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England to lock down again as virus surges in Europe

Iran's daily COVID-19 deaths hit record • Slovakia testing entire population



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks during a virtual press conference inside 10 Downing Street on Saturday to announce new lockdown restrictions. — AFP

LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced a new four-week coronavirus lockdown in England, which will join several European countries in imposing the measure for a second time, as Slovakia took a different tack and began testing its entire population. Global infections are fast approaching 46 million, with close to 1.2 million deaths, and Europe is experiencing a dizzying spike in COVID-19 cases.

Under-pressure governments on the continent are scrambling to contain the outbreaks, with the re-imposition of restrictions sparking widespread exasperation and sometimes violent protests. "Now is the time to take action because there's no alternative," Johnson said. "We have got to be humble in the face of nature. In this country, alas, as in much of Europe, the virus is spreading even faster than the reasonable worst-case scenario of our scientific advisers."

Under the new lockdown, planned to start on Thursday and end on Dec 2, England's population must stay at home except when exemptions apply, such as for work, education or exercise, while all but essential shops will close. The devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have already imposed partial lockdowns. Britain's infections surged past one million on Saturday.

The four-week coronavirus lockdown in England will be extended if it fails to reduce infection rates, the government said yesterday, as it faced criticism over the abrupt decision to shut down again. Senior minister Michael Gove said the government would maintain the stringent measures if the R rate - the number of people one person with the virus is likely to infect - remained above one.

"With a virus this malignant, and with its capacity to move so quickly, it would be foolish to predict with absolute certainty

what will happen in four weeks' time," he told Sky News. "And so therefore of course we will review what requires to be done but we have a clear plan over the next four-week (period)," he added.

Under the new rules, people must stay at home except in cases where exemptions apply, such as for work, education or exercise. In contrast to the months-long UK-wide lockdown earlier this year, schools, colleges and universities will remain open. But pubs and restaurants will shut unless serving takeaway food, while all leisure and entertainment venues and non-essential shops will close.

Just minutes after Johnson, Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Costa announced a partial lockdown with 70 percent of the population going back under restrictions. Also on Saturday, Austria brought in a second lockdown of its own, while Greece declared a partial one.

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MoI warns against election gatherings

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry yesterday warned candidates running in the National Assembly election against hosting election gatherings in the wake

of the coronavirus pandemic, warning that stiff penalties will be applied against violators. The ministry has advised candidates to conduct their campaigns through social media.

The interior ministry also announced that a special committee has started screening the records of candidates to ensure that they conform to the conditions required by the election law. The committee has the right to disqualify candidates if they have previous criminal records or had violated the law. Those disqualified have the right to appeal the

decision in court, which must make its decision before election day.

Yesterday, 42 candidates including two women filed their nomination papers on the seventh day of registration to run in the parliamentary election scheduled on Dec 5. With just three days remaining for registration, the number of candidates rose to 301 after one candidate withdrew. Registration ends on Nov 4, while withdrawal continues until seven days before election day.

The new candidates include eight MPs who

hope to retain their seats, raising the number of sitting MPs who have filed to contest the election to 32 out of 50. In the first constituency, MP Osama Al-Shaheen registered, while Riyadh Al-Adasani filed from the second constituency and MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari from the third constituency. In the fourth constituency, MPs Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Askar Al-Enezi and Mubarak Al-Hajraf registered, while MPs Hamdan Al-Azemi and Mohammad Al-Huwailah filed from the fifth constituency.

Swordsman in medieval clothes kills 2 in Quebec

QUEBEC CITY: The sword-wielding attacker dressed in medieval costume who killed two people and injured five others in a Halloween rampage on Saturday night in Quebec was "not associated with a terrorist group", Canadian police said yesterday. The attacks occurred in multiple locations in the Old Quebec neighborhood, near the tourist hotspot Chateau Frontenac and the National Assembly, the Quebec provincial parliament.

The suspect, who was arrested early yesterday after a manhunt through the streets, is due to make a preliminary court appearance by video-link later in the day. "Yesterday evening we were plunged into a night of horror when a 24-year-old man, who does not live in Quebec, came with the intention of claiming as many victims as possible," Quebec City police chief Robert Pigeon told reporters. "Everything leads us to believe" that the suspect, who was armed with a Japanese-style sword, "chose his victims at random," Pigeon added.

The police chief said that two of the victims are French people living in Quebec for some years, without specifying whether they were among the dead or injured. Some of the injured suffered "significant lacerations", he said. The suspect, from Montreal, had planned his attack but had no criminal record.

"My heart breaks for the loved ones of the two people killed in last night's horrific attack in Quebec City," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Twitter. "I'm also wishing a full recovery to the injured." "All of Quebec is in mourning this morning," said Quebec deputy premier Genevieve Guilbault, who denounced "barbaric" acts. — AFP

Trump, Biden hit key states; 92m votes cast

READING, Pennsylvania: Donald Trump visited five swing states yesterday in a punishing finale to a frantic weekend sprint against challenger Joe Biden just days ahead of the US presidential election. The candidates and their top surrogates barreled through crucial states in the industrial Midwest and coastal southeast on Saturday, pressing closing arguments.

Trump rallied voters yesterday with an exhausting schedule in toss-up states Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida while Biden focuses on Pennsylvania, a key battle-

ground likely to play a crucial role in Tuesday's election. Underscoring the high stakes - and the disruptive impact of the coronavirus pandemic - a record 92 million early votes have already been cast, as the bruising contest heads toward the biggest turnout in at least a century.

Using some of his most urgent language yet, Trump warned Saturday of "bedlam in our country" if no clear winner emerges quickly in the election, saying, without evidence, that it could take weeks to sort out a result and that "very bad things" could happen in the interim. Biden meanwhile told backers it was "time for Donald Trump to pack his bags and go home".

The virus has killed more than 230,000 Americans, ravaged the world's largest economy and is infecting record numbers of people across the US.

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FLINT, Michigan: Former US President Barack Obama joins Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden at a campaign event on Saturday. — AFP

At least 10 dead as Typhoon Goni batters Philippines

MANILA: At least 10 people were killed as Typhoon Goni pounded the Philippines yesterday, ripping off roofs, toppling power lines and causing flooding in the hardest-hit areas where hundreds of thousands had fled their homes. The strongest typhoon of the year also triggered deadly landslides that buried a number of houses in the southern part of the most populous island of Luzon, officials said.

Goni was a "super typhoon" when it made landfall on Catanduanes Island before dawn, packing maximum sustained wind speeds of 225 km per hour and dumping heavy rain across the region. It was downgraded a few hours later as it swept across Luzon and reduced intensity as it skirted the capital Manila and headed out to the South China

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MALILIPOT, Philippines: Motorists make their way through boulders washed from the nearby Mayon volcano along a damaged road after super Typhoon Goni hit this town in Albay province yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir receives Crown Prince, top officials

Sheikh Nawaf inquires about Algerian president's health



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. He received as well His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-

Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, he received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem,

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad, and Saleh at Seif Palace yesterday.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President of Algeria Abdelmadjid Tebboune inquiring about his wellbeing following a health setback.

His Highness the Amir wished president Tebboune quick recovery and restoration of full health. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed cables of identical content to the Algerian president. — KUNA

England to lock down again...

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The new measures came just a day after France started its second lockdown and Belgium said it would tighten its measures. Italy has also already reintroduced some restrictions.

This time around in Europe, there have been sometimes-violent protests against the measures. "This city will go bust. There will be nothing left of it," Roger Stenson, a 73-year-old pensioner in Nottingham, said ahead of Britain's lockdown announcement, echoing widespread concerns about the economic impact. "You know, closed shops... There will just be nothing left of it, that's the problem."

Iran's daily tally of coronavirus deaths hit a record high of 434 yesterday, the health ministry announced, and the head of a top medical body said the actual toll was at least three times higher than the official count. The deaths, announced by health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari on state TV, take the official toll to 35,298 in the Middle East's worst-hit country. She said the number of confirmed coronavirus cases increased by 7,719 to 620,491. The head of Iran's Medical Council, Mohammadreza Zafarghandi, doubted the accuracy of the official toll and warned that Iran had reached a "catastrophic mortality rate", the

Students News Agency ISNA reported yesterday. "The official death toll is only based on the number of registered patients," Zafarghandi told ISNA.

"Through field surveys in hospitals and cemeteries, our Council has obtained a figure at least three times higher than the official death toll." The medical council is a non-governmental organization that is responsible for licensing doctors in Iran. "Thousands of our health workers were infected with the virus and according to our statistics, 300 of them had died," Zafarghandi said.

With no vaccine yet available, governments have limited tools at their disposal to counter the spread of the virus. In Slovakia, the government has decided to take a different approach to other European countries and test its entire population of 5.4 million, with Prime Minister Igor Matovic describing the strategy as the EU nation's "road to freedom". But in the lesser privileged parts of the world with little or no infrastructure and resources, there are fewer options.

The United States remains the worst-hit country in the world, with 9.1 million infections, more than 230,000 deaths and fresh spikes in many parts of the vast nation. COVID-19 has been one of the dominant campaign issues ahead of the presidential election on Nov 3, with millions of jobs lost and Donald Trump facing intense criticism over his handling of the pandemic.

Trump himself got COVID-19, as did members of his family and staff, but he has been critical of lockdown measures over their economic impact, belittled mask-wearing by his Democratic challenger Joe Biden, and organized rallies with thousands of supporters despite warnings about the risk of transmission. — Agencies

That included three people who died in rain-induced landslides of volcanic ash that police said engulfed numerous houses in two adjacent villages near the active Mayon volcano in Albay. "We have recovered three bodies and are looking for three more," said Major Domingo Tapel, chief of police in Guinobatan town.

The roofs of buildings including two evacuation centers were torn off by the force of the wind, while torrential rain flooded roads and inundated towns. "The winds are fierce. We can hear the trees being pummeled. It's very strong," Francia Mae Borrás, 21, told AFP from her home in the nearby coastal city of Legazpi. Nearly 400,000 people fled their homes, most of them to evacuation centers, Civil Defense said.

Various officials in affected areas reported power cuts, which were disrupting telecommunication serv-

ices and hampering efforts to assess the extent of the damage. "Our roads have a lot of debris from the mountains such as branches and sand, some which came from Mayon (volcano). Some roads are unpassable," said Carlos Irwin Baldo, the mayor of Camalig, near Legazpi.

In Manila, the airport was closed and residents were evacuated from low-lying slum areas at risk of being inundated by storm surges. "It's better to be safe," Arman Atuel, 33, told AFP as he sat with his wife in a vehicle taking people to shelters. The couple do not own a television or radio so were not aware of the typhoon's strength.

Thousands of soldiers and police were on standby to help with evacuations and rescue efforts. Photos shared by the Philippine Red Cross on Twitter showed personnel wading through flooded streets in a village in Batangas province, south of Manila, to

Trump, Biden hit key states...

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The election takes place in a deeply divided country, with feelings so raw that gun sales have surged in some areas. Businesses in some cities, including Washington, are protectively boarding windows, and police are preparing for the possibility of violence.

Trump focused Saturday on Pennsylvania - "the state where the story of American independence began," he said in the small city of Newtown, the first of four stops in that state amid a frenetic final sprint. Biden made his first joint appearance of the campaign with his former boss Barack Obama - probably the most popular Democrat in the country - in Flint, Michigan as they scrambled to boost turnout in a state Trump carried by a razor-thin margin in 2016.

Pennsylvania has emerged as one of the top prizes this year. In his motorcade en route to rural Bucks County, the president passed hundreds of supporters holding up a forest of pro-Trump signs. The crowd then booed trailing vehicles that were carrying reporters, a regular target of Trump's attacks. In remarks he lashed out at Biden, saying he would shut down the state's fossil-fuel industry,

The president claimed credit for creating the "greatest economy in the history of this country - the history of the world" - while "foreign nations are in free fall".

Despite recent signs of recovery from the virus-induced economic pain, however, millions remain jobless. The campaign has been overshadowed by the surging pandemic, which even sickened Trump and members of his staff. Stanford University economists estimated in a study out Thursday that 18 of Trump's campaign rallies had resulted in more than 30,000 coronavirus cases and more than 700 deaths - although not necessarily among attendees - based on statistical modeling.

In stark contrast to Trump, who has belittled mask-wearing by Biden and others, the Democrat has scrupulously followed the guidance of public health experts. After Biden and Obama appeared Saturday before a socially distanced drive-in rally in Flint, they made an unannounced stop in suburban Bloomfield Hills before heading to Detroit, where they were joined by superstar singer Stevie Wonder.

Biden leads in the state by nearly seven points, according to a RealClearPolitics average of polls. Michigan's 16 electoral votes could provide a sizable leap towards the 270 needed to win the White House. Trump, in eking out his 2016 victory, took advantage of low turnout rates among black Michigan voters. As Biden campaigns with the nation's first black president, he clearly hopes to change that. — AFP

rescue people trapped in their homes.

Schools, which have been empty since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, are being used as emergency shelters, as are government-run evacuation centers and gymnasiums. COVID-19 patients being treated in tent facilities have been evacuated, officials said. The Philippines has recorded more than 380,000 infections, including more than 7,200 deaths, which has stretched its resources and complicated evacuations.

Mary Ann Echague, 23, and her family fled their home in Legazpi on Saturday to an inland primary school where they were sheltering in a classroom with several other families. "We fear the wrath of the typhoon," said Echague, who was with her two children, parents and siblings. They had carried with them a portable stove, tinned meat, instant noodles, coffee, bread, blankets and pillows. — AFP

At least 10 dead as Typhoon Goni...

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Sea where it is expected to weaken into a severe tropical storm. Catanduanes and Albay provinces bore the brunt of Goni's ferocious winds, which the state weather forecaster had warned earlier could cause "catastrophic" damage. It came a week after Typhoon Molave hit the same region of the natural disaster-prone archipelago, killing 22 people. At least nine people were killed in Albay and one in Catanduanes, Civil Defense said in a statement.

Local

Kuwait Democratic Forum boycotts 2020 National Assembly elections

In protest of current elections law, corruption

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Democratic Forum announced it is boycotting the 2020 National Assembly elections in protest against the elections law. The liberal group issued a statement yesterday saying they are boycotting the 2020 elections that will be held on Dec 5, 2020 due to the current elections law that allows each voter to cast one vote only.

According to the Forum's statement, no achievements can be realized with this law. It said Kuwait needs to change this law as it is a "negative law that brought bad members to the parliament who only served their personal interests and relations with ministers instead of serving the community."

The statement added that MPs had weak oversight over the performance of the government and public officials amid hidden corruption. "This caused the decline of the situation from bad to worse, which showed that any reforms are far from being applied, although it's the people's demand," the statement reads.



The Forum said, "today it's clear that the country needs real reforms and to face corruption, which is the people's responsibility." The group expressed belief that the members who voted against changing the elections law during the last parliamentary session won't work for reforms.

The members of the Kuwait Democratic Forum discussed this issue during two extraordinary general assembly meetings held in the past two years. The members then decided they will boycott the 2020 elections. But the Forum will continue to follow up national issues and democratic demands, along with ensuring the constitution is applied. The Forum will continue political and democratic activity outside the parliament, supporting any peaceful movements working towards real democracy.



The country needs real reforms



Kuwait reports 608 new COVID cases, three deaths

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health announced yesterday 608 new coronavirus (COVID-19) infections, raising the total to 126,534. Deaths reached 782 with the addition of three fatalities. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that there were 109 patients receiving treatment at intensive care units. Those still receiving treatment amounted to 8,194. Health authorities conducted 4,753 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising the whole count to 921,278. Dr Sanad added. Earlier, the ministry announced that 696 patients have recovered from the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, bringing the total of recoveries to 117,558. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Doctors at NBK Hospital performed a stem cell transplant surgery on a three-year-old girl on Saturday; the first operation of its kind to be conducted at the pediatric hospital, the health ministry announced.



KUWAIT: Ministry of Commerce inspectors closed a store for selling goods imported from Israel, which is against the law in Kuwait. Legal procedures are underway against the owner of the store.



Crimes

Road rage leaves multiple deaths

KUWAIT: A motorcyclist died when his bike collided with a vehicle in a traffic accident reported on the intersection of Abdullah Al-Salem and Faiha yesterday. Meanwhile, two people were seriously injured in a three-way collision on Arabian Gulf Road. The accident was caused by a drunk driver who was also wounded in the crash. In the meantime, a cleaning worker died of fatal injuries he sustained when a vehicle ran him over after crashing into a garbage truck, knocking him to the ground. The accident happened in Qosoor yesterday.

Smugglers arrested

KUWAIT: Coastguard men arrested two persons who confessed to bringing in drugs to the country, the Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said. Seven bags were lifted from the bottom of the sea containing 180 smaller bags of suspected drugs. The suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

Indecent clips

KUWAIT: Police arrested a man who published indecent video clips online, the Interior Ministry announced. The Electronic Crimes Department men identified and arrested the suspect after becoming aware of the clips. He confessed to committing the offense, and was remanded in custody pending further action.

Mahboula fire

KUWAIT: Firemen put out a blaze in a Mahboula building Saturday evening, Kuwait Fire Force said. Mangaf and Fahaheel fire stations' men responded to the scene, and battled the blaze that started in a ninth floor apartment. No injuries were reported, and a case was filed for investigations.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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Legal action against selling service barcodes

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Ministry warned on Saturday that it would take the appropriate legal action to deter any bid to sell barcodes for consular services and to monitor and thwart wrongdoings. The warning came in response to recent social media reports that some people were involved in selling the barcodes of services provided by the ministry's consular department, according to a ministry statement. The ministry is closely monitoring the consular department's services, and is keen on regulating and streamlining them only to serve its customers, Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Samie Al-Hamad was quoted as saying in the statement. He added that the ministry had monitored some people while trying to sell barcodes, underlining that "legal action was taken against them." Cautioning against such wrongdoings, the official vowed that the ministry would take all appropriate measures to preclude such malpractices. — KUNA



Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A photo taken on October 31, 2020, shows a partial view of the Sheikh Jaber Causeway in Kuwait City at sunset. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Bureau audits \$3.2 billion projects in Kuwait since April

Authority concerned public funds might have been misappropriated

KUWAIT: The State Audit Bureau assessed 1,531 ventures worth KD 1.9 billion (\$3.2 billion) between April 4 and October 31 this year. Up to 93 percent of the projects were presented by ministries and government departments - worth KD 1.7 billion - (\$3 billion), in addition to five percent of the presented enterprises from departments of affiliate budgets-valued KD 1.2 million (\$3 million), two percent of independent apparatuses-worth KD 43 (\$138 million). The bureau approved 64 percent of the projects, at a value of KD 1.2 billion (\$3 billion), with advance and post contracting examination, said Shahad Al-Mnayess, the assistant auditor for

advance supervision for economic affairs at the Audit Bureau in a statement yesterday.

