



2 Clock starts ticking on govt plan to cap expat workers



5 Arab Spring: The first smartphone revolution



13 Cher welcomes 'loneliest elephant' to Cambodia



16 Mahomes powers champions Chiefs over Brady-led Bucs



Kuwait completes inclusion into MSCI Emerging Markets Indices

Inclusion sees values of over KD 961.6 million traded

- HH the PM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirms inclusion a historic achievement
- Commerce Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan hails joint work between public and private sectors

- Head of Boursa Kuwait's executive committee Bader Al-Kharafi says inclusion proves private sector's success in operating Boursa
- Boursa Kuwait CEO Mohammad Al-Osaimi says Kuwait now on worldwide investment map

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait yesterday completed the Kuwaiti capital market's inclusion into the MSCI Emerging Markets Indices with the successful implementation of the first tranche of index inclusion. A total of seven listed companies - the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Zain, Agility, Boubyan Bank, Mabane and Gulf Bank - were included. The inclusion brought in huge inflows to the market, as the total traded value during the inclusion was over KD 961.6 million, most of which came from foreign inflows.

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hailed Kuwait's entry into all emerging markets and achieving a quantum leap in its ranking of improving the business environment and enhancing competitiveness indicators. Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan said Kuwait's inclusion in international indices is an important aspect of the implementation of the New Kuwait 2035 vision and the embodiment of the idea of transforming Kuwait into a regional financial center.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, head of the executive committee at Boursa Kuwait,



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Khalid Al-Roudhan



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi



Mohammad Al-Osaimi

said this achievement proves the private sector's success in operating Boursa Kuwait, one of the most important economic facilities in the country. Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer

Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi said: "We saw values of over 961.6 million Kuwaiti dinars traded today, which is proof of the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus's success in absorbing these unprecedented

foreign inflows."

The Capital Markets Authority said in a statement yesterday that it played a significant role in developing the Kuwaiti market and promoting Kuwait in interna-

tional indices, starting with the plan of developing the market and overseeing its implementation in cooperation and coordination with Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company. (See Page 8)

News in brief

Biden fractures foot

WASHINGTON: US president-elect Joe Biden has a foot fracture and will likely have to wear a medical boot, his team said Sunday after the 78-year-old was taken to the doctor because he had slipped while playing with his dog. — AFP

Kushner heads to Saudi, Qatar

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner will visit Saudi Arabia and Qatar this week in a bid for further diplomatic deals in the region before leaving the White House. A senior administration official said Kushner met at the White House last week with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. — Agencies

Oman resumes some tourist visas

DUBAI: Oman will resume granting tourist visas to people visiting on trips arranged by hotels and travel companies, after they were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, state media said yesterday. The country's coronavirus council also decided yesterday to restart a number of commercial and industrial activities. — Reuters

First students arrive in Australia

SYDNEY: International students have arrived in Australia for the first time since the country shut its borders to curb coronavirus in March. A plane chartered by Charles Darwin University (CDU) carrying 63 international students arrived in the northern city of Darwin. — AFP

Helpers to return from Dec 7; cost of quarantine KD 270

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday decided to allow domestic helpers to start returning to the country from

Dec 7, according to government spokesman Tareq Al-Mazrem. He added the Cabinet set the cost of each returning maid at KD 270 to cover quarantine expenses. The amount does not include airfare, Mazrem said.

Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah told the Council of Ministers that the number of new coronavirus cases has dropped significantly over the past week and the recovery rate has soared. The minister said the recovery rate has increased to a massive 95.8 percent as the number of patients in intensive care units and deaths dived during the past week.

The ministry of health yesterday reported just 209

new cases, two deaths and the recovery of 658 patients. The number of cases in intensive care also dropped to only 84. The previous day, the ministry reported 231 cases and three deaths, while as many as 524 patients recovered.

The drop in the number of coronavirus cases comes ahead of the weekend's general elections. Authorities have taken strict precautionary measures to prevent a new outbreak. The Cabinet decided during its meeting yesterday to allocate a school in every electoral constituency for people infected with the coronavirus to vote.

One-vote system under fire; Hashem targets 60+ expats

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A field survey conducted on a sample of Kuwaiti voters regarding the single-vote election sys-

tem showed that 83.8 percent of those polled want the system to be changed because it has harmed the country. The single-vote system was introduced by the government through an Amiri decree in late 2012 and was implemented for the first time in the Dec 2012 general election. Its introduction led opposition groups and independents to boycott the election.

Under the system, each Kuwaiti voter is allowed to elect only one candidate in a constituency which elects 10 MPs. Previously, each voter was allowed to elect up to four candidates. The system has drastically curbed

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: Candidate Majed Mousa Al-Mutairi (center) greets people during the opening of his election headquarters (tent in background) yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait condemns assassination of Iran nuke scientist

KUWAIT: Kuwait's foreign ministry yesterday condemned the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh. Kuwait "underlines its unwavering stance in rejection of violent acts, whatever the motive, and rejects anything that may increase tensions and affect stability in the region," the ministry said in a statement. The ministry extended its condolences and commiserations to Iran over the loss.

Yesterday, Iran said Israel and an exiled opposition group used new and "complex" methods to assassinate the top scientist, as it buried him in a funeral befitting a top "martyr". As it laid Fakhri-zadeh - seen by Israel as the "father" of Iran's nuclear weapons program - to rest, the Islamic republic also vowed to redouble his work.

Fakhri-zadeh died Friday after his car and bodyguards were targeted in a bomb and gun attack on a major road outside the capital, heightening tensions once more between Tehran and its foes. Iran's top security official, Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani of the Supreme National

Continued on Page 2

Local

Clock starts ticking on govt plan to cap expat workers in Kuwait

Demographic imbalance has become main topic of political discussion

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: A law to regulate Kuwait's demographic structure by reducing the numbers of the country's expatriate community was published in Kuwait's official gazette 'Kuwait Al-Youm' this week. The publication of the law makes it official and starts the clock on the government's plan to reduce expatriate workers in the country.

The law requires the government to present a plan within one year (from the date of publication in the official gazette on Nov 29, 2020) that will determine a formula and system for rebalancing the country's demographics. The law specifically requires the government to cut the number of foreigners living and working in Kuwait and tip the scale in favor of the Kuwaiti population, which currently stands at only 30 percent of the total population.

No specifics on how this plan should be implemented are mentioned. The law, as published, does not stipulate any details regarding the final numbers or percentages of expatriates that will be allowed to stay. The National Assembly unanimously approved the demographics law on Oct 20, 2020. The law as passed does not include a quota system based on nationality. The law requires that the government consider the total number of expatriate labor currently living in Kuwait.

According to Central Statistical Bureau figures, there are 1.7 million expat workers (compared to 396,661 Kuwaitis), making up 81.3 percent of the total workforce. Meanwhile, Public Authority for Civil Information statistics show the total expatriate population stands at

3.3 million compared to 1.4 million Kuwaitis.

"The Cabinet should issue a list of regulations to address the demographic imbalance within a year of the law's publishing, coming up with mechanisms that include controls to set a maximum cap on expatriate workers," Article 3 of the law states. "Meanwhile, the Cabinet is required to issue executive orders on a yearly basis and whenever necessary, in addition to providing the parliament with annual reports in this regard."

The explanatory note of the law mentions the "rapid spread of marginal laborers in excessive numbers" as a main reason that led to a demographic imbalance in Kuwait and piled pressure on public services, especially healthcare. "The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the terrible living conditions of marginal laborers, which necessitates legislations to control manpower percentages and regulate their presence in the country in a way that does not affect the economic, social and service aspects," the explanatory note adds.

Other issues the government should consider while preparing the regulations include:

- Labor requirements for projects in the national development program.
- Policies pertaining to replacing expatriate employees with Kuwaiti labor.
- Educational levels of laborers.
- Exceptions needed to meet the development plan's labor requirements.

Furthermore, the government must take into account the medical sector's capacity in handling potential diseases and pandemics related to manpower

er coming from abroad, and must also set policies to prohibit the transfer of labor forces between different sectors. MPs had sought to force the government to gradually cut the numbers of expats over the next five years in a bid to achieve a balance between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. The issue of Kuwait's demographic

allow collaborative opportunities. It also aims at building communities for knowledge transfer amongst nationals and residents to utilize their talents. "We studied the needs of the society and the way of connecting achievers," said Executive Manager of KAFO Fatemah Al-Mosawi during the press conference. "Participants can build their CVs on the website and show the possible ways of cooperation, in addition to searching for achievers according to their specialization."

She pointed out that KAFO has been hugely successful. "Our platform includes over 3,000 achievers, and this number is increasing every year," added Mosawi. The program of activities during the entire year will be announced during the forum. According to Mosawi, around 3 to 4 activities will be held weekly online via Zoom, but if the situation changes next year, this can also change.

and achievers can register through a link on KAFO's accounts on social media. This year, KAFO has selected 100 personalities from different fields to build 10 communities. The activities of this year's forum will all be held online via the Zoom app. The four-day event will include various sessions on volunteering, sports, entrepreneurship, science and technology, media, arts and culture.

KAFO is part of the Kuwait Youth Program (Kuwait Listens) projects, launched in 2013. In fulfillment of the directives of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, KAFO is an initiative by the Amiri Diwan. Objectives of KAFO are to establish and develop a database of young Kuwaiti achievers in different professions, academic careers and creative fields. It also aims to connect national achievers with organizations and other achievers, as well as showcase youth and their projects to

Palestinian territory's under-developed health system. The donation of the intensive care devices, funded by Kuwait, came a week after local and international public health advisers said hospitals in the enclave could soon become overwhelmed.

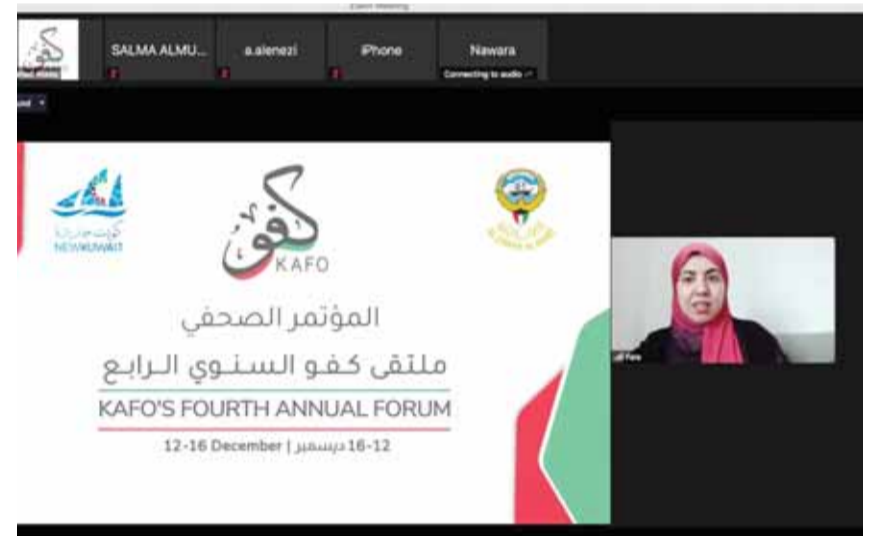
"These devices will help medical teams provide better service to patients, but it is not enough," said Abdullatif Alhaj of Gaza's health ministry. Alhaj said hospitals had suffered acute shortages in oxygen essential in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Gaza has logged nearly 20,000 coron-



KUWAIT: This November 3, 2020 file photo shows workers moving dead palm tree leaves from a garbage container into a truck's bed at a location in Kuwait. The picture was used for illustration purpose only. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

avirus cases and 97 deaths, mostly since August, amid concern of a wider outbreak in the densely populated enclave of two million people, many of whom live in poverty.

The Gaza Health Ministry said 342 COVID-19 patients, of whom 108 are in critical condition, are being treated in the territory's hospitals, which have been able to expand their intensive care units to 150 beds over the past week. It said more than half of the territory's 150 ventilators are in use. "The health system right now can hold on for a few weeks after the expansion of beds," said Abdelnaser Soboh, emergency health lead in the World Health Organization's Gaza sub-office. Soboh said Gaza is also experiencing severe shortages of medications and disposable equipment needed to treat COVID-19 patients. Palestinians in Gaza say 13 years of economic sanctions by Israel and its border blockade have crippled their economy and undermined the development of medical facilities, weakening their ability to tackle a pandemic. — Reuters



KUWAIT: A screenshot showing Executive Manager of KAFO Fatemah Al-Mosawi while speaking during the online press conference.

KAFO forum 2020 to be held virtually

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Various important issues including education, environment and health will be discussed and presented during the fourth annual Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO) forum to be held from Dec 12 to 16, 2020. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is set to participate in the opening session.

Registration for the KAFO forum opened during a press conference held online yesterday. Interested institutions

Kuwait-funded aid arrives at struggling Gaza hospitals

GAZA: The World Health Organization delivered 15 ventilators to Gaza hospitals on Sunday amid a spike in COVID-19 infections that has tested the

One-vote system under fire...

Continued from Page 1

the influence of political groups on the National Assembly. The survey, prepared by the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Center at Kuwait University, found that 82 percent of those polled said the system failed to curb sectarian, tribal and factional factors in the society.

Around 70 percent of those polled said the system failed to achieve a fair representation of all groups and sections of the Kuwaiti society, while 71 percent said the system led to the weakening of national unity. In addition, 85 percent said the system failed to end vote-buying practices.

In other election news, MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday took credit for filing a proposal that called for all expats who reach 60 years to leave the country to reduce pressure on public services. Hashem, bidding for re-election from the third constituency, said in a television interview

that expats who have reached 60 have worked for a sufficient time and earned enough, and it's time for them to leave. The lawmaker, who regularly targets expats in her speeches, said she proposed to give an additional 15 years of stay in the country for expats who hold rare degrees.

Also, as many as 56 candidates running in the Dec 5 election signed a pledge that if they win seats, they will push to issue a law that guaranteeing a general pardon for those jailed over political issues. The law will allow the return of several Kuwaiti opposition figures who have been living in self-exile for the past two years to escape a jail sentence against them for storming the National Assembly building during a protest in 2011. The law will also facilitate national reconciliation. More candidates are expected to sign the pledge.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry said yesterday that online registration for illegal expats has opened. People who want to legalize their stay or obtain a permit to leave the country must register on the interior ministry's website. The ministry said the six residency departments will receive a total of 2,400 expats every day. People who want to legalize their stay and those who want to leave must pay fines. The amnesty runs from Dec 1 to 31.



People attend an electoral campaign meeting yesterday. - Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait condemns assassination of...

Continued from Page 1

Security Council, said the "operation was very complex, using electronic equipment and no one was present at the scene".

The People's Mujahideen of Iran (MEK) were "certainly" involved, along with "the Zionist regime and the Mossad", he said in video interviews, referring to the Israeli government and its spy agency. With few details emerging of the attack itself, the scientist's son said his mother was also in the targeted car but survived the attack. Without citing sources, Fars news agency said the attack had been carried out with the help of "a remote-controlled automatic machinegun" mounted on a pickup truck. State-run Press TV said "made in Israel" weapons were found at the scene.

Fakhrizadeh's funeral was attended by several high-ranking officials, including Defense Minister Amir Hatami and Revolutionary Guards commander Hossein Salami. As the funeral got underway, a religious singer praised Fakhrizadeh and alluded to the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. "If our enemies had not committed this heinous crime and spilled our dear martyr's blood, he might have remained unknown," Hatami said in a speech.

"But today, he who was only an idol for... his students and colleagues, is introduced to the whole world," he added, saying he would be an inspiration for "all who embark on the path to fight. The enemies should know that this is their first defeat." Hatami had said after the scientist's death that Fakhrizadeh was one of his deputies and headed the ministry's Defense Research and Innovation Organization, focusing on the field of "nuclear defense".

In his speech, he said the government had decided

to double the organization's budget to continue Fakhrizadeh's path "vigorously". A large display showed a picture of Fakhrizadeh next to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as well as former top general Qasem Soleimani, who was killed in a January drone strike by the US in Baghdad.

The assassination has led to demands for a strong response from Iran's leadership and calls by some conservative lawmakers to avoid entering potential negotiations with the United States, even as the hawkish presidency of Donald Trump draws to a close. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has accused Israel of acting as a US "mercenary", blaming it for the killing of Fakhrizadeh, and supreme leader Khamenei has called for the perpetrators to be punished.

Parliament on Sunday demanded a halt to international inspections of nuclear sites in the country, a step that could prove a fatal blow to the nuclear deal the Islamic republic agreed with world powers in 2015. Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and began reimposing crippling sanctions, but US President-elect Joe Biden has promised a return to diplomacy.

Rouhani has emphasized Iran will seek its revenge for the assassination in "due time" and not be rushed into a "trap". The US slapped sanctions on Fakhrizadeh in 2008 for "activities and transactions that contributed to the development of Iran's nuclear program". Around a year after the US withdrew from the nuclear deal, it began gradually abandoning most of its key commitments under the agreement.

The funeral was not open to the public in order to maintain health protocols over the novel coronavirus pandemic, the defense ministry said. Some "say we can make the enemy not have enmity (towards us) through talking. That is not possible," said the supreme leader's representative at the defense ministry, Ziaodin Aghajanpour, standing next to Fakhrizadeh's coffin. "Why? Because the enemies are against the basis of the Islamic republic system," he added. — Agencies

Local

Explainer: What is the role of Kuwait's National Assembly and how does it work?

By Yasmena Al-Mulla

KUWAIT: The upcoming 2020 National Assembly elections, scheduled for December 5th, will be the 18th election in Kuwait's history. The parliamentary elections are an important aspect of Kuwait's political fabric as it determines who will shape Kuwait's legislative branch.

According to the Kuwaiti constitution, the parliament is the legislative branch that is in charge of proposing laws. While the parliament has significant power, according to Yousef Al-Azmi, an employee at the National Assembly, "the constitution is the highest law, meaning that any law proposed by the parliament should not violate the constitution."

Structure of parliament

The Kuwait parliament, a unicameral system, is the single legislative branch in Kuwait. The parliament has a maximum of four-year term, made up of four sessions, and sometimes a fifth closing session if the parliament completes its four years.

The legislative branch is made up of 50 MPs that are elected by the Kuwaiti people and up to an additional 15 appointed ministers who make up the government. At least one of the ministers must be an elected MP.

Of the 50 MPs, one is elected as speaker of the parliament and another as a deputy, during the opening session of the new term.

Also during the first session, the 65 members vote on who joins which committee and if the number of candidates are the same as the number of committee members, then they automatically become a member. Each MP is allowed to join a maximum of two committees. "While there are no specific requirements to join a committee, an MP chooses a committee depending on his background. For example, historically the legislative committee has always been made up of MPs with a background in law," Azmi told Kuwait Times.

According to article 43 of the Parliament's procedural law (in Arabic known as Laehat Al-Dakhleya), there are 10 permanent committees in parliament, most of which have five members, except the legislative, public utilities, budget and financial and economic committee who have seven members. Each committee has a head, who is elected by the committee during the first session.

There are also temporary committees that are suggested and decided on at the beginning of every session. For example, the women and family committee is a temporary committee and its responsibilities are determined at the beginning of every session.

session.

Although the committee is only made up by MPs, ministers are allowed to attend meetings, but they cannot vote on the proposed law in the committee. Ministers enjoy the same privileges as MPs as they get to vote on laws, once presented on the floor of parliament, and vote during the opening session for committee members and the speaker of parliament.

With that being said, they are not allowed to vote during a no confidence vote against a minister, as per article 101 of the constitution.

In terms of political parties, while the constitution does not prohibit the formation of political parties, Kuwait does not have any because they are not legally regulated. For example, there are several de facto political blocs in parliament but they are not recognized by the law.

How laws are passed

There are several procedures that are done before a law can be passed by parliament.

First, the proposed draft is suggested in front of parliament (as an acknowledgment). Then it goes to the parliamentary preparations department (known in Arabic as the Edarat edad Al-parlimany) to help write with the wording and the legal terminologies. Once they are done, they transfer it to the legislative committee, where they determine whether it is constitutional. If it is approved, then they return it to the parliament. Then the parliament directly refers it to the respective committee.

As each committee discusses the proposed law, according to Article 50 of the Parliament's procedural law, ministers may attend committee sessions when a matter related to their ministry is being discussed. The minister needs to orally or on paper state his opinion, which is read out loud in front of the parliament before a vote is taken, "so that the government's stance is made clear," Azmi clarified.

For a proposed law to be made final by the committee, the majority of the committee members need to approve it.

Once the law is finalized, it is sent along with the government's comments and the report from the legislative committee to the floor of the parliament for the first deliberation.

After the first deliberation, the members of parliament get a chance to propose amendments to the law. It is then referred to the committee once again for final approval, before it is presented again to the floor for a second deliberation vote.

In order for a vote to take place, a simple majority of the 65 members need to be present.



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man walks by a billboard featuring third constituency candidates running for parliamentary elections, in Khaldiya yesterday. Kuwait's National Assembly elections are scheduled for December 5, 2020. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

The constitution stipulates that this quorum must include some representation of the government, whether it is the prime minister alone or "some of its members," which is usually interpreted as three ministers. According to Azmi, during the last legislative term, the most law that was proposed to be amended was the Election Law No 42 of 2006; around eight to 10 times. He also pointed out that, throughout the history of the parliament, the Nationality Law is one of the laws that has been amended the most.

Elections for parliament

Kuwait is divided into five electoral districts, thus the 10 candidates that get the highest number of votes in their electoral district are elected to parliament.

Each electoral district is made up of several areas, distributed as follows: 19 areas in the 1st district, 13 areas in the 2nd district, 15 areas in the 3rd district, 19 areas in the 4th district and 22 areas in the 5th district.

