialists has 'excellent' diagnostic results, Dr. Salman Al-Sabah, head of the surgical department at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, said.

PCR testing is considered a more accurate method of diagnosing the presence of coronavirus among patients where a swab is taken and blended with a reagent usually called a PCR Kit, of which a solution the Kuwaiti medical team has developed.

The team is now in the initial stages of the solution's production before output is ramped up on a bigger scale to satisfy local requirements and reduce dependence on imported reagents that are costlier and take a longer delivery period.



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Scores of shops closed in Kuwait for violating coronavirus precautionary measures
Grocery stores' working hours amended in Kuwait

[Jordan imposes three-day lockdown with](#)

resurgence of coronavirus cases

Author:

Thu, 2020-05-21 08:33

DUBAI: Jordan is imposing a three-day lockdown starting Thursday midnight after a resurgence in coronavirus infections, which the government aims to address and to control with the Eid Al-Fitr holiday just around the corner.

“The crisis cell in the National Center for Security and Crisis Management ... decided to amend the measures taken during the period of Eid Al-Fitr, based on the developments of the epidemiological situation of the Kingdom during the past days,” state news agency Petra reported.

Jordan reported 23 new more coronavirus cases on Wednesday, bringing its caseload to 672.

“In light of developments in the epidemiological situation in the Kingdom, the increase in the number of Covid-19 infections significantly during the past days, the need to increase the efforts of epidemiological investigation teams, the need to limit gatherings and contact between individuals, and take the necessary measures for achieving physical distancing,” Amjad Adaileh, the Minister of State for Media Affairs, said.

Lockdown violators will be fined anywhere between 100 and 500 Jordanian dinars, he said.



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Jordan completes second phase of repatriation flights amid coronavirus pandemic
Jordan eases lockdown, public sector to return to work on May 26