The advance audit division at the Audit Bureau notified the Financial Breaches Department that some of the authorities had been committed to contracts without obtaining the bureau's prior approval, breaching provisions 13 and 14 of the bureau's law. It put the number of these offenses at 28, valued KD 63 million (\$203 million). Moreover, the penalties' division notified some of the authorities of their breaching of provision 52 of the same law, involving 13 projects worth KD 45 million (\$145 million). It furthermore expressed concern that sums deducted

from public funds might have been misappropriated.

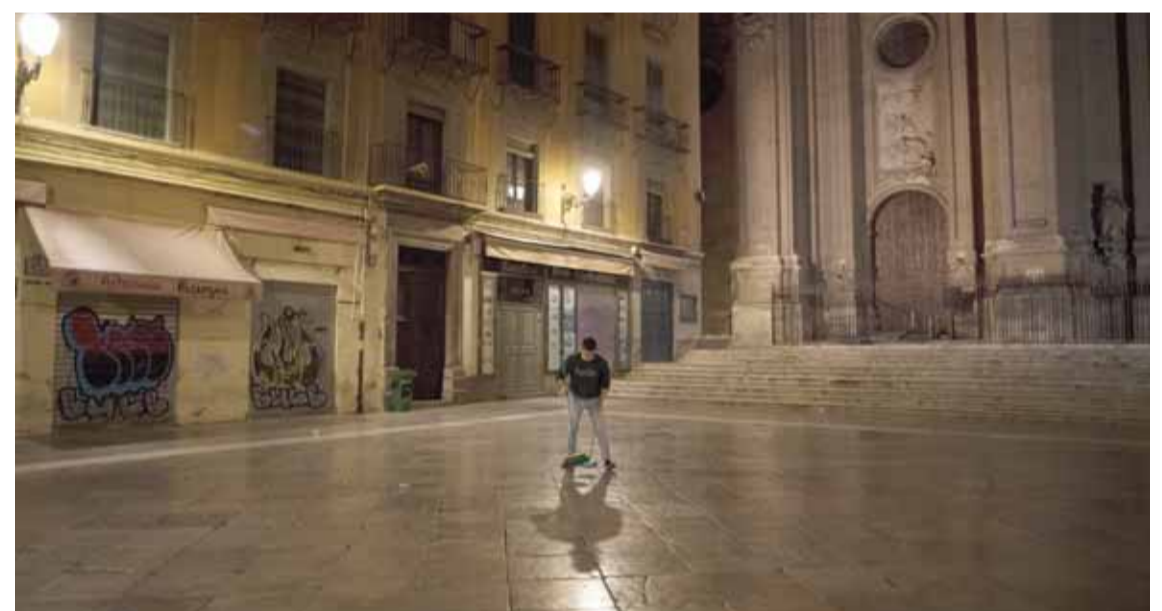
The diwan turned down 77 planned enterprises estimated at KD 230 million (\$743 million), citing irregularities in pre-contract procedures. The ministry of health had the lion's share of these projects (40) valued at KD 142 million (\$458 million). Additionally, the diwan rejected employment of personnel for security and safety at oil installations; with a projected cost of KD 2.5 million (\$6.4 million). Up to 491 projects were rejected due to lack of necessary documents. The bureau noted that the advance supervision resulted in saving KD 52 million (\$168 million). — KUNA

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GRANADA: An employee sweeps after closing his business at Las Pasiegas Square at the end of a day's work in Granada, Spain on October 31, 2020. — AFP

Embassies urge Kuwaitis abroad to take precautions

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait's Embassy in the United States of America has called on citizens in the US to take all necessary safety precautions. The embassy urged, in a statement early yesterday, the Kuwaiti nationals to abide by health guidelines from the US Centers for disease Control (CDC) and instructions by local authorities in this regard. The mission call came amid soaring numbers of COVID-19 casualties in the US.

Moreover, the embassy said the Kuwaiti Consulate and affiliate technical bureaux were reachable for any help on the following phone numbers: The State of Kuwait Embassy (Washington) (+1) 2022620758, the General Consulate of the State of Kuwait in New York: (+1) 9172426688, the General Consulate in Los Angeles: (+1) 3644279310, the Cultural Bureau in Washington: (+1) 2023642104, the Health Office in Washington: (+1) 2415320202, the Military Office in Washington: (+1) 2023903416, and the Cultural Bureau in Los Angeles: (+1) 4214666424.

Spain

Meanwhile, Kuwait advised its nationals in Spain to adhere to new coronavirus measures aimed at bringing down increasing infection rates in the country with Western Europe's highest caseload. Kuwaitis in all parts of Spain are strongly urged to follow the new rules as outlined by local authorities, said an embassy statement,

emphasizing that COVID-19 infections continue to spread exponentially amid a nationwide state of emergency that has been extended by six months. Regional authorities have been given the legal backing they need to control a second wave of the pandemic as they see fit, implementing measures that include curfews and total lockdowns in some regions. The embassy has provided the hotlines: (+34)913-86-96-66 or (+34)656-66-55-55 for all Kuwaitis in need of emergency assistance.

Netherlands

In the meantime, Kuwait has called on the need for its citizens in the Netherlands to adhere to partial coronavirus lockdown measures issued by local authorities, aimed to curb the spread of the disease. Kuwaitis were urged to keep abreast of further government guidelines related to the pandemic, expected later this week, and to commit to social distancing. Kuwait's embassy at The Hague said in a press statement. The embassy has placed its services at the disposal of its nationals and is ready to provide all forms of assistance in the event of an emergency on the following telephone numbers: (+31)63-937-4157 (emergencies) and (+31)70-312-3409 (embassy).

Turkey

Furthermore, Kuwait urged its citizens in Turkey to adhere to new coronavirus guidelines issued by local authorities and to exercise caution, particularly amid gatherings. In the event of an emergency, they were urged to contact Kuwait's embassy in Ankara on (+90)533-164-84-79, a statement read. Authorities in Turkey have issued preventative pandemic measures in public spaces, such as parks, beaches, restaurants and places of worship. — KUNA



Crammed into camps, displaced Syrians fear spread of coronavirus

Boards of election: Fearing violence, Washington prepares

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ALEXANDRIA, Virginia: Voters fill out their ballots at an early voting center at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center on Saturday. — AFP

2020 might be the COVID-19 election

'Vote like your life depended on it'

WASHINGTON: At the end of January, a little after the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the United States, the New York Stock Exchange hit an all-time high, and Donald Trump's biggest concern was the impact of Boeing's woes on the economy. "The American Dream is back, bigger, better and stronger than ever before," the US president declared in Davos, already in campaign mode.

Fast-forward nine months. More than nine million confirmed infected with the coronavirus and close to 230,000 have died from COVID-19 - making it the third leading cause of death for the year. The numbers become even more grim when the hundred thousand or so additional deaths from misdiagnosed COVID-19 cases and indirect causes are added to the tally.

Despite an impressive rebound in the third quarter, millions of Americans lost their jobs, shattering the most reliable electoral argument of American presidents in search of a second term - that of economic strength. Trump's defeat at the polls next Tuesday is far from assured, and the Republican believes the electorate will punish his rival Joe Biden for failing to campaign extensively on the ground.

But his handling of the pandemic has certainly cost him votes. Like that of Kimberly McLemore, a 56-year-old from St. Augustine, Florida who worked in jewelry before the pandemic hit. McLemore, a life-

long Republican, said she thought Trump was doing a good job at the start, when he held daily briefings and seemed to listen to scientists, but she later realized he was not taking the crisis seriously.

"In good conscience, I cannot vote for this man," she told AFP, adding that both her parents, who are in their eighties, also voted for Biden, the first time they had voted for any Democrat. "Vote like your life depended on it" is also how a narrator closes out an ad for The Lincoln Project, a collective of high-profile former Republicans on a mission to defeat Trump.

Thin margins

At rallies and on Twitter, Trump has accused the "fake news mainstream media" of focusing on "COVID, COVID, COVID" to hurt his reelection chances. The virus has hindered his efforts since the start of the campaign. In June, he held his first rally of the pandemic in an indoor arena in Tulsa, which somehow managed to be both an embarrassing disaster in terms of attendance but also likely a super-spreading event.

Surveys for several months now have shown that Americans are judging their leader poorly when it comes to the virus. Only 40 percent approve, according to a recent Gallup poll, compared to 60 percent in March. These types of polls are too general to detect if there will be a so-

called "COVID effect" on the election. But on Friday, researchers behind a new analysis in the journal *Science Advances* said they found just that. They drew on more 300,000 survey responses from the summers of 2019 and 2020, then tied that to local COVID-19 death rates, concluding the pandemic may have significantly damaged public support for Trump. Specifically, people in counties which saw a doubling in the death rate in the month prior to the day they were surveyed were on average 0.14 percent less likely to vote Trump, and 0.28 percent less likely to vote for Republican congressional candidates.

That might not sound like a whole lot. But George Washington University's Christopher Warshaw told AFP it could still be significant. "A lot of elections are determined by small margins. So even relatively small effects are sufficiently important," he said. "It's very possible, based on our results, that COVID could be affecting the president and other members of his party, the two-party vote share by half a point or a point or more in some states and counties."

It still might be enough for Biden. In 2000, just a few hundred votes separated the winner and loser in the key state of Florida. And four years ago, a meager 77,000 vote lead in three states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin) tipped the election in favor of Trump. — AFP

Turnout key for Algeria govt in referendum

ALGIERS: A pro-government Algerian television channel showed people streaming into a provincial polling station yesterday for a constitutional referendum backed by the country's rulers, but on the streets of the capital there was less enthusiasm to vote. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and the powerful military have pushed the changes to the constitution as a way to turn the page on last year's popular unrest.

It has set the referendum up as a test of strength with the leaderless opposition "Hirak" protest movement, which brought thousands of people onto the streets every week last year and which rejects the proposed constitutional reform as a sham. Tebboune, who has been in hospital in Germany since last week after saying aides had tested positive for COVID-19, has pushed for a big turnout to show support for his strategy to end unrest.

Ennahar channel, which supports the government, showed hundreds of young men rushing into a polling station in the city of Mila as voting started, forming lines to cast their ballots. The area had much state support after a recent earthquake. However, polling stations were far quieter elsewhere on Sunday morning, amid strict health measures because of the global pandemic.

In the Kabylie region, center of a 1990s Islamist insurgency and known for low electoral turnout, many people were boycotting the vote. "It is 'ulac' vote here," said Said Mezouane, using the Berber word for 'no'. Protesters had burned ballot boxes in some places there, he said. In Ouled Fayet, west of Algiers, about 10 people were waiting to vote. "Let's hope for the better and pray for Tebboune's speedy recovery," said Ahmed Slimane, 60.

"There is no point in voting. This constitution will not change anything," said 30-year old bus driver Hassan Rabia, sitting with two friends at a cafe in central Algiers. A cartoon in *el Watan* newspaper referenced Tebboune's hospitalization, with a man at a polling booth looking at ballots marked 'yes' and 'no' in German rather than in Arabic.

Tebboune has presented the changes as partly addressing the wishes of protesters who forced his predecessor Abdelaziz Bouteflika to step down after 20 years in office. However, their demands - replacing the ruling elite, the military's withdrawal from politics and an end to corruption - have been at best only partly met.

The new constitution includes presidential term limits and more powers for the parliament and judiciary. However, the military remains the most powerful institution in Algerian politics, though it has played a less prominent role since Tebboune's election. The new constitution gives it powers to intervene outside Algeria's borders, with the generals concerned about insecurity in neighboring Libya and Mali. — Reuters



ALGIERS: An Algerian man casts his ballot at a polling station in the capital during a vote for a revised constitution yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

Obama casually sinks 3-pointer

WASHINGTON: He was attempting to land Democrat Joe Biden an electoral slam dunk, but former president Barack Obama nailed a 3-pointer instead. Literally. On the campaign trail Saturday at a high school gym in Flint, Michigan, Obama, who is known for his skill on the court, was passed a basketball as he left the room. The ex-president dribbled, then sank the 3-pointer from the corner before casually resuming his exit and telling the campaign entourage confidently that "that's what I do". Video of the shot quickly went viral, gaining hundreds of thousands of likes and praise from none other than LeBron James. — AFP

Turkey extends research mission

ISTANBUL: Turkey yesterday extended once again a research ship mission in contested waters of the east Mediterranean, ignoring Greek warnings such moves undercut efforts to resolve their dispute. The Turkish navy said in a message on the international maritime alert system NAVTEX that the Oruc Reis vessel would stay in the area until Nov 14. It had previously said the ship would remain until Nov 4, Wednesday. The latest deployment comes as the two NATO allies have toned down some of their bellicose rhetoric in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake that hit both countries. — AFP

Turkish FM in Azerbaijan

BAKU: Turkey's foreign minister arrived in Azerbaijan yesterday for talks over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after Baku's arch-enemy Armenia requested security assistance from Russia. "We are once again in Baku with our brothers to renew our strong support for dear Azerbaijan and exchange on the latest developments in Nagorno-Karabakh," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter. On Saturday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan formally asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to begin consultations on security assistance, invoking the two countries' defense pact. — AFP

Battling two crises, Macron faces defining moment

PARIS: Simultaneously battling the twin crises of the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic and a resurgence in Islamist attacks, French President Emmanuel Macron faces a defining moment that will determine the success of his presidency and even his chances of reelection. Macron came to power in 2017 on a wave of optimism that he was a transformational leader who would bring much-needed reform to France and restore its confidence as a player on the global stage.



Emmanuel Macron

But for two years he has been beset by a succession of crises, first, from 2018 to 2019, more than a year of "yellow vests" protests against his reforms, and then a crippling nationwide strike last winter over changes to France's pension system. And just when the strikes dwindled and Macron began talking confidently about what was to come in the "second act" of his mandate, the world was hit by the coronavirus pandemic, which forced a nationwide lockdown.

As France was beginning to recover from the economic hit of that lockdown, the virus surged again, forcing Macron to announce a fresh lockdown last week. The country is now in shock after the beheading of a teacher and the killing of three people in a church, attacks that have been blamed on Islamist radicals and which have propelled the fight against terror to the top of the agenda. The motives behind the shooting of a priest in Lyon on Saturday are still not clear.

The current period is the toughest for Macron since he came to power, said Bruno Cautres, political researcher for the Paris-based Centre for Political Research at Sciences Po (CEVIPOF). When confronted with the "yellow vest" protests, the French leader had the "political capacity" to respond to the demands and came up with a package worth €10 billion, he noted. "This permanent pressure is offering us no respite," admitted an advisor of Macron's

administration, who asked not to be named. "We have lost the control of the agenda."

'Succession of crises'

No-one can blame Macron for the emergence of the pandemic but the government is under pressure from critics who accuse it of having failed to prepare for the second wave. "The virus is circulating in France with a speed that even the most pessimistic forecasts did not anticipate," the French leader said in an address to the nation announcing the new lockdown, prompting an outcry from medics who had indeed warned of such a scenario.

And while France is united in its outrage over the deadly attacks, there are questions over why security services failed to watch the assailants, and a debate over whether his strategy against Islamist radicalism is too hard or too soft. For almost two years Macron has been unable to impose his own agenda in the face of fast-changing events, said Cautres. "The French have the impression of going through a succession of crises that never go away."

'Worst job in the world'

As France enjoyed a relatively normal summer, unaware of the ferocity of the coronavirus wave that was to follow, Macron hoped to regain the initiative with a €100 billion relaunch plan and a strategy of "living with the virus". Since then however, attempts to move forward on an ambitious agenda of green policies, economic change, and the overhaul of France's pension system have been stymied by external factors.

This is a particular concern for a president who has never enjoyed wild popularity - with the latest Ifop survey giving him a 38 percent approval rating - and whose party flopped in local polls earlier this year. Eyes are already focused on the 2022 presidential election where Macron's most likely challenger will be far-right leader Marine Le Pen. He hopes to avoid the same one-term fate as predecessors Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande.

But if he wants to emerge victorious, the French leader needs to "finally get results", said prominent political commentator Philippe Moreau-Chevrolat. "If the health situation does not improve by the end of the year or the beginning of 2021 it will be truly very difficult for him. He will be held directly responsible. At this anxiety-inducing moment, Emmanuel Macron probably has the worst job in the world." But political analyst Pascal Perrineau said that even if a majority of French was "not convinced by the president and the majority then they are even less so by the opposition". — AFP

International

US on the edge amid fears of violence on eve of election

Washington prepares on tense final days of Trump-Biden showdown

WASHINGTON: Hammers are pounding and saws are buzzing in Washington as crews board up stores amid fears that the pivotal US presidential election next week could degenerate into unrest. All around downtown Washington, near the stately White House and elsewhere, many merchants and office building managers are working feverishly to protect their property in the tense final days before tomorrow's showdown between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden.

Shellshocked by the pandemic, economic turmoil and racial tension, the nation is on edge to a degree perhaps not seen in living memory at election time.

Americans have fresh memories of nationwide protests this summer, some of them violent, after the police killing of African-American George Floyd. Gun sales are up, Trump has refused to state he will go peacefully if he loses and has even flirted with armed right-wing groups that back him, such as the Proud Boys, whom he told to "stand back and stand by."

More than 90 million Americans have voted early, either in person or by mail—the latter complicating the ballot count. So it is possible no winner will be known on election night and perhaps not for days or longer. If the results are in fact slow to be tallied, fears are that people on either side of the national political chasm will take to the streets to protest—even with weapons—and demand their man's rival concede defeat.

'Better safe than sorry'

Sean Anger, superintendent of a construction company with a workforce of 60, says he has been hired to board up at least 20 buildings in recent days. "We've done these buildings before when

they had riots a couple months ago," he said, as workers covered windows with large boards sawed on the spot.

Indeed, violence broke out in downtown Washington as it did in other US cities after the Floyd killing in May triggered widespread unrest and a national reckoning on how police treat people of color and the broader issue of economic and social inequality in America. In some cases, the boards put up then only came down a few weeks ago. "We had a broken window on May 30, the first night of the kind of protests. There was damage to the whole street," said Kosta Abatzis, who owns a tailor shop near the White House.

"So for most of the summer into September, we had the boards up waiting for glass replacements," he added. "I hate the way it looks, obviously, but you know it's better than having to go through the process of replacing everything."

Virus, economic turmoil and racial tension

Interacting with police

Getting ready for the election, Washington police have announced plans to shut down streets within a large perimeter around the White House on Tuesday and Wednesday. They have also ordered \$130,000 worth of tear gas and stun grenades, said local radio station WUSA9. Other news outlets have reported that George Washington University in downtown Washington has advised its students to stock up on food and medicine as if they were hunkering down for a hurricane. "We also know that some people would like to cause mayhem or trouble," Mayor Muriel Bowser said this week at a news conference.