When the National Assembly was first created in 1963, there were 10 electoral districts, which

were then changed to 25 districts in 1981. It is only after the 'Nabiha Khamsa' (we want it five) movement in 2006 that the electoral districts were changed to five. On election day, every registered voter heads to the designated polling station in their area to cast a vote for one candidate.

Throughout Kuwait's history, the number of candidates a person can vote for has changed multiple times. For the first 18 years, each citizen had the right to vote for five people. Then in 1981, it was changed to two candidates per citizen, which lasted until 2006. Between 2006 and 2011, Kuwaitis had the right to vote for four candidates.

Following an Amiri decree that was issued in 2012 by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the election law was changed to a single-vote system. Protests broke out and many opposition figures initiated a boycott movement to express their discontent with the change. While many of the opposition figures have fled the country or have refrained from participating in elections, many citizens as well have decided to continue to boycott the elections until the single-vote system is changed.

Kuwait Radio ready to broadcast elections: Official

KUWAIT: Information Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Radio Affairs Sheikh Fahad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah confirmed that Kuwait Radio is ready to cover the 2020 National Assembly elections and to show it through media and technology. In a statement to the press, Sheikh Fahad Al-Mubarak said yesterday that the radio sector is eager to implement the directives of the

Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, as well as the Information Ministry's Undersecretary Muneera Al-Huwaidi, mentioning that the coverage of the December 5 parliamentary elections should be distinguished, from opening the ballot boxes to the counting process and ending with announcing the official results. "Preparations are being made by following up on all sectors in order to ensure that the coverage is excellent with comprehensive and distinct media coverage of the voting process," he added.

The coverage will focus on creating interaction and direct communication between the people, including procedures and news, in addition to spreading awareness of the rights, duties and collective responsibility among individuals, Sheikh

Fahad Al-Mubarak explained. Radio coverage on Election Day will focus on urging voters to comply with the health requirements recommended by the health authorities, plus contributing to facilitating the work of government agencies related to the elections, such as the Ministry of Interior and others, he pointed out. Kuwait Radio divided its programmatic plan into three stages: starting with the announcement of the decree calling for elections, then the implementation phase, and the final stage will be on Election Day to close the ballot boxes and announce the results, Sheikh Fahad Al-Mubarak indicated.

Meanwhile, Saad Al-Fandi, director of Kuwait Radio public program and the general supervisor of the radio's election coverage, underlined that the radio sector is eager to show the parliamen-

tary elections with distinguished coverage that keeps pace with the vital event, referring to the weekly meetings of Sheikh Fahad Al-Mubarak with directors of radio stations. Kuwait Radio divided the work mechanism into five teams in studios fully equipped to cover all five electoral districts from the start of the voting process until the end of the counting and consequently the results, Fandi said. A team of 15 reporters was formed for Election Day, distributed among all constituencies and electoral committees, while being screened three times per day, he added. The radio will educate citizens to participate by enlightening them to make good choices between candidates, plus urging citizens to adhere to health precautions during Election Day, Fandi explained. —KUNA

Kuwait sees 209 new COVID-19 cases, two fatalities

KUWAIT: Kuwait said yesterday it logged 209 new coronavirus infections over the previous 24 hours, raising total cases to 142,635, while two fatalities recorded over the same period upped its death toll to 880. The health ministry had earlier announced the recovery of 658 COVID-19 patients during the same period, raising total recoveries to 137,071. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood yesterday at 4,684, with 84 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad. He revealed that 4,078 swab tests were conducted over the past 24 hours taking the total to 1,095,574. He went on to urge the public to abide by health precautions, mainly social distancing, which he said is the best way to halt the spread of the virus. —KUNA

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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NGOs play vital role in helping cancer patients

KUWAIT: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in helping cancer patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, said Gulf Union for Fighting Cancer Secretary-General Dr Khaled Al-Saleh. In a press statement yesterday, Saleh affirmed that the Fourth Joint Gulf Cancer Conference, which was held on the 28th and 29th of November, under the title 'Cancer Patients Care During Crises and Beyond,' discussed the extent of preparedness to face health care crises. He noted that the conference, which comes during the spread of COVID-19 and the implications of this pandemic on cancer patient care, discussed the experiences of the GCC countries in caring for cancer patients during the pandemic. Saleh stressed the importance of holding such conferences that come out with recommendations to be implemented, as happened in the conference that was held in Kuwait in 1996 under the title 'cancer between truth and illusion' and recommended the establishment of the Gulf Union for Fighting Cancer. He finally appreciated the role played by the non-governmental Gulf associations and their success in continuing to provide everything that serves the patient using artificial intelligence. —KUNA

Oil exports to Japan down

TOKYO: Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in October fell 33.3 percent from a year earlier to 5.36 million barrels, or 173,000 barrels per day (bpd), for the seventh consecutive monthly decline, government data showed yesterday. As Japan's third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 7.6 percent of its total crude imports, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil in October slid 18.1 percent year-on-year to 2.26 million bpd, down for the 10th straight month. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 90.2 percent of the total, down 1.3 percentage points from the year before. —KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Smoke rises from the Doha power plant on a cloudy day on November 29, 2020. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Interior Minister opens operations center in Subhan

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh reaffirmed the commitment of Kuwait's political leadership to the upgrading of the security institution and providing it with the state-of-the-art equipment. "Constant modernization of all sectors of the Ministry of Interior is a top priority for political leadership in order to help the security institution discharge its mission in the best possible way," the minister said in a press release from the Ministry's General Directorate of Security Relations and Media.

Saleh made the comments while opening the operations center and the emergency operator (112) at the ministry's headquarters in Subhan on Sunday. "The center reflects the level of



KUWAIT: Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh tours the new center. —Interior Ministry photos



The '112' emergency center's operations room.

advancement of the security institution and its continued effort to acquire the latest communication technologies and maintain high preparedness of the security personnel," the minister added. After inaugurating the operations center and the emergency switch, the minister was briefed by member of the Col Dr Abdullah Zakaria, member of the committee of the inte-

grated digital security project, on the new system and operating mechanism related to response to emergency calls. Saleh was accompanied by Undersecretary of the Ministry Lt Gen Esam Al-Nahham, assistant undersecretaries Maj Gen Jamal Al-Saygh and Maj Gen Staff Aziz Suaylem, as well other senior officers, according to the statement. —KUNA

COVID-era education reveals shortcomings, required improvements

KUWAIT: Education Minister and Minister of Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi affirmed yesterday that education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had revealed the shortcomings and the required improvement of the learning process. Minister Harbi made that statement during a video-conference titled 'the Second International Conference on: Distance Learning: Coping with Covid-19 Crisis.' The event scheduled from November 30 until December 1st.

Dr Harbi pointed out that critical circumstances always delivered ways to update the educational system through innovation, which later contributes to sustainable development both on a national and international level. Closure of schools and resorting to distance education were an outcome of the pandemic with the latter process requiring tremendous amount of knowledge being transferred extensively to the digital domain, he added. Despite all the efforts, there still challenges needed to be addressed, indicated the minister who urged for more development of education through adequate

channels aimed at relieving social and psychological stress of students and educators. Dr Harbi commended the organizing of the current conference and hoped it will come out with recommendation pushing the educational process forward.

Meanwhile, head of the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC) Dr Suleiman Al-Askari said that the conference — prior to COVID-19's spread — was aimed at formulating a national vision for the development of education. He added that the pandemic had shifted the approach with most countries prioritizing health first to stop the spread of the viral infection. It was not only education that suffered from lockdowns, business and other institutions had suffered losses around the globe, indicated Dr Askari who revealed that billions of students in the world had to do distance education to complete their studies in the summer. He went on to say that national entities had provide all of their assets to make sure that students were educated via digital platform through live class sessions and pre-recorded material. The official indicated that though huge efforts were exerted, there were problems that went beyond the capacity of the system; however, the struggle continued to solve shortcomings. Researchers are assessing the positives and the negatives of distance learning to improve the quality of education, Dr Askari affirmed, adding that it was important to look at the data and use it in the future. —KUNA

ICSK organizes career awareness program

KUWAIT: Through the years, the Indian Community School, Kuwait (ICSK) has built a reputation that is synonymous with excellence. It endeavors to provide an environment that encourages growth, fosters creativity, exploration and discovery: where children can find magic in the mundane, enjoy the gift of robust laughter, broaden their intellectual, physical and emotional horizons and build a strong sense of integrity, compassion and generosity of spirit.

ICSK realizes that the journey towards a successful career starts with the selection of the right subject and stream. Classes 9 and 10 are the stepping stone for a student's career and the choices he makes. Things take a huge surge during this time and suddenly students have to make the most important decision that would help them in their growth and profoundness of life, to choose the right stream.

The school is planning to organize CAP, a virtual Career Awareness Program with an objective to provide proper guidance to the students of classes 9 and 10 of 21 CBSE schools in Kuwait, an enriching and enlightening session by the eminent education and career consultant Dr T P Sethumadhavan (Director, Education, UL CyberPark, Kozhikode and In charge - Education and Skill development, Indian Institute of Infrastructure and Construction, DDU GKY, UL Skill academy and other education,

Skilling institutions of ULCCS and Agri projects) on Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The career session will be telecasted through zoom, YouTube and Facebook as well.

Teenagers in Class 9 and 10 are shaped from explorers to in-depth learners. They are expected to understand details and form relations and connections in knowledge. The program aims at building the necessary critical thinking and decision making skills to make the choice of a career on which the career goals and subject choices will be based. Through this distinctive session ICSK presents a unique approach to making crucial career-related decisions. The process of career guidance differs for every grade and the student journey is also different. The selection of stream post class 10 would greatly determine the career paths students take in the future. Many of them realize later in life that they have made an error of choice and are stuck with the options available or redo everything from the very start. So this decision becomes an important step in life and has to be taken consciously. The program offers a chat option for students to clear doubts with the guest through the interactive session.

There will also be a separate educational fair in the month of February for universities where around 100 famous universities will be participating including IIT, IIFT, IIM and the likes. ICSK's trailblazing initiatives are vivid reflections of the mettle and dedication that goes into the making of a noble institution, with a noble mission. The school strives to ignite minds to learn and explore by empowering them to develop as self-confident global individuals with a high self-esteem and potential.

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Transition kicks into gear; Trump admits dwindling options

Ethiopia's Abiy says has Tigray leaders in his sights

Page 7

Page 6



KHARTOUM: In this file photo taken on April 25, 2019, Sudanese protesters open their smartphones lights as they gather for a "million-strong" march outside the army headquarters. — AFP

Arab Spring: The first smartphone revolution

NICOSIA: Social media and smartphones briefly gave youthful Arab Spring protesters a technological edge that helped topple ageing dictatorships a decade ago as their revolutionary spirit went viral. Regimes across North Africa and the Middle East were caught flat-footed as the fervor of the popular uprisings spread at the speed of the internet via Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Unfortunately for the pro-democracy movements, autocratic states have since caught up in the digital arms race, adding cyber surveillance, online censorship and troll armies to their arsenals. While the so-called Arab Spring offered a brief glimmer of hope for many, it ended with even more repressive regimes in most countries and devastating, ongoing wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

Nonetheless, say veterans of the period, the revolts mark a watershed moment when digital natives launched the era of "hashtag protests" from Occupy Wall Street to Hong Kong's Umbrella protests and Black Lives Matter. Hyper-networked and largely leaderless, such protests flare up like flashmobs, making them harder for authorities to suppress, with grievances and demands decided not by committees but crowd-sourced online.

"Blogs and social networks were not the trigger, but they supported the social movements," said former Tunisian activist Sami Ben Gharbia, who ran a blog from exile and returned home amid the 2010 uprising. "They were a formidable weapon of communication." Today, say Arab cyber-activists, states have lost much of their control over what citizens can see, know and say, as evidenced by a later wave of protests that rocked Algeria, Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon in 2019 and 2020.

While the heavy lid of state censorship has come down once more in many places, that free spirit has also

brought change for the better, especially in the small Mediterranean country where it all started, Tunisia.

'Mass mobile-isation'

The spark that set off the Arab Spring was the tragic suicide of Tunisian street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi, 26, who, having long been cheated and humiliated by state officials, set himself on fire. If his desperate act on Dec 17, 2010 expressed a real-world fury shared by millions, it was the virtual universe of online communications that spread the anger and hope for change like wildfire. Long simmering discontent among the less privileged was harnessed and multiplied by tech-savvy and often middle-class activists into a mass movement that would spread from Morocco to Iran. Bouazizi's self-immolation was not caught on video - but the subsequent street protests were, along with the police violence that aimed to suppress them through fear but instead sparked more anger.

Smartphones with their cameras became citizens' weapons in the information war that allowed almost everyone to bear witness, and to organize, in a trend that has been dubbed "mass mobile-isation". Clips were shared especially on Facebook, a medium outside the control of police states that had for decades tightly controlled print and broadcast media. "The role of Facebook was decisive," recalled a blogger using the name Hamadi Kaloutcha, who had studied in Belgium and back in 2008 launched a Facebook forum called "I have a dream ... A democratic Tunisia". "Information could be published right under the regime's nose," he said. "Censorship was frozen. Either they censored everything that circulated, or they censored nothing."

If previously dissent could only be whispered, some of the citizens' fear and apathy lifted as online users saw

their networks of family and friends speak out in the virtual space. Online platforms also formed a bridge with traditional global media, further accelerating the regional revolt. "International media like Al-Jazeera covered the uprising directly from Facebook," Kaloutcha said. "We had no other platform to broadcast videos."

With head-spinning speed, Tunisia's ruler of more than two decades, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, was gone in less than a month. "Thank you Facebook," read one graffiti sprayed on Tunisian walls, long before the social media giant drew increasing fire for spreading not just calls for freedom but also fake news and hate speech.

'The camera is my weapon'

The Tunisia victory would soon kick off a political earthquake in North Africa's powerhouse Egypt. A key catalyst there to mobilize and organize protests was the Facebook campaign "We are all Khaled Said", or "WAAKS", which highlighted rampant police brutality and widespread corruption. Said, 28, died in police custody in June 2010. Photos of his battered corpse went viral online while authorities unconvincingly claimed he had choked on a bag of drugs.

The WAAKS campaign brought hundreds to his funeral, followed by a series of silent protests. By early 2011, the Egyptian revolt had gathered steam, and the movement snowballed into anti-government protests on January 25, the National Police Day. WAAKS at the time encouraged citizen journalism with the video tutorial "The camera is my weapon". Powerful online images surfaced including one of a man facing off with an armored vehicle, echoing the iconic image of an unknown Chinese protester who in 1989 defied a column of tanks on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. —AFP

Second wave of Mideast protests

BEIRUT: The Arab Spring uprisings are nearly a decade old and moribund but protests in four new countries last year revealed that the spirit of the revolts that lit up 2011 is still alive. "The emergence of the 2019 wave of the uprisings in Algeria, Sudan, Lebanon and Iraq showed that the Arab Spring did not die," said Asef Bayat, an expert on revolutions in the Arab world. "It continued in other countries in the region with somewhat similar repertoires of collective action."

Algeria

Memories of Algeria's 1992-2002 civil war had left many wary when protests swept the region in 2011, despite a wave of demonstrations that broke out in January over rising food prices. On Feb 22 last year, fear gave way to anger as President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's plans to run for a fifth term after 20 years in power prompted demonstrations in key cities. The uprising, which would later become known as the Hirak protest movement, echoed a resistance to the kind of long-standing dictatorships that spurred the protests in Egypt and Tunisia nearly a decade ago. The Algerian army, like its counterparts in Tunisia and Egypt, withdrew its support for the regime, causing Bouteflika to resign on April 2, 2019.

Iraq

The 2003 US invasion had long rid Iraq of dictator Saddam Hussein by the time the Arab protests started toppling seeming invincible regimes like dominoes. In Feb 2011, Ali Abdulkhaleq, a 34-year-old activist and journalist, helped create the "Youth of February" protest group that organized weekly rallies in Baghdad's Tahrir Square to denounce the then government of Nuri Al-Maliki, which was corroded by corruption. Protests broke out again almost every other year, but anger finally boiled over in Oct 2019. An unprecedented nationwide uprising demanding a complete political overhaul forced the government of then-prime minister Adel Abdul Mahdi to resign.

Sudan

The advent of the Arab Spring lit a revolutionary spark in Sudan in 2011, said Mohammad Al-Omar, a 37-year-old activist. Omar said the clearest indication of the "influence of the Arab Spring uprisings" on his country came in 2013. Khartoum lifted petrol subsidies, leading prices to skyrocket and people to take to the streets, revealing the revolutionary fervor brewing beneath Sudan's surface. Protests broke out again five years later over soaring food prices and continued into 2019. On April 11, 2019, the army announced it had put Bashir under house arrest.

Lebanon

Imad Bazzi, a Lebanese activist and advocacy expert, has been pushing for political change since 1998. The Arab Spring uprisings, he said, fuelled his momentum. In Feb 2011, a jobless Bazzi started organizing the first series of protests, setting the stage for a grassroots renaissance in the decade that followed, leading to a wave of protests in 2015 over a garbage management crisis. It culminated in Oct 2019, when a government decision to tax WhatsApp calls sparked an unprecedented nationwide movement demanding the wholesale removal of the ruling elite. The movement took aim at the entire political class, forcing the government of then-prime minister Saad Hariri to bow to street pressure. —AFP



BEIRUT: In this file photo taken on Nov 10, 2019, Lebanese demonstrators wave national flags during anti-government protests. — AFP

How Arab revolts were weakened by online fakes

TUNIS: The Arab uprisings a decade ago were supercharged by online calls to join the protests - but the internet was soon flooded with misinformation, weakening the region's cyber-activists. When Tunisian dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled the country in Jan 2011, rumors and uncertainty created "panic and hysteria", said ex-activist and entrepreneur Houeida Anouar.

"January 14 was a horrible night, so traumatic," she said. "We heard gunfire, and a neighbor shouted 'hide yourselves, they're raping women'." As pro-regime media pumped out misinformation, the flood of bogus news also spread to the Internet, a space activists had long seen as a refuge from censorship and propaganda.

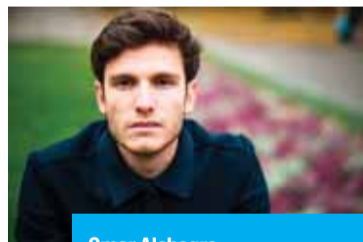
Journalist and researcher Hakim Beltifa said the ground was ripe for "the spreading of fake news". "Fake news fed off people's mistrust" of traditional, state-owned media outlets which "obscured the reality and kept the people in ignorance," he wrote for online magazine The Conversation.

When Egyptian state TV accused American fast food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken of giving free meals to pro-democracy protesters at Cairo's emblematic Tahrir Square, the rumors were repeated online, amid a string of reports of foreign powers allegedly infiltrating the protest movement. But activists and journalists on the ground found little evidence of fried chicken. Most demonstrators were getting by on pita bread and kushari, a popular, ultra-cheap street dish of rice, pasta and lentils.

Ghost bloggers

Soon, a slew of fake stories originating online was undermining trust in internet sources. One example was the infamous case of the "Gay Girl of Damascus". Amina Abdallah Arraf was a young Syrian-American lesbian, anti-regime activist and author of a blog widely followed by observers of the Syrian uprising. Except she never existed. When Amina was reported "kidnapped" in Damascus, her worried followers mobilized to rescue her from the hands of the Assad regime.

But they discovered that the blogger, who had been an icon of Syria's pro-democracy movement, was in fact Tom MacMaster - a bearded American in his 40s living in Scotland and hoping to achieve some literary fame. "That seems fairly bland today as we've learned to be more suspicious of this type of fabrication, but at the time, suspicion was far less prevalent," researcher Yves Gonzalez Quijano said. —AFP



Omar Alshogre



Nivin Al-Mousa



Bashar Farahat

Spirit of revolt lives on in Syria's exiles

PARIS: They may be scarred, but nothing, not even torture, bombing or exile, could break them. As the Arab Spring revolts swept through the Middle East and North Africa region like a wildfire, thousands of young Syrians joined protests in March 2011 demanding change in a nation ruled by the family of President Bashar Al-Assad since 1970. The regime's revenge was swift and brutal, and many of the non-violent activists at the heart of the uprising paid with their freedom and their lives. AFP interviewed four Syrian activists who ended up as refugees after surviving extreme violence and immeasurable loss. But even now, with no end in sight to their exile, they do not regret their revolution. Here are their stories.

Stockholm: The public speaker

The first thing Omar Alshogre sees when he wakes up in his Stockholm flat are the photographs of two prison guards who tortured him in Branch 215, one of Syria's most notorious detention centers. It may seem surprising but Alshogre wanted the pictures, which he had to buy off the guards' families and keeps on his bedside table, as a reminder to himself that: "They could not break me, and I'm still alive." Alshogre, now 25, says he was just 15 when regime forces first arrested him "along with all the men" in his village near Baniyas city - a protest hub in a largely pro-government province - on the Mediterranean coast. He was released two days later - but only after his interrogators had pulled out his fingernails and broken his leg.

Over the next 18 months, he was detained six more times in different places, including at his cousin's home, in the classroom and at checkpoints. In May 2012, regime troops attacked his village, killing his father, a retired army officer, and his two brothers. To save her sons' lives, his mother smuggled Omar and his younger brother Ali, then 20 and 11 years old, into Turkey. At the height of Europe's migrant crisis, they boarded a smuggler's boat to Greece and crossed Europe to Sweden, where they were granted asylum.

Berlin: The humanitarian

"When I was pregnant and I had pain in my belly, I would cry. Not for me, but for the Syrians living in displacement camps who can't see a doctor, and for the detainees who suffer constantly," says Nivin Al-Mousa, who has lived in Berlin since 2015. When she joined the protests in her town of Taybet al-Imam in the central province of Hama, she never imagined she would end up seeking refuge abroad.

In 2013, her younger brother Hanza, also a non-violent activist, was detained at a checkpoint. "We later learned that he had been tortured to death," says Mousa, who identified his body in one of the pictures of torture victims' corpses released by a former Syrian military police photographer, code-named "Caesar", who fled the country taking thousands of photographs documenting abuse and torture.

Mousa, her mother and siblings fled to Turkey in an escape "worthy of a James Bond movie". In Turkey, she met her husband Mohammad, who originates from the central Syrian city of Homs and had narrowly survived being randomly shot in the head by a sniper while coming home from university. Mousa, now 36, has frequent nightmares. She works for international aid group Humanity & Inclusion, formerly known as Handicap International, helping refugees with disabilities in Germany.

London: The doctor

When Bashar Farahat was released from detention in early 2013, he was barred from resuming his postgraduate pediatrics training at a government hospital in Latakia in western Syria. He had been jailed for joining the protests, and beaten by his interrogators "even harder" because he was a doctor with a degree from a public university. In April 2013, he was detained again for another six months.

Following his release in Nov 2013, Farahat fled to neighboring Lebanon, where he applied for resettlement through the United Nations. He arrived in Britain in March 2015, and has since passed the conversion exams allowing him to practice medicine there. Married to an interior designer, Farahat, now 36, works at a National Health Service (NHS) hospital in north London. —AFP

International

Biden transition kicks into gear as Trump admits dwindling options

President-elect names all-female communications team

WILMINGTON, Delaware: US President-elect Joe Biden was expected to unveil his picks for several top economic positions as early as yesterday when he will also finally receive his first classified intelligence briefing, an essential step towards taking control of national security. While Biden's transition to the White House appeared to be hitting its stride, the president-elect was hobbling after fracturing his foot while playing with his dog on Sunday.

The incoming administration has been hampered for weeks by President Donald Trump who has refused to concede claiming, without evidence, that Biden's Nov 3 electoral victory was due to fraud. Biden was expected to name leading members of an economic team that will have to combat the crushing blows to US workers and businesses from the coronavirus pandemic.

Biden on Sunday announced an all-female senior White House communications team, in what his office called a first in the country's history.

Among those named was Jen Psaki, who will serve in the highly visible role of White House press secretary. Psaki, 41, has held a number of senior positions, including White House communications director for the Barack Obama-Biden administration.

Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have sought to emphasize diversity in their appointments and nominations so far ahead of their January 20 swearing-in. "I am proud to announce today the first senior White House communications team comprised entirely of women," Biden said in a statement.

"These qualified, experienced communicators bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better." In addition to Psaki, six other appointments were announced.

They include Kate Bedingfield, who was Biden's deputy campaign manager, as White House communications director. Bedingfield had also served as Biden's communications director when he was vice president.

In contrast to Trump, who largely picked white men for key positions, Biden's early appointments were shaping up to be highly diverse, including an all-women communications team unveiled on Sunday night. Biden was expected to announce Janet Yellen, who was the first woman to chair the Federal Reserve, as his Treasury secretary, and Adevale Adeyemo, who would be the first Black deputy Treasury secretary.



WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo, US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki delivers a daily briefing at the US State Department in Washington, DC. US President-elect Joe Biden on Sunday announced an all-female senior White House communications team. — AFP

Other members of his economics team are expected to be announced include Neera Tanden, chief executive of the progressive Center for American Progress think tank, as director of the White House Budget Office, who would be the first woman of color to lead that agency, Reuters and other media outlets reported. Brian Deese, who helped lead Obama's efforts to bail out the automotive industry during the 2009 financial crisis, will head the National Economic Council, the New York Times reported on Sunday, sparking some criticism from progressives for his ties to Wall Street.

Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were also set to receive their first classified presidential daily briefing on Monday, which the Trump administration had previously refused to provide. The briefing is the first step toward transfer of responsibility for the most sensitive intelligence to a new administration. Trump, for his part, kept up his unfounded fraud claims in an interview with Fox News on Sunday and with Sunday evening Tweets that the social media service flagged as disputed. But the Republican president, who on Thursday said he would vacate the White House if Biden were formally declared winner by the Electoral

College on Dec. 14, appeared to retreat from his combative legal stance, telling Fox that he did not see a path toward making his case to the Supreme Court.

While most of Trump's fellow Republicans have followed his lead and refused to refer to Biden as President-elect, one Republican member of the House of Representatives appeared on Twitter late on Sunday to have lost patience. In a Tweet addressing Trump, Representative Paul Mitchell said: "Please for the sake of our Nation, please drop these arguments without evidence or factual basis. #stopthestupid," he wrote.

Other appointees include Ashley Etienne as communications director for Harris and Symone Sanders as Harris's senior advisor and chief spokeswoman.

Pili Tobar was named deputy White House communications director and Karine Jean Pierre will be principal deputy press secretary. Elizabeth Alexander was named communications director for incoming First Lady Jill Biden. The appointments do not require Senate confirmation unlike most cabinet-level positions.

"Honored to work again for @JoeBiden, a man I worked on behalf of during the Obama-Biden Admin as he helped lead economic recovery, rebuilt our relationships with partners (turns out good practice) and injected empathy and humanity into nearly every meeting I sat in," Psaki said on Twitter.

More landmark nominations

There were reports of a number of landmark nominations set for this week.

The New York Times reported that they were to include Cecilia Rouse as the first Black woman to lead the Council of Economic Advisers and Neera Tanden as the first Indian-American at the head of the Office of Management and Budget.

Those reports follow news that Biden intends to nominate former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen to head the US Treasury. Yellen would be the first woman in the role if she is confirmed by the Senate. Biden has also named the first female head of intelligence and the first Latino chief of Homeland Security. The president-elect has sought to move swiftly to assemble his team, despite Donald Trump's refusal to concede his loss in the November 3 election and continued baseless claims of voter fraud. — Agencies

WHO warns malaria fight flat-lining

GENEVA: Progress in eliminating malaria has stalled in recent years, the World Health Organization said yesterday, with more than 400,000 people once again estimated to have died from the disease last year. In its World Malaria Report 2020, the WHO said progress against the mosquito-borne disease was plateauing, particularly in African countries bearing the brunt of cases and deaths.

In 2019, the global tally of malaria cases was estimated at 229 million—a figure that has been at the same level for the past four years. Meanwhile the once rapidly-falling death toll has effectively come to a standstill in the last two years. After steadily tumbling down from 736,000 in 2000, the disease claimed an estimated 411,000 lives in 2018 and 409,000 in 2019.

"A better targeting of interventions, new tools and increased funding are needed to change the global trajectory of the disease and reach internationally-agreed targets," the WHO said.

Call to arms

The UN health agency said a funding shortfall posed a "significant threat", with only \$3 billion of a \$5.6 billion target raised in 2019. "Funding shortages have led to critical gaps in access to proven malaria control tools," it said. Rather than a uniform approach, countries have recently begun to adopt tailored responses based on local data and intelligence, in order to try to keep up the pressure on malaria. More than 90 percent of the disease burden is in Africa. The continent accounted for an estimated 384,000 malaria deaths last year. "It is time for leaders across Africa—and the world—to rise once again to the challenge of malaria," said WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"Through joint action, and a commitment to leaving no one behind, we can achieve our shared vision of a world free of malaria," the former Ethiopian health minister said. In 2019, four countries accounted for nearly half of all malaria cases globally: Nigeria (27 percent); the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12 percent); Uganda (five percent) and Mozambique (four percent).—AFP

In the 24 hours to 0130 GMT yesterday, the country added 140,651 coronavirus cases, taking its total to 13,373,673, according to Johns Hopkins University. There had been 822 additional deaths.

Desperate wait for vaccine

Elsewhere, thousands of health workers marched in Madrid in support of Spain's public health system, in one of the European countries hardest hit by the pandemic. And guards opened fire to quell a prison riot in Sri Lanka, where four inmates were killed while protesting a surge in coronavirus infections. In France, the highest administrative court ordered the government to loosen rules allowing no more than 30 people at religious services, in the face of angry objections from church leaders. Around 9,000 runners—some wearing face masks—took part in the Shanghai International Marathon, according to Chinese media, a mass-participation sports event rare during the pandemic. New York City again took a small step back toward normality, as Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that elementary schools would reopen for in-person instruction on December 7. Things were also returning to normal in Bolivia, where Health Minister Edgar Pozo said the country would soon allow the resumption of "cultural, sporting, religious and political activities," with appropriate safety measures—a further easing of strict containment rules introduced in March.—AFP



The Custos of the Holy Land Friar Francesco Patton arrives to lead a mass at the Church of the Nativity compound to ceremonially launch the beginning of the Christmas season, in Bethlehem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. — AFP

'Christmas will not be cancelled', says Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, West Bank: Bethlehem is shaping up for a dismal Christmas: most of the inns are closed, the shepherds are likely to be under lockdown and there are few visitors from the east, or anywhere else. Just 12 months ago, the Palestinian town was celebrating its busiest festive season for two decades, amid a sustained drop in violence and a corresponding surge in the number of pilgrims and tourists. But hotels that were adding new wings in 2019 are now shuttered because of the coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, town leaders say the traditional birthplace of Jesus will go ahead with its celebrations, aware that the world's eyes are upon it at this time of year.

"Bethlehem is going to celebrate Christmas. And Christmas will not be cancelled," said Mayor Anton Salman, as workers behind him erected a huge Christmas tree in Manger Square. "This Christmas from Bethlehem there will be a message of hope to the whole world, that the world will recover from this pandemic."

Americans brace for COVID 'surge' upon a surge

WASHINGTON: America should prepare for a "surge upon a surge" in coronavirus cases as millions of travelers return home after the Thanksgiving holiday, top US scientist Anthony Fauci warned Sunday. The United States is the world's worst-affected country, with 266,831 COVID-19 deaths, and President Donald Trump's administration has issued conflicting messages on mask-wearing, travel and the danger posed by the virus. "There almost certainly is going to be an uptick because of what has happened with the travel," Fauci told CNN's "State of the Union." Travel surrounding Thursday's Thanksgiving holiday made this the busiest week in US airports since the pandemic began. "We may see a surge upon a surge" in two or three weeks, Fauci added. "We don't want to frighten people, but that's the reality."

The trend is ominous, Fauci and other government scientists said, with the Christmas holidays sure to bring

more travel and family gatherings. Deborah Birk, White House coronavirus response coordinator, noted a surge in COVID-19 after a holiday weekend in May. "Now we're entering this post-Thanksgiving surge with three, four and 10 times as much disease across the country," she told CBS's "Face the Nation." "We are deeply worried." The US surgeon general, Jerome Adams, was equally blunt. "I want to be straight with the American people," he told "Fox News Sunday." "It's going to get worse over the next several weeks."



LOS ANGELES, CA: Alexis Small prepares her newborn baby Aubrielle Kitchen to visit family members in Los Angeles, California. Families have adjusted plans under CDC guidelines due to a spike in COVID-19 cases. — AFP

News in brief

Israel-Lebanon maritime talks off

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM: US-mediated talks between Lebanon and Israel that were scheduled for tomorrow have been postponed until further notice, a Lebanese security source and an Israeli official said yesterday. Long-time foes Israel and Lebanon launched the negotiations in October with delegations convening at a UN base to try to resolve a dispute about their maritime border that has held up hydrocarbon exploration in the potentially gas-rich area. The US mediators, who informed the Lebanese side of the delay, will have bilateral contacts with both sides, the Lebanese source said. The Israeli official confirmed the delay but said he could give no further details. — Reuters

Scotland's Sturgeon hints at new vote

LONDON: Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon yesterday declined to rule out a new vote for Scottish independence next year and hinted she might go to court for permission to hold one if London tried to block it. Scots rejected independence in 2014 but Brexit and the British government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis have bolstered support for secession, with most polls showing a majority now favour breaking up the United Kingdom. Elections to Scotland's devolved parliament will take place in May, and Sturgeon's Scottish National Party (SNP) is expected to perform strongly, which it argues would be a mandate for another independence referendum. — Reuters

Losses for Bolsonaro in local polls

SAO PAULO: Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's candidates suffered further defeats Sunday and the traditional center-right emerged stronger in municipal runoff elections seen as a gauge of where things stand in Brazilian politics ahead of presidential polls in 2022. Brazil's biggest cities, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, both elected experienced center-right mayors—incumbent Bruno Covas and returning veteran Eduardo Paes, respectively—as the candidates endorsed by Bolsonaro were roundly defeated, according to full official results. The Brazilian left meanwhile continued to struggle to bounce back from the damaging impeachment of president Dilma Rousseff in 2016. — AFP

Artist protest a US plot: Cuba

HAVANA: Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said Sunday that a recent protest in Havana by an artists' collective over freedom of expression was "the last attempt" by US President Donald Trump's administration "to overthrow the revolution." "You know they tried to trick us. They set up a media circus," Diaz-Canel told hundreds of young people who took part in a "defense of the revolution" event in a park in the capital. The protest was "the last attempt that the Trumpists and the anti-Cuban mafia (in Miami) could lead." He called it part of an "unconventional war strategy to try to overthrow the revolution." — AFP

Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells: Anger over coronavirus curbs

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, UK: In quintessentially conservative Tunbridge Wells in southeast England, residents are living up to the town's caricatured reputation for perpetual indignation.

This time, the source of their disgust is the government's coronavirus approach when a national lockdown ends next week. Ministers announced on Thursday that the roughly 118,000 people who call the leafy town and its surroundings home will, from next Wednesday, join more than 23 million people across England under the very strictest virus restrictions.

But unlike many other "Tier 3" areas—primarily in northern and central England—COVID-19 rates in the affluent corner of Kent, some 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of London, are well below the national average. The government included it and other parts of west Kent in the "very high" alert level because infection rates in the east of the county, some 40 miles away, are among the worst in the country.

Similar discrepancies have been seen elsewhere in England as Prime Minister Boris Johnson attempts a regional rather than hyper-localized "whack-a-mole" approach to stopping the spread.

But it has irked the upmarket town, which has become synonymous with the phrase "Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells", supposedly a sign-off of a prolific newspaper letter writer which has come to be a catch-all for conservative moral indignation. "It's like a ridiculous puzzle," local retiree Pat Parrock said of the government's evolving tiered approach to the pandemic as she enjoyed a hot drink with a friend sitting outside in the elegant town center. She vowed to keep using her gym down the road in nearby East Sussex, a county with similar infection rates but placed in the more moderate Tier 2 where more businesses will be able to stay open. The government, though, advises against travel outside Tier 3 areas unless essential. —AFP

International

Ethiopian premier says has Tigray leaders in his sights

Abiy vows Ethiopia will be able to quickly welcome back refugees

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said yesterday Tigray region's dissident leaders had fled west of the regional capital after weeks of fighting, but said federal forces were monitoring them closely and would "attack" them soon. Abiy, winner of last year's Nobel Peace Prize, this month ordered military operations against leaders of Tigray's ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), in response to what he said were TPLF-organized attacks on Ethiopian federal army camps.

More than three weeks of fighting between federal soldiers and pro-TPLF forces has left thousands dead in the northern region, and prompted tens of thousands of refugees to flee across the border into Sudan. "I want them to hear me: Yesterday evening, around midnight, we saw them from the situation room in the area between Hagera Selam and Abiy Addi," Abiy said in remarks to lawmakers, referring to two towns west of the Tigray capital Mekele. "We didn't attack them at night because as they retreated they took their wives, children and abducted soldiers... But this will not continue."

The fighting has been a dramatic escalation of tensions between Abiy and the leaders of the TPLF, which dominated Ethiopian politics for nearly three decades before anti-government protests swept Abiy to office in 2018. Abiy said on Saturday the military operations were "completed" after federal forces claimed control of the Tigray regional capital Mekele. The TPLF leaders, however, have repeatedly vowed to fight on as long as federal forces are on Tigrayan soil. Their exact whereabouts remain unknown.

'Mekele is ours'

As the Ethiopian military bore down on Mekele last week, global concern mounted about a possible bloodbath in a city that, before the conflict, had a population of half a million. But the government says little combat actually occurred as pro-TPLF forces retreated. A communications blackout in Tigray has made it difficult to verify claims from both sides about how the fighting is going. On Monday Abiy claimed soldiers did not kill any civilians as

they took over Mekele and other cities in Tigray. "Mekele is ours, it was built with our own resources. We are not going to destroy it," he said. "Not even a single person was harmed by the operation in Mekele." The International Committee of the Red Cross said Sunday that hospitals in Mekele were flooded with trauma patients, though it did not specify how the injuries were sustained. Abiy also dismissed claims from TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael that air strikes had resulted in many civilian casualties.

"Every missile launched is backed by the signature of an authority, 99 percent hit their target, and 99 percent did not have collateral damage," he said. "When it is suspicious, we don't fire. Especially at night. Because we don't want to kill children, they are ours," he added.

Rising tensions

In a marathon four-hour address, his first to lawmakers since the conflict began, Abiy fielded multiple questions about why he hadn't moved against the TPLF leadership earlier. The party has complained of being sidelined, targeted for corruption prosecutions and scapegoated for the country's woes under Abiy's rule. Tensions rose dramatically after Tigray held its own elections in September, flouting a nationwide ban on polls because of the coronavirus pandemic. It then tried to brand Abiy an illegitimate ruler.

Abiy said yesterday that when he took office, he was hemmed in by a TPLF-run security and intelligence apparatus. "My office in general was under the control of other forces. Even the key to my house was controlled by these people, they opened the door, they closed the door, morning and night," Abiy said. "This was the scenario I was in... I was unable to safeguard the safety of my family," he said. He accused the TPLF of fomenting internal conflict, including ethnic clashes, throughout the country during his tenure, leaving only Tigray unaffected. "They said peace is only in Tigray region and it's true, because the perpetrators are there themselves," he said.

Nod to Eritrea

Abiy vowed yesterday that Ethiopia would be able



ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed gestures at the House of Peoples Representatives yesterday. —AFP

to quickly welcome back Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. He questioned, though, why the refugees were "mostly male" and suggested they could have been involved in a massacre in the Tigray town of Mai-Kadra that a government-affiliated rights body says killed 600 people. Abiy's government has seized on the massacre as evidence of pro-TPLF forces' brutality, though refugees in Sudan have told AFP that pro-government forces were involved in killings in Mai-Kadra.

A recent breakdown from the UN refugee agency

indicated 57 percent of Ethiopian refugees in Sudan were male and 43 percent female. Abiy also thanked Eritrea for its support during the conflict, including helping Ethiopian soldiers who at one point were forced to retreat over Ethiopia's northern border onto Eritrean soil. "When the junta sent Ethiopian defense forces naked to Eritrea, the Eritrean people clothed them, gave them water, fed them and gave them arms. The Ethiopian people should know it and respect it," Abiy said. —AFP

Thousands flee as Indonesian volcano bursts to life

JAKARTA: Thousands have fled the scene of a rumbling Indonesian volcano that burst to life for the first time in several years, belching a massive column of smoke and ash, the disaster agency said yesterday. The evacuation of more than 4,400 residents came as Mount Ili Lewotolok erupted Sunday, spouting a thick tower of debris four kilometers (2.5 miles) into the sky, triggering a flight warning and the closure of a local airport. The crater's last major eruption was in 2017.

There were no reports of injuries or damage from the eruption in a remote part of the Southeast Asian archipelago. But authorities

advised residents to wear masks to protect themselves from volcanic ash spouting from the crater in East Nusa Tenggara—the southernmost province of Indonesia—and to be alert for possible lava flows.

"To minimize the health impact from volcanic ash, it is recommended that people wear a mask or other equipment to protect their eyes and skin," National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati said. A two-kilometer no-go zone around the crater was also expanded to four kilometers after Sunday's eruption, while flights were advised to steer clear of the area as volcanic ash rained down on the local Wunopitu airport, which was temporarily closed. Indonesia is home to about 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", a belt of tectonic plate boundaries circling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs.

In late 2018, a volcano in the strait between Java and Sumatra islands erupted, causing an



JAKARTA: Thousands have fled the scene of a rumbling Indonesian volcano that burst to life for the first time in several years, belching a massive column of smoke and ash, the disaster agency said yesterday. —Reuters

underwater landslide that unleashed a tsunami which killed more than 400 people. —AFP

Afghan forces kill Taliban mastermind of army base attack

KABUL: Afghan forces have killed the Taliban mastermind of a suicide car bomb attack that left at least 30 security personnel dead, officials said yesterday. Hamza Waziristani was killed in an air strike overnight in the eastern province of Ghazni where the bomber struck an Afghan military base on Sunday.

"The mastermind behind yesterday's terrorist attack on the (Ghazni) base was killed along with seven other terrorists," the defence ministry said in a statement. Military spokesman Fawad Aman said that the bomber was a Taliban militant from the Pakistani border region of Waziristan.

The attack was one of the deadliest in months

targeting government forces in Afghanistan, where violence has surged since the start of peace talks between President Ashraf Ghani's administration and the Taliban in Qatar. No group has claimed the attack. The Taliban often do not comment on deadly attacks they are accused of carrying out. The insurgents have launched near daily attacks against Afghan forces, primarily in rural areas, since signing a deal with Washington in February that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign troops by May 2021.