"We don't have anything specific to report to you about that, but we will tell you that we are preparing to ensure the city's safety," she added.

the Central Election Commission said.

The proportional vote decides 120 of the 150 seats in the legislature. Georgian Dream's leader, billionaire ex-prime minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, said his party "has won elections for the third time in a row. Georgians have elected a great team," he said. But Saakashvili, a charismatic reformer who led Georgia from 2004 to 2013, accused the ruling party of "massively falsifying election results" and announced a "mass mobilization to defend votes". Georgia became a darling of the West after Saakashvili came to power in the 2003 Rose Revolution and instituted reforms to boost democratic institutions and battle corruption.

But a 2008 war with Russia and political infighting has dimmed hopes of the country joining NATO and the European Union. Georgian Dream—widely seen as a vehicle for Ivanishvili's political ambitions—emerged in 2012 and has since dominated the country's politics.

'Setback for democracy'

Georgia remains one of the most pluralistic countries to emerge from the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, although concerns have been growing that it is backsliding on democracy.

Independent local election observers also criticized Saturday's vote. The polls "marked a setback of Georgia's democracy," the Georgian branch of Transparency International said in a statement.

along the road to the rally, he was right that they'd turned out in impressive numbers, waiting for him for hours in the cold, only three days before polling day.

Trump was soon back on Air Force One, flying from Newtown across Pennsylvania to Reading, where a bigger crowd of thousands crammed together, ignoring Covid-19 precautions, on the airport tarmac.

An hour or so later, he was flying again, this time to Butler and an even bigger crowd.

With temperatures dipping steadily, he still had another rally to go in the state, which he almost certainly has to win on Tuesday to get that second term. The Trump show -

Polls show Trump behind Democrat Joe Biden. But the rallies clearly give him hope.

"Did you see the crowds? It looks like Broadway, only slightly more picturesque!" he said. "Is there a better place to be, any place, any time, than a Trump rally?" he asked later. At each stop, he delivered the

ain't going to make a difference with this next one ... I have no hope. The only thing I have hope in is my own self-what I can do for my family."

Trump's a 'rebel'

Brian Milo, a former GM worker laid off when an Ohio plant shut down, nevertheless says he's sticking with Trump. "I like a business guy and I like a guy who is strong-willed. America was somewhat founded by people who were rebels... Trump, he's somewhat of a rebel."

He forgives Trump for not meeting his goal of reviving US manufacturing in America's so-called Rust Belt in the Midwest, saying: "I think it was something that he promised that maybe he didn't have the ability to deliver."

'As racist as he is'

Brook Manewal, co-founder of the Suburban Women Against Trump group (the SWAT Team) in Connecticut, responded to Trump claiming that Joe Biden would "destroy your neighborhood and your



WASHINGTON: Workers install protections on building facades near the White House as building managers and local businesses fear violent demonstrations ahead of the coming presidential elections. —AFP

Some groups are already planning rallies, such as Shutdown DC, which has sought a permit for 10,000 people to gather in the new Black Lives Matter Plaza on a street leading to the White House on election night.

It is to feature music and speeches and a large screen for people to watch the election returns come in.

But the group has also trained its members in how to interact with police if things get ugly and with counter-protesters. "We've been training for a long time. We talk about quick decision-making and how to keep ourselves and our friends safe in the streets," said Hope Neyer, a spokeswoman for

Shutdown DC.

"We're unfortunately prepared to take risks, because we recognize the importance of this moment," she said. Other cities are also preparing for possible unrest. In Los Angeles, stores on posh Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills are boarding up and even closing on Tuesday and Wednesday in case looting breaks out. In Santa Monica, also near Los Angeles, a beefed up police presence is also planned.

One in three Americans is worried about the prospect of election-related violence, according to a USA Today/Suffolk University poll released this week. —AFP

Georgia oppn cries foul as ruling party claims vote win

TBILISI: Georgia's opposition called yesterday for mass protests after the ruling Georgian Dream party claimed victory in a tightly contested parliamentary election. Exiled ex-president and opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili accused Georgian Dream of falsifying Saturday's vote and urged his supporters to take to the streets. The vote could spark another political crisis in the ex-Soviet republic of four million, where elections are often followed by accusations of fraud and mass demonstrations. Saakashvili's United National Movement party (UNM) was already calling for a protest rally yesterday afternoon outside parliament.

Independent local election observers also said there had been multiple irregularities. It was unclear whether the opposition would be able to mobilize large numbers of supporters, with many Georgians weary of political instability and worried by the coronavirus pandemic. With votes from nearly 92 percent of precincts counted, Georgian Dream had won 48 percent of the proportional vote, against 45.5 percent for opposition parties.

Trump's rallies: Victory cry or last gasp?

BUTLER, US: President Donald Trump gazed over the thicket of supporters wearing his branded red baseball caps and marveled at the crowds he'd witnessed while driving in his motorcade to give the speech in Pennsylvania. "Nobody's ever seen anything like this," he said to cheers on Saturday as he began his final sprint for reelection.

Trump was speaking at a small rally by his standards—a few hundred people in a field in the picturesque rural community of Newtown. But although he was exaggerating about the many "thousands" of fans

American voters explain their election views

WASHINGTON: In the build-up to tomorrow's US presidential election, AFP correspondents have travelled to dozens of towns and cities far beyond Washington to hear from voters about how they view hot-button issues.

Here are some of those voters in their own words:

'No hope'

Demon Lane, a 27-year-old Baltimore resident, is among the Black Americans who have given up hope, saying he believes his neighborhood will still be blighted by drug-dealing and neglected by the establishment no matter who wins the election. "It didn't make a difference with the last three presidents. So it



Tbilisi-based election watchdog GYLA said "election day was marred by... serious violations". In an unprecedented show of unity months ahead of the vote, Saakashvili's UNM party and smaller opposition groups joined forces to challenge Georgian Dream. They had held talks on forming a coalition government if elected. With another 30 seats to be assigned in single-mandate constituencies requiring up to two rounds of voting, the final makeup of the new parliament may only become clear in late November. —AFP

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one-man political theater his followers have come to expect. The script is always basically the same—a mix of hate against the media and stoking of conspiracies interspersed with jokes and anecdotes that wouldn't sound out of place on a radio talk show.

Somewhere in there, often lost in the jumble of Trump humor and Trump attacks, are traditional stump speech segments about the economy and his government's achievements. To the crowds, comprised nearly exclusively of white and often working-class Americans, these performances are by now so familiar that they know exactly when to cheer, to boo or to respond in a kind of interactive give-and-take.

"Lock him up!" they chant when Trump lays out shadowy allegations of corruption against Biden.

"Scumbags!" cries a man when Trump savages the media. "How do you do it?" a woman calls out when Trump describes his exhausting travel schedule. "We love you!" everyone chants at length. —AFP

American Dream" with low-cost housing. "I was just appalled by how he was trying to paint this picture of suburban women falling into his camp and being as racist as he is. He paints us as afraid of losing our white picket fences, perfect little houses and perfect yards and I don't think that's the people I have run into at all."

'Slip away from us'

Bill Burke, a 55-year-old history professor who lives on the street where Biden lived until he was 10 years old in Scranton, Pennsylvania, warned not to trust polls. "No Democrat in America is confident because 2016 took everybody by surprise, even Donald (Trump). Most Democrats are looking at good news, at polling numbers and all of that, your brain is going frantic trying to say: 'Ok, where is it looming? How is it going to slip away from us?'" Dan Barker, a 67-year-old retired judge and lifelong Republican who, along with his spouse, founded Arizona Republicans for Biden due to his disagreement with Trump's behavior, based on his Mormon faith. —AFP

Chile elite say facing 'uncertain' future after vote

SANTIAGO: In Santiago's well-heeled suburbs, Chile's elite say they are facing uncertainty after the rest of the country voted to ditch the dictatorship-era constitution that has served them well for decades. For some, it's a bitter pill to swallow.

"It's very uncertain. We are trying to move. We are trying to sell the houses, be as liquid as we can in case we have to move to another country," said Aranza, a company executive who declined to give her full name because she had not discussed her family's plan with friends. Nearly 80 percent of Chileans voted to rip up the constitution established under the 1973-1990 dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, seen as the root of the South American country's jarring inequalities.

Many blamed the constitution for a system that has part-privatized public services, especially health care, education and pensions. Of the 20 percent that voted no, most live in the "golden triangle" of Lo Barnechea, Las Condes and Vitacura in northeastern Santiago, where the country's political and economic power is concentrated.

Privileged setting

These are suburbs of manicured lawns, chic restaurants, glitzy stores and private schools, with Porsche, Maserati and Bentley auto dealerships prominent. Ana Maria Alvarez Rojas, a social sciences researcher at the Silva Henríquez Catholic University, said these neighborhoods' rejection of change was "not surprising."

"The people favored by the current economic model do not want to lose their privileges. These elites have always been cut off from the people. "They are saying: 'we want to continue like this, we have a life we value,'" she said, pointing out that nearly 90 percent of Chile's richest 1.0 percent live in the three districts. Conservative President Sebastian Pinera, interviewed after the October 25 vote, acknowledged that the inhabitants of these neighborhoods "live in a very different reality from the rest of the country, which makes them see the world differently."

Pinera, a billionaire, is a resident of Las Condes.

In neighboring Lo Barnechea, which hugs the foothills of the Andes with a view of the sprawling city of seven million, 60 percent voted to keep the Pinochet-era constitution. "I work in a public hospital and the gap is enormous. You can't imagine how fast people here access health care," said orthopedic surgeon David Daved, 33. "It's comfortable, they get what they want, they don't have to wait. People down there," he said, indicating the city, "have to wait, like for years, they are treated like animals. I understand why there are upset." He voted against because "I know that this will not help the concerns that people have."

It's a common theme of the Rechazo (Reject) campaign, that a new constitution will harm economic growth and that needed change could be more easily wrought by amendments to the existing charter.

Alvarez Rojas pointed out that the unequal way municipalities are funded went to the heart of the city's problems. Each municipality is given a high degree of financial autonomy. —AFP

International

Crammed into camps, displaced Syrians fear spread of coronavirus

Almost 1.5m people live in overcrowded camps in Northwest Syria

QAH, Syria: Hassan Sweidan is terrified he will catch COVID-19 in the overcrowded displacement camp in northwest Syria he calls home, even more so as medical staff in the region have become sick.

Humanitarian workers fear any further rise in novel coronavirus cases would be disastrous in northwest Syria, where almost 1.5 million people live in overcrowded camps or shelters, often with poor access to running water. In an informal settlement in Idlib, the country's last major rebel stronghold, Sweidan said he and other displaced Syrians did not stand much chance against the disease.

"We live in a camp all crammed together. If someone talks to his family, all the neighbors can hear it," said Sweidan, who is in his forties and has an existing health condition.

If someone gets sick, "it's hardly the disease's fault," the father of six added. In the encampment in Qah, a few makeshift solar panels shimmer on the canvas roofs of endless tiny breeze-block rooms where families have settled after being uprooted by war. Resting after helping a friend build a small room to serve as a shop, Sweidan said he hopes he does not have to take anyone in his family to the local hospital. "Hospitals are overcrowded. People have started to be scared of doctors and nurses, who they think might be infected, with all the sick people going to them."



More medical staff become sick in region

by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate has been battered by years of war. Local and international humanitarian workers are working to contain the virus, but cases are still on the rise.

"In the northwest, confirmed cases have increased six-fold over the last month, with cases also rising in displacement camps and settlements," Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, told the UN Security Council. The health authorities in northwest Syria have officially announced 5,075 cases of Covid-19 so far, including 42 deaths.

Of those, more than 860 cases have been recorded among healthcare staff and almost 330 people in the camps, figures showed Wednesday. Seated cross-legged on the floor, as she crushed

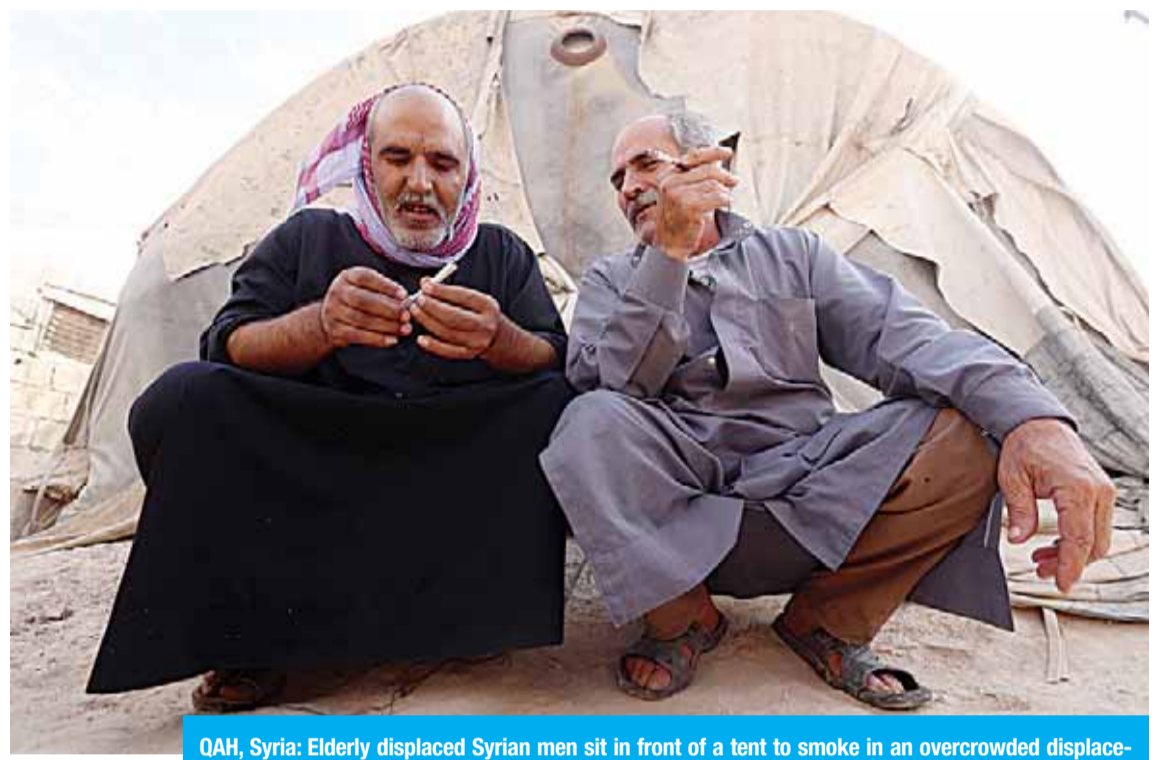
small green olives one by one with a brick, 80-year-old Ghatwa al-Mohammad said she and her family felt like sitting ducks. "We're scared of the disease but we don't dare leave," she added.

"We're so confused about what we should do. If only God would have us die and end our misery."

Of the three million people living in Idlib, around half live in makeshift homes and tents after escaping the fighting during Syria's nine-year civil war. The latest Russia-backed regime offensive on the region last winter killed around 500 civilians and forced nearly one million people to flee their towns and villages. Since a ceasefire brokered by Moscow and rebel-backer Ankara came into force in March, only around 200,000 people have returned home.

Distancing 'near impossible'

At the Idlib health directorate, doctor Yahya Nehmeh said they had asked residents to observe



QAH, Syria: Elderly displaced Syrian men sit in front of a tent to smoke in an overcrowded displacement camp near the village of Qah near the Turkish border in the northwestern Idlib province. —AFP

social distancing. But he admitted that was "near impossible" in the hundreds of informal settlements dotting the region.

Few in the camps wear masks. Many cannot afford to buy face coverings, or to change them regularly, let alone disinfectant hand gels. For most, food, water, medicine and school supplies are far more important. "The regime and Russian forces are responsible for displacing these people and for the disastrous conditions in which they now live," Nehmeh said.

Back in the camp, Mohammad al-Omar, 40,

agreed that asking people to self-isolate in a tent city was not realistic. "They tell us, 'Don't go out. Don't cause overcrowding'. But we live in tents barely half a meter (yard) apart," said the father of four, who was displaced by the conflict eight years ago.

"They give all of us who are older than five one mask as if that were enough. But it's not."

Omar, who works as the driver of a water truck, said he cannot stay inside the camp as he needs to earn money. "If I stay put in my tent, how will I live? How will I eat?" —AFP

China kicks off once-a-decade census

SHANGHAI: Millions of census-takers began knocking on doors across China yesterday for a once-a-decade head count of the world's largest population that for the first time will use mobile apps to help crunch the massive numbers. Around seven million community workers and volunteers will drive the two-month data-collection effort, visiting homes ranging from residential skyscrapers in downtown Shanghai to remote Tibetan mountain villages. China conducts the census every ten years to determine population growth, movement patterns and other trends, using the findings to apportion resources for education, health, transportation, labor, elderly care and other services. The previous tally in 2010 counted 1,339,724,852 persons, an increase of 5.83 percent, or 73,899,804 people—equal to adding more than the population of France over 10 years.

Much of the attention on this year's census—expected to take two years to fully compile—will focus on whether it indicates any population bump from China's relaxation of its former "one-child policy".

The policy was introduced in the late 1970s to slow rapid population growth amid concerns over too many mouths to feed, but was relaxed four years ago to allow two children due to fears over China's fast-aging society and shrinking workforce.

But the change has not yet resulted in a baby boom. The national birth rate last year was the slowest since the founding of Communist-ruled China in 1949, with many Chinese today choosing smaller families amid rising living costs. The government estimates the 2020 census could update the population to 1.42 billion, a 5.99 percent increase. A research institute affiliated with real estate giant Evergrande Group last week issued a study saying the government figure was an overestimate, and recommended that three children be allowed. "If adjustments are not made, it will seriously affect national rejuvenation and (China's) rise as a great power," the researchers said, citing two of the stated goals of powerful President Xi Jinping.

'Big Brother' fears

The study sparked a passionate online discussion, with many saying the real curbs on childbirth are rising costs and insufficient policy support for families. "Even a ten-child policy is useless until we create a society that is childbirth-friendly and childrearing-friendly," said one widely "liked" comment on the WeChat platform of Chinese internet giant Tencent.

reimburse for the research he requested. It's only US\$10,000 so he didn't have to have my approval," Lai wrote. "I know it is hard for anyone to believe that I didn't know about it and my integrity is damaged," he added. Simon resigned from Apple Daily over the weekend. In emails to AFP yesterday, Simon said he acted in his own capacity in paying for some of the research that ended up in the dossier. "Apple Daily had nothing to do with the report and certainly Mr Lai has nothing to do with it," he said. "All were completely unaware of me helping out with expenses of research."