Health officials in Ghazni said 30 people died in Sunday's attack, but the defense ministry—which is known to downplay tolls in attacks against its forces—said 10 were killed. Violence has also surged in Kabul in recent weeks, with more than 50 people killed in two assaults on educational centers and a rocket attack. The three Kabul attacks were claimed by the Islamic State group, but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban—who denied any involvement. —AFP



JALALABAD: Security personnel present to the media two suicide attackers (center L and R), who according to officials were arrested before detonating explosives, in Jalalabad city yesterday. —AFP

Australia bush fire rips through heritage island

BRISBANE: Australian firefighters are struggling to control a massive bush fire that already destroyed 40 percent of the UNESCO world heritage-listed Fraser Island before a heatwave hit yesterday. The fire on the world's largest sand island, off Australia's east coast, has been raging for more than six weeks and is consuming large swathes of the island's unique forests.

Temperatures are forecast to peak at 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) yesterday as a heatwave sweeps across the region, raising concerns that hotter conditions will fur-

ther fuel the blaze.

"The vegetation on Fraser Island is extremely dry and because it's so dry it's therefore very easy to ignite," incident controller James Haig told AFP. About two-thirds of Queensland state, including Fraser Island, is currently gripped by drought. According to a recent report from the nation's top science and meteorology agencies, climate change is fuelling more extreme droughts, bush fires and cyclones in Australia—which they said will only worsen as temperatures continue to rise.

Firefighters on Fraser Island are not only battling "very challenging weather conditions", Haig said, but are stymied by limited access to the blaze in the island's remote north. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service said the fire was burning on two fronts across 74,000 hectares (183,000 acres) — or 42 percent of the island—but was not threatening properties. —AFP



This handout picture taken on Sunday and released by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services shows an aerial view of bushfires on Fraser Island, off Australia's east coast. —AFP

Australia PM slams 'repugnant' Chinese tweet

SYDNEY: Australia's prime minister angrily denounced a "repugnant", "outrageous" and "appalling" tweet from a top Chinese government spokesman yesterday and demanded Beijing formally apologize. Chinese foreign

ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian sparked the outrage when he posted a staged image of a man dressed as an Australian soldier holding a bloody knife to an Afghan child's throat. Australian prosecutors are currently investigating 19 members of the country's military in connection with alleged war crimes committed by special forces in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016. Morrison called the tweet—from an official Chinese government account—an "outrageous and disgusting slur" against the Australian armed forces and called on Twitter to take it down.

"It is utterly outrageous and it cannot be justified on any basis whatsoever. The Chinese government should be

totally ashamed of this post," Morrison said of the tweet. "It diminishes them in the world's eyes." Asked about the tweet at a regular press briefing, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying replied: "With Australian soldiers committing such atrocious crimes, shouldn't the Australian government feel ashamed?" She said Australia should "make a formal apology to the Afghan people", adding that "it is a fact that Australian soldiers brutally slaughtered innocent civilians in Afghanistan". Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said earlier in November that Morrison had called him personally to express his "deepest sorrow" over the allegations. —AFP

News in brief

Ex-S Korean dictator Chun found guilty

SEOUL: Former South Korean dictator Chun Doo-hwan was found guilty of defaming a dead priest yesterday, in connection with a pro-democracy uprising his troops crushed 40 years ago. The 89-year-old dozed off as the verdict was read out in Gwangju, where the 1980 demonstrations ended in a bloodbath, but he was spared a return to prison. The official toll for the dead or missing is around 200 people, but activists say it may have been three times as high, and Chun is known as the "Butcher of Gwangju". —AFP

HK reimposes strict social distancing

HONG KONG: Hong Kong reimposed social distancing measures at some of their strictest levels in the city since the start of the coronavirus pandemic yesterday, as authorities battle a fourth wave of infections. The financial hub has maintained bans on large group gatherings for much of year and has shuttered various industries when cases have spiked. The measures have helped keep infections to just over 6,000 in the city of 7.5 million with 109 deaths. But daily cases have risen above 100 in recent days, prompting authorities to usher in stricter measures similar to those seen during waves in the spring and summer. "This new wave of COVID-19 has hit Hong Kong very quickly," chief executive Carrie Lam told reporters, adding the new restrictions would take effect from Wednesday. —AFP

British girl's death probe

LONDON: A coroner's inquest started in London yesterday to determine whether air pollution played a role in the death of a nine-year-old girl who lived near a busy road. The hearing, which is due to last 10 days, could set a new legal precedent if it is found poor air quality contributed to the death of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah. Ella died in February 2013 from a severe asthma attack. She had previously suffered from nearly three years of repeated attacks related to the chronic illness and had been in hospital 30 times. —AFP

Turkish ship leaves disputed waters

ANKARA: A Turkish research ship at the center of a row with Greece over potential gas riches in the eastern Mediterranean has returned to port, Turkey's energy ministry said yesterday. The Oruc Reis seismic survey vessel has become a symbol of Turkey's growing appetite to find natural gas in the contested waters despite opposition by Greece and Cyprus. Backed by Turkish navy frigates, the ship was first deployed in August and again in October to the waters south of Greece's Kastellorizo island, in defiance of calls to stop by the European Union and the United States. Ankara says that with its long Mediterranean coastline, its claim to sovereign waters in the region is stronger than Greece's, which is based on the tiny island of Kastellorizo. —AFP

Business

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020

Kuwait completes inclusion into MSCI Emerging Markets Indices

Inclusion sees values of over KD 961.6 million traded



KUWAIT: (From left) Boursa Kuwait CEO Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi, Board Member Faleh Abdullah Al-Ruqba, Board Member and Chairman of the Executive Committee Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Chairman of the Executive Committee at Boursa Kuwait Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Boursa Kuwait Chairman Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi, Board Member Talal Jassem Al-Bahar and Chairman of the Risk Committee Khalid Waleed Al-Falah applaud during Boursa Kuwait's market debut.

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait yesterday completed the Kuwaiti capital market's inclusion into the MSCI Emerging Markets Indices with the successful implementation of the first tranche of index inclusion. A total of seven listed companies - the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Zain, Agility, Boubyan Bank, Mabaneer and Gulf Bank - were included. The inclusion brought in huge inflows to the market, as the total traded value during the inclusion was over KD 961.6 million, most of which came from foreign inflows.

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hailed Kuwait's entry into all emerging markets and achieving a quantum leap in its ranking of improving the business environment and enhancing competitiveness indicators. He praised the promotion of Boursa Kuwait to the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, noting this is a historic achievement witnessed by the capital market over the past few years in order to place Kuwait on the global investment map.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed that promoting Kuwait as an emerging market in all global indices is of great importance, especially after obtaining two earlier promotions - to the FTSE Russell Index and to the S&P Dow Jones Index.

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan said Kuwait's

- HH the PM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirms inclusion a historic achievement
- Commerce Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan hails joint work between public and private sectors
- Head of Boursa Kuwait's executive committee Bader Al-Kharafi says inclusion proves private sector's success in operating Boursa
- Boursa Kuwait CEO Mohammad Al-Osaimi says Kuwait now on worldwide investment map

inclusion in the MSCI index is an exceptional event and a notable success that was achieved by the efforts of competent nationals. He said Kuwait's inclusion in international indices is an important aspect of the implementation of the New Kuwait 2035 vision and the embodiment of the idea of transforming Kuwait into a regional financial center. Roudhan hailed the joint work between the public and private sectors.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, head of the executive committee at Boursa Kuwait, said this achievement proves the private sector's success in operating Boursa Kuwait, one of the most important economic facilities in the country.

Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi said: "We saw values of over 961.6 million Kuwaiti dinars traded today, which is proof of the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus's success in absorbing these

unprecedented foreign inflows. Kuwait's inclusion in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index represents an important milestone in advancing the Kuwaiti capital market and putting Kuwait on the worldwide investment map, as well as a recognition of Boursa Kuwait's instrumental role in improving market access and efficiency, enhancing transparency and governance, increasing liquidity and strengthening investor confidence."

Boursa Kuwait introduced a series of measures for the day of inclusion, including an extension of the Closing Auction and the Trade at Last (TAL) Session. The Closing Auction went on for 40 minutes, followed by a 30-minute break before the TAL session kicks off for 40 minutes. In cooperation with the capital market apparatus, which is comprised of the Capital Markets Authority, Kuwait Clearing Company and Kuwaiti brokerage firms, Boursa Kuwait had conducted a series of

stress tests to enable Kuwait's trading systems to absorb the amount of orders and trades conducted during the inclusion.

The Capital Markets Authority said in a statement yesterday that it played a significant role in developing the Kuwaiti market and promoting Kuwait in international indices, starting with the plan of developing the market and overseeing its implementation in cooperation and coordination with Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company. It said it was in constant contact with international investment establishments and presented the latest market developments to international indices.

MSCI Inc announced the reclassification of Kuwait to "Emerging Market" status in Dec 2019. The landmark development comes as global recognition of the sweeping market development efforts undertaken by Boursa Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority and Kuwait Clearing

Company.

The reclassification announcement occurred as a result of the successful completion of the implementation of MSCI's recommendations, including the introduction of omnibus account structures and same National Investor Number (NIN) cross trades by the end of October 2019, a month ahead of the stated deadline.

MSCI had granted conditional approval for the inclusion of Kuwait in the coveted index as part of the benchmark provider's 2019 Annual Market Classification Review held on June 25, 2019, paving the way for increased participation from foreign investors in Kuwait's capital market and driving significant capital inflows to the country. The official status upgrade follows the country's inclusion in S&P DJI Global Equity Indices, with an Emerging Market classification in Dec 2018 and the FTSE Russell Emerging Markets Index in September 2017.

Since its inception, Boursa Kuwait has worked diligently to create a credible exchange built on efficiency and transparency, creating a liquid capital market, a progressive exchange platform and developing a comprehensive set of reforms and enhancements that has allowed it to compete on an international level. Over the past three years, the company has rolled out numerous market reforms and new initiatives as part of its comprehensive multi-phase market development (MID) plans.

OPEC begins meet to mull extension of production cuts

LONDON: As the coronavirus pandemic continues to weigh on global oil demand, the OPEC oil producers' club yesterday began a meeting in which they are expected to decide on an extension of production cuts. "2020 continues to be a year of immense challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," Abdelmadjid Attar, who currently holds the rotating presidency of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and is also Algeria's energy minister, said in a speech broadcast live at the beginning of the group's videoconference meeting.

The common goal of the 13 member states, who will be joined by Russia and other allies forming the OPEC+ grouping today, is to keep afloat a crude market devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and which is slowly recovering from the depths into which prices plunged at the end of April. That month, OPEC members agreed to cut production by 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd), which was meant to be eased to 5.8 million bpd in January 2021.

However, most observers expect the cut instead to be extended by three to six months to take into account the ongoing effects of the virus. A "second wave of the pandemic and related lockdowns put a damper on demand," Attar told the ministerial meeting. "The shock to the oil industry is massive and its severe impacts will likely reverberate in the years to come," Attar said.

His Iranian counterpart, Bijan Zanganeh, made similar remarks after the meeting finished, but

said today's meeting of OPEC+ would not be easy. "I think within OPEC there was consensus," Zanganeh said, the Iranian oil ministry's news agency SHANA reported. "Tomorrow's meeting will be difficult and require negotiations and patience."

Despite encouraging news from trials for vaccines by pharmaceutical companies, global deployment would take time and its effects might not become significantly apparent before the second half of 2021, Attar cautioned. Just this March, the last of their meetings to be held at OPEC headquarters in Vienna before the pandemic forced them online turned into a fiasco when Saudi Arabia and key ally Russia failed to reach an agreement and spent the next month engaged in a fratricidal price war.

Whether all members are currently sticking to the output quotas that have already been assigned to them has also become a sensitive topic. Those

exceeding their allotted output - foremost among them Iraq and Nigeria - regularly come in for a scolding from Prince Abdelaziz bin Salman, energy minister of OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia.

Crude oil prices have picked up by 25 percent since the beginning of the month and have returned to roughly their pre-pandemic levels of between 45 and 50 dollars per barrel for both the US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), and Europe's Brent North Sea contracts. However, they were down yesterday morning in what analysts say was a sign of investor jitters ahead of the meeting.

"OPEC will probably agree to extend the current production ceiling for the first quarter of 2021, if the non-OPEC countries agree with it in (Tuesday's) meeting," an OPEC source said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said differences between Russia and OPEC were not as severe as in early 2020, when disagreements led to a collapse in talks and a surge in output. — Agencies

Business

Britain's Big Four auditors await shake-up as graft probes add up

'Repeated failures' underline need for restructuring

LONDON: Britain's audit sector, dominated by the so-called Big Four accountancy giants, is shortly expected to discover how it must reinvent itself amid a series of probes into alleged corruption, including one linked to the collapse of German electronic payments group Wirecard.

UK authorities want the industry to separate audit and consulting activities, while increasing oversight and competition following allegations of malpractice by Britain's Big Four-comprising accountants Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is reportedly set to publish reform proposals before Christmas amid fraud probes into EY-linked activities at Denmark's Danske Bank and Wirecard.

"Strengthening our corporate governance and audit regime will help to ensure that the UK remains a world leader in corporate transparency and advance its status as a place of the highest standards in audit," a BEIS spokesman said.

'Repeatedly failing'

Simon Youel, head of policy at Positive Money-which campaigns against market dominance in the financial sector-said there is "a real problem with the UK market dominated by these four firms".

"They have been repeatedly failing," he said. EY has been accused of failing to warn about suspicious transactions at Danish bank Danske Bank worth billions of euros. It was responsible also for validating the books of Wirecard before the company became subject to one of the most well-known modern-day corporate bankruptcies. Wirecard, a former darling of the fintech sector, collapsed in June after it was forced to admit that 1.9 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) missing from its accounts did not exist. Pressure group Spotlight on Corruption has urged the UK government's Crown Commercial Service-which procures goods and services-to temporarily block London-based EY from public sector contracts

for three years.

Spotlight has accused the accounting giant of "grave professional misconduct that renders EY's integrity questionable". EY "strongly" disputes the claims, insisting that it takes its responsibilities "seriously" in a highly-regulated industry.

The UK auditing sector as a whole faces outcry over its failure to identify or prevent major UK bankruptcies that sparked massive job losses-including at department store BHS in 2016, construction firm Carillion in 2018, and tour operator Thomas Cook in 2019.

PwC had been the auditor of BHS, while KPMG oversaw Carillion accounts and has been heavily criticized for its role. As for Deloitte, it was fined £15 million (\$19.7 million, 16.6 million euros) in September for serious misconduct after UK regulators investigated its audit of British software firm Autonomy ahead of a disastrous takeover by US tech giant Hewlett-Packard in 2011.

'Corruption is rare'

Questioned about the Spotlight findings, Laura Empson, a business professor at City University London, told AFP that explicit corruption was "relatively rare within the audit sector". "The problems lie with the considerable scope that exists within the current regulations and the strong incentives that exist within the firms, to engage in practices which fail to protect the public interest.

"It is this mismatch between government regulations, firms' incentives, and public expectations, which has given rise to the scandals and reputational damage of recent years," she added. Empson noted that the scandals had provoked extensive anxiety and introspection within the Big Four.

"Some partners within these firms have long been concerned about the direction of travel, but there has been a strong pressures from internal politics to disregard these concerned voices." The

million-euro) loan to help Arcadia avoid bankruptcy.

Sources however told the BBC that they do not anticipate a rescue deal from Ashley, who also owns Newcastle United football club and bought troubled department store chain House of Fraser in 2018.

"Fraser's Group notes recent press reports concerning the potential provision of emergency funding by the company to the Arcadia Group," Fraser's said in a statement. "The company can confirm that it has made an offer and provided draft terms to the Arcadia Group for a loan of up to £50 million and is now awaiting a substantive response.

"Should the company and the Arcadia Group's efforts to agree an emergency funding package fail and the Arcadia Group enter into administration, the company would be interested in participating in any sale process." Arcadia had stated on Friday that the deadly COVID-19 pandemic has had a "material impact" on trading due to enforced closures during lockdowns, adding it was working on "a number of contingency options" to secure the future of its brands.

Back in 2015, Green sold retailer BHS for just £1 to Dominic Chappell, a former bankrupt businessman with

negotiator, told AFP.

NAFTA erased nearly all tariffs across the region and helped turn Mexico into an export powerhouse. But Trump had long blamed the agreement for the offshoring of American jobs. He also threatened to slap tariffs on imports from Mexico if it did not stop a wave of Central American migrants heading overland to the United States. A new trade war would be devastating for Mexico's economy, now reeling from the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, as the United States buys more than 80 percent of its exports.

Analysts at the Spanish bank BBVA think Biden's victory will clear the uncertainty hanging over trade between the US, Mexico and Canada, which in 2019 was worth \$1.2 trillion. Biden "supported the original free trade agreement and the current one. We would think that he is more committed to this vision," said Carlos Ramos, chief economist at BBVA Mexico.

Trump's scorching rhetoric is likely to be replaced by careful monitoring, under Biden, to ensure that Mexico is complying with the fine print of the trade deal, analysts said. Some fear this could produce cross-border spats. "It's very clear that President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador doesn't share the political agendas of the Democrats, and this will lead to permanent disagreements, mainly in energy and labor

Nairobi, community groups are working to stop encroachers from destroying the forests around the city, as conservationists allege that much of the activity is due to illegal deals between developers and local politicians.

Asked about the corruption allegations at a media briefing in November, Alfred Gichu, national coordinator for REDD+, the UN-backed conservation scheme, acknowledged that unlawful encroachment was rife in the country's forests. The problem, he said, is driven by the government's inability to meet Kenya's annual demand for 45 million cubic meters of wood, with the state falling short by about 15 million cubic meters each year. Violet Matiru, a conservationist with Millennium Community Development Initiatives (MCDI), a local environment charity, said grassroots projects had become necessary to protect Nairobi's forests.

"City forests are always on the radar of land grabbers because of the value they hold. Fighting them politically does not work, so we have to come up with creative ways of engaging communities (to help) keep them away," she said. Like other members of the local conservation group he belongs to, Wainana farms in Thogoto forest under a state pro-



Buildings of the global 'Big Four' accounting firms (clockwise from top left) KPMG, Ernst & Young, Deloitte & Touche and PricewaterhouseCoopers are pictured in this combination photograph. —Reuters

scandals have therefore given the leaders of these firms the incentive but also the authority they need to force through changes which would previously have been inconceivable," she noted. The government has meanwhile already announced plans to replace the Financial Reporting Council regulator with the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority which has been handed fresh enforcement powers. —AFP

Owner of Topshop facing collapse despite loan offer

LONDON: British clothing retailer Arcadia, ravaged by coronavirus lockdowns and fierce online competition, remains on the brink of bankruptcy despite an emergency loan offer, the BBC reported yesterday. The owner of high-street chains including Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins, Burton, Miss Selfridge, Evans and Wallis, is set to enter administration "within hours", the BBC reported citing senior company sources, in a move that would threaten some 13,000 jobs.

The failure would deliver another body blow to Arcadia boss Philip Green, whose reputation had already taken a battering from the high-profile collapse of retailer BHS four years ago. British sportswear tycoon Mike Ashley's Frasers Group meanwhile confirmed yesterday that it has offered a £50 million (\$67 million, 56-



LONDON: A pedestrian wearing a face covering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, walks past a temporarily closed-down Topshop clothes store, operated by Arcadia, in central London yesterday. —AFP

no retail experience. BHS then collapsed one year later, resulting in 11,000 job losses and leaving a massive deficit in its pension fund. —AFP



Trump's scorching rhetoric is likely to be replaced by careful monitoring, under Biden, to ensure that Mexico is complying with the fine print of the trade deal.

matters," said Miguel Angel Jimenez, analyst at the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations. Lopez Obrador managed to maintain cordial relations with Trump even though the Republican branded Mexican migrants as "rapists" and drug dealers during his 2016 election campaign and vowed to build a wall across the southern US border.—AFP

gram aimed at tackling deforestation, the Plantation Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme.

Run by the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the initiative allocates farmers half an acre of land each - cleared by the KFS - in any Kenyan forest to grow crops like maize and beans for a period of up to four years. In return, the farmers must plant and nurture trees until the saplings are mature enough to sustain themselves, explained Patrick Kariuki, a conservator of forests for the KFS.

Working in partnership with the MCDI, Wainana and the rest of the Thogoto Community Forest Association have gone beyond the scheme's remit by also planting bamboo to fill out the forest.

In addition, the plants' roots stop silt falling into the springs that flow through the area, which was causing their water levels to drop, Wainana explained. To deter encroachers, older women in the group have turned to beekeeping among the trees, he added.

They sell the honey to supplement their incomes, and because the bees need daily attention, the project ensures there is always someone in the forest to report illegal logging. —Reuters

Opinion-editorial

Oil buyers in Asia look to Mideast crudes

By Dan Colover

Oil buyers in Asia are increasingly turning to heavy sour crude oil grades from the Middle East, which as a result, have seen their value increase relative to light sweet crudes. Oil markets have witnessed unique demand destruction in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, with S&P Global Platts Analytics forecasting that consumption will drop by 8.5 million b/d this year, leaving the global Dated Brent oil price in the upper \$30s to lower \$40s/b range. However, crude grades are not homogenous and there are hundreds of different types, each with their own qualities and characteristics. Typically, the value of a grade of crude oil is defined by the underlying value of the products that are made when it is refined. The refinery yields of different crude grades and underlying refinery economics are critical in analyzing the competitiveness of competing crudes in big consuming markets, such as Asia.

The international market has settled on using certain benchmarks, against which the value of crudes is measured. Values for Platts Dubai, the Middle East sour crude benchmark assessment, have been supported in recent weeks by the ongoing tightness in the sour crude complex. Platts Dubai rose to a 1 cent/b premium to Cash Brent at the Singapore market close on Nov. 9. This means that the market is valuing sour Middle Eastern crude above North Sea sweet crude, which the Brent benchmark reflects. By contrast, in 2019 Platts Dubai was assessed at a 74 cents/b discount to Cash Brent at the Singapore close. The market has seen a combination of strong buying interest from Asian refiners - buoyed by a resurgence in the region's major economies, especially India and China - and production cuts from the so-called OPEC+ grouping of producer nations.

Demand growth

Chinese demand has been particularly strong for Middle East sour crude grades, with barrels of Abu Dhabi's Upper Zakum, Qatar's Al-Shaheen and Oman's crude export blend - all deliverable crudes into the Platts Dubai benchmark - having been purchased recently by the world's largest importer of crude oil. By way of example, China's independent Rongsheng refiner is set to expand its refinery capacity and it has been seen buying crude cargoes in advance of the startup of the expansion. In addition, demand from Indian refiners for Middle East crude has picked up against a backdrop of improving domestic gasoline margins. OPEC and its alliance have managed to keep to high levels of output compliance in recent months, with some member countries even contributing to overcompliance as they have looked to recover previous slippage in their quotas. The most recent Platts OPEC+ survey for October shows that the OPEC +10 non-OPEC alliance members produced 34.40 million b/d in October, reflecting 100.2% compliance with their quotas.

Meanwhile, Western benchmarks - Brent and WTI - remain under pressure from poor refining margins, linked to weak refined product demand due to ongoing lockdowns and reduced movement across the Western Hemisphere. In Europe, news of second-wave coronavirus lockdowns across much of the continent in October and November sent further shockwaves through crude markets, but the consequences on fundamentals have been notably different from those seen in the spring. The dominant reason for this has been that same resurgence in crude demand from Chinese and Indian refiners seeking a mix of West African and Mediterranean sweet crudes, which are providing economic options for those buyers. While values for the Platts Dated Brent benchmark have found some support solace following reports of effective coronavirus vaccines, prices remain fundamentally weak as oil product demand remains stuck on the back foot. Oil markets are still vulnerable - and on a net basis, Platts Analytics sees oil demand in 2021 being lower than that of 2019. However, there will be winners and losers, and the premium of Platts Dubai to other major oil benchmarks highlights the extent that heavier sourer grades of crude from the Middle East are in strong demand from buyers in Asia in a two-tier recovery.

Note: Dan Colover is Head of Middle East Structured Market Engagement, S&P Global Platts

Mexico braces for discreet trade scrutiny from Biden

MEXICO CITY: After years of fiery rhetoric from outgoing President Donald Trump, Mexico is bracing for more discreet but steadfast pressure from Joe Biden's administration to fulfill its trade obligations to the latter, analysts say. Mexico and Canada were pressured by Trump to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the 1994 pact that the Republican branded "the worst trade deal in the history of the country."

After more than two years of arduous haggling, it was replaced as of July 1 by the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) — but only after the Democrats demanded US officials renegotiate key elements including labor provisions. "Biden won't be as hostile as Trump, but he will watch to see that the commitments made in the USMCA are fulfilled, which Trump hasn't done," Kenneth Smith, who was the Mexican chief

Kenyan farmers and young guides enlisted to protect city forests

KARINDE, Kenya: Peter Wainana remembers when the forest near his home outside Kenya's capital, Nairobi, was so thick with trees and vegetation it was difficult to walk through.

Today, Thogoto forest, on Nairobi's northwest edge, is dotted with open spaces that locals and environmentalists say have been illegally cleared of trees by loggers and property developers. Wainana said. The destruction motivated the 49-year-old to join with a dozen other farmers from Karinde village to protect Thogoto's trees through projects such as bamboo farming and beekeeping.

"Everybody wants a piece of this forest because it is near the capital city. Rich people are trying to steal its land, traders are taking (its) timber, even manufacturing companies are dumping toxic waste here," said the father of three. Across

Business

Pandemic Motors: Europeans snap up old cars to avoid public transport

Online searches for ageing vehicles spike

LONDON/MADRID: Want a cheap used car to nip around town without running the gauntlet of coronavirus on public transport? Welcome to Pandemic Motors, we have just what you need. Across Europe, people are snapping up old bangers, clunkers, Klapperkasten, tacots and catorci, desperate to avoid buses and trains but wary of splashing out on a shiny new motor in uncertain economic times. "Public transportation is terrific here, but with the COVID and all that, it's better to avoid it," said Robert Perez, who recently moved to Spain's capital Madrid from Argentina.

On the hunt for work, Perez, a 33-year-old automotive engineer, bought a red 2001 Seat Toledo for 2,000 euros (\$2,370) from OcasionPlus, a Spanish used car firm that has opened four new dealerships since the lockdown due to soaring demand. Data provided to Reuters by research firm IHS Markit and online car market AutoScout24 showed there has been a marked upward shift in registrations of older cars across Europe, as well as a spike in internet searches for ageing vehicles.

The surge in interest in used cars is neither good news for struggling mass transit networks nor the environment as dirty old cars appear to be more in demand than new electric vehicles.

In the longer term, however, the shift away from public transport towards "individual mobility" in the pandemic era is expected to help carmakers, hit by a 27 percent slump in new vehicle sales across Europe in the first 10 months of 2020. At Nawaie Motoring's cramped lot in the west London suburb of Hayes, general manager Ameen Sultani points out the older cars selling for under 3,000 pounds (\$3,985) that are in demand.

He said prices for the cars, mostly over a decade old, have jumped by 25 percent as buyers who used to take trains and buses look for affordable alternatives. "Anything under 3,000 pounds has sold very quickly and is very hard to replace in our inventory because everyone is chasing the same vehicles," Sultani told Reuters. "Most of them have bought because they wanted to avoid public transport."

Cheap cars

Stronger than expected demand for new cars in the United States, Europe and especially China in recent months has helped major automakers recover to some extent from the financial blows pandemic lockdowns

delivered in the spring. But an analysis of car registration data in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom conducted for Reuters by IHS Markit also shows there's a significant shift toward older, used vehicles.

In France, for example, the IHS analysis showed used car registrations rose nearly 16 percent in the third quarter while new vehicle sales fell more than 5 percent. It also showed that in 2020 so far, vehicles over 15 years old made up a higher proportion of used car registrations than in 2019. "It's fair to say in the time of corona that the amount of vehicles older than 15 years has increased versus prior years," said Bjoern Huettner, an associate product director at IHS.

There was an even bigger jump in Spain, with used car registrations up nearly 25 percent, according to the IHS analysis. Cristian Lopez, 34, is another buyer in Spain who went for the cheaper second-hand option, partly thanks to having saved some money during the country's strict lockdown.

"Enough to buy a cheap car in cash!" Lopez said.

Furloughed from his job at a catering company, he went back to school to study tourism management. This month, he bought a gray 2005 Renault Clio for 3,600 euros to get to classes from his home in the Madrid suburb of Vicalvaro. Vehicle sales portal Sumauto, part of Spanish media company Vocento SA, told Reuters that sales of cars over 20 years old jumped 25 percent in Spain from June to October, while those over 15 years old rose 16 percent.

'Individual mobility'

In an analysis for Reuters, online car market AutoScout24, which serves Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, said internet searches for older cars had spiked since the summer. The data showed, for instance, that in July through September, online searches for vehicles over 20 years old jumped 80 percent in France, 77 percent in the Netherlands and 59 percent in Belgium.

AutoScout24 Chief Executive Edgar Berger said that while "individual mobility" had become more important to consumers in these markets because of the pandemic, they had also become more cautious because of economic uncertainty. But buyers are still shying away from second-hand electric vehicles, according to used car



Ameen Sultani, general manager of used car dealer Nawaie Motoring Ltd, looks inside a car as he shows some of the older, cheaper vehicles that have been popular with customers eager to avoid public transport during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in Hayes, Britain. — Reuters

dealer OcasionPlus. Of the 2,800 vehicles it currently has on sale, only six are electric.

"People are wary about batteries' performance in the long run and are reluctant to invest in the charging cabling for a second-hand car," marketing chief Fernando Rodriguez said.

Besides the potential setback to ambitious European targets for cutting carbon emissions, there are other, longer-term ramifications from keeping very old cars on the road longer.

Older vehicles with fewer safety features might cause more accidents and lead to higher premiums, insurers said, though that will take time to show up in statistics. And the shift to cars is already hitting public transport.

The number of people using public transport in Spain fell 92 percent in April from the same month in 2019 and was still 44 percent lower in September, several months after national lockdown restrictions were eased. In

Britain, before the country's latest lockdown began at the beginning of November, rail usage was about a third of 2019 levels, while personal car usage was close to 90 percent.

In September, London Mayor Sadiq Khan called for a 5.7 billion pound bailout package for the city's transport operator as passenger numbers continued to plunge. Germany and France have also bailed out their state-owned railways. Greenpeace political campaigner Sam Chetan-Welsh said the shift away from public transport was a greater environmental concern than having older cars on the road because higher sales of new, larger sports-utility vehicles have left vehicle emissions relatively flat anyway.

"Governments need to do everything they can to reduce traffic on the road," Chetan-Welsh said. "That includes giving people the confidence to get back on public transport safely." — Reuters

Digital giants sign on to fair tax initiative

PARIS: Some 75 major tech players, including Google and Facebook, are backing a French initiative committing them to making a "fair tax contribution" in countries where they operate.

French President Emmanuel Macron unveiled the "Tech For Good" initiative at the Elysee Palace yesterday in a move designed to draw up the ground rules for ensuring the internet is a borderless "free, open and safe space". Signing on to the initiative are tech big-hitters such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter, Snapchat and Huawei. Assorted tech 'unicorns', start-ups and NGOs have also joined.

Two big names yet to sign on are Amazon and Apple, but French presidential sources said both have expressed a "desire" to join. The initiative comes with France having last week pledged to enforce a new digital levy for online technology giants, breaking a truce with Washington over a long-running tax fight that could prompt a round of punitive US tariffs on French goods.

France has been seeking a global tax accord but the OECD has warned no such deal is immediately in the offing owing to strong US opposition. "Tech for Good" includes eight commitments for joint regulation of digital space involving "transparent measures" designed to "prevent transmission of material relating to child pornography, terrorism or hardcore violence".

Those measures would also seek to guarantee "consumer freedom of choice".

Signatories also pledge to take seriously their "economic and social responsibilities (to make) a fair tax contribution in the countries in which they operate," opening themselves up to public scrutiny on the issue. The tax issue has for years been a highly thorny issue with Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple widely accused of limiting to a minimum, as do many multinationals, their tax liabilities in a number of countries, notably in Europe.

Under EU law, US-based companies can declare profits from across the bloc in a single member state and most pick low-tax jurisdictions such as Ireland or the Netherlands.

"Tech for Good" was launched in 2018 as a forum to determine how tech giants and new technology can be a force for the common good in areas such as education and health. — AFP

China to force firms to report plastic use in recycling push

SHANGHAI: Restaurants, e-commerce platforms and delivery firms will be forced to report their utilization of single-use plastics to the authorities and also submit formal recycling plans. China's commerce ministry said in proposals published yesterday. The Ministry of Commerce said it had established a nationwide system for retailers to report their plastic consumption as part of retail scheme to encourage recycling.

Plastic pollution has become one of China's biggest

CBK bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KD 360 million for 6 months with a rate of return at 1.250 percent.

Ooredoo and Gait promise outstanding Apple experience

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, partnered with Gait Apple Premium Reseller, to expand Ooredoo's portfolio to include MacBook, iMac and their accessories in their electronic store point of sale to the customers to give them the facility to enjoy using Apple products with their 5G services.



Tapan Tripathi

Gait outstands itself through its Apple-trained experts who are enabled to increase customer experience and take it to the next level by offering them knowledgeable advice and support. Indeed, Gait offers customers the opportunity to learn and experience Apple products and solutions.

The agreement between Ooredoo Kuwait and Gait promises exceptional Apple experience, unrivaled solutions and products offered in one place, and an authentic 5G connectivity. Hence, the products which will be taken from Gait will be limited to Apple laptops and computers with their accessories only such as: iMac, MacBook Air, and MacBook Pro and more.

Tapan Tripathi - Chief Marketing Officer at Ooredoo Kuwait commented on this partnership saying: "Focused on customer-centric technologies and services, we are gearing up through our partnership with Gait to offer our customers the opportunity to enjoy the next level of Apple experience with the latest products and solutions advised by Apple-trained consultants at Gait".

challenges, with vast amounts buried in landfills or dumped in rivers. The rise in home food deliveries has also caused volumes to surge. In September, the ministry said single-use plastic bags and eating utensils would be banned from major cities by the end of the year, while single-use straws would be banned nationwide. Wang Wang, chairman of the China Scrap Plastic Association, said the bans would "only resolve the most visible types of plastic pollution" and were just one part of the country's efforts to tackle waste. From September, China has also prohibited some types of agricultural-use plastic film used to keep crops warm and moist. Chinese farmers use around 1.5 million tons a year, but it leaves residues that damage the soil. A new "solid waste law" also came into effect in September, raising fines tenfold for those who break rules and mandating the construction of new recycling infrastructure. —Reuters

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly Al-Danah draw on 29th November 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 22 - 26 November 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Abdullah Adel Mirza Abdullah
Mohamed Ahmad Edrees Saqer
Hassan Mohammad Dhafer Alajmi
Fadhel Abbas Abdullah Alamir
Khadejah Ali Mohammed Alshawaf

Al-Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their

Mental health in workplace, saved by bots and apps?

NEW YORK: We are all familiar with the challenges of 2020, but we may still be underestimating how deep and wide they go. Seven in 10 employees say this has been the most stressful year of their working lives, according to a report from Workplace Intelligence and Oracle.

For companies, that means the mental-health issues of employees have rocketed from a secondary concern in years past, to a primary one. But making help available, quickly and at scale, is no easy task.

That is where artificial intelligence can come in. Not only do employees say they are open to the help and guidance of robots - in the form of chatbots, wellness and meditation apps, fitness monitoring, and more - but 82 percent say that AI is better than humans at providing support, according to the Workplace Intelligence study. And 68 percent say that they would prefer interacting with a robot on issues like stress and anxiety, as opposed to a human manager. To find out how AI can help in this moment of workplace crisis, we sat down with Dan Schawbel, managing partner of Workplace Intelligence and author of multiple books including "Back to Human".

Q: How are employees coping in 2020?

A: Workers worldwide say this has been their hardest year ever, and that makes sense, because no one has ever experienced anything like this. There's such a high degree of uncertainty, and no one knows exactly how this is all going to play out.

Q: You found that employees are very receptive to the use of AI in the mental-health arena - why is that?

A: People don't want to be judged based on the mental-health issues they are facing. They don't want to be perceived as a worker who has issues, because they think it might hurt their career prospects. That's true even at the top of organizations: Executives in the C-suite are actually experiencing the most anxiety of all.

Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met.



Q: So how can AI help with this?

A: The benefit of technology is that it's available 24/7. It doesn't judge you and doesn't care about your race or class or gender. It gives you non-biased responses and helpful health information. It's not like we can call on 3 billion therapists, so there has to be some alignment between humans and technology here, to help people with what they're going through.

Q: What might these AI tools look like?

A: It might involve chatbots, like Ginger.io, BioBeats or Woebot. It might be meditation apps like Calm or Headspace. It might be fitness apps like Peloton, Fitbit or ClassPass. It might be online counseling providers like Talkspace or BetterHelp. Or it might be corporate wellness platforms like Castlight Health and Virgin Pulse.

Q: How has this year affected the adoption of mental-health resources?

A: These were all issues that companies were looking at before, but now everything has been accelerated, because the side effect of this global health crisis is a mental-health crisis. Depression numbers were huge even before COVID-19, and now it's hard to even calculate. I would say most of the global population has experienced some level of mental-health challenges over the past eight months.

Q: AI in the workplace is changing so fast - where do you see it headed in the next year or two?

A: It's going to be even more robust, more sophisticated, smarter and on a bigger scale, because more data is being accumulated all the time, and more people are going to have access. A lot of this stuff is here to stay and is going to be a permanent part of organizations.

Part of that is because employees themselves are demanding more of their employers: They want to be treated as human, and be supported mentally, physically and emotionally. — Reuters

Classifieds

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

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 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 66819 - 66817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair and Visibility will improve gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 10 - 35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Rather cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WATCH			Fog	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 30/11/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	16 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	21 °C	16 °C		
ABDALY	20 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	20 °C	15 °C		
JAHRA	19 °C	14 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	20 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWAISIB	24 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	23 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	16 °C	10 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	12/01	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	19 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	12/02	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	22 °C	17 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 38 km/h
Thursday	12/03	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	22 °C	18 °C	SE-NW	10 - 40 km/h
Friday	12/04	Cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	21 °C	18 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:00
Sunrise	06:24
Zuhr	11:37
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	23 °C
MIN. Temp.	17 °C
MAX. RH	100%
MIN. RH	74 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	15.5mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP:0

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

LOST

My BTech Degree semester mark lists (10 nos.) in Instrumentation and Control Engineering from the University of Calicut lost in Kuwait during travel. The details of semester register number with year is given as follows:
 1st and 2nd Semester - Reg.No: 28787 (June-1992), 3rd Semester-Reg.No: 21702 (Dec-1992) & Reg.No:5304 (Oct-1993), 4th Semester-Reg.No:6973 (Sept-1993) & 2356 (Oct-1994), 5th Semester-Reg.No:1824 (April-1994), 6th Semester Reg.No: 948 (June-1995), Reg.No:822 (Dec- 1995) & Reg.No:847 (Dec-1995), 7th Semester Reg. No: 1323 (May-1995).
 If found, kindly return to me at the following address. If the same is not found in one week time from the date of this advertisement, I will be applying for the duplicated semester mark lists.
 Shemej Kumar K.K, Flat 902- Ghaliya Tower, Mahboula, Kuwait.
 Mob: 97106957. (C 5820) 30-11-2020

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shazeen Mahamad Shaif Alaji (Indian Passport no. T8991335 issued in Kuwait) D/o Alaji Mahamad Shaif Kasam, resident of Kurdhunda, Tal. Sangmeshwar, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra-415611 hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as, given name: Shazeen Mahamad Shaif, surname: Alji and Father's name as Mahamad Shaif Kasam Alji for all purposes. (C 5819)

I, Nuwair Mahamad Shaif Alaji (Indian Passport no. T2416290 issued in Kuwait) S/o Alaji Mahamad Shaif Kasam, resident of Kamte Mohalla, Tal. Chiplun, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as, given name: Nuwair Mahamad Shaif, surname: Alji and Father's name as Mahamad Shaif Kasam Alji for all purposes. (C 5819) 27-11-2020

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

EMERGENCY 112

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Word Search

Astrology Word Search

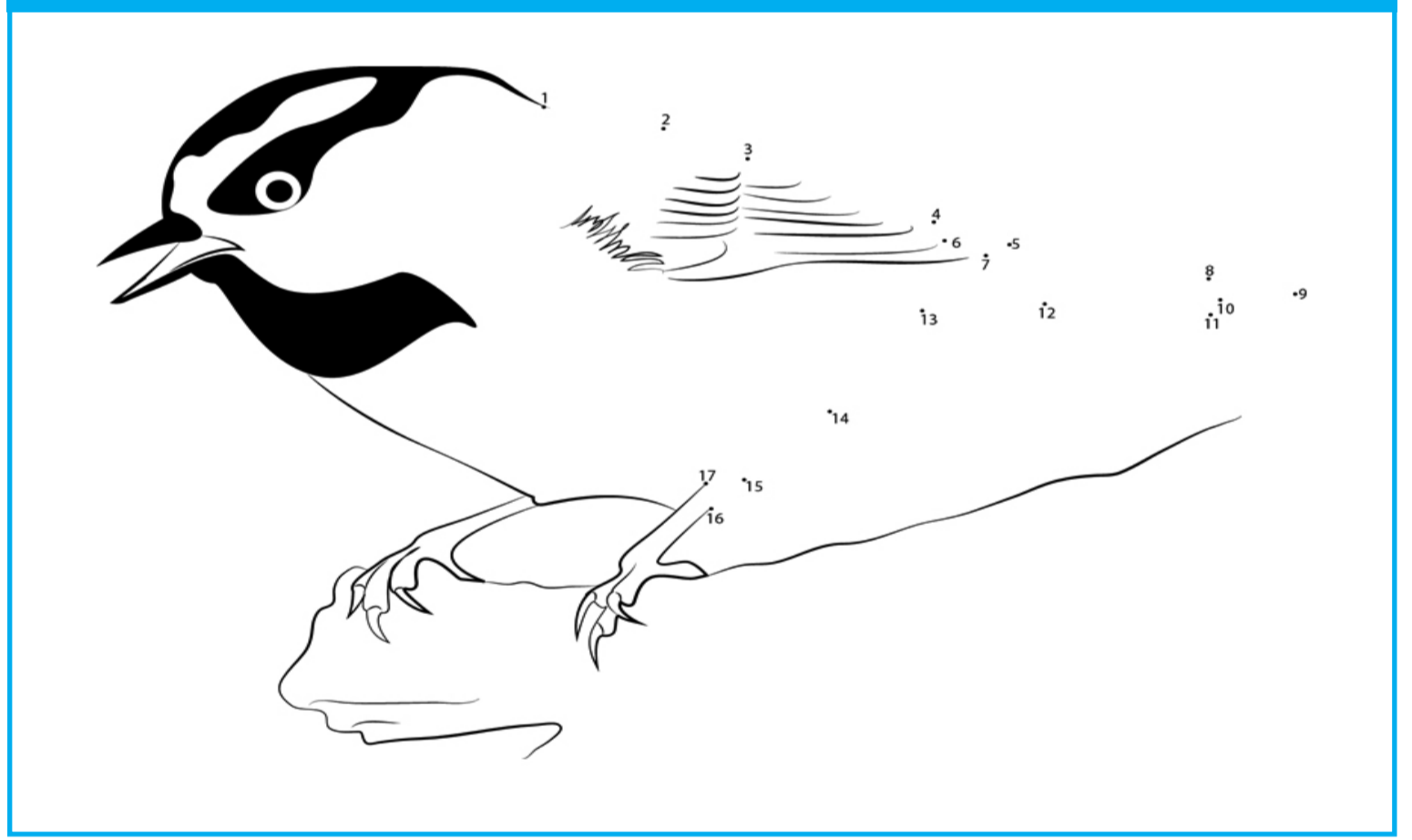
D X M S P S Y D S D P Y Y W T J D N S
 J B L J U C E M I S Y X V R J S C W A
 T T B R T E N O G N R V A C M Z P N G
 K W U U W H Z H N H N H Q F A M I G I
 S A C H L D Y M P T C U S J E N S T T
 T C J J P L F W A Z S B N V H K C K T
 S Z O G E M I N I L E O I O N U E E A
 X D T R P R S Z Q S M S W D N H S H R
 F U J F P R H L M P U P T Y O J W F I
 W U O G R I V Q N I G R I V I R W Z U
 B A R C V F O C R X C H B K L M A C S
 A X L O T K C A P R I C O R N D T N E
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 E O K A Q Q W G C H Y N V S F O R E O
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 B I R T H D A Y H A B I K Q H A N A R
 G A W J O U L C Z N X I C J C T E W A
 W Z P Z V A Q Z G O A T L L V S L P M

FISH
 GEMINI
 GOAT
 HOUSE
 LEO
 LIBRA
 LION
 PISCES
 RAM
 SAGITTARIUS
 SCORPIO
 SCORPION
 SIGN
 STARS
 TAURUS
 TWINS
 VIRGIN
 VIRGO
 WATERMAN
 ZODIAC

AQUARIUS
 ARCHER
 ARIES
 BALANCE
 BIRTHDAY

BULL
 CANCER
 CAPRICORN
 CHART
 CRAB

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)
 Unguarded words on the part of a younger person might lead to upset. If the words are directed at you, don't take them seriously. The person doesn't know any better. If the words are directed at someone else, don't be tempted to lash out at the person who said them. Correct him or her gently. Either way, keep it to yourself and then forget it. It isn't worth the stress.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
 Today, Cancer, you might uncharacteristically decide to sequester yourself away from the world. Perhaps you're tired or feeling a bit under the weather and only wish to kick back and read a good book. That's fine. Everyone needs a little solitude from time to time. The only concern here is that if you stay too secluded, you might miss an important communication.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
 You might long for a vacation today, Libra, and you could toy with the idea of a future journey by air. Your mind may turn to spiritual places such as India, Egypt, Israel, or Ireland as you wonder how it would feel to stand in the sacred places in those countries. Don't just toy with the idea. You're probably overdue for a trip that would suit your mystical nature.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
 Today your biorhythms may be a little low, Capricorn, so you aren't likely to be feeling very sociable. You're more likely to want to bury your nose in your projects instead of being your usual outgoing self. This is OK but take care that you aren't so exclusive that you miss receiving some sincere compliments. That can make a big difference in the way you feel!