Fabricated author

On Friday, NBC published an investigation saying the 64-page dossier had "questionable authorship and anonymous sourcing". The investigation found the listed author, a supposed Swiss security analyst called Martin Aspen, was a fabricated identity and that his picture had been created using software. According to NBC, blogger and academic Christopher Balding, a former associate professor at Fulbright University Vietnam, said he had contributed to the report

a repeat of the West African nation's 2010-2011 post-election crisis when 3,000 people were killed.

Tensions erupted in August when Ouattara, in power for ten years, announced he would run for a third term, angering opposition leaders who dismissed it as an unconstitutional "electoral coup".

Opposition leader Henri Konan Bedie, an old Ouattara adversary, had called for an active boycott and a campaign of civil disobedience to halt or disrupt the election. "October 31 was not the deluge as the leaders of the opposition forecast," Adama Bictogo, a senior ruling party official, said after the election.

"The popular will was expressed and all the opposition did for months was defend the idea of not holding elections." Electoral officials have up to five days to release the results and it was not clear when the CEI election commission planned an announcement.



QINGDAO: Census workers use an app to collect information from a resident in Qingdao, in China's eastern Shandong province yesterday. —AFP

Demographic experts have estimated it could take 15 years for the two-child policy to have any noticeable effect as other modern factors mitigate against rapid growth, including increasingly empowered Chinese women delaying or avoiding childbirth, and the slower population growth that comes with rising national affluence. Despite the door-to-door visits, most citizens are expected to enter their information via a smartphone app, adding to rising concerns about privacy protection. —AFP



HONG KONG: Jimmy Lai said he fears authorities are trying to shut down a critical voice in the restless city. —Reuters

and admitted Aspen did not exist.

He said the report was "commissioned by Apple Daily". Lai's staunchly pro-democracy and anti-Beijing newspaper in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The paper denied that characterization, as did Simon. —Reuters

Opposition cries foul

But the opposition has already dismissed it as a failure. Several opposition figures, including former rebel chief Guillaume Soro, took to social media to say they no longer recognized Ouattara as president. "The electoral coup has been a failure. The Ivorian people succeeded in halting this election," opposition candidate Pascal Affi N'Guessan told a news conference at Bedie's residence.

Opposition party officials were expected to hold a press conference to announce their next steps. The tense Ivorian election is another test for a region where Nigeria was buffeted by widespread protests, Mali soldiers ousted the president and Islamist militants are gaining a foothold. Ouattara, 78, had said he would step aside after his second term to make way for a new generation, but the sudden death of his chosen successor led him to step in for a third term. —AFP

Aide: HK tycoon Lai unaware of Biden dossier

HONG KONG: A top aide to Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai has stepped down after admitting he helped fund a contentious report alleging links between Joe Biden's son and China, but insisted yesterday his boss had no knowledge of it. The 64-page document by a fictitious author, which was circulated online and seized on by President Donald Trump's supporters, alleges business connections between Biden's troubled son Hunter and China.

But investigations in recent days have raised questions about its veracity and how it was compiled. In a series of tweets over the weekend Lai said senior aide Mark Simon, a vocal critic of Biden, had "worked with the project".

"Mark used my private company's money to

Ivoriens await results after tense ballot

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast: Ivory Coast officials prepared to tally results yesterday after a tense presidential ballot marked by an opposition boycott and protests over President Alassane Ouattara's bid for a third term. Scattered protests, clashes, vandalized voting material and some closed polling stations were reported mostly in opposition strongholds during Saturday's election although Ouattara had called for calm and his party was expecting a win.

At least 30 died in clashes in the lead-up to the vote, reviving fears for many Ivorians over

News in brief

S Korea expands mask norms

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday it will expand its mandatory mask policy to spas, wedding halls and other places as part of new social distancing rules aimed at preparing for a prolonged COVID-19 outbreak. While South Korea has managed to contain the COVID-19 spread better than many western nations, which are struggling with a resurgent virus, daily new cases in the country have risen above 100 in recent days. The Korea Center for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 124 new cases as of midnight Saturday, marking a fifth consecutive day of infections topping 100 due to small clusters emerging in places such as spas, schools and churches. —Reuters

Moldova elects president

CHISINAU, Moldova: Moldovans went to polls yesterday to elect a president under the watchful eye of Moscow which wants the polarized country to remain in its orbit amid political and security crises on Russia's borders. Polling stations opened at 0500 GMT and closed 14 hours later. Despite its small size, politics in tiny Moldova, which is wedged between Ukraine and NATO member Romania, have long been deeply sensitive. The impoverished country of 3.5 million has been divided between those favoring closer ties with the EU, in particular Romania, and those who cling to Soviet-era relations with Moscow. —AFP

Marshall Islands repatriation

MAJURO, Marshall Islands: The Marshall Islands went ahead with its first Covid-19 repatriation flight over the weekend, despite calls for the Pacific archipelago to keep its borders closed after two workers at a US Army base tested positive for the virus. A group of 27 people who arrived Saturday on a flight from Hawaii are the first islanders allowed to return since the country, a group of islands and atolls about halfway between Australia and Hawaii, closed its borders in early March in a bid to keep out the coronavirus. —AFP

Eta takes aim at Nicaragua

MIAMI: Tropical storm Eta formed in the Caribbean on Saturday evening, headed toward the coast of Nicaragua and Honduras, which it is expected to lash with heavy rain and hurricane-strength winds in the coming days, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said. By early tomorrow, the storm is forecast to hit the northeast coast of Nicaragua near the Honduran border, the NHC said. By then, Eta is due to have strengthened into a hurricane and could be packing winds of up to 90 miles per hour (145 kph). The Miami-based NHC said that through Thursday evening, Eta's rains may lead to flooding across parts of Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Central America. —Reuters

Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020

OPEC faces dilemma over oil cuts into 2021

Kuwait, UAE, Iraq struggle to stick to their agreed reductions

DUBAI/BAGHDAD/LONDON: Gulf OPEC producers the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, as well as Iraq, are debating whether they should roll over existing oil supply cuts into 2021, as they struggle to stick to their agreed reductions, OPEC and industry sources said. Their hesitance raises the possibility of reviewing output targets when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meets in November to decide on its production policy and could create further friction within the OPEC+ group that includes allies, complicating efforts to rebalance the market amid weak global demand. The UAE and Kuwait have traditionally supported Riyadh's position, but both nations are feeling the heat of tight oil policies in 2021 as they believe the size of their output cuts is too deep to sustain, the sources said.



Saudis, Russia in favor of continuing cuts

Saudi Arabia, OPEC's de-facto leader, and non-OPEC Russia are in favor of continuing with the current oil production cuts of around 7.7 million barrels per day into next year, rather than easing them by 2 million bpd from January as under the current pact, OPEC sources said. "The countries are being suffocated

with those cuts, it is very tough to continue with them next year too," said one OPEC source.

The UAE is finding it difficult to continue the burden of the big reductions because of its deals with international oil companies and that the baseline production used for cuts is too low compared with output capacity, OPEC and industry sources briefed on the matter said. Other sources have said the UAE and Kuwait have argued in recent OPEC+ talks that they were not concerned about Libya's return with a sustainable output increase in the near term, which will make it easier for other OPEC members to raise output as planned. The UAE is cutting around 33 percent of its output potential, pumping 2.59 million bpd, down from around 3.9 million bpd in April before the deal, according to OPEC data.

The UAE has overproduced in August but pledged to compensate for the rise by reducing its oil supply in the coming months. Kuwait's production cap is at 2.297 million bpd after it had boosted its output to around 3.1 million bpd before the deal, meaning it is cutting about 26 percent of its output capacity, the data shows. Iraq, OPEC's second largest producer, which is required to cut about 850,000 bpd, has talked about being exempt from the reductions next year. "Iraq will stay committed to OPEC+ cut deal and we will keep respecting our pledge, not only to cut production but also to compensate for the missing months until end year," said a senior Iraqi oil official who attends OPEC meetings.

"But, and here we have a big but, when OPEC will meet again to discuss 2021 plans it will be difficult for

ered to a lame duck Congress that might actually act on what the Fed's doing."

No rate change

The FOMC meeting lacks any suspense over the benchmark lending rate after the central bank in August debuted a new policy keeping interest rates lower for longer to wait to inflation to rise and maximize employment. The coronavirus pandemic in the United States caused tens of millions of layoffs as well as a historic contraction in GDP, but recent data shows a recovery is underway. GDP growth rebounded by 33.1 percent annualized in the third quarter from its 31.4 percent contraction in the quarter before, according to Commerce Department data.

But weekly applications for jobless benefits remain higher than the worst of the 2008-2010 global financial crisis, and nearly 23 million people continue to receive some form of government unemployment support. The \$2.2 trillion CARES Act stimulus package passed in March has helped spur rehiring and supported spending, but key provisions are expired and fears of a renewed economic malaise have increased.

Extending that aid is the job of Congress, but at the Fed, "They've got their accelerator foot down hard on the pedal... to sustain the economy as best as they can, using the tools at their disposal," Wilcox said.

It's unclear if there how much more the Fed is willing or able to do. Mousseau said they could begin buying different types of debt to ease the pressure on entities like local governments, particularly if no stimulus package is passed. But that opens them up to thorny questions over whose debt to buy, and accusations of political preference could follow, the last thing the central bank desires. "I think that's one reason why the Fed has passed some of this back of Congress. Rightfully so," Mousseau said. It is a given that the FOMC meeting will be overshadowed by the election contest between President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden set for the day before the meeting begins. —AFP



DUBAI/BAGHDAD: Gulf OPEC producers the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, as well as Iraq, are debating whether they should roll over existing oil supply cuts into 2021, as they struggle to stick to their agreed reductions, OPEC and industry sources said.

Iraq keep cutting output and exports with the same agreed share in 2020 because we are suffering a financial crisis which threatens the possible collapse of the Iraqi economy," said the official.

"All OPEC members must understand Iraq's critical situation... when it comes to discuss a new cut extension deal." Iraq has failed to comply with its output

targets but its compliance has been improving as it agreed to compensate for earlier overproduction by December. "For the rollover to work, I think the baselines and quotas need to be looked at again... when the name of the game is to produce and maximize your gains," one source from an OPEC producing country said. — Reuters

Fed in holding pattern amid tense US election

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve's policy setting committee meets this week at a turbulent time: one day after voters head to the polls in the deeply uncertain US presidential election. But the body pointedly keeps itself out of politics, and analysts expect the policy-setting Federal Open Markets Committee (FOMC) will do little to rock the boat at its two-day meeting beginning Wednesday. The Fed already zeroed out borrowing rates and offered massive credit facilities amid the coronavirus downturn, recently expanding them to reach more firms and nonprofit organizations.

"I think November's meeting is too soon for there to be a dramatic break," said David Wilcox, a former top economist at the Fed who is now with the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"This is a sort of a placeholder meeting while they wait for those situations to clarify." Political uncertainty ahead of the vote comes amid continued worries about the world's largest economy amid the coronavirus crisis. While the Fed moved quickly with new credit lines and the rate cut as the pandemic arrived, the initial momentum to get aid bills through Congress has petered out despite increasingly desperate pleas for more aid from Fed Chair Jerome Powell.

John Mousseau, president and chief executive officer at Cumberland Advisors, said the central bank is likely to again encourage lawmakers to continue the push for new stimulus after the election in the final weeks before a new Congress is installed in January.

"The Fed has done their job," he said. And as they call for more aid next week "the message will be deliv-

Tech-savvy women could beat virus job blues in Arab world

AMMAN: As COVID-19 swells the ranks of unemployed women in the Arab world, surging demand for digital skills could help many of them find work in a region where only one in four women has a job.

The pandemic has taken an especially heavy toll on retail, tourism and hospitality jobs traditionally held by women, but experts say those able to retrain could tap into growth areas like digital marketing, e-commerce and online customer support. "This is a tremendous opportunity. These are areas where you can reskill someone relatively quickly," said Jasmine di Florio, senior vice president at Education for Employment (EFE), a job training non-profit for young people in the Middle East and North Africa.

"We need to teach young women all kinds of digital skills but we also need to continue to teach them human skills - things like empathy, teamwork, leadership... (that) are in even greater demand now because so much is going digital." The fourth industrial revolution - a term referring to the new era of digital advances that is changing the way people live and work - is expected to double job opportunities for women in the region by 2030, according to a 2020 McKinsey study.

Many women are already finding new opportunities - sometimes by putting their new-found tech skills to work in jobs where they have an innate edge over men.

One of EFE's trainees, Walaa Shahahdeh, who has her own business repairing smartphones, said her services were in high demand among women in her conservative Jordanian community who did not want men seeing personal photos on their devices.

"Technology is constantly evolving. You have to keep up to date... because new devices keep coming out and repairs will never stop," said Shahahdeh, 30, who comes from the Tafleh governorate in south-central Jordan. "Because of high usage during coronavirus due to remote learning and work from home, devices are breaking down more often and I'm getting more calls."

'Two divides'

The pandemic is expected to push 700,000 Middle Eastern women out of work in 2020 - about 40% of the 1.7 million total jobs expected to be lost, according to aid organization Oxfam.

That is despite women in the Middle East and North Africa only accounting for a quarter of the workforce - the world's lowest rate of female participation in the labor market. In hard-hit countries like Lebanon, where an Aug. 4 explosion compounded the impact of a financial crisis and COVID-19, the number of unemployed women in June 2020 was up 63 percent compared with figures from 2018 and 2019, according to UN Women.

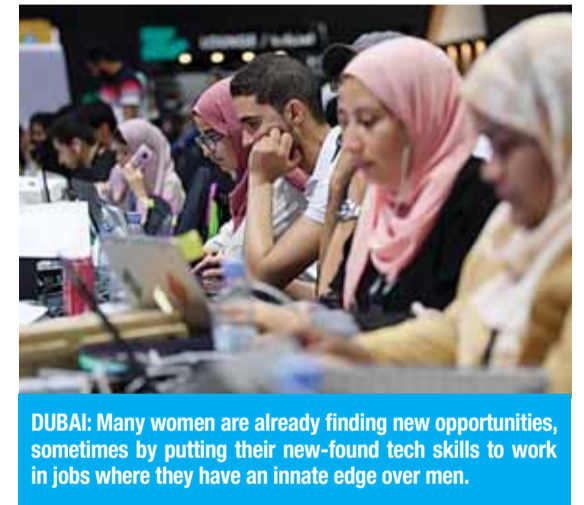
New job prospects could provide some relief, though the additional burden of unpaid work - such as childcare and supervising remote schooling, is likely to widen the digital gap between men and women in Arab states.

That could mean retraining is even more of a challenge for women, said Manuel Langendorf, a researcher on digital transformation in the region. "People may have access to the internet but still you will find a lot of families across the region that don't have multiple laptops or desktop computers," said Langendorf, adding that men often have priority when using family devices.

"That also affects the way women will be able, and are at the moment able, to upskill or reskill."

The digital gap between men and women in Arab countries had already increased from 19 percent to 24 percent between 2013 and 2019, according to the International Telecommunication Union.

Gender differences in internet access vary widely across the region, and within countries too. Women in rural areas face "two divides at the same time" and risk missing out on a lot of the promising job prospects of the evolving digital economy, Langendorf said. "Most of the digital economy across the region is based in urban areas... so the talent is drawn to that but people who don't live there have (fewer) opportunities to participate and learn from that knowledge exchange," he added.



DUBAI: Many women are already finding new opportunities, sometimes by putting their new-found tech skills to work in jobs where they have an innate edge over men.

'A blessing'

The switch to distance learning during the pandemic has made it easier for many people to access training and study programs, however. When lockdowns came into force in March, EFE across the region quickly shifted its training online, adding new components focused on digital and social media skills.

Following the change, women's enrollment rose to 65 percent on some courses, up from the usual 50-50 split between men and women. Menna Fathy, 23, who lives in the Egyptian port city of Suez, some 130 km (80 miles) from the capital, said being able to access the training remotely had been an unexpected boon.

"If I had to travel to Cairo every day for a month it would have been draining. The online option was a blessing," said Fathy, who found an insurance job at a bank soon after. Even though private-sector employers have been badly affected by the pandemic and opportunities are scarce, there is still value in helping women gain skills today, di Florio said. "We found a surge of youth and women who want to keep learning even if they know they're not going to get a job tomorrow," she said. —Reuters



In this file photo, the Federal Reserve Board building in Washington, DC. — AFP

Trumpcare or Bidentcare: Effect will be felt differently

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden wants to expand the Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama's signature healthcare legislation, and then name it after himself.

Republican President Donald Trump wants to end

it altogether, and replace it with something that has yet to be defined. An ongoing debate over which approach is better for the economy is partly about price tags. Bidentcare is forecast to increase federal healthcare spending by \$2 trillion or more over 10 years. Trump's approach is to hold federal spending stable or reduce it.

Bidentcare supporters emphasize the stimulative effects of government spending, especially in a period of economic distress, and the benefits of insuring more people in the middle of a pandemic. Those who prefer Trump's approach say it would avoid debt or tax increases they say would drag on future economic growth. The United States has about 30 million people

without health insurance <https://tmsnr.rs/3mqQxX> now, down from about 46.5 million in 2010, when the ACA was passed. Bidentcare would cut that figure by a further 15 million to 20 million, an analysis by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates. Trump isn't expected to try to reduce that.

Healthcare spending is equal to 17 percent of the US economy, far more than any other industrialized country, so the Trumpcare vs. Bidentcare debate is no small economic matter. It's further complicated by the fact that extra spending doesn't translate to a healthier populace than other countries.

"Improving healthcare performance is a critical part of strengthening America's health, economy and fiscal

future, and should be top a priority for the next president and Congress," says Peterson Foundation CEO Michael Peterson.

Bidentcare would cover more Americans by increasing subsidized health insurance purchases through tax credits. It would also offer a "public option," allowing anyone who wants it to buy in, even if their job offers private insurance. Lower-income families shut out of ACA's expanded Medicaid eligibility because of where they live could get it premium-free.

Any boost to health and financial stability is likely to be biggest for millions of low-income households, particularly Latino and Black families who have been particularly hard-hit during the pandemic. —Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank holds ordinary AGM to elect independent board members

Meeting in compliance with instructions from CBK

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Ordinary Annual General Meeting (AGM) No 60 on Saturday, 31 October 2020 with the aim of electing independent board members, in compliance with instructions from the Central Bank of Kuwait, and with a quorum of 72.87 percent. During the assembly, both Ahmad Mohammad Al-Bahar and Ali Ibrahim Abdullah were appointed as independent members of Gulf Bank's Board of Directors to complete the current tenor (2018-2020).

During the meeting, attendees also voted on three new non-independent members: Dr Adnan Ahmad Shehab Al-Deen, Barrak

Abdulmohsen Ahmad Al-Asfour and Abdullateef Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh.

Gulf Bank's Chairman, Jasem Mustafa Boodai, commented: "We would like to welcome the newest members joining Gulf Bank's Board of Directors, and we wish them every success in their new positions. On this occasion, I would also like to extend a special thank you to the executive management and the teams who have been working tirelessly during the past months which, despite their challenges, also demonstrated to us our employees' commitment and dedication to their work."