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
 Profligate spending over the past week or two may have you feeling less confident about your money situation today, Taurus. Perhaps you've lent some money to a friend and you doubt their ability to repay. Or maybe you fell for a sales pitch that you now regret. Correct the situation if you can. If you can't, simply learn from the experience and put it behind you.

Leo (July 23-August 22)
 A quarrel over money could interfere with a friendship today, Leo. Perhaps someone hasn't repaid a loan and the lender now needs it. Perhaps a member of your household is unable to pay their share of the bills. Don't let yourself get drawn into quarrels or recriminations. Work something out with your friend if possible. Money isn't worth throwing away a friendship and leaving a gap in your life.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
 Someone you've known for a long time may move away or otherwise vanish from your life. He or she may move to a distant state. You'll probably stay in touch by phone or email, but it will never be the same, at least not for a long time. You will feel better if you meet some new people. They will come your way today, possibly through humanitarian group activities.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)
 An electrifying attraction to someone you may have just met could cause your mind to dwell on sex and romance today, Aquarius. If you can, set up a romantic evening with a love partner. If this isn't possible, watch a movie that moves you to tears. Movies may be of particular interest to you today, since you might be reading about how they're made.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
 Your ambition and will to succeed may be at war with your feelings today, Gemini. Perhaps you've been working so hard that you aren't paying enough attention to friends and family - and they miss you. Children and young people may be very much on your mind. Perhaps you doubt your ability to fulfill your responsibilities. Be objective when considering the situation. Don't let your emotions run away with you.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)
 Spiritual and metaphysical studies may take up a lot of your time today, Virgo. You might want to dig into the world's major religions or try to make it through works about spiritualism or the occult. If you want to, this is the day to do it because your concentration is very strong, although it will be necessary to take a lot of breaks!

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
 There might be some tension between you and your romantic partner that might have you feeling a bit depressed. The key to patching this up is honest communication. Remember that honest doesn't necessarily mean brutal. Confrontations now can only widen the rift. Tell your partner how you feel, Sagittarius, but don't cast blame for anything. Share a little. By day's end, all should be well.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
 Family members could be upset over different frustrating events in their lives, and these moods could spill over to you. Today it would be best to leave them alone to work things out in their own way. They aren't likely to respond to sympathy. Take this opportunity to tend to some of your concerns that you may have postponed. This way, the silence in the house can work for you.

THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS IN 10 SONGS

Few of the pro-democracy protesters who took the Middle East by storm a decade ago had a flag to raise or a leader to follow. But all of them had a song to sing. From the US civil rights movement's "Freedom Songs" to the Italian partisans' "Bella Ciao", revolutionaries throughout history have always rallied around an anthem. The demonstrators who took to the streets in Tunisia in late 2010 and in other countries since took up that tradition, producing rousing hymns of protests packed with the anger, humor and creativity that their regimes had silenced for too long. Here is a playlist of 10 of the most striking anthems of the so-called Arab Spring:



Tunisian rapper and musician Hamada Ben Amor, known by his stage name "El General", poses for a picture in Sfax, southeast of the capital. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on March 29, 2013, Mouad Belghouat, aka "Al-Haqed", a young Moroccan rapper known for his anti-monarchy lyrics, gives a press conference after he was released from jail in Casablanca.



In this file photo taken on January 29, 2011, Tunisian rapper and musician Hamada Ben Amor, known by his stage name "El General", performs during the first meeting of the Tunisia's main PDP opposition party in Tunis.

TUNISIA "Rais Lebled"

Tunisia was the original revolution and in some respects, "Rais Lebled (President of the country, or Mr. President)" was the original revolution song. The dark and gritty rap song by "El General" paints a damning picture of the state of the country under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, with this punchline: "Mr President, your people are dying." "Rais Lebled" lists all the economic and social ills that led street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi to self-immolate on December 17, 2010 and ignited the first revolution of the so-called Arab Spring.

Spring. He was only 24 when he climbed on stage in late January 2011 to sing his tunes to the crowd of revolutionaries camping out on the Egyptian capital's main square.

"I never looked at myself as a musician or an artist before 2011, it was always the other way round: I was a protester with a guitar who could use it as a tool for the movement," he says. Unknown to the greater public until then, his song "Irhah (Leave)" that directly took on President Hosni Mubarak soon became the anthem of the revolution. He was beaten when thugs on camelback

LIBYA "Zenga, Zenga"

Libya's revolution produced one of the most unlikely of the "Arab Spring" protest hits, a viral video starring Moamer Kadhafi himself in an outlandish remix made by an Israeli. After Tunisia erupted into pro-democracy protests, the wildfire of revolts that spread against the region's dictators did not spare the longest-standing among them. In February 2011, faced with an unprecedented uprising, a haggard-looking Kadhafi gave a rambling televised speech calling for a national march against the revolutionaries.

The song title comes from the dialect word he used for "alleyway" when he vowed to "purify Libya" by hunting down the enemy in every home, in every street. His rant triggered howls of laughter on the internet, and a few days later a dance remix entitled "Zenga, Zenga", in which Kadhafi's words were set to the tune of a song by US rapper Pitbull, started making the rounds on YouTube. The realization that the parody video was produced by an Israeli musician, Noy Aloshe, somewhat dampened Libyan enthusiasm but not enough to prevent it from reaching more than five million views.

YEMEN "Hurriya"

In the early days of Yemen's often forgotten revolution, Khaled al-Zaher's song "Hurriya" (Freedom) became an upbeat anthem for the revolution. The samba beat combined with a distinctive Yemeni lilt made it an instant hit with tens of thousands who took to the streets of Yemen in early 2011. The chorus goes like this: "Freedom, freedom, and we are a free people".

The song did not travel beyond Yemen's borders, but it stood out among a flurry of revolutionary anthems that flooded the internet at the time. Zaher, who started singing as a schoolboy, was already known for his patriotic and revolutionary songs. The song's destiny and the singer's fame however appear to have gone the way of the Yemeni revolution, now but a distant memory of a fleeting moment of hope.

SYRIA "Yalla Erhal, ya Bashar"

The rise of Syria's protest movement was sung to a variety of tunes, often repurposed traditional songs. But one of them came to symbolize the revolution's tragic fate. It's hard to overstate the sense of transgression conveyed by the grainy nighttime footage of a crowd gathered in the city of Hama for a protest against President Bashar Al-Assad. Every person chanting "Yalla Erhal, ya

Bashar (Come on Bashar, time to leave)" in that video is literally risking their life.

The man who was credited with writing the song, Ibrahim Qashoush, became a faceless hero of the battle against the Assad regime. The words-a-rageful drumroll of attacks calling the Syrian president a "liar" and an "ass"-were once spray-painted on walls, blared on minibus radios and exchanged as mobile phone ringtones. The nagging mantra achieved sacred status when word got out that Qashoush, "the nightingale of the revolution", had been brutally murdered and had his vocal cords ripped out.

His fate became a cautionary tale of the dangers of joining the revolt until a 2016 investigation revealed Qashoush had nothing to do with the song. Its real author Abdul Rahman Farhood had chosen to keep a low profile after hearing of the purported songwriter's grim demise.

would blurt out the explicit refrain during and after the protests, with joyous rage. On one Beirut street, cars were only allowed through the "Hela Ho" checkpoint once the driver had produced an acceptable rendition of the song.

ALGERIA "La Liberte"

When Soolking released "La liberte" in March 2019, the streets of Algiers were boiling over with anger and the song became an instant success with protesters demanding freedom and democracy. He released the song with Ouled El Bahdja, a group of supporters of the USM Alger football club known for its fan songs and which lent its organisational firepower to the Hirak protest movement. The song is in French and its heartfelt plea for freedom struck a chord. The anthem went viral in Algeria and across the region and has since clocked up



In this file photo taken on May 28, 2020, Algerian singer Soolking (left) performs on stage during the recording of the show "Ensemble a l'Olympia" for the benefit of Emmaus at the Olympia concert hall in Paris.

The song was not just an anthem inspired by what was the revolution, it was part of what started it. Hamada Ben Amor, the 21-year-old rapper behind the stage name "El General", had released his song on November 7, the anniversary of Ben Ali's rise to power in 1987. He released another days after the start of the protests and was briefly jailed before the revolt succeeded into toppling Ben Ali. Ben Amor was among Time magazine's 100 most influential people of the year in 2011 and while his career never took off, "Rais Lebled" was a major inspiration to other protesters and will forever go down as one of the sparks of the Arab uprisings.

EGYPT "Irhah"

Jubilant crowds singing along to Ramy Essam and his guitar on Cairo's Tahrir square captured the euphoria that marked the early days of the Arab

stormed the square. Then he was arrested and tortured.

"I was so lucky to take part in this revolution. It taught me life, it taught me freedom," he told AFP from Sweden, where he fled after Abdel Fattah al-Sisi took over and imposed his autocratic rule on Egypt. Essam continued to produce music abroad, but some of those he worked with were swept up in the crackdown against dissent in his home country.

In May this year, filmmaker Shady Habash died in prison after more than two years in jail over directing a music video for Essam's song lambasting "Balaha", a name given to Sisi by his detractors. Two others remain in jail. Essam admits the revolution has not fulfilled the promise of its heady days, but the singer's revolutionary spirit seems intact. "I'll never lose hope. It would be a betrayal. The bond (with the revolution) is written in blood... I will continue until my last breath," he says.



Chanters lead an anti-government rally commemorating the late rebel fighter and famous chanter Abdel-Basset Al-Sarout, in Syria's rebel-held northwestern city of Idlib, on May 8, 2020.



In this file photo taken on December 1, 2019, Protesters chant slogans, bang pot covers, and wave a Lebanese national flag during an anti-government demonstration in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon.

MOROCCO "Iradat al Hayat"

Morocco's short-lived protest movement also had its song, a Tunisian poem adapted in local dialect and turned into song by a rap artist from Casablanca. The people's view of the king was different from the rage the Arab Spring ignited against tyrants in other countries, but the wave of protests briefly caught on nonetheless.

And they yielded an iconic song, with rapper Lhaqed's version of poet Abou el Hacem Chebbi's "Iradat al Hayat (The Will to Live)". Mouad Belghawat, whose stage name means "the grudgeful", paid dearly for posting his protest song and was jailed several times. He was granted political asylum in Belgium.

IRAQ "Dhayl Awaj"

The protest movement that drew hundreds of thousands in the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in October 2019 became a window for the country's vibrant youth culture and one song captured it better than others. "Dhayl Awaj" literally means "crooked tail" and in Iraqi dialect is a reference to Tehran's political allies as "tentacles" of the Iranian regime.

It was aired on Deutsche Welle on the Al Basheer Show, a hugely popular and influential satirical program whose host Ahmad al-Basheer has lived in exile for years. The sleek camera work showcases all the symbols of the October revolution-from the "Turkish restaurant" landmark that became the revolution's de facto "command centre" to the tuk-tuks that ferried away the wounded. It became a popular meme and has scored nearly 15 million views on YouTube.

LEBANON "Hela Ho"

It was perhaps not the most poetic of protest songs, but it became the undisputed mega-hit amid the demos that erupted in Lebanon on October 17, 2019. Its chorus crudely takes aim at then foreign minister Gebran Bassil and the president's son-in-law-the face of everything the protesters wanted to get rid of: corruption, political dynasties and incompetence.

For weeks, groups of youngsters

close to a quarter of a billion views on YouTube.

Soolking grew up in a suburb of the capital. A stampede at a concert which left several dead in August 2019 as well as a tribute he posted on social media following the death of army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah later tarnished his credentials as a revolutionary icon.

SUDAN "Blood"

One of the most powerful musical moments of the Arab uprisings took place in central Khartoum in 2019, when Sudanese rapper Ayman Mao climbed on stage. On April 25, having flown straight to Khartoum from the US, he grabbed a microphone at the main sit-in site, and intoned one of his most famous songs: "Blood". With every line, the crowd answered "Thawra (revolution)". But a few weeks later, the title of what had become the revolution's anthem took on new significance. The same site was where the most tragic episode of the Sudanese revolution unfolded on June 3, when security forces cracked down on the sit-in and killed at least 128 people. — AFP



Lifestyle | Features



US pop singer Cher (center) and Cambodia's Deputy Minister of Environment Neth Pheaktra (left) pose in front of the crate containing Kaavan the Asian elephant upon his arrival in Cambodia from Pakistan at Siem Reap International Airport in Siem Reap yesterday.



US pop singer Cher walks past the crate containing Kaavan the Asian elephant upon his arrival in Cambodia from Pakistan at Siem Reap International Airport in Siem Reap yesterday.



US pop singer Cher holds a flower as she waits to greet the Asian elephant Kaavan upon his arrival in Cambodia. — AFP photos

'WORLD'S LONELIEST ELEPHANT' LANDS IN CAMBODIA, GREETED BY CHER

An elephant dubbed the "world's loneliest" landed in Cambodia yesterday from Pakistan, receiving a warm welcome from American superstar Cher who will accompany it to a sanctuary housing potential mates. The case of Kaavan-an overweight, 36-year-old bull elephant-sparked global uproar from animal rights groups, who petitioned for his move from an Islamabad zoo accused of substandard care and conditions. His cause was boosted by a spirited social

media campaign by Cher, who travelled to Pakistan to see him off. Wearing a black face mask, the singer was on hand at Siem Reap airport and waved excitedly at the plane after it landed around 2:30 pm (0730 GMT). Kaavan's much-anticipated journey was "uneventful", said Amir Khali, a veterinarian from animal welfare group Four Paws, adding he behaved "like a frequent flyer". "Kaavan was eating, was not stressed-he was even a little bit sleeping, standing, leaning at the crate wall," he said.

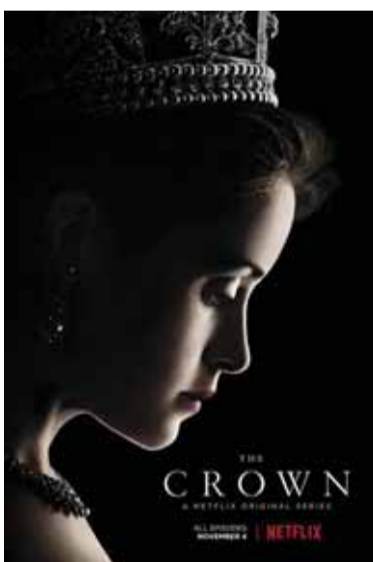
Once the sole Asian elephant in Pakistan, Kaavan will be transported from Siem Reap to neighboring province Oddar Meanchey where a wildlife sanctuary with about 600 other elephants will be his new home. "Cambodia is pleased to welcome Kaavan. No longer will he be 'the world's loneliest elephant,'" deputy environment minister Neth Pheaktra said. "We expect to breed Kaavan with local elephants-this is an effort to conserve the genetic fold," the minister told AFP.

Years of campaigning
Kaavan's journey is the culmination of years of campaigning from animal rights groups, who say the animal's behavior demonstrated "a kind of mental illness" likely due to the zoo's woeful conditions. In May, a Pakistani judge ordered that all the animals at the zoo be moved. Upon hearing about Kaavan's freedom, Cher had tweeted that the decision marked "one of the greatest moments" of her life. A team of vets and experts from Austria-based Four Paws has spent months working with Kaavan to

get him ready for the trip-a complicated process due to his size and the amount of food needed en route. The elephant also had to be taught to enter the massive metal crate that was placed in a cargo plane for the seven-hour flight. Four Paws, along with Islamabad authorities, also safely moved three wolves and some monkeys from the zoo. Currently only two Himalayan brown bears, one deer and one monkey remain. — AFP

NETFLIX HIT 'THE CROWN' SHOULD CARRY FICTION WARNING

Netflix hit series "The Crown" should make clear that much of its content is fiction over fears of damage to the image of British royal family, a government minister said. "It's a beautifully produced work of fiction, so as with other TV productions, Netflix should be very clear at the beginning it is just that," culture minister Oliver Dowden told The Mail on Sunday. "Without this, I fear a generation of viewers who did not live through these events may mistake fiction for fact". Dowden is expected to formally write to the US streaming company to request it adds a "health warning" before each episode. The latest episode in the series, which follows the life of Queen Elizabeth II and her close family, revolves around Prince Charles and his doomed marriage to wife Diana.



Those close to the royal family fear that fabricated scenes are hurting the monarchy, particularly heir to the throne Charles. "It is quite sinister the way that (screenwriter Peter) Morgan is clearly using light entertainment to drive a very overt republican agenda and people just don't see it," an unnamed friend of the prince told the paper. Although largely sympathetic to Diana, her brother has also called for Netflix to make clear some scenes are fictional. "It would help The Crown an enormous amount if at the beginning of each episode it stated that, 'this isn't true but is based around some real events'. Because then everyone would understand it's drama for drama's sake," Charles Spencer told ITV. More than 70 million households worldwide have watched The Crown, which is now on its fourth series, since it began in 2016, according to figures released by Netflix. — AFP



Wow-ser: Japan 'Super Mario' theme park to open in Feb

The first ever "Super Mario" theme park will open in February, Universal Studios Japan said yesterday. Featuring a real-life Bowser's Castle and an interactive "Mario Kart" ride, the attraction in the city of Osaka was originally planned to open in July 2020 ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, with huge droves of visitors expected. But the long-awaited "Super Nintendo World" zone at Universal Studios Japan was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic along with the Games, which will now be held next summer. Now Nintendo fans can visit the attraction from February 4 — although Japan's borders have been closed to almost all foreign tourists for

months, with no plan yet announced to ease these restrictions. It is the gaming giant's first foray into theme parks, and USJ calls it an "immersive land featuring Nintendo's legendary worlds, characters and adventures where guests will be able to play inside their favorite Nintendo games". Augmented reality headsets are a feature of some rides, while a smartphone-linked wristband allows visitors to collect virtual coins and items, like in the popular Mario games. There is also a ride based on the cute green dinosaur Yoshi. — AFP

From majors to manga: Japan tennis ace Osaka to star in comic book

Japan's major-winning tennis player Naomi Osaka has welcomed a new manga comic-book series where she will star as a cartoon character in a magazine aimed at teenage girls. "Unrivaled Naomi Tenka-ichi", which will run in "Nakayosi" magazine from late December, was produced with the help of Osaka's older sister, Mari. "Tenka-ichi" means "world number one" in Japanese. "Growing up reading manga/watching anime was something that bonded me and my sister immensely so this is really exciting for both of us," the three-time Grand Slam champion tweeted Sunday. The new character, which depicts a doe-eyed Osaka with pink and purple hair and wearing a yellow visor, follows a storm of controversy over a sponsor's cartoon image of her last year. Noodle-maker Nissin apologized and withdrew the image, which showed Osaka with pale skin and light brown



hair, after being accused of "white-washing" the Japanese-Haitian player. Osaka, who has dislodged Serena Williams to be rated as the world's highest earning female athlete, is a household name in Japan where she is the face of several leading brands. — AFP

As pandemic closes New York stores, artists move in

Artists are taking over New York storefronts made empty by the coronavirus pandemic, receiving invaluable free exposure and breathing life into depressed shopping streets. Thousands of shops and restaurants have closed this year as the virus ravages the Big Apple's economy, and artists are now getting some of them as studios and exhibition space. "Sometimes they say tragedy brings an opportunity. So this is an opportunity," says the artist known as Sir Shadow, performing his signature one-stroke drawings in a former furniture store in Manhattan. The 70-something is helped by Chashama, a 25-year-old New York non-profit that persuades property owners to temporarily donate unused units to struggling artists to use as studios and to display their work.

With landlords struggling to fill vacated lots, Chashama is upping its efforts amid the pandemic and plans to add 100 spaces within the next year to the 150 studios it already operates. "There are definitely a lot more spaces available and a lot more that people are willing to give us at the moment," founder and artistic director

Anita Durst told AFP. Artists receive the space for free and take home all money made from any sales, a godsend in New York where retail space is prohibitively expensive and galleries customarily take a cut. The arrangement-which sees artists move out again after the unit has been leased-also works well for the property owners. "We make the space look nice. We're there to open the doors for the brokers. So, in that way, we try to help lease it," said Durst.

A similar initiative is happening in the Upper West Side area of Manhattan where vacant storefronts on the prominent Columbus Avenue thoroughfare are prominently displaying the works of local artists. Oil on canvas paintings, acrylic paint artworks and photographs appear in windows alongside signs that read "Retail Space Available" in the Art on the Ave NYC exhibition, which runs from November 21 to January 31.

'Changes your mood'

The idea was conceived in June by three teachers, including local resident Barbara Anderson who became increas-



A picture made by AJ Stetson, part of his "Masked NYC" exhibition, is displayed on the Upper West Side area of Manhattan New York.

ingly depressed by seeing one shop after another close or board up as the virus engulfed New York. "I said, 'There's got to be something better we can do, something a little bit more energetic or vibrant,'" she explained to AFP during a tour of the exhibition. "Hopefully, it brings foot traffic to the area and also helps businesses that are struggling to make rent payments," Anderson added of the exhibition which features approximately 40 artists. Forty-

five-year-old Lance Johnson is one of them.

His brightly colored mixed media artwork entitled "We the People," priced at \$3,500, gleams at passersby who stop to take photos and press their noses to the glass to read the accompanying caption. "Instead of brown paper lining the windows you see amazing art. It changes your mood," says Johnson. "You also see the diversity that is New York City. That's a beautiful thing, especially now that people are saying New York is dead. "It's not true. We're still here, we're still fighting and it's important to share that," he adds.

Back at Chashama, Sir Shadow-who would risk the wrath of police by hanging his drawings from park fences and washing lines before tearing up with the program in the mid-90s-thinks the pandemic will bring lasting exposure for artists. "Once people get used to seeing these spaces full and they feel the benefit and see the beauty of it, it can't go back to the old way," he says. — AFP



The artist known as Sir Shadow, who draws and exhibits his work in empty real estate spaces, draws one of his signature one-stroke drawings in New York. — AFP photos



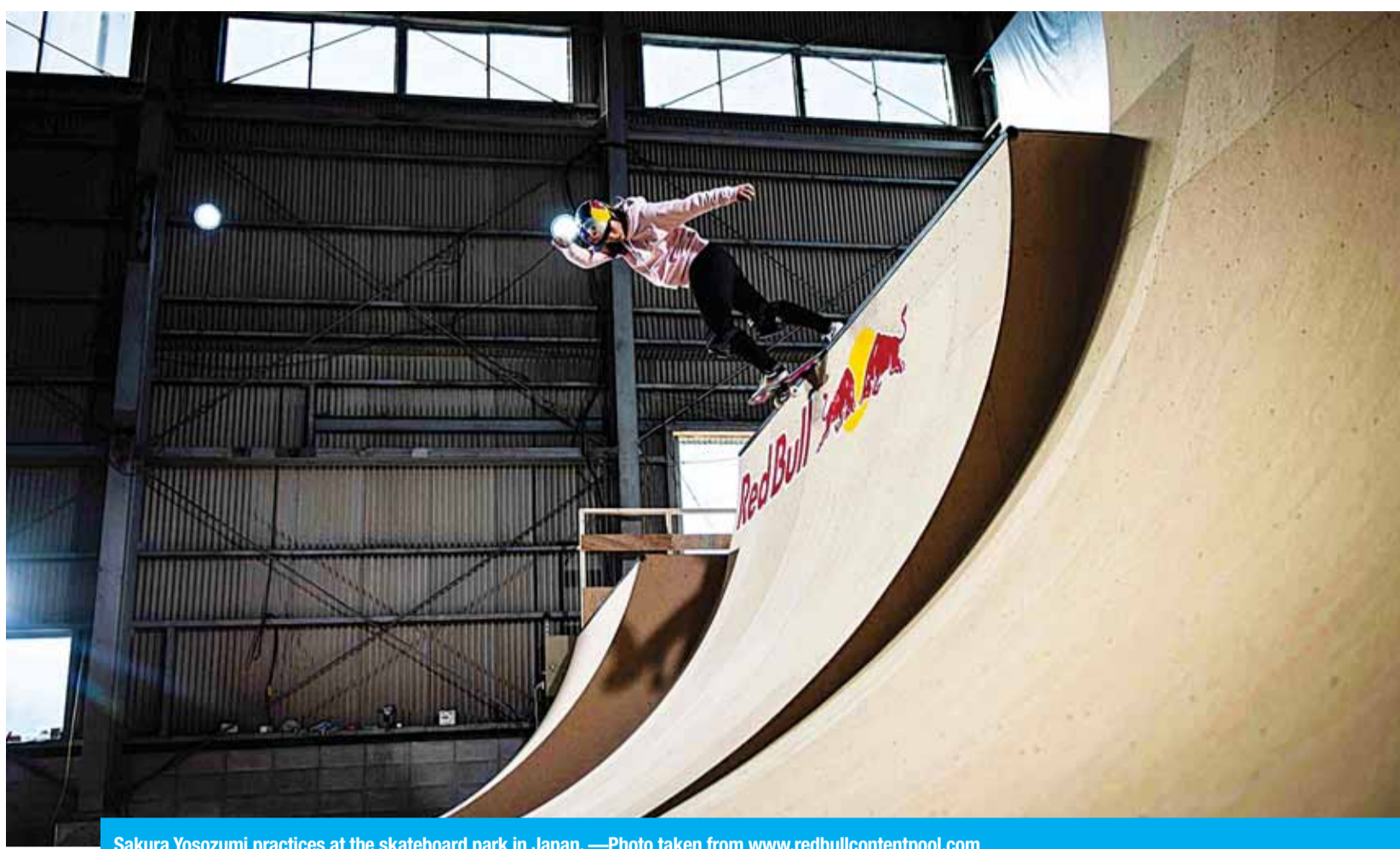
Art by local artists is displayed in a "For Lease" space in New York.



Pictures made by AJ Stetson, including a portrait of Magnum photographer Bruce Gilden (left), are displayed during Stetson's "Masked NYC" exhibition on the Upper West Side area of Manhattan New York.

Sports

Photo of the day



Sakura Yosozumi practices at the skateboard park in Japan. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Celtic's first defeat in four years leaves Lennon in firing line

GLASGOW: Neil Lennon admitted his job as Celtic coach is hanging by a thread after a 2-0 home League Cup defeat by Ross County saw the Scottish champions lose a domestic cup tie for the first time in four years. Ross Stewart's first-half penalty and an Alex Iacovitti header five minutes from time ended Celtic's 35-game winning run in cup competitions.

Lennon's men have won just two of their last 10 games in all competitions to also crash out of the Europa League and fall 11 points behind Rangers at the top of the Scottish Premiership. Angry mobs of fans gathered outside Celtic Park after the match to demand Lennon's removal and vent their frustrations towards the players as they left the stadium in what Scotland's Justice Minister Humza Yousaf described as "disgraceful scenes."

Glasgow is currently under Scotland's most severe coronavirus restrictions. "Utterly disgraceful scenes outside of Celtic Park from a minority of fans tonight with violence aimed towards Police," Yousaf tweeted. "Officers have been front & centre keeping us safe during this pandemic, to treat them this way at any time is shameful, to do it during these times is a disgrace." Lennon insisted in his pre-match press conference on Friday he had the full backing of major shareholder Dermot Desmond and chief executive Peter Lawwell.

However, there was no sign of a response from his players and the Northern Irishman admitted after the match his time may be up. "Today's result won't have helped," said Lennon. "There is a demand for excellence and a demand for wins at this club. I'm not standing here like a happy clapper saying 'Everything's ok.' "I'm the face of the football department. It's my philosophy, my tactics, what I am trying to work out is why we are more of less the same squad who were rampant last year and we've certainly not been rampant this year." —AFP

'Selfish' or 'protecting the players'? Klopp's complaints divide managers

Liverpool's ever expanding injury list raises schedule issue

LONDON: Liverpool's ever expanding injury list has prompted Jurgen Klopp to take on the football authorities and broadcasters over a grueling schedule that he feels is doing little to protect the players. The English champions head into today's Champions League clash with Ajax without Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Thiago Alcantara, Naby Keita, Xherdan Shaqiri, Trent Alexander-Arnold and James Milner.

Klopp was infuriated that Liverpool were chosen for Saturday's lunchtime kick-off in a 1-1 draw at Brighton just over 60 hours after they faced Atalanta in Europe on Wednesday night. "After Wednesday, Saturday at 12:30 is really dangerous for the players," said Klopp, who also sarcastically congratulated a BT Sport interviewer for Milner's hamstring injury in the second half.

However, he is not alone and has formed an unlikely alliance with Manchester United and Manchester City, who have also faced early Saturday kick-offs after Wednesday night games in the Champions League this season. United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said his side had been "set up to fail" when they won at Everton

after returning from a trip to Turkey barely 48 hours before they travelled to Goodison Park. City boss Pep Guardiola has also been a strong advocate of allowing managers the chance to make five substitutions.

"All around the world there is five substitutions. Here we believe we are a special league with just three players, we don't protect the players," said Guardiola after his side's 1-1 draw with Liverpool earlier this month that characterized the problems of a condensed calendar. Both sides chased the game in an enthralling first 45 minutes before settling for a point as fatigue set in after the break. "We've reached a point where you start to think that with so many matches and so many injuries, the spectacle is not the same," said Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane last week.

Joyless football

Despite losing a month of the season due to a late start to the campaign caused by the three-month coronavirus shutdown last season, barely any sacrifices have been made in English football to ease the strain on play-

ers. Both domestic cup competitions have been retained alongside a full 38-game Premier League season, European football commitments and two international breaks with an extra game for European nations. Guardiola has repeatedly argued that the gruelling winter schedule in England when other major leagues take a mid-season break comes at the expense of better quality matches for fans to enjoy. And he believes that is only exacerbated in a season so far without fans inside the ground.

"The problem is today the players lose the joy of playing football. Before it was nice playing football once or twice a week with spectators, now it is in three days another one." Sheffield United manager Chris Wilder drew Klopp's ire after standing his ground in a manager's meeting last week over the issue of five substitutes. Two previous votes have failed to garner the 14 votes needed from the 20 Premier League clubs to change the rules over fears from those with less resources that such a change only benefits the bigger clubs with deeper squads.

"I've got incredible respect for these top managers because they produce top results and win things," said Wilder, whose side sit bottom of the table with just one point from 10 games. "But they're selfish, they look after their own clubs. They're going to be bothered about Liverpool, Man City and Chelsea, which I understand and respect. I would be the same, but I'm bothered about Sheffield United and it doesn't help us to have five subs." Yet, the evidence across Europe shows the continent's biggest clubs are struggling to match their usual levels of dominance even with five subs.

Real Madrid and Barcelona find themselves well off the pace in La Liga having already lost three times each. Paris Saint-Germain have also lost three of their opening 12 matches in Ligue 1, while Juventus sit fourth in Serie A, behind Sassuolo, as they go for a 10th consecutive title. Klopp may not be getting much sympathy from those fighting just to remain in the Premier League. But the cost of cramming so much football into a shortened calendar threatens not only player welfare, but the enjoyment for fans watching a watered down product. —AFP

Ireland edge Georgia in Autumn Nations Cup

DUBLIN: Ireland secured an Autumn Nations Cup play-off against Scotland next weekend with an edgy 23-10 victory over tenacious Georgia at Lansdowne Road on Sunday. Billy Burns' 15 points on his first Test start was the highlight of the hosts' performance. It was a much improved performance by the away team after failing to register a point in their previous two matches and they will hope Covid-affected Fiji are able to field a side next weekend in their play-off.

Ireland skipper James Ryan said the Irish would need to improve a lot before the Scotland clash. "It was a bit scrappy and not the performance we wanted," he told RTE. "We knew it would never be easy and the Georgians fronted up well and we definitely need to improve this week." Georgian captain Merab Sharikadze rued what he felt was a chance to record a historic victory. "It feels like a missed opportunity," he said.

"We did not take our chances and should have scored more points. It is a shame because we so rarely get the chance to play teams of this level." The game was preceded by a minute's silence for the late French great Christophe Dominici with a photo of him on one of his jinking runs and the words Rest In Peace showing on the big screen. Burns took less than 10 minutes of his maiden Test start to score his first try for Ireland, running on to a brilliant pop pass by Chris Farrell. The Ulster fly-half converted for 7-0. Burns added a penalty soon after as Irish pressure provoked Georgia into conceding penalties.

Georgian genius

However, some individual brilliance by Giorgi Kveseladze saw the Georgians score their first points of the competition taking full-back Soso Matiasvili's pass inside his half. He went on a mazy run sending Jacob Stockdale the wrong way and breaking a Burns' tackle to touch down, prompting a mobbing from his team-mates. Once the Georgian celebrations had died down fly-half Tedo Abzhandadze collected himself and converted for 10-7.

Burns gave the Irish some breathing space converting a penalty for 13-7. A superb passage of play from the hosts, beginning with Conor Murray's box kick collected brilliantly by Hugo Keenan was just the pep the Irish needed. Ireland hooker Rob Herring went close to scoring their second try but a Georgian player succeeded in preventing him touching the ball down on the line. Hugo Keenan did secure their second try as the wing was picked out by Stockdale's long pass and went in at the corner.

Burns converted from wide out on the right for 20-7. The Irish looked to have put the game to bed when Stuart McCloskey marked his first cap for two years touching down but Stockdale's pass was ruled forward. —AFP

Kuwait Football League: 9th round



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The ninth round of Kuwait Football League (Ranking Phase) saw Salmiya beating Jahra after being one goal down. The final score was 2-1. Jahra scored first in the 41st minute when Ahmad Titi converted a penalty, then it was not until the 76th minute when Salmiya's Hussein Al-Musawi scored the equalizer. Patrick Fabiano scored the winner from the penalty spot in the 90th minute. Salmiya now have 18 points, while Jahra have 10 points. The match started with Salmiya adopting an attacking strategy, while Jahra was playing defense. Jahra's player Adama was shown red for dangerous foul

Revolution oust 10-man Orlando, face Crew in MLS semi-finals

WASHINGTON: Gustavo Bou's brace and a penalty save by goalkeeper Matt Turner from former Manchester United star Nani sparked the New England Revolution to a 3-1 victory over 10-man Orlando City in Sunday's Major League Soccer quarter-finals. Former US national coach Bruce Arena's side will visit the Columbus Crew in next Sunday's semi-finals. Columbus beat visiting

against Salmiya's goal keeper Bader Al-Saanoon.

In another match, Qadisiya were able to go past Kuwait 2-1 - raising their point total to 18 points while Kuwait remained at 12. Qadisiya's James Okuasa headed the ball into Kuwait's net following a corner kick in the 10th minute, then Kuwait's Dimbly equalized for Kuwait in the 43rd minute. The second half saw Qadisiya's determination as they carried out one attack after the other until the 57th minute when Ahmad Al-Dhafiri's counter attack produced the winner goal. Qadisiya's veteran player Bader Al-Mutawa almost scored a third goal, but the goal keeper Hameed Al-Qallaf defended it.

Al-Nasser had no mercy when they played Yarmouk



and rained five unanswered goals and remained on top of the list. Ahmad Al-Riyahi scored two goals, Salem Al-Mislati, Abdelrahman Al-Enezi and Talal Al-Ajmi scored one goal each. Al-Nasser now have 20 points, while Yarmouk have just one.

Fahaheel surprised Al-Arabi with a draw as their match ended (1-1). Al-Sahel defeated Burqan (1-0), which was scored by defender Marcello in the 56th minute, raising its point total to 13 points. Kazma defeated Kheitan (4-1), raising its point total to 16 points while Kheitan's remained at 7. Al-Shabab defeated Sulaibkhat (4-2) raising its point total to 12 while Sulaibkhat remained at 4.

minute, but Nani's right-footed penalty was batted away by Turner. "It came down to a big moment on the penalty kick," Turner said. "I did my homework, spent hours on video and made the play on the kick."

"We got the win and it feels really good." New England sealed the victory in the 86th minute when Gil set up Bou on the counter-attack and the South American star flicked the ball between the legs of Orlando goalkeeper Brian Rowe and into the back of the net. The Revolution have reached the MLS Cup final five times but have yet to capture the crown. Western Conference MLS quarter-final matches find Dallas at defending champion Seattle on Tuesday and Minnesota at Kansas City on Wednesday. —AFP

Sports

Wolves shake off Jimenez loss to thump Arsenal 2-1

Jimenez suffered a fractured skull in horror collision

LONDON: Wolves recovered from losing top scorer Raul Jimenez to a sickening head injury to inflict Arsenal's third consecutive home league defeat with a 2-1 win at the Emirates on Sunday. The Mexican received treatment from medics for 10 minutes on the floor after colliding with David Luiz before being stretchered from the field. Luiz continued with blood seeping into a white bandage wrapped around his head until half-time, when he was replaced by Rob Holding, leading to fresh calls for the introduction of concussion substitutes in football.

The rest of the Wolves team had combined for just five goals in their previous nine league games, but Pedro Neto and Daniel Podence struck to hand the visitors a first win away to Arsenal since 1979. Sky Sports reported Jimenez is conscious in hospital and responding to treatment. Football's law-makers IFAB have opened the door for concussion substitutes to be used on a trial basis with the English Football Association hoping to do so in this season's FA Cup. Former Chelsea and Celtic striker Chris Sutton has been a campaigner for concussion subs and more investigation into the high percentage of former footballers suffering from neurodegenerative diseases.

"Sickening head clash between Jimenez and Luiz. It's time football wised up and got up to date and immediately ratifies temporary concussion replacements," Sutton tweeted. "Jimenez clearly in a bad way. Has David Luiz been checked adequately?" There was a sombre mood on the pitch when the

action returned but Wolves quickly took the lead. Leander Dendoncker headed an Adama Traore cross against the crossbar but Neto was quickest to respond and converted the rebound. The lead was short-lived as Arsenal responded to score their first goal from open play in six league games.

Willian's inviting cross was powered home by Gabriel Magalhaes at the back post for his second goal for the club. But the Arsenal defence that had been the bedrock of a revival under Mikel Arteta towards the end of last season as they won the FA Cup, could not cope with the pace of Traore. Another dart from the Spaniard teed up Neto and when his shot was spilled by Bernd Leno, Podence reacted fastest to turn the loose ball home. Arsenal responded after the break to pin Nuno Espirito Santo's men back, but the home side again lacked inspiration and a clinical finish in the final third.

Bukayo Saka should have done better when he skewed wide from close range. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's wait for a Premier League goal from open play since he signed a lucrative new contract worth a reported £55 million (\$73 million) over three years also goes on. The Arsenal captain had his side's best chance for an equalizer but headed wide much to the dismay of Arteta on the sidelines. A year to the day since Unai Emery was sacked with the Gunners sitting eighth in the Premier League, Arteta's men now sit 14th. At the other end of the table Wolves climb up to sixth and within four points of league leaders Tottenham and Liverpool. —AFP



LONDON: Arsenal's Brazilian defender David Luiz (left) and Wolverhampton Wanderers' Mexican striker Raul Jimenez lay injured after clashing heads during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Wolverhampton Wanderers on November 29, 2020. —AFP

Lille held as Ligue 1 top five separated by two points

PARIS: Lille stuttered to a 1-1 draw at struggling Saint-Etienne on Sunday to miss the chance to draw level on points with Paris Saint-Germain at the top of Ligue 1, but the rest of the chasers took advantage of the defending champions' latest slip-up. Lille sit second in the table, two points behind PSG — who drew 2-2 with Bordeaux on Saturday — and above Lyon, Monaco and Montpellier on goal difference. Lyon continued their fine form with a 3-0 win over Reims, while Monaco beat Nimes by the same scoreline to also move within two points of PSG, while Montpellier edged out Lorient. Lille would have hoped to take all three points from a Saint-Etienne side on a seven-match losing streak in the league before kick-off.

But Christophe Galtier's team fell behind to a controversial first-half penalty from Tunisian Wahbi Khazri and needed a second-half strike from Jonathan Ikone to rescue a draw. Galtier was left frustrated by the decision to award Khazri the spot-kick, after the former Sunderland winger appeared to fall over Domagoj Bradaric in a vain attempt to reach the ball before Lille goalkeeper Mike Maignan. "The penalty was a clear refereeing error," he said. "Wahbi Khazri comes with a lot of

experience onto my player Domagoj Bradaric. "With video and professional referees this shouldn't happen. It doesn't take away from our bad first half, but it was an important moment of the game."