After the end of the assembly, Gulf Bank's

Board of Directors also held a meeting in which Jasem Mustafa Boodai was re-elected as Chairman of Gulf Bank, and Ali Morad Yousuf Behbehani as Vice Chairman. It is worth noting that Gulf Bank was founded in 1960 and has been listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) since 1984, with assets totaling KD 6 billion for the year ending in December 2019. Gulf Bank is one of the leading banks in Kuwait, providing a broad range of consumer banking, wholesale banking, treasury, and financial services through its large network of over 50 branches and more than 200 ATMs across Kuwait.



Jasem Mustafa Boodai

Ali Morad Yousuf Behbehani

All bark no byte? Unease over Ireland as data watchdog

DUBLIN: Two years after the EU launched its landmark GDPR data rights charter, there are signs Ireland is faltering in its outsized role as regulator of many of the most powerful digital giants. Hailed as a potent weapon to bring tech titans to heel, the General Data Protection Regulation endowed national watchdogs with cross-border powers and the possibility to impose sizeable fines for data misuse.

Ireland hosts the regional headquarters of Facebook, Apple, Google and Twitter, and is therefore largely responsible for policing their European activities.

But its Data Protection Commission has yet to issue a major decision against any of the giants in Dublin's glimmering "Silicon Docks". "It's a blessing for Ireland economically to be the seat of these big digital companies for Europe, and that brings a lot of revenue," one EU Commission official with deep knowledge of the area told AFP.

"With this, of course, comes an obligation. With the role as a lead regulator it has a duty to the citizens all over Europe. "The patience of the other

authorities will fade if Ireland doesn't get its act together. It's as simple as that."

'Tax haven'

Government and business leaders are coy but it is generally understood that multinational tech companies chose Ireland because of its low 12.5 percent corporate tax rate. In 2018, Facebook Ireland generated 25.5 billion euros (\$29 billion) in revenue and paid 63.2 million euros (\$73.8 million) in tax, according to the Companies Registration Office. Meanwhile the government coffers of Ireland—a nation of just five million people—are regularly padded with receipts from multinationals. Last year, 77 percent of Irish corporation tax receipts came from foreign multinationals and 40 percent were from just 10 companies. Tax Justice Network chief executive Alex Cobham said his campaign group generally avoids the term "tax haven" because "every jurisdiction has a lot of work to do to improve". "With that caveat, yes, Ireland is a tax haven," he said. "Ireland is probably the most exposed to a small number of fairly similar US multinationals in pharma and in tech and it really can't afford to cross them."

'Regulatory austerity'

GDPR stipulates that data protection commissions should be separate from outside interference and there is no suggestion of government influence in the Irish process. But little of the tax bonanza from tech



companies is funnelled into Ireland's Data Protection Commission, which acts as the EU's regulator for firms like Facebook and their services such as Whatsapp and Instagram.

GDPR requires that countries ensure their data protection commission has the "human, technical and financial resources... necessary for the effective performance of its tasks and exercise of its powers".

Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner, Helen Dixon, said the organization was "disappointed" by the 2020 government allocation of 16.9 million euros (\$19.7 million). Additional funding was "less than one third" of the figure requested which "reflected a year of experience of regulating under the GDPR", she added. —AFP

Biden's clean energy vision faces challenge

WASHINGTON/NEW YORK: Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, seeking to allay concerns that his plan to fight climate change would harm the economy, has promised a "clean energy revolution that creates millions of unionized middle-class jobs" if he's elected.

That vision, however, would require policy makers and clean-energy companies to overcome some major challenges in replacing the number and quality of fossil-fuel jobs that could be lost in a transition away from coal and oil. Union representation, pay and benefits in the fast-growing wind and solar power industries at the center of a clean energy transition lag those in oil, gas and coal, according to data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, academic studies and interviews with labor experts and industry officials.

Solar and wind energy installations, once built, also tend to require fewer workers to run than oil and gas infrastructure. And both industries rely heavily on imported components to keep costs down, potentially limiting their US job creation.

Biden's \$2 trillion climate plan envisions a massive shift to cleaner energy sources such as solar and wind over the next three decades. It would also aim to create jobs across a variety of other sectors, including construction, power transmission and electric vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure.

The Biden campaign acknowledges the prospect of short-term economic pain as the nation builds a cleaner energy infrastructure. "There is no doubt we will suffer some job loss because of this transition, but there will be opportunity," said Lonny Stephenson, a member of Biden's transition team and president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical workers, a labor union.

Biden campaign spokesman Matt Hill said the candidate would work with labor leaders to "ensure that clean energy investments are creating jobs with the opportunity to join a union across all energy sectors." If elected, Biden plans to issue executive orders to boost demand for US-made products and push legislation to help workers unionize, his campaign said. His plan also calls for retraining and other support for traditional energy workers caught up in the transition. President Donald Trump, throughout his campaign, has called Biden's focus on climate change a recipe for economic devastation. "Biden's 'clean energy' plan is nothing more than him risking millions of American jobs," said campaign spokes-



Democratic US presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden speaks at a Victory Center in Fort Lauderdale.

woman Samantha Zager.

Selling clean-energy as an economic boon is critical to gaining union support in fossil-fuel sectors, said Jason Walsh, president of the Blue Green Alliance, an association of labor unions and environmental groups, which supports Biden. "Labor will only fully endorse this shift to a clean energy economy if their rank and file members are getting jobs," he said. While Biden has been leading Trump in most national opinion polls heading into the Nov. 3 election, the contest is tight in swing states crucial to an electoral victory. —Reuters

New priorities

Prior to Trump's 2016 election, the Republican Party favored free trade, but the Trump administration imposed punitive tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars in US goods, particularly from China and Europe. Balancing the gigantic, debt-infused US budget was another talking point of the Grand Old Party but he postponed the deadline for achieving that by five years to 2035 and approved \$3 trillion in aid to support the economy during the coronavirus downturn.

And while the Republicans once used concerns over the national debt to thwart the ambitions of his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, Trump made clear in 2019 that taming it was no longer a priority, claiming the money is better spent on the military.

"If we don't have a strong military, you don't have to worry about debt. You have bigger problems," Trump said at the White House. If judged by his statements, Trump did not always think this way.

"I cannot believe the Republicans are extending the debt ceiling—I am a Republican & I am embarrassed!" he tweeted in 2013 amid a battle between congressional Republicans and Obama over raising the cap on how much the world's largest economy could borrow.

In the fiscal year ending September 30 of this year, the US budget deficit hit \$3.1 trillion, more than double its previous peak. But in 2012, Trump tweeted "The deficits under @BarackObama are the highest in America's history. Why is he bankrupting our country?"

Driven by discontent

Trump was swept into office with the support of white, working-class voters disenchanted with Washington politics, and shifted elements of American policy towards populism. Geoffrey Gertz, an expert at the Brookings Institution, said that unlike Republicans before him, Trump didn't attack the United States' social safety net, and many of his most drastic comments didn't actually end up being policies. —AFP

UAE approves spending cuts in 2021 budget

DUBAI: The cabinet of the United Arab Emirates approved a smaller federal budget for 2021 in a sign that the country is curbing expenditure amid the coronavirus crisis and lower oil prices. The budget for next year was set at 58 billion dirhams (\$15.8 billion), state news agency WAM reported yesterday, down from this year's 61.35 billion dirhams, which was the largest budget since the establishment of the country. "The UAE economy will be among the fastest to recover in 2021, and the government has dealt with the 2020 budget efficiently and has all the tools to continue its financial and operational efficiency in 2021," the Dubai media office said, quoting Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who is also the UAE's prime minister.

The federal budget accounts for only a fraction of consolidated state spending in the UAE as individual emirates such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai also have their own budgets. It is, however, an indication of official plans for the economy. The planned retrenchment in spending comes amid an economic contraction in the oil-rich Gulf region, bruised by the coronavirus pandemic, lower oil prices and crude production cuts.

Saudi Arabia, the region's largest economy, said in September it plans to cut spending by around 7 percent next year. The International Monetary Fund expects the UAE economy to shrink by 6.6 percent this year and to swing back to a modest growth of 1.3 percent next year. —Reuters

Trump attacked GOP economic orthodoxy and got away with it

WASHINGTON: After taking control of the Republican party, President Donald Trump led it through a reshaping of its economic principles few ever expected. Protectionism replaced free trade, the national debt ballooned and balancing the US budget was put on the back burner in what experts describe as a shake-up of conservative economic orthodoxy that may outlast Trump, even if he loses at the ballot box tomorrow. "The Republican Party is not going to return to what it was before," said Edward Alden, a senior fellow on the Council on Foreign Relations. "The party has become deeply confused ideologically and it's not at all clear what it stands for anymore on."

Trump's economic vision will be put before voters when the president stands for a second term against Democratic challenger Joe Biden. A slew of Senate seats up for grabs could also move control of that chamber to the Democrats. But no matter which party controls the White House and Congress after the dust settles, Eswar Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University, says Trump's doctrine will endure.

"The GOP seems to have struck a Faustian bargain with Trump, abandoning some of its core economic principles in favor of pushing forward its social agenda along with lower taxes, deregulation and rightward tilt of the judicial system," he said. "Whatever the outcome of the upcoming election, Trump has changed the substance and tone of the Republican Party in ways that will take a long time to reverse."

Wealthy creditors give Cuba a pass, but with penalties

HAVANA: Wealthy nations grouped together in the Paris Club of creditors have waived Cuba's annual payment for restructured debt but plan to impose a penalty on the Communist-run island, according to five Western diplomats with knowledge of the situation. This year marks the first time Cuba has missed the entire payment due by Oct. 31 since the restructuring agreement was signed in 2015, though it fell short of full payment last year as well.

The accord, signed in tandem with the US detente under former President Barack Obama, is seen as a historic effort by all parties to begin to bring Cuba back into the international financial system and has survived efforts by the administration of President Donald Trump to torpedo it.

Cuba had asked earlier this year for a two-year moratorium and the waiving of penalties for overdue payments due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Caribbean nation's tourism sector was closed most of the year, export earnings declined, and fierce new US sanctions are making matters worse for an economy already notorious for inefficiencies and currently suffering shortages of food, medicine and other basic goods.

The United Nations forecasts growth will decline 8 percent this year after averaging a 1 percent increase since 2016. "We are united in our belief that the agreement should be saved and think the Cubans agree. That is why we waived payment, but not the penalties," one diplomat said. Like others, he requested anonymity as he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Paris Club negotiations with Cuba will cover unpaid maturities and penalties, as well as the scheme of future payments, the sources said. A spokeswoman for the Paris Club said it did not comment on such matters. The Cuban government did not respond to a request for comment.

A number of the diplomats said they were encouraged by Cuba's recent announcement that it would devalue the peso and take other measures aimed at increasing exports and cutting imports which they saw as crucial to regaining solvency. "Creditors, from the Paris Club to Russia and China, will be very encouraged by devaluation and other measures," said a Western banker who follows Cuba closely and also requested anonymity.

Another of the diplomats with knowledge of the Paris Club situation, said - in reference to the governments' chief debt negotiator Ricardo Cabrisas - "Mr. Cabrisas needs to come talk to us."

Cabrisas was in Russia a few months ago where restructured Soviet-era debt, new debt and economic plans were discussed and where he said Cuba was having problems meeting those obligations as well.

The 2015 Paris Club agreement, seen by Reuters, forgave \$8.5 billion of \$11.1 billion, representing debt Cuba defaulted on in 1986, plus charges. Repayment of the remaining debt in annual installments was backloaded through 2033 and some of that money was allocated to funds for investments in Cuba.

Under the agreement interest was forgiven through 2020, and after that is just 1.5 percent of the total debt still due. The agreement states if Cuba does not meet an annual payment schedule in full within three months of the Oct. 31 deadline, it will be charged 9 percent late interest for that portion in arrears. Cuba owed an estimated \$85 million this year.

Cuba last reported foreign debt of \$18.2 billion in 2016, and experts believe it has risen significantly since then. The country is not a member of the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. "Faced with the pandemic, almost all governments are taking their debt levels to record highs, and Cuba is no exception," said Pavel Vidal, a former Cuban central bank economist who teaches at Colombia's Universidad Javeriana Cali. "The fiscal deficit has grown and so have the trade imbalances. Although there is no data to know the magnitudes."

The Cuba group of the 19-member Paris Club comprises Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. —Reuters

Business

Brands matter: \$22 trillion wiped off company values globally in Q1 2020

IAA launches a global campaign: 'Why Brands Matter'

KUWAIT: Around \$22 trillion was wiped off the value of publicly listed companies in Q1 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic spooked markets, investors and consumers, but new research from Brand Finance, published in partnership with the International Advertising Association (IAA), shows that brands have the power to fuel an economic recovery.

Brand Finance's analysis of 55,000 publicly listed, branded companies worldwide found that although their total enterprise value dropped from \$116.6 to \$94.8 trillion between January and April, it bounced back to \$121.0 trillion in September, demonstrating how brands matter to business.

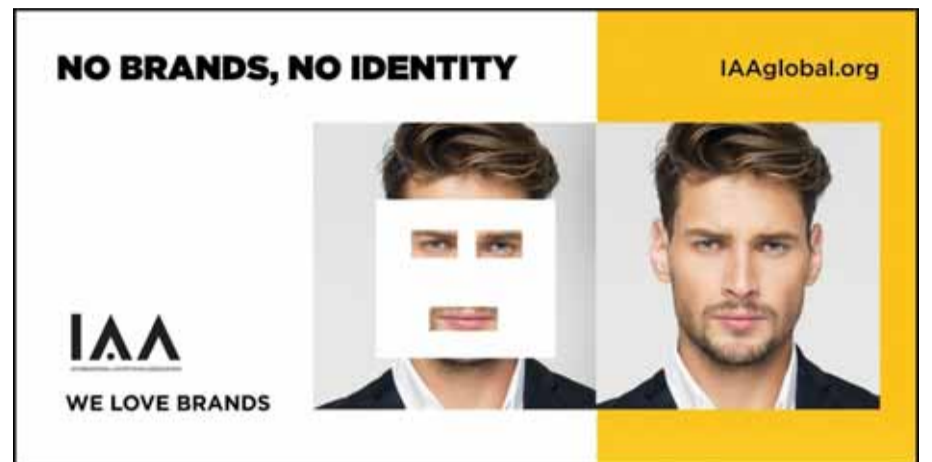
While the global economy as a whole is forecast to contract by -4.4 percent this year (IMF), branded companies that convey trust to consumers, like Apple,



Amazon, Microsoft, Tesla and Visa, have already bounced back from the decline caused by the COVID-19 crisis to record growth of 3.8 percent. Brands are among the most valuable assets in a company,

accounting for around 20 percent of total business value on average, according to Brand Finance.

Commenting, Dagmara Szulce, Managing Director of IAA, said: "This report shows us that the importance of brands increases during times of crisis, and that is why we are launching our global multi-channel campaign, Why Brands Matter. Brands communicate the origin, quality and authenticity of a product, but they also convey trust, identity, pride, passion, creativity, innovation and optimism. Strong brands restore consumer confidence, and brand competition can rebuild economic strength. We call on governments and brand owners around the world to work together to create an environment that gives consumers the



confidence to invest in brands that matter to them: to foster an environment where brands are protected, nurtured and

like or differentiate between them. Brands are there to protect consumers from the risks that are posed from unregulated, illegal and counterfeit products, giving consumers peace of mind in their purchasing decisions.

David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance, said: "In times of crisis, brands - especially those most valuable and strongest in their categories and markets - become a safe-haven for capital. Like gold or fine art during past economic downturns, nowadays well-managed, innovative, and reputable brands are what the global economy turns to in the hour of need. There can be no better evidence for why brands matter than the role they have already played and will continue to play in the post-COVID recovery."



Study shows brands can fuel post-COVID economic recovery

allowed to fulfil their full potential."

The report shows how and why brands are a powerful tool for economic revival, allowing consumers to quickly identify the companies and products they

- COVID-19 panic slashed \$22 trillion off company valuations worldwide in Q1 2020 (from \$116.6 to \$94.8 trillion between January and April).
- While the global economy is forecast to contract by -4.4% this year (IMF), branded companies worldwide have bounced back from the COVID-19 crisis to record growth of 3.8% (from \$116.6 to \$121.0 trillion between January and September).
- Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the total value of intangible assets of publicly listed companies globally hit an all-time high of \$65.7 trillion in September, up 69% from April.

IAA in partnership with professional global social platform

KUWAIT: Dagmara Szulce, global Managing Director for the International Advertising Association and Kinga Ince, Founder and CEO of Mediaspace.global formed a strategic alliance on a Zoom call on the 16 Sept 2020. The partnership begins with the global IAA conference, Creativity4Better on the 27-28 October 2020.

This partnership brings both parties a greater influence to help tackle the global crisis and industry challenges by the power of brands, communication, professional networking, collaboration and innovation.

We're thrilled to announce that International Advertising Association is partnering up with its youngest member, Mediaspace.global, the brand-new professional social platform for media, marketing, tech, innovation and regulation.

The International Advertising Association (IAA) is the most

powerful global network for the marcomm industry with members in 53 countries all around the world. It is a unique strategic company which champions the common interests of all the disciplines across the spectrum of marketing communications - from advertising to media companies to agencies to direct marketing firms and individual practitioners. IAA's objective is to help tackle the global crisis to prove brands can be the engine for economic revival.

Mediaspace was born in May, during the first peak of the COVID-19 crisis to connect stakeholders from the media, marketing, tech, innovation, regulation and policy making professionals. Mediaspace provides an independent social platform, as well as Members' Daily Video interviews, proprietary business intelligence services, curated news and market insights. Mediaspace started their own online event series in



September - 'Regulation Meets Market & Innovation'.

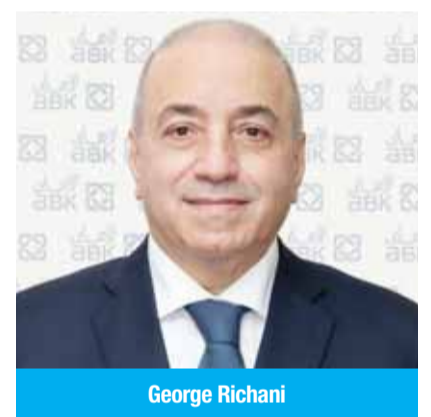
The goal of the platform is to break professional bubbles and support collaboration, knowledge sharing, business networking, as well as to help professionals and businesses find new opportunities on a truly global market in the era of social distancing. It's free to use, only premium services will be subscription based coming later. Dagmara Szulce, Managing Director of IAA said: "The role of communication and so the role of IAA is more important than ever. This unprecedented global crisis makes us collaborate more, be more creative and find new ways to transform our

industry for the better. The keep changing consumer habits, technical developments and regulatory frameworks bring continuous challenges and make thought leadership crucial."