Lyon looking 'upwards'

Karl Toko Ekambi, Bruno Guimaraes and Moussa Dembele scored for Lyon as they made it 16 points from their last six matches. "We must continue in this vein and look upwards. We must put a run of victories together," said Lyon coach Rudi Garcia. "This is the first time that we have won three times in a row. As in Angers (last week), we had an opportunity to (move up the) table. We seized it." PSG gave the chasing pack a chance to cut the gap with a 2-2 home draw against Bordeaux on Saturday, having blown a two-goal lead to lose to Monaco last week. Reims, who had Moreto Cassama sent off on 33 minutes, remain fourth from bottom and look destined for a relegation dog-fight.

Monaco march on

Monaco eased to victory over Nimes to notch their fourth straight league win. Young midfielder Sofiane Diop gave the hosts an early lead at the Stade Louis II, before Gelson Martins and Kevin Volland struck in the second half to see off Nimes, who had Lucas Deaux dismissed in the 69th minute. Germany striker Volland has scored five Ligue 1 goals for Monaco since his close-season move from Bayer Leverkusen.

The principality outfit have finished ninth and

Fabian Ruiz added a second just after an hour, with club-record goalscorer Dries Mertens and substitute Matteo Politano adding two more in the final ten minutes. "There is an air of sadness," said Napoli coach Gennaro Gattuso. "This is a wonderful city even when the weather is bad and yet there is an atmosphere of mourning." A minute's silence had been observed before the game, as in all matches in Italy, in memory of Maradona who spent seven years at Napoli. A photo of Maradona was projected onto giant screens in the 10th minute, as players stopped to applaud.

Napoli crush Roma in honor of Maradona

MILAN: A "mourning" Napoli honored their club legend Diego Maradona on Sunday with a 4-0 victory over Roma, as AC Milan extended their lead in Serie A by beating Fiorentina. In Naples, players took to the pitch wearing a special Argentina-inspired jersey in tribute to Maradona, who died aged 60 on Wednesday. Captain Lorenzo Insigne curled in a free-kick after half an hour, celebrating his goal by holding up and kissing the No. 10 jersey of the Argentina great.

Napoli's jersey with white and light blue vertical stripes was specially designed to remember Maradona who led the club to their only league titles in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in

1989. "The city has done everything to honor him, the team too. Diego will always remain," said Gattuso. "He is a legend, who has done something important. Those who have been lucky enough to see it cannot forget it." Napoli overtake Roma to move fifth, with both teams six points behind leaders AC Milan. Milan pulled five points clear of city rivals Inter Milan and Sassuolo after seeing off Fiorentina 2-0. Champions Juventus are fourth, six points behind.

Milan streak continues

At the San Siro, Serie A top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic watched from the stands after picking up a muscle injury last weekend. Head coach Stefano Pioli was also absent recovering from coronavirus, but Milan extended their



SAINT-ETIENNE: Saint-Etienne's French defender Mathieu Debuchy (right) fights for the ball with Lille's Brazilian forward Luiz Araujo during the French L1 football match between Saint Etienne (ASSE) and Lille (LOSC) on November 29, 2020. —AFP

17th in the last two seasons and coach Niko Kovac was eager to play down any thoughts of a repeat of their shock 2017 title triumph. "The title? Not after 12 games, we're not there, no," said the Croatian. "It's a good period for us, we have to keep working, we are a young team. We will also lose matches." Fifth-placed Montpellier also extended their winning streak to four matches as Petar Skuletic scored late on to grab a 1-0 win at Lorient, despite midfielder Teji Savanier's missed penalty in the first half. Marseille, who have also won four league matches on the spin, are only four points behind PSG in sixth, with two games in hand. —AFP

unbeaten run in the league this season. Franck Kessie set up Alessio Romagnoli for the opener on 17 minutes, with the Ivorian forward adding a second from the penalty spot 10 minutes later.

Fiorentina goalkeeper Bartlomiej Dragowski denied Kessie a second spot-kick goal in the first half after Martin Caceres fouled Theo Hernandez. Pioli spoke to the team by video link after the game. "Pioli congratulated everyone for winning this very important match," said Kessie. Milan have now gone 21 league matches without defeat since Serie A returned in June following the coronavirus lockdown. New Fiorentina coach Cesare Prandelli fell to his second defeat in as many games, with his side just three points above the relegation zone and without a goal in their last four games. —AFP

Unbeaten Leverkusen held 0-0 by Hertha in stalemate

BERLIN: Bayer Leverkusen missed the chance to go second in the Bundesliga with a 0-0 draw at home to Hertha Berlin on Sunday, while Hoffenheim's winless run was extended to seven league games after being held by Mainz. In-form Jamaica winger Leon Bailey had found the net five times in his last four matches for Leverkusen in all competitions, but he and his colleagues were left frustrated on Sunday as Hertha took a hard-earned point back to the German capital.

"Hertha were difficult to play against, so there wasn't much more in it for us today. We had too few chances and didn't use our set-pieces," said Leverkusen midfielder Julian Baumgartlinger. Leverkusen had scored 18 goals in their previous five matches, but their in-form attack was held at bay by a suffocating Berlin defense on Sunday. Both Bailey and Kerem Demirbay tested goalkeeper Alexander Schwolow with long-range efforts in the first half, while Dodi Lukebakio twice came close for Hertha at the other end.

Lars Bender almost snatched a late winner for Leverkusen when he flicked Demirbay's free-kick past the post from six yards out. A win would have seen Leverkusen move to within a point of league leaders Bayern Munich. Instead, they remain in third behind Bayern and RB Leipzig. Hertha, who have earned just eight points in their first nine games, will

hope to put their season back on course with a win in next Friday's derby against high-flying cross-city rivals Union Berlin.

Later on Sunday, Togo striker Ihlas Bebou secured Hoffenheim a point in a 1-1 draw away to Mainz. Bebou's second-half equaliser rescued a frustrating afternoon for Hoffenheim, who have not won in the league since their surprise 4-1 victory over champions Bayern in September. "It's a bit frustrating because we wanted to win today and the three points would have done us a lot of good," Bebou told Sky. Jean-Philippe Mateta twice came close for Mainz before Robin Quaison put them ahead with a tap-in just after the half-hour mark.

Having dominated possession for much of the game, Hoffenheim were finally rewarded for their patience when Bebou turned Ryan Sessegnon's cross into the net on 62 minutes. Mateta struck the post with 15 minutes to play, and Hoffenheim were forced to cling on with 10 men after Dennis Geiger was sent off for kicking out at Mainz striker Karim Onisiwo. After losing their first six games this season, Mainz are now unbeaten in November but remain in the bottom three after Sunday's draw. Hoffenheim are stuck in 12th, their domestic troubles in stark contrast to a sparkling Europa League campaign, in which they have won four games out of four. —AFP



LEVERKUSEN: Leverkusen's German midfielder Lars Bender (up left) jumps for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Bayer Leverkusen v Hertha Berlin on November 29, 2020. —AFP

Kaizer Chiefs win on CAF Champions League return

JOHANNESBURG: Itumeleng Khune saved a penalty as South African giants Kaizer Chiefs made a winning return to the CAF Champions League by beating PWD Bamenda 1-0 in Cameroon at the weekend. Several superb saves by the 33-year-old goalkeeper kept Chiefs level until defender Eric Mathoho scored the only goal of the preliminary round first leg six minutes from time. Chiefs consider themselves one of the top clubs in Africa, but have consistently flopped in the Champions League, with their last appearance four years ago. Here, AFP Sport provides five talking points as the 2021 edition of the elite African club competition kicked off on the same weekend as Al Ahly of Egypt won the 2020 final.

Chiefs boost

Chiefs shrugged off poor domestic form to edge debutants Bamenda in a match moved from the northwest to Limbe in the southwest of Cameroon for security reasons. The Soweto outfit have lifted a record 53 domestic trophies since their 1970 formation, but none in the past five seasons, and won just two of eight local matches this season before flying to central Africa. Cameroon were once a force at CAF club level, but no club from the country has won the Champions League since Canon Yaounde defeated Kinshasa club AS Bilima 5-2 on aggregate in the 1980 final.

Advantage Enyimba

Former back-to-back champions Enyimba of Nigeria beat Rahimo of Burkina Faso 1-0 in Ouagadougou thanks to a headed goal from Victor Mbaoma with 14 minutes remaining. The teams met at the same stage last season with Rahimo winning 1-0 at home before suffering a 5-0 away drubbing in their first Champions League appearance. Plateau United, the other Nigerian challengers, surprisingly lost 1-0 at home in Jos to Simba of Tanzania with Zambian Clatous Chama scoring on 54 minutes.

Hilal celebrate

Al Hilal of Sudan celebrated participating in the Champions League a record 34th time by winning 1-0 away to Vipers of Uganda in Entebbe. Waleed Bakhet scored the only goal after 25 minutes and it is hard to imagine the 1982 and 1987 runners-up not advancing after the return match in Omdurman this weekend. Hilal first competed in the premier CAF club competition in 1966 and have played in every edition since 2004, reaching the semi-finals four times. —AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Lokomotiv Moscow v Red Bull Salzburg	20:55
beIN Sports HD 2	
Shakhtar Donetsk v Real Madrid	20:55
beIN Sports HD 1	
Atletico de Madrid v Bayern Munich	23:00
beIN Sports HD 3	
Borussia Monchengladbach v Inter Milano	23:00
beIN Sports HD 4	
Porto v Manchester City	23:00
beIN Sports HD 2	
Olympique Marseille v Olympiacos Piraeus	23:00
beIN Sports HD 6	
Liverpool v Ajax	23:00
beIN Sports HD 1	
Atalanta v Midtjylland	23:00
beIN Sports HD 5	

14 Kuwait League 9th round:
Al-Nasser grab 20 points



15 Lille held as Ligue 1 top 5
separated by two points

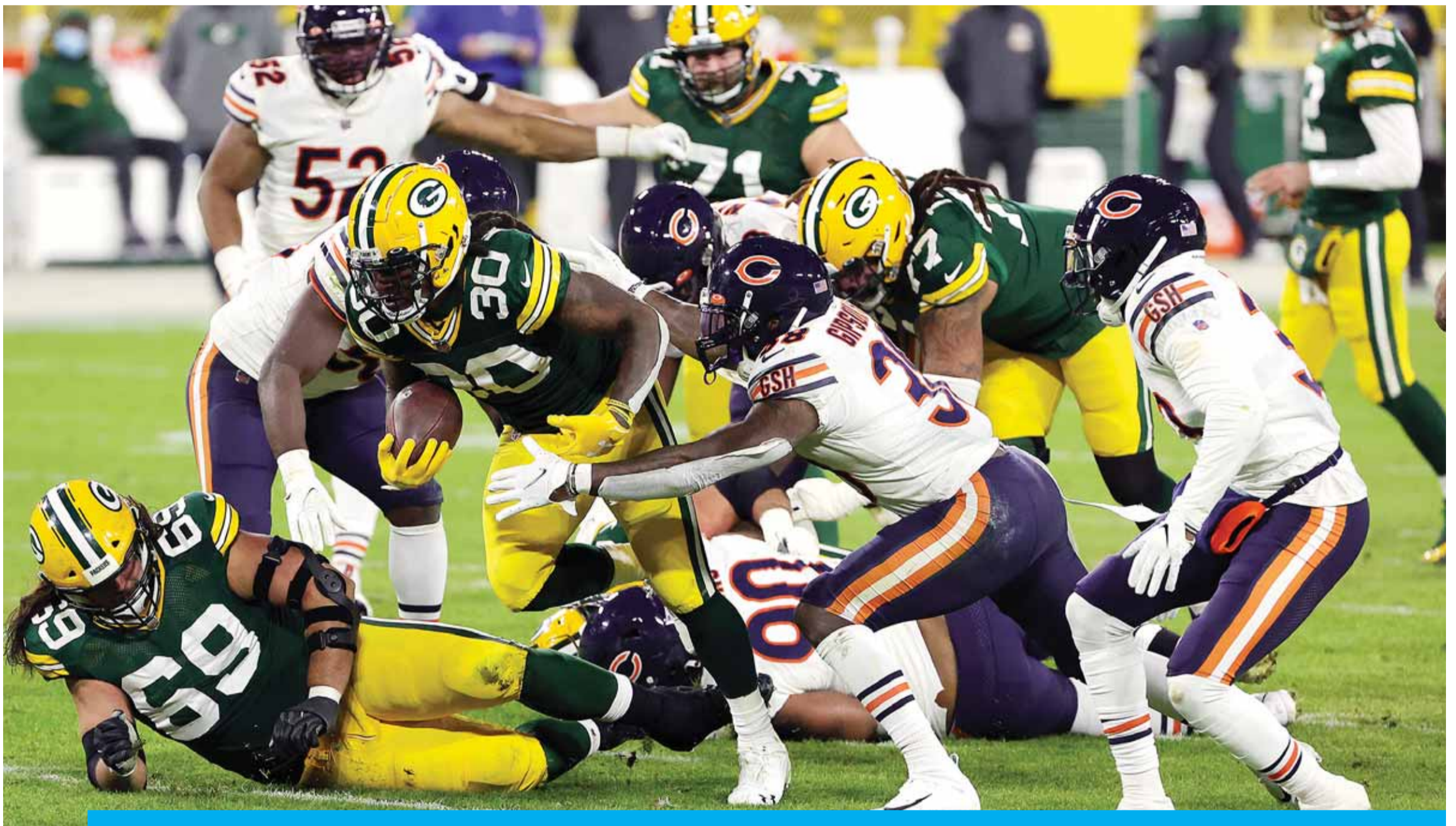


15 Wolves shake off Jimenez
loss to thump Arsenal 2-1



Chiefs take down Brady, Bucs

Packers crush Bears behind Rodgers' 4 TDs



GREEN BAY: Jamaal Williams #30 of the Green Bay Packers battles through during the 2nd half of the game against the Chicago Bears at Lambeau Field on November 29, 2020 in Green Bay. — AFP

FLORIDA: Patrick Mahomes passed for 462 yards and three touchdowns, winning a duel with Tom Brady, as the visiting Kansas City Chiefs beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 27-24 on Sunday. The Chiefs (10-1) won their sixth straight and continued to track the front-running Pittsburgh Steelers for the top seed in the AFC playoffs by capitalizing on the rhythm established between Mahomes and speedster Tyreek Hill, who caught 13 passes for 269 yards and three touchdowns.

Fittingly, he also snagged a game-clinching 8-yard pass on the boundary for a first down that enabled Kansas City to run out the fourth-quarter clock. Hill had seven receptions for 203 yards in the first quarter, including scores of 75 and 44 yards. His first-quarter yardage was the most in a period since 2006 when Lee Evans generated 205 yards for Buffalo. Hill also grabbed a 20-yard TD in the third quarter to make it 27-10. The Bucs (7-5) could not offer enough answers behind Brady, who finished 27-of-41 passing for 345 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions.

Titans 45, Colts 26

Derrick Henry ran for 178 yards and three touchdowns to help visiting Tennessee grab sole possession of first place in the AFC South with a victory against Indianapolis. AJ Brown had a 69-yard touchdown reception and also returned an onside kick 42 yards for a score late in the game for the Titans (8-3), who built a 35-14 halftime lead. Jacoby Brissett had two short TD runs for the Colts (7-4), who had beaten division rival Tennessee in Nashville on Nov. 12.

Dolphins 20, Jets 3

Ryan Fitzpatrick, returning to the starting lineup due to Tua Tagovailoa's injury, passed for 257 yards and two touchdowns to lead visiting Miami over winless New York. Dolphins receiver DeVante Parker had eight catches for a season-high 119 yards, but Miami with defense after forcing six punts, notching a fourth-down stop and collecting interceptions by Nik Needham and Xavien Howard. Miami has forced a turnover in 17 straight games, tying a franchise record. Howard's pick gives him an NFL-leading seven this year. New York fell to 0-11. The Jets are five losses away from joining the 2008

Lions and 2017 Browns as NFL 0-16 teams. Quarterback Sam Darnold, who hadn't played since Nov. 1 due to an injured non-throwing shoulder, was sacked three times and was intercepted twice, passing for 197 yards.

Packers 41, Bears 25

Aaron Rodgers carved up Chicago's usually formidable defense for four touchdown passes as host Green Bay put a chokehold on the NFC North with a blowout win at Lambeau Field. Rodgers completed 21 of 29 passes for 211 yards as Green Bay (8-3) took a three-game lead over Chicago (5-6) and Minnesota with five games left. The Packers could clinch the division title as soon as next week if they win and both teams chasing them lose. Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky, starting his first game since Sept. 27, hit on 26 of 46 passes for 242 yards and three touchdowns. He also tossed two interceptions and lost a fumble that Preston Smith took 14 yards for a score that upped Green Bay's second-quarter lead to 27-3.

Bills 27, Chargers 17

Buffalo scored a touchdown on the opening possession of each half and remained alone in first place atop the AFC East by holding off Los Angeles in a victory at Orchard Park, NY. Bills quarterback Josh Allen threw for 157 yards and one touchdown and ran for another score as the Bills improved to 8-3 in the chase for their first division title since 1995. Devin Singletary rushed for 82 yards for the Bills. Chargers rookie quarterback Justin Herbert was 31-of-52 passing for 316 yards and one touchdown, but Los Angeles (3-8) lost for the fourth time in its last five games.

49ers 23, Rams 20

Robbie Gould kicked a 42-yard field goal as time expired to give San Francisco a victory and a season-series sweep over host Los Angeles. Nick Mullens passed for 252 yards with one interception to lead the 49ers (5-6), who benefited from the return from long absences by Deebo Samuel, who caught 11 passes for 133 yards, Raheem Mostert, who rushed for 43 yards and a score, and Richard Sherman, who intercepted a pass. Jared Goff threw

for 198 yards but suffered a pair of interceptions for the Rams (7-4) in a game that featured seven turnovers and two defensive scores.

Patriots 20, Cardinals 17

Nick Folk made a 50-yard field goal as time expired, lifting New England over Arizona in Foxborough, Mass. The Patriots (5-6), who overcame an early 10-0 deficit, drove for Folk's field goal after Arizona kicker Zane Gonzalez missed a 45-yard attempt with 1:47 remaining. New England quarterback Cam Newton completed 9 of 18 passes for only 84 yards and no touchdowns. Arizona (6-5) tied the game at 17 with 8:02 remaining. Four plays after converting a fourth-and-4 attempt via a defensive holding penalty, Kenyon Drake scored on a 1-yard run, the Cardinals' first touchdown since their first possession of the game.

Falcons 43, Raiders 6

Matt Ryan passed for 185 yards and two touchdowns and Deion Jones returned an interception 67 yards for a touchdown as host Atlanta took advantage of turnover-prone Las Vegas. Ryan completed 22-of-39 passes and was intercepted once, but he became the eighth quarterback in NFL history to pass for 3,000 or more yards in 11 consecutive seasons. Ito Smith rushed 65 yards and a touchdown for the Falcons (4-7). Las Vegas (6-5) dropped its second straight game. Derek Carr, who lost three fumbles and threw an interception, completed 22 of 34 passes for 215 yards.

Vikings 28, Panthers 27

Kirk Cousins threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Chad Beebe with 46 seconds left and Minnesota rallied for the victory against visiting Carolina in Minneapolis. The outcome wasn't secured until Carolina kicker Joey Slye missed wide left on a 54-yard field goal attempt with one second remaining. The result dampened a record-setting day for Panthers rookie safety Jeremy Chinn. Chinn scored two touchdowns on fumble returns in an historic eight-second span early in the third quarter. There's no other documented situation in NFL history in which the same defensive player scored touchdowns on back-to-back snaps.

Saints 31, Broncos 3

Taysom Hill and Latavius Murray each ran for two touchdowns and visiting New Orleans took advantage of the absence of all Denver quarterbacks. Hill won his second straight start in the absence of injured Drew Brees as the NFC-leading Saints improved to 9-2 with their eighth consecutive victory. The Broncos (4-7) played without all four quarterbacks on their roster due to COVID-19 concerns. Practice squad wide receiver Kendall Hinton, who played quarterback as a freshman at Wake Forest, was expected to start, but running back Phillip Lindsay took the first three snaps in the shotgun formation and ran the ball.

Giants 19, Bengals 17

Wayne Gallman scored a touchdown and rushed for a career-high 94 yards. Graham Gano kicked four field goals and visiting New York defeated Cincinnati to move into first place in the NFC East. The Giants (4-7) won their third straight game but also lost quarterback Daniel Jones to a hamstring injury in the third quarter. The Giants are tied with the Washington Football Team atop the NFC East, but hold the head-to-head tiebreaker. Gallman scored his sixth rushing touchdown since Week 7 on New York's first series when he plunged in from 1 yard out. The first touchdown for Cincinnati (2-8-1) came on Brandon Wilson's 103-yard kickoff return in the first quarter, the longest play in team history.

Browns 27, Jaguars 25

Nick Chubb rushed for a season-high 144 yards and a touchdown, and Baker Mayfield threw two touchdown passes as visiting Cleveland posted its third straight win by holding off Jacksonville. It was the third straight 100-yard rushing game, and fifth of the season, for Chubb. Mayfield hit 19 of 29 passes for 258 yards, and Jarvis Landry posted season-highs with eight catches for 143 yards and his first touchdown of the season for the Browns (8-3). Mike Glennon completed 20 of 35 for 235 yards and two touchdowns in his first NFL start since 2017 for Jacksonville (1-10), which has lost 10 straight. The Jaguars pulled to within 27-25 with 2:14 left on James Robinson's 4-yard run, but the two-point try failed. — Reuters