She added: "We at IAA have the power of the most influential brands and have the knowledge to share it widely - with more corporations, SMEs and students globally, so they can use the power of creativity, advertising and communication to grow. On this mission collaborating with Mediaspace brings mutual benefits to reaching out to more decision makers and engage with them, while also involving the next generation of professionals."

ABK appoints George Richani as Group CEO

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced yesterday the appointment of George Richani as the Group CEO, to resume his duties as of 1st November 2020, after obtaining the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait. Richani brings with him more than 37 years banking experience. He joined National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) in 1987, and was the CEO of the Group of Overseas Branches and Subsidiaries since 2012, with locations in fifteen countries and in four continents. At National Bank of Kuwait he was a member of numerous management committees and also served as a Board Member of several subsidiaries. He has extensive experience in Treasury Management as well as Capital Market Investment Management and International Credit. Richani graduated from the



American University of Beirut with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He also holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration and Finance with honors from the University of London. Commenting on his appointment, Talal Mohamed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, said: "On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Executive Management, we welcome George Richani to Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group. We are certain that he will lead ABK Group towards further progress and growth, and we wish him every success."

Big tech stocks may face post-election headwinds

NEW YORK: Some investors are betting the technology and communications stocks that drove a massive rebound in US markets this year will face a tougher slog in coming months, no matter whether Republican President Donald Trump or Democratic challenger Joe Biden wins tomorrow's election.

Betting against big technology has been a risky proposition over the last decade, as stocks like Amazon, Google and Netflix have shot higher at the expense of so-called value and cyclical stocks such as banks and energy companies. Recently, however, some fund managers say they are growing alarmed by what they see as a consensus in Washington to tighten regulations, and prospects that another large stimulus bill would bolster a rotation out of tech and into other sectors including economically sensi-

tive value stocks.

"There will be a shift and it is starting, but it will take time," said Max Gokhman, head of asset allocation at Pacific Life Fund Advisors, which cut its exposure to large-cap tech in September to neutral from overweight. Should Biden win as polls suggest, technology companies could face higher tax rates and tax-motivated selling as well as increased regulation, investors said. Both Trump and Biden have criticized large tech companies but stopped short of explicitly calling for them to be broken up. Trump has said "there is something going on in terms of monopoly" when asked about big tech firms.

Apple Inc, Microsoft Corp, Amazon.com Inc, Facebook Inc, and Google-parent Alphabet Inc now make up approximately 23 percent of the total weight of the S&P 500, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices, giving their gyrations an outsized impact on broader markets. Hedge fund manager David Einhorn of Greenlight Capital, a longtime tech bear, told clients in a letter this week that tech stocks were in the middle of an "enormous bubble" that popped when the S&P 500 hit its record high on Sept 2, 2020. — Reuters

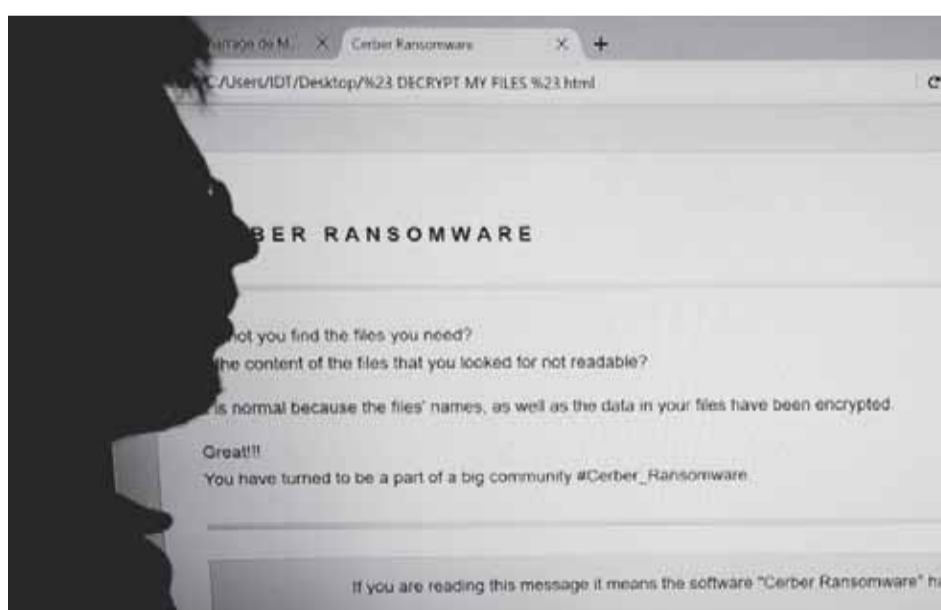
Ransomware surge imperils hospitals as virus intensifies

WASHINGTON: Hackers are stepping up attacks on health care systems with ransomware in the United States and other countries, creating new risks for medical care as the global coronavirus pandemic accelerates. Alerts from US authorities and security researchers highlight a wave of cyberattacks on hospitals coping with rising virus infections.

An unusual warning this week from the FBI with the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, underscored the threat. The three agencies "have credible information of an increased and imminent cybercrime threat to US hospitals and health care providers," said the alert issued Wednesday, calling on health systems to "take timely and reasonable precautions to protect their networks from these threats."

Media reports have cited several US hospitals hit by ransomware. One of them, the University of Vermont Medical Center, said in a statement Thursday it was working with law enforcement on "a now confirmed cyberattack that has affected some of our systems" which has had "variable impacts" on patient care.

Daniel dos Santos of the computer security firm Forescout said cash-strapped medical centers are particularly attractive targets for hackers and that at least 400 hospitals had been hit in the past few weeks in the US and Britain. Hackers are



aware that "health care is the most likely to pay the ransom because their services are critical," dos Santos said.

"Stopping services means that people will literally be dying." For hospitals unable or willing to pay, "it would mean going back to pen and paper, which can cause huge slowdowns," he added. Forescout said in a report that while many hospitals have upgraded computer systems, most use a variety of connected devices such as patient monitors or CT scanners which "act as the weak links in the network" because they transmit data over insecure channels.

In one sign of the troubles looming, dos Santos and fellow researchers said they discovered data on some three million US patients online, "unprotected and accessible to anyone who knows how to search for it," the Forescout report said.

Most targeted

Ransomware is a longstanding security issue and health care has been a frequent target. A September attack disrupted Universal Health Services, which operates hospitals in the US and Britain.

But security experts say the attacks are accelerating as the pandemic worsens. Researchers at the security firm Check Point said its survey showed health care has been the most targeted industry by ransomware, with a 71 percent jump in attacks on US providers in October from a month earlier. Check Point said there have been significant rises in ransomware attacks on hospitals in Asia, Europe and the Middle East as well. Globally, the firm said ransomware attacks were up 50 percent in the third quarter compared with the first half of this year. — AFP



NEW YORK: People walk along Wall Street in Manhattan's financial district in New York City. — AFP

Classifieds

Monday, November 2, 2020

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



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

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Rather hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to south westerly wind with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 01/11/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	34 °C	22 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	34 °C	16 °C			
ABDALY	35 °C	13 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	35 °C	18 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	33 °C	26 °C			
SALMIYAH	29 °C	24 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWASIB	33 °C	17 °C			
WAFRA	35 °C	16 °C			
SALMY	32 °C	17 °C	MSL Analysis (DPA) Valid 0000 UTC 01 NOV 2020		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/02	Rather hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	34 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	11/03	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	34 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	11/04	Rather hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	35 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	11/05	Rather hot and Humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	35 °C	17 °C	SW-SE	08 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:40
Sunrise	06:01
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:39
Sunset	17:02
Isha	18:20

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	35 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	78 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

LOST

I, Faheem Jamshed S/o Jamshed Amjad Ishrat, resident of Kuwait announce that my HSSC certificate bearing roll no. 580690 of the year 2007 issued by Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Islamabad has been lost. Whoever finds it, please send it to the address Salmiya, Essa Al Qatami St., Lane 24, Building 5, Apartment 1 or contact +965 99488251. (C 5809) 2-11-2020

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaikh Hassan Bathusha Azhikottayil Kunhimon, holder of Indian passport no. M5457545 issued at Kuwait on 03.03.2015 hereby change my name to Shaikh Hassan Bathusha. (C 5808) 29-10-2020

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Kuwait is looking for a **Personal Assistant-cum-Translator, female candidates only**, meeting the following criteria:

- Must be a Bachelor degree holder
- At least 8 – 10 + year's administrative experience in similar field preferably in Diplomatic Missions in Kuwait.
- Fluency in English & Arabic Language (Spoken & Written)
- Excellent Knowledge of Translation from Arabic to English and Vice Versa
- Proficient in Microsoft Office software applications
- Must have a valid transferable Kuwaiti residence

Curriculum Vitae (CV) along with photo to be sent by email :

rbe.kuwait@mfa.gov.bt

latest by 16th November 2020.

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

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444

Word Search

Crime Fiction



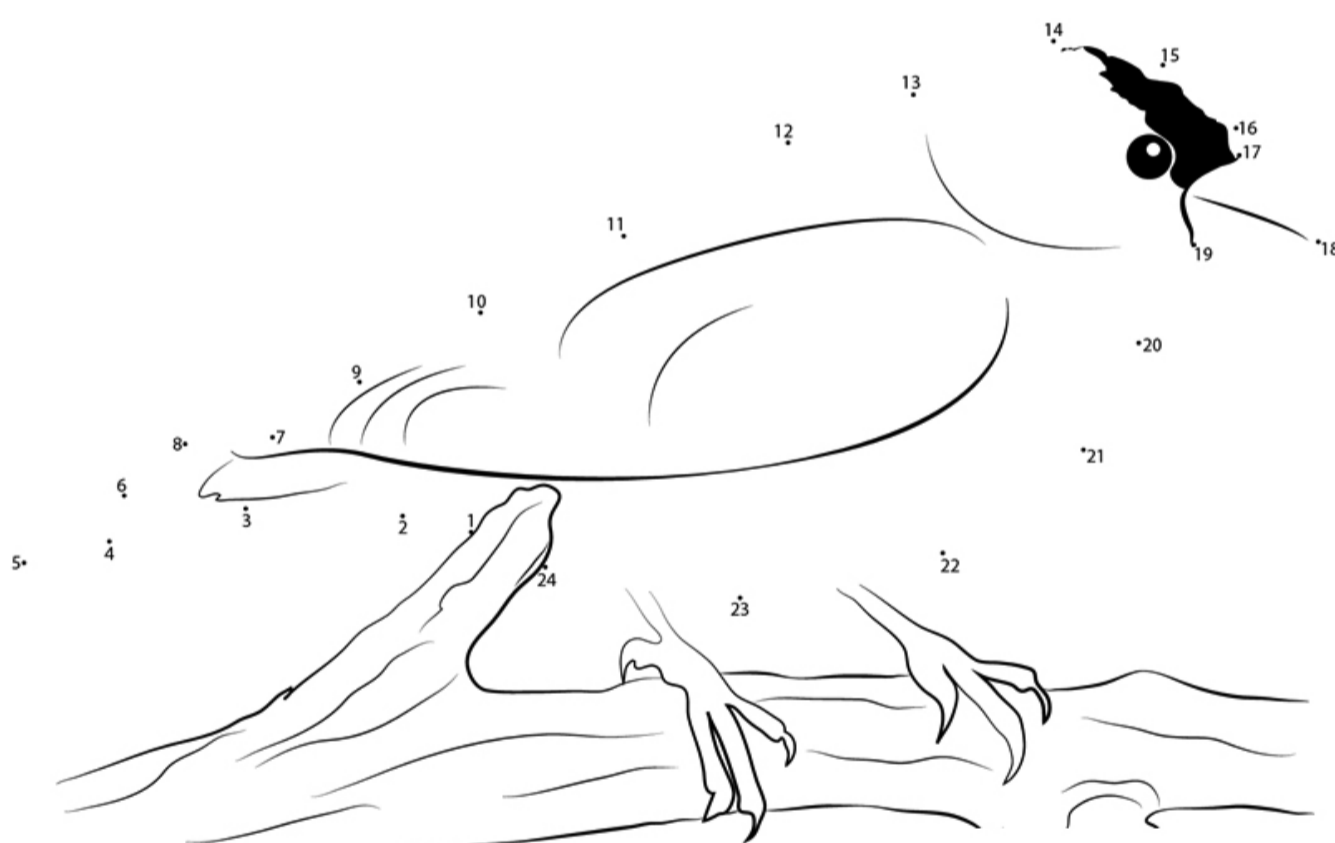
DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| ACCOMPLICE | FLATFOOT | PRIVATE EYE |
| ALIBI | FORENSICS | RED HERRING |
| BREAKTHROUGH | GUMSHOE | SLEUTH |
| CAPER | HUNCH | SUSPENSE |
| CLUE | INVESTIGATOR | VILLAIN |
| CRIMINAL | METHOD | WHODUNIT |
| DEDUCTION | MODUS OPERANDI | WITNESS |
| DETECTIVE | MOTIVE | |
| EVIDENCE | MYSTERY | |
| FEMME FATALE | OBSERVATION | |



Join the Dots



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Uncertainty about spiritual matters and doubt about your insights might have you down in the dumps today. Don't try to force any solutions - it won't work. This isn't a good day to be out and about, because travel of any kind could pose problems. This is also a bad day to plan or start a vacation. Stay close to home and take care of practicalities, Aries. That way you will be calm by evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, check your house to make certain everything is in working order. There are indications that small hazards could exist that need correcting. Tension might run high among family members, and quarrels could result. Don't waste time trying to mediate. They will have to work it out for themselves. This is a great day for study and solitude since your mind is especially sharp.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your physical energy is very high today, Libra. You're likely to want to get out and exercise, perhaps jog through the park or attend a virtual aerobics class. Be careful! You might not be as fit as you think and trying too hard could cause minor injuries. Someone you know professionally might not be in a great mood. You could get swept up in their anger. Try to stay out of it.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Gossip and bad feelings among co-workers or in a group could occur today, and there might be some political shenanigans that it would be in your best interests to avoid. This isn't a good day to go to lunch with co-workers. Get away by yourself. Don't believe anything you hear. Chances are it isn't true. Keep to yourself and don't offer any opinions, Capricorn. To do so might be unfortunate.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Stay close to home today, Taurus. Spending too much time in the car could lead to stress or, in extreme cases, minor accidents. On the job, this could turn out to be one of those days. Avoid office politics and stay out of arguments. Try to sequester yourself and do your work alone. Days like this are best used to take care of your affairs quickly and efficiently.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Short visits in your neighborhood could catapult you into some negative situations, Leo. It's best to stay close to home if you can. An angry letter or call could put you in a shaky mood. This isn't a day to socialize. Days like this are best spent keeping to yourself and throwing your energy into taking care of whatever you're working on.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Uncertainty about spiritual matters and doubt about your insights might have you down in the dumps today. Don't try to force any solutions - it won't work. This isn't a good day to be out and about, because travel of any kind could pose problems. This is also a bad day to plan or start a vacation. Stay close to home and take care of practicalities, Scorpio. That way you will be calm by evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Too much running around might have you feeling exhausted and under the weather today, Aquarius. You may have been exercising a little too much. Therefore, this is a good day to avoid exercise and get some rest. Don't push yourself too hard! This isn't a good day to plan or start a vacation. Wait a few days, as trips planned at this time could be fraught with glitches.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Money matters might take a turn for the worse today. Don't fly off the handle because of this, Gemini. Use every bit of financial savvy you have to put things straight. Try to remain calm and collected when dealing with stubborn people. Don't be drawn into arguments. You will be able to pull everything together again, but only by your ingenuity. Don't depend on others.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today you might be a bit worried about your financial affairs, Virgo. A past mistake could have led to some rather upsetting consequences. Now you need to harness every bit of skill you have in order to set things straight. Your knowledge of modern technology could help. A friend might try to pick a quarrel with you, but it's best to stay cool, neutral, and out of the discussion.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If a friend or acquaintance gives you advice about money or investments today, don't take it. To follow this unknowledgeable person's lead might prove to be disastrous. Participation in group activities also isn't advisable. They could get out of hand, and you could find end up in the middle of an angry crowd. This is a great day to stay home, Sagittarius. Work on your own project.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You could feel extremely passionate today, Pisces. You might want to connect with a love partner but be prevented by circumstances. You might be attracted to racier novels or movies. Repressed anger could bubble up from your subconscious and seek an outlet. This is a great day to channel that anger into some artistic activity. Don't be surprised if you use a lot of red!

Lifestyle | Features



This handout photograph shows a lamp which was allegedly sold for \$93,000 with the claim that it had magic powers. — AFP

Indian doctor duped into buying 'Aladdin's lamp' after genie show

Two men who allegedly duped a doctor into buying an "Aladdin's lamp" for \$93,000 — and even conjured up a fake genie-have been arrested in India, an official said yesterday. Laeek Khan approached police in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh after he realized the lamp did not have any magical powers, as described in the popular folk tale about Aladdin and his

wish-granting genie that appears when it is rubbed. "The cheats had struck a deal for much more but the doctor had paid about seven million rupees (\$93,000)," Amit Rai, a senior officer told AFP. He said the men were arrested on Thursday and were remanded in custody ahead of charges being filed. "The wife of one of these men was also involved in the fraud. She is on the run," Rai added.

In his complaint filed last Sunday, Khan said one of the men pretended to be an occultist and made a "jinn"-a supernatural figure-appear from the lamp, local media reported. But when Khan asked if he could touch the genie or take the lamp home, they refused, saying it might cause him harm, the complaint stated. Eventually they sold the lamp to him, promising it would bring

health, wealth and good fortune. Khan stated that he later realized the "genie" was actually just one of the men in disguise. "The men have also cheated other families using the same modus operandi. The total amount of money involved runs into several million rupees," Rai said. — AFP

PANDEMIC-HIT MEXICO MARKS SOMBER DAY OF THE DEAD

In Mexico death is usually a cause for celebration during the Day of the Dead festival, but this year parades are canceled and cemeteries closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. From November 1-2, people across the country normally deck their homes, streets and relatives' graves with flowers, candles and colorful skulls. The traditional festival, which in

photograph of her mother Rosa Maria who died in June aged 64 from suspected Covid-19. "Now I begin to see what the Day of the Dead really represents," the 41-year-old said, adding that her mother had asked her and her siblings not to cry when she died. "I want everyone to be happy, to have a party because I died. I don't want them to be crying, because life goes on," Burgos remembers her mother telling her.

The Day of the Dead, which is widely considered to be Mexico's most important festival, is rooted in the indigenous Mexica culture, mixed with Christian superstition brought by Spanish colonizers. The Mexica were the dominant indigenous population in pre-Hispanic Mexico. The modern celebration is based on a Mexica legend that after death, they traveled through the nine regions of the underworld, known as Mictlan. Millions of Mexican families set up altars on which they place the personal belongings of the dead and adorn them with intensely orange marigold flowers and confetti in the shape of skulls. Usually the capital hosts a parade of colorful skulls and "Calavera Catrinas"-a famous skeletal representation of death created by cartoonist Jose Guadalupe Posada more than a century ago.

But this year virtual events are replacing the usual festivities. Traditionally, many families also visit their loved ones in cemeteries and bring music, food and drinks. However, this year many graveyards are closed to prevent crowds gathering and spreading the coronavirus, which has already prevented families from mourning properly. Grieving relatives have been unable to hold funerals and in many cases the bodies have gone straight from the hospitals to the crematorium. — AFP



View of a skeleton made of cardboard at Santa Cecilia neighborhood, prior to the Day of the Dead in Mexico City, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP

2003 was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, centers around the belief that the living and the dead can commune during the brief period. With its bright colors and cartoonish skeleton costumes, the Day of the Dead has become an internationally recognized symbol of Mexican culture.

But this year the authorities have urged people to stay at home to avoid spreading the coronavirus, which has killed more than 90,000 people in Mexico-one of the world's highest tolls. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador declared three days of national mourning for coronavirus victims to coincide with the festival. Many families will remember those who have passed away in the privacy of their homes. Janet Burgos decorated an altar with confetti, fruit and a

Man and dog: Ancient genetics study reveals complex history

Much of the diversity seen in modern dog populations was already present around the time the last Ice Age had ended 11,000 years ago, a global study of ancient DNA revealed Thursday. The paper, published in Science, showed how our canine companions spread across the world with their masters, but also found intriguing periods when our shared history was decoupled. A research team led by the Francis Crick Institute sequenced the genomes of 27 dogs, some of which lived nearly 11,000 years ago, across Europe, the Near East and Siberia. They found that by this time, well before the domestication of any other animal, there were already at least five different types of dog with distinct genetic ancestries. Pontus Skoglund of Crick's Ancient Genomics laboratory, the paper's senior author, said: "Some of the variation you see between dogs walking down the street today originated in the Ice Age. "By the end of this period, dogs were already widespread across the northern hemisphere." He added this implied that the diversity arose far earlier,

"way back in time, during the hunter gatherer Stone Age, the Paleolithic, way before agriculture."

When and where dogs first diverged from wolves is a contentious matter-analyses of genetic data indicates a window of roughly 25,000-40,000 years ago. The new paper doesn't enter this vexed debate but does support the idea that, unlike other animals such as pigs which appear to have been domesticated in multiple locations over time, there is a "single origin" from wolves to dogs. The scientists found that all dogs probably share a common ancestry "from a single ancient, now-extinct wolf population," with limited gene flow from wolves since domestication but substantial dog-to-wolf gene flow.

Convergent evolution

By extracting and analyzing ancient DNA from skeletal material, the researchers were able to see evolutionary changes as they occurred thousands of years ago. For instance, European dogs around four or five thousand years ago were highly diverse and appeared to originate from highly distinct populations from Near Eastern and Siberian dogs. But over time, this diversity was lost. "Although the European dogs we see today come in such an extraordinary array of shapes and forms, genetically they derive from only a very narrow subset of the diversity that used to exist," said the paper's lead author Anders Bergstrom. Evolutionary pathways between our two species have at times followed similar routes.—AFP



British artist Katrina Cobain, poses for photographs with some of her collection of plastic bags. — AFP photos



British artist Katrina Cobain, 24, poses for photographs with some of her collection of plastic bags from which she intends to start The Plastic Bag Museum in Glasgow. — AFP photos

GLASGOW ARTIST LAUNCHES PLASTIC BAG MUSEUM

Katrina Cobain unwraps a parcel and removes its precious contents, slowly and delicately as if she were handling an ancient scroll of papyrus. But the items she places on the table of a makeshift studio in an old tobacco pipe factory in the east end of Glasgow are rather more mundane-plastic carrier bags. Yet, to many, they are considered historical items, representing the consumer excesses of the 20th and 21st centuries. For Cobain, 24, every plastic bag tells a story of the modern age and so, two years ago, she became a collector and plans to start a museum. "The original idea started because I felt that landfill sites could be archaeological digs of the future and for our civilization they would be filled with plastic," she told AFP. "They reveal so much about our lifestyle in the last 60 years in terms of consumerism and social history. "They can document or reveal key shifts in our lifestyles, key historic events and also changes in graphic design styles."

When Cobain put the word out that she intended to start a museum she was inundated with bags from around the world. Her growing collection includes ones from New York and the old Soviet Union. Others commemorate the supersonic passenger jet Concorde, and even the marriage of Queen Elizabeth II's eldest son and heir Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. "Why they were making bags commemorating the royal wedding, I don't know," said Cobain. "It shows you the level of production of plastic bags at that time that such events were being printed onto bags."

Cobain's most prized bag is one she bought from a Woolworths store where as a child she would buy CDs. She remembers "Woolies", which once had more than 800 stores in the United Kingdom, completely disappearing after the credit crunch in 2008 and classes it as a key moment in her life. Cobain's plans to hold an exhibition were scuppered by the coronavirus pandemic,

prompting her to move online. The lockdown proved an ideal time to photograph her collection, build a website and to launch plasticbagmuseum.com. A physical exhibition is still in the pipeline. Despite her affection for plastic bags, which are increasingly attracting charges for use, Cobain is looking forward to a time when they are consigned to history. "They are obviously very damaging for the environment," she said. "Photographs show how many bags there are in the oceans and how disruptive they are for other natural habitats for animals and so on. "And they are just incredibly unsustainable to produce and use. "So by making a plastic bag museum, it kind of helps people along to the idea that these are objects that do belong in the past." — AFP



A coffin designed for upright sitting is seen on display at the Funeral Museum in Vienna, Austria. — AFP photos



A visitor looks on at death masks of Ludwig Van Beethoven (second left), Joseph Hayden, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (2nd R) and Franz Schubert at the Funeral Museum in Vienna. — AFP photos

With morbid humor, Viennese look death in the eye

Even in midst of a deadly pandemic, the Viennese seek to look death straight in the eye-an attitude on display at a morbidly humorous museum devoted to death and burial. Right below the funeral parlor of the Austrian capital's famous Central Cemetery, burial shrouds and coffins have been on display since 1967, making the Vienna Funeral Museum the first museum to trace how we mourn the dead. It is perhaps fitting, given the local expression: "Death must be a Viennese". "A lot of people are probably afraid of death, but it's inevitable-along with taxes! — so it's a good idea to show that things haven't changed that much," says visitor Jack Curtin, a Vienna resident of American origin in his 70s.

After a day spent touring the graves of the great and the good, he has taken in the museum collection together with a friend, pronouncing it "excellent". In normal times tourists from as far afield as Japan and Canada would come to marvel at the re-usable coffins-introduced in the 18th century by Austrian Emperor Joseph II-as well as the futuristic-looking "cocoon" coffin. But thanks to the blow dealt to travel by the pandemic, the Viennese will largely have the site to themselves on Halloween and All Saints Day.

Morbid side

Despite the pandemic, however, the museum's new temporary exhibit commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven is drawing

visitors. Alongside insights into the life of the German composer, who was laid to rest in the Central Cemetery, the exhibition also naturally includes his death mask and objects relating to his funeral. Fellow composer Joseph Haydn was also buried here-although his skull, stolen by medical students in 1809, was only recovered nearly 150 years later.

"Vienna is well known for its morbid side," says visitor Julia Wuerzl, who has come for a stroll through the leaf-strewn grounds that serve as a last resting place for three million people, outnumbering the city's living residents by more than one million. As the coronavirus pandemic has taken hold, the museum says that it felt encouraged rather than dissuaded to keep its doors open, hoping to help locals consider death as a part of life. "I believe that because of coronavirus, people spend more time contemplating what kind of significance death could have for their life," as well as how they would like to be buried, says museum spokeswoman Sarah Hierhacker.

Lego death match

Recent trends include the use of compostable urns as well as of a new area dedicated to joint burials of people and their pets that allows for "strong bonds to be safeguarded beyond death," according to a brochure. The one thing that's frowned upon, however, is dodging the subject, even when it comes to children: The museum's gift shop offers Lego sets

of crematoriums, hearses, and skeletons. "While it is certainly necessary to choose words that are suitable for them, it's still crucial to be clear and transparent with children of all ages, because taboos create fear and a sense of being abandoned", says psychotherapist Michaela Tomek, who specialises in treating children who have experienced trauma, such as the death of a parent.

The Gothic Lego figurines, some of which are reminiscent of the Addams Family characters, have long been among the gift shop's bestselling items, but the latest hit has been funeral service-branded face masks. "Denying the coronavirus secures our jobs," reads a typical piece of black humor printed on one of the masks. "We produced 3,000, but we've had 7,000 orders," says Hierhacker, looking on as a disappointed visitor leaves empty-handed. As elsewhere, the pandemic is on everyone's mind, leading a visitor to indulge in some gallows humor and ask if Vienna will put its once infamous "hearse tram" back into service. At the height of the 1918-1920 Spanish flu, the tram transported thousands of bodies straight to the central cemetery. A century later, the public transport line 71 still follows the same route, giving rise to the Viennese euphemism for death: "to take the 71". — AFP



In this file photo taken on June 25, 2005 British actor Sean Connery waves to the gallery from the Royal Box on Centre Court at the 119th Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on May 27, 1981 British actor Sean Connery (left) congratulates Polish film-maker Andrzej Wajda (right) after he was awarded the Palme d'Or at the end of the 34th International Cannes Film festival for his movie "Iron Man".



In this file photo taken on February 15, 1965 British actor Sean Connery (center) and his wife US actress Diane Cilento (left) are presented to Britain's Princess Margaret during the Royal Film Performance of "Lord Jim" in London.



In this file photo taken on April 13, 1999 British actor Sean Connery imprints his hands in the cement at Mann's Chinese Theater in Hollywood.



In this file photo taken on October 22, 1982 British actor Sean Connery is seen during the making of the film "Never say, never again" in Nice.

SEAN CONNERY FUNERAL TO BE 'PRIVATE', MEMORIAL TO FOLLOW

Legendary British actor Sean Connery, who has died aged 90, will be honored in a private funeral ceremony with a memorial event to be held later, his family said Saturday. "There will be a private ceremony followed by a memorial yet to be planned once the virus has ended," the family said in a statement.

Sean Connery's greatest films

Cinema's first James Bond Sean Connery, who has died aged 90, brought his distinctive Scottish twang to a wide range of roles, from gangster epics to classic Hitchcock psychodrama. Here are seven of his most memorable screen appearances.

'Dr. No' (1962)

In the first screen outing for British agent James Bond, Connery mixed macho toughness, good manners and grace for a role he would hold in seven films all told—six official and one made outside the franchise. In this adaptation of Ian Fleming's 1953 novel, Bond is sent to Jamaica, leading him to the reclusive scientist Dr. No whose sinister black metal hands have deadly strength.

'Marnie' (1964)

Made at the height of Alfred Hitchcock's fame, this chilling suspense film helped to expand Connery's repertoire and raise his profile beyond 007. Tippi Hedren played Connery's troubled young bride Marnie whose spiraling psychological state takes them on a disturbing path back to the source of all her problems—her mother.

'The Hill' (1965)

Sidney Lumet's uncompromising drama about a sadistic military camp in the Libyan desert showed a whole new Sean Connery who was not afraid to put himself or his audience through hell. The pair worked again in 1973 on the even more edgy, "The Offence", with Connery as a detective trying to break a sex offender. In between, Connery showed his social conscience again in his documentary, "The Bowler and the Bunnet"—the only film he would direct—about the chasm between the classes in his native Edinburgh.



In this file photo taken on February 19, 1965 British actor Sean Connery (C) and Claudine Auger answer journalists' questions in Paris.

'The Man Who Would Be King' (1975)

With their shared Irish roots, Connery said he had a ball with director John Huston making this rollicking yarn drawn from a Kipling story of two British Indian army privates who are taken for gods in the remote land of Kafiristan. Even though it did not win an Oscar, both Connery and co-star Michael Caine regarded it as the best film that either of them made.

'The Name of the Rose' (1986)

In a role that earned him a British BAF-TA, Connery donned a long-hooded robe for this adaptation of Umberto Eco's blockbuster novel about a monk in 14th-century Italy who investigates a mysterious death in his abbey, assisted by a novice played by newcomer Christian Slater.

'The Untouchables' (1987)

Brian De Palma's tour de force about gangsterism during the Great Depression won Connery both an Oscar and a Golden Globe despite one of the worst Irish

accents in Hollywood history. Kevin Costner's FBI agent handpicks him, an embittered veteran officer, to form part of the "Untouchables" team that tracks down the notorious Al Capone, played with sinister brilliance by Robert De Niro.

'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade' (1989)

As the father of Harrison Ford's adored adventurer Indiana Jones, Connery provided a comical touch to Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning third installment of the franchise. Naive and unprepared for his son's action-packed life, a show-stealing Connery is kidnapped by Nazis, forcing Indiana to overcome a run of booby traps and crate-loads of snakes to save him. — AFP

In this file photo taken on March 23, 2003 British actor Sean Connery is seen backstage at the 75th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California.



In this file photo taken on May 20, 1965 British actor Sean Connery is welcomed during the 18th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.



In this file photo taken on September 05, 1981 British actor Sean Connery (right) and his wife Micheline Roquebrune (second right), Jean-Pierre Cassel (second left) and his wife Anne Cassel (left) pose during the 7th American Film Festival of Deauville.

Springsteen lends his voice, and a song, to a Biden ad

American rock star Bruce Springsteen is lending his voice and one of his songs to a campaign ad for Joe Biden, underlining his support for the Democratic candidate just three days before the Tuesday election. It will not be the first time the iconic singer/songwriter has shown his support for the former vice president. In August, Springsteen granted permission for the Biden campaign to use

his song "The Rising" as background music to a video shown at the opening of the Democratic National Convention. He has publicly lashed Trump as a "threat to our democracy." In narrating the campaign ad, which airs for the first time Saturday, Springsteen talks about Biden's blue-collar roots in Scranton, Pennsylvania, a battleground state likely to play a crucial role in the election. "Scranton,

Pennsylvania," the "Boss" says on the video. "Here, success isn't handed down. It's forged with sweat, grit and determination."

It was a barely veiled allusion to Donald Trump, whose millionaire father gave him a substantial chunk of his fortune. "This place stays with him, these streets are part of him," the 71-year-old singer says of Biden. "This is more than where he's from, it is who he

is for." The message, to be broadcast Saturday evening during a college football game, ends to the swelling sounds of "My Hometown," from what is probably Springsteen's most famous album, "Born in the USA." — AFP

In this file photo US singer Bruce Springsteen performs during "The river Tour 2016" in the northern Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian. — AFP



Sports

Photo of the Day



Mohammed Jaffar, motocross athlete, performs in Kuwait. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

England crowned Six Nations champions; 3rd time in 5 years

French victory over Ireland hands title to England

ROME: England were crowned Six Nations champions for the third time in five years on Saturday as they beat Italy 34-5 in Rome before watching France's 35-27 win over Ireland which meant that neither team could overhaul them. England began the day 23 points behind Ireland on points difference and two ahead of France. After a stodgy opening half, they secured a bonus-point win with five tries and set Ireland a target of winning by seven points in Paris.

The Irish couldn't achieve it and France's bonus-point victory meant they and England finished together on 18 points, but with England comfortably clear on points difference. It was a day to remember for England scrumhalf Ben Youngs, who marked his 100th appearance with two smart individual tries and the man of the match award in a generally stuttering performance that improved markedly in the second half.

"I'm obviously very proud but the most important thing for me was to play my part in this team," Youngs told ITV. "It's a nice milestone. "We always felt like it was going to be a grinding down process, we knew if we stuck to it we'd get there in the end." England captain Owen Farrell was a hap-

py man after watching the Paris game in his team's Rome hotel. "It got to a point where it seemed like it was going our way and it did," he told the BBC. "It's a massive achievement for us as a group to win the Six Nations in the strangest year and circumstances."

It was a suitably surreal end to the championship, which England began by being ripped apart in the first half of their opening game against France in February but ended, nine months later, with a big win over Italy in an empty Olympic Stadium. "I'm very proud of all the players and staff, they've reacted superbly to the changing situations in the past couple of weeks and remained focused on the goal of winning the Six Nations," coach Eddie Jones said in a statement. "It's strange not having fans in the stadium and we know it is a tough time for the country but we felt your support throughout the campaign and it does make a difference."

Ideal start

England made the ideal start when Farrell broke clear and sent Youngs over to mark his 100th cap with the first try after five minutes. But absent

England fans expecting the floodgates to open were to be disappointed as they not only failed to add anything more than a Farrell penalty but spent much of the half on the defensive.

Number eight Jake Polledri burst through for an excellent Italian try and the hosts came close to another as England reeled after a yellow card for debutant lock Jonny Hill and reached halftime 10-5 ahead. Youngs was the man of the moment again a minute after the restart, dummying twice to sneak through for his second try with Italy down to 14 with Polledri in the sin-bin.

England were finally playing with more patience and a rolling maul sent Jamie George over to mark his 50th cap with a try and flanker Tom Curry slipped down the blindside to get the all-important bonus-point clinching fourth after 67 minutes. Henry Slade chased down a Farrell grubber kick for England's fifth try - completing a remarkable three weeks for the centre, who also scored in Exeter's European and Premiership final successes. The margin of victory was tight enough to keep the England camp nervous as they watched the action from Paris, but proved good enough for the World Cup runners-up to take the title. — Reuters

Al-Arabi beat Qadisiya 3-2

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait's classic derby between Qadisiya and Arabi club was as expected - highly competitive and was not decided until the dying minutes of the match. What the match lacked was the fans who always give the particular match a special flavor like no other. The fourth round of the league ranking saw Al-Arabi's AlSanousi Alhadi handing a victory to his team by beating Qadisiya 3-2. Alsanousi scored his hat-trick in the 52nd and 88th from the penalty spot then scored the winner in the 93rd minute of the match.

Meanwhile, Qadisiya goals were scored by Eid AlRashidi in the 78th minute and Lucas in the 96th. This left Qadisiya with 9 points while Arabi improved to 4 points. The start of the match was highly active and it was Arabi's goalkeeper who kept Bader Al-

Mutawaa from scoring. Arabi had many chances but Qadisiya's goalkeeper and defense kept them at bay as the first half ended goalless.

It did take long in the second half for Arabi to be awarded a penalty in the 52nd minute which Alsanousi scored. Qadisiya's Salem Alburaiqi squandered an opportunity to score in the 75th minute only for his teammate Eid Alrashidi to equalize four minutes later. Arabi was awarded a penalty kick in the 88th minute which was converted into a goal by Alsanousi. Qadisiya's Lucas scored his team's second goal in the 96th minute.

In another match, Naser played with Kuwait and the match ended in a goalless draw. That gave Naser a point - raising the total to seven, meanwhile Kuwait has six. The match itself was average as each team played cautiously with Naser shooting from a distance. Naser scored a goal in the second half but was disallowed due to offside. In another development, Kazma beat Sahel 1-0 - marking its first win and raising its points to five while Sahel's points total remains six.



Bills get their shot to take down AFC East bully Patriots

NEW YORK: The Buffalo Bills were anointed as the trendy pick to win the AFC East long before the season began. The Bills (5-2) bid to strengthen their hold atop the division on Sunday against the visiting New England Patriots (2-4), who have won the AFC East in each of the last 11 seasons. What's more, the Patriots have emerged victorious in seven in a row in the series against the Bills and 35 of their last 40 meetings. New England has won 15 of its last 16 games in Orchard Park, N.Y., since a 31-0 drubbing in the season opener in 2003.

"They're first in the division. We're 2-4. So I definitely wouldn't call us the team to beat this year," Patriots safety Devin McCourty said. It's hard to argue that point, given New England has mustered just 28 points during its first three-game losing streak since 2002. Former NFL MVP Cam Newton has come under fire during his first season with the Patriots, notably after his three-interception performance in a 33-6 loss to San Francisco on Sunday.

Newton, who has been picked off five times in his last two games, was pulled after completing 9 of 15 passes for just 98 yards versus the 49ers. New England's passing game has yet to take flight, with the 197.2-yard average ranked fifth worst in the NFL. Conversely, Buffalo's Josh Allen has thrown for an NFL fourth-best 2,018 yards during his third season. The former first-round pick's 16 touchdowns ranked tied for fourth in the league, although he did not add to that total in the Bills' 18-10 win over the New York Jets on Sunday.

"I think he does a better job of going to his second or third reads; not as quick to pull the ball down and run, although he will do that," New England coach Bill Belichick said of Allen. "He has a good feel of when to stay in the pocket and ... I think he's less apt to just start running around. "More patient, more confident to stay in the pocket and go to the second guy, go to the third guy, come back to the check-down; like any quarterback who's gained two or three years of experience." Allen will welcome the return of speedy wide receiver John Brown, who was a full participant in practice this week after missing two of the last three games with a knee injury. Defensive tackles Vernon Butler (groin) and Quinton Jefferson (knee), cornerback Cam Lewis (wrist), safety Micah Hyde (concussion), offensive guard Brian Winters (knee) and linebacker Matt Milano (pectoral) were listed as questionable. — Reuters

News in brief

Mumbai, Hyderabad win big

MUMBAI: Champions Mumbai Indians and David Warner-led Sunrisers Hyderabad completed emphatic victories in the Indian Premier League on Saturday to leave six teams vying for three playoffs spots with the final round of the league stage remaining. Fast bowlers Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah picked up three wickets apiece to help Mumbai thrash Delhi Capitals, who are coached by Australian batting great Ricky Ponting, by nine wickets with 34 balls remaining. It was the ninth win from 13 matches for Mumbai, who had already booked one of the four playoffs spots and ensured that the four-time IPL winners will finish at the top of the eight-team league. In Saturday's other match, Hyderabad chased down a 121-run target with five wickets in hand and 35 balls to spare after an inspired bowling performance against the Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore. — Reuters

Leipzig slip off top spot

BERLIN: RB Leipzig lost 1-0 at Borussia Mönchengladbach on Saturday when their on-loan player Hannes Wolf scored against them as they slipped off top spot in the Bundesliga. It was their first league defeat of the season and snapped Leipzig's nine-game unbeaten run away from home. The result lifted Gladbach to fourth on 11 points after six games, with Leipzig dropping to third on 13, two behind new leaders Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund. "It kind of felt like a draw," said Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann, whose team have lost two games in a row after a 5-0 thrashing at Manchester United in the Champions League. "Our pressure over 90 minutes was just not enough to speak of an unfortunate defeat," he added. "But it was also not a hugely deserved defeat." Gladbach's Alassane Plea wasted several good chances after the break before Wolf, who joined this season on loan from Leipzig, fired in from a Patrick Herrmann layoff on the hour. — Reuters

Simona Halep tests positive

PARIS: Simona Halep has tested positive for Covid-19 but the former women's tennis world number one said on Saturday she was "recovering well and feels good". The 29-year-old Romanian made the announcement on Twitter, four weeks after she was knocked out of the French Open as top seed by Iga Swiatek, who went on to claim the title won by Halep in 2018. Halep, the reigning Wimbledon champion, wrote: "Hi everyone, I wanted to let you know that I tested positive for COVID-19. I am self-isolating at home and am recovering well from mild symptoms. I feel good... we will get through this together." — AFP

Jeonbuk record eighth title

HONG KONG: Cho Gue-sung scored twice in the first half as defending champions Jeonbuk Motors handed Daegu FC a 2-0 defeat on Sunday to secure a record-breaking eighth South Korean title in 12 seasons. Needing a draw to be sure of finishing ahead of nearest challengers Ulsan Hyundai, Jose Morais' team were rarely troubled by Daegu and by half time the destination of the title was beyond doubt. Veteran striker Lee Dong-gook, playing in his final league game ahead of retirement, sought to add to his K-League record scoring tally early in the game, only to send his shot high into the stands. But Cho made amends for Jeonbuk three minutes before the half hour mark when he headed in from six yards out after a pin-point cross from Choi Chul-soon ensured the striker completed a fine move with the opener. With five minutes remaining in the half, Cho struck again, this time stroking his effort home after Modou Barrow had seen his initial shot blocked by the Daegu defense. — Reuters

Corinthians surprise Internacional

SAO PAULO: A first-half goal from Davo gave Corinthians an unexpected 1-0 win over title challengers Internacional in Sao Paulo on Saturday. Davo finished off an inviting cross 10 minutes before halftime to give the home side their first league win in nine games and lift them into ninth place in the 20-team Serie A table. The loss was a costly one for Inter, who started the day joint top of the table with Atletico Mineiro and lost their top goalscorer Thiago Galhardo to a red card in the final minute of the game. Atletico play seventh-placed Palmeiras on Tuesday. — Reuters

Redman grabs 1-stroke lead

MIAMI: Doc Redman, a 22-year-old American chasing his first US PGA title, fired a four-under par 67 to grab a one-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the Bermuda Championship. Redman, ranked 85th, made five birdies against a lone bogey in windy conditions at Port Royal Golf Course in Southampton to stand on 10-under 203 after 54 holes. "It was really windy," Redman said. "Especially with this wind, being in the fairways was really nice. And the greens roll great so if you have looks at it you can make birdies." Americans Ryan Armour, Wyndham Clark and Kramer Hickok shared second on 204 with Australia's Matt Jones and Americans Ollie Schniederjans and Brian Gay on 205. "Whoever plays the best tomorrow wins," Redman said. "And I think I have a good chance of doing that." Redman, a runner-up last year at Detroit for his best PGA showing, shared third at the Safeway Open in September and the Wyndham Championship in August. — AFP

Sports

Barca held by 10-man Alaves to extend winless streak in La Liga

Atletico de Madrid overpower Osasuna 3-1

MADRID: Barcelona made it four La Liga games without a win on Saturday after failing to beat 10-man Alaves, a 1-1 draw leaving Ronald Koeman's side sitting 12th in the table. Luis Rioja put Alaves in front at Mendizorrotza after an error from Barca's back-up goalkeeper Neto, with Antoine Griezmann equalizing in the second half, a minute after Jota Peleteiro had been sent off.

But with almost half an hour left and an extra man, Barcelona were still unable to find a winner, instead settling for a draw to go with recent defeats by Getafe and Real Madrid, and another draw against Sevilla. It means Madrid, who had earlier won 4-1 at home to Huesca, now sit eight points clear of their Catalan rivals, having played a game more, while Atletico are six ahead after they beat Osasuna 3-1. Atletico will go top if they win their game in hand.

Even at this early stage in the title race, the gap is significant and Koeman will know the scrutiny on his position as coach will increase, particularly after the resignation of Josep Maria Bartomeu as president on Tuesday. Bartomeu appointed Koeman coach in August and eight points from the first six league games is not the sort of form that will impress the next president and board, who should be voted in before the end of January. "I'm very disappointed," said Koeman. "Once again we haven't played well enough to get a result. The first goal was a gift and then we created a lot of chances but didn't take them."

Koeman's decision to substitute Ansu Fati with 12 minutes left was particularly surprising given Fati had been arguably Barcelona's most dangerous player, perhaps even more threatening than Lionel Messi, who endured a frustrating night. Messi has

still not scored in open play this season and while he was at the heart of almost every Barca attack, his touch and finishing was again not as crisp as usual. He was booked in the first half for dissent.

Fati and Griezmann both missed early chances while a Messi free-kick would have gone in had Florian Lejeune not been perfectly placed on the line. Frenkie de Jong was unlucky not to have had a penalty when nudged out of a free header by Ximo Navarro before a Barca mistake gifted Alaves the opening goal. Gerard Pique underestimated how close Neto was to him and the defender's firmly hit backpass caught the goalkeeper by surprise. Neto failed to adjust his feet and Rioja capitalised, robbing him of the ball and tapping into an open net.

Koeman made three changes at half-time, with Pedri, Francisco Trincao and Miralem Pjanic all coming on. But Barca found it difficult to break down the Alaves defence until Peleteiro gave them an opening. He booted Pique in the face to earn a second yellow card in the 62nd minute and in the 63rd, Griezmann equalized, an exquisite, lifted finish pulling Barcelona level. It was almost 2-1 a minute later but Messi's finish was well saved while Griezmann had a second ruled out for offside. Fati fired at goal before going off and Pique's finish was cleared off the line. Alaves held on.

Hazard ends goal drought

Eden Hazard earlier scored his first goal for Real Madrid in over a year and his team appear to have turned a corner after their comfortable win over Huesca. Hazard has had a terrible time with injuries since joining Madrid for 100 million euros from Chelsea in 2019 but the Belgian will hope his stunning strike from distance at the Alfredo di Stefano



VITORIA: Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi shoots against Alaves' Spanish goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco (left) during the Spanish League football match between Deportivo Alaves and Barcelona at the Mendizorrotza stadium on October 31, 2020. —AFP

can kick-start his career in Spain.

"We know the quality that Eden has," Zidane said. "He scored a good goal and we needed it in the first half, because after his first goal the game was different." Karim Benzema and Fede Valverde made the win secure before Huesca scored through

David Ferreiro, only for Benzema to add his second and Madrid's fourth in injury-time. It caps an encouraging week for Zidane's side, which began with the Clasico win at Camp Nou and finishes with them top of the table, two points ahead of Real Sociedad. —AFP

Mission accomplished: Ruthless All Blacks to retain Bledisloe Cup

SYDNEY: A ruthless All Blacks retained the Bledisloe Cup for an 18th straight year in record-breaking style Saturday, blitzing a young Australian team 43-5 to reinforce their trans-Tasman dominance. After winning 27-7 in Auckland, which followed a tense 16-16 draw in Wellington, they accomplished their mission in Sydney by their biggest ever winning margin against the Wallabies, with one match of the series to go next week.

Fly-half Richie Mo'unga bagged 23 points to ensure bragging rights went to New Zealand coach Ian Foster, who like his opposite number Dave Rennie is in charge for his first Bledisloe Cup tournament. "It's more than a relief, it's exciting," said All Blacks captain Sam Cane, adding that the team would celebrate with "a few fizzies". "It's a lot of feelings but I'm just really proud of the group and excited about what's ahead." While the match was the third Bledisloe fixture, it was also the first of the Tri Nations also featuring Argentina-rebranded from the Rugby Championship after world champions South Africa pulled out.

In front of just 25,000 fans at a wet ANZ

Stadium, less than the 38,000 allowed under coronavirus rules, the All Blacks overwhelmed the Wallabies in a breathless first half that saw two yellow cards, four tries and two disallowed tries. A ragged Australia was fortunate to only be down 26-0 at the break and there was no way back for Rennie's men despite lifting their game in the second stanza. While the Wallabies cut down on missed tackles, New Zealand were physically too strong and again exposed the frailties of Australia's defensive wall. And the hosts badly missed the calming presence of experienced backs Matt To'omua and James O'Connor, who were both out with injuries.

Wallabies 'hurting'

"We're hurting a lot from that," said Wallabies captain Michael Hooper. "It's a hit to the confidence now. We're going to go look back at sticking to our game plan, we got out on the field and we changed direction." The opening 10 minutes was action-packed with Filipo Daugunu yellow-carded for tackling All Blacks dangerman Caleb Clarke in the air. Australia paid the price with New Zealand prop Karl Tu'inukuafe powering over for his maiden Test try on four minutes. Jordie Barrett joined Daugunu on the sidelines for elbowing Wallabies fullback Dane Haylett-Petty in the face, before All Blacks hooker Dane Coles had a try disallowed on review for a knock on. The Wallabies were desperately defending and

punching power was on full display as he showed why he is nicknamed 'Monster'. Inoue first knocked down Moloney in the sixth round with a left hook on the counter. He ended it one round later with a short right hand. Moloney tried to get back to his feet but was unable and referee Kenny Bayless counted him out at 2:59 of the round.

Inoue unified the IBF and WBA crowns last November by winning the World Boxing Super Series final over Filipino star Nonito Donaire by unanimous decision in a pulsating "fight of the year" contender. The Japanese knockout specialist had dispatched his four prior foes in less than three rounds. Inoue was to have faced another Filipino, John Riel Casimero, in April but the bout was wiped out by the coronavirus pandemic. The 29-year-old Moloney stopped Mexico's Leonardo Baez after seven rounds in June but he was overmatched against the speed and power of Inoue.

Davis grabs belt

In another development, undefeated Gervonta Davis knocked out Leo Santa Cruz with a vicious uppercut in the sixth round to seize the World Boxing Association belt in a junior lightweight world title clash in San Antonio on Saturday. The 25-year-old Davis surprised Santa Cruz with a left uppercut that snapped the champ's head back and sent him crumbling to the canvas late in the sixth round at



SYDNEY: New Zealand's Sam Whitelock wins lineout ball during the Tri-Nations and Bledisloe Cup match between Australia and New Zealand in Sydney on October 31, 2020. —AFP

only a top-class tackle from Marika Koroibete on the line prevented Clarke stretching New Zealand's lead. But the All Blacks were red-hot and Mo'unga scored a brilliant individual try, beating three players, to pile more pressure on. He then bagged another, sprinting almost half the length of the field after Beauden Barrett's sublime chip, before Coles finally got the try he deserved after a superb rolling maul. Australia looked dejected stomping off at half-time but Rennie's pep talk appeared to work and they were far more disciplined at the start of the second period. —AFP



LAS VEGAS: Japanese boxer Naoya Inoue celebrates defeating Australian boxer Jason Moloney (not pictured) in their bantamweight title bout at MGM Grand Conference Center on October 31, 2020. —AFP

the Alamodome Arena.

Hit by a punch he never saw coming, Santa Cruz landed flat on his back under the padding in the ring corner and remained that way for about a minute while doctors attended to him. He was eventually able to sit up and was even smiling once he shook off the cobwebs. American Davis improved to 24-0 with 23 knockouts by registering the defining win of his up-and-coming career and handed the four-division champion Santa Cruz his first knockout. —Agencies

Japan's unbeaten 'Monster' Inoue KOs Moloney

LOS ANGELES: Naoya 'Monster' Inoue defended his unified WBA and IBF bantamweight world titles in his Las Vegas debut on Saturday with a seventh-round knockout of Australia's Jason Moloney. The undefeated Japanese superstar floored Moloney with a shuddering punch near the end of the round to retain both belts in spectacular fashion at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.

The 27-year-old Inoue landed a vicious straight right that buckled Moloney's knees in the 118-pound fight and the Australian was unable to beat the count with just one second left in the round. "The final punch, I'm very happy and satisfied with that punch," said Inoue. "Moloney has great defense it was difficult to get through." Inoue scored two knockdowns and improved to a perfect 20-0 with 17 knockouts while Moloney dropped to 21-2 with 18 KOs.

Inoue dominated throughout the fight which was held inside the quarantine bubble at the luxury casino on the Las Vegas strip. Inoue's devastating

Swansea on the up as Bournemouth falter

LONDON: Swansea moved into second place in the Championship with a 2-0 win against Blackburn, while fellow promotion chasers Bournemouth had to settle for a draw against Derby on Saturday. With leaders Reading losing at Coventry on Friday, Swansea moved within four points of the surprise pace-setters. Goals in each half from Ben Cabango and Andre Ayew saw the south Wales club climb above Bournemouth.

An 81st-minute Rodrigo Riquelme equalizer earned the Cherries a 1-1 draw after Graeme Shinnie put Derby ahead in the first half. Riquelme's leveler preserved the English Football League's last remaining unbeaten run. Teemu Pukki netted a first-half double to lead Norwich to a deserved 3-1 victory

over Bristol City at Ashton Gate. There were only six minutes on the clock when Pukki struck for the first time, before a deflected effort doubled his tally eight minutes later. Jack Hunt pulled a goal back for Bristol City within a minute, but Emi Buendia slotted past Dan Bentley in first-half stoppage time to re-establish the advantage. Middlesbrough moved into the play-off positions after Marvin Johnson's 81st-minute strike secured a 1-0 win over Nottingham Forest. Wycombe finally secured their first win of the season as they overcame the absence of manager Gareth Ainsworth to beat Sheffield Wednesday 1-0 thanks to David Wheeler's goal in first-half stoppage-time. Ainsworth was watching the game from a hospital after undergoing back surgery on Friday. Millwall, whose entire first-team coaching staff are self-isolating following positive tests for manager Gary Rowett and two other staff members, lost 3-0 to Huddersfield. Barnsley beat Watford 1-0 at Oakwell thanks to Alex Mowatt's stunning early effort. —AFP

Millions online, 6,000 live see Koreans win top eSports title

SHANGHAI: More than 6,000 mostly young spectators watched at a Shanghai stadium and millions tuned in online to see Damwon Gaming win the League of Legends world championship on Saturday. The South Korean team beat Suning, the surprise finalists from China, 3-1 to claim one of the most prestigious titles in eSports. There were 3.2 million applications for tickets to see the decider of the month-long tournament in a football arena that holds about 35,000 people.

However, spectators were limited to 6,300 because of social distancing and those lucky

Inter angered by VAR after Parma draw 2-2

MILAN: Inter Milan came back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Parma on Saturday but were left furious by a contentious VAR decision, while Atalanta beat bottom club Crotona to move second in Serie A. Antonio Conte's Inter have dropped points in three of their first six league games this season and could slip five points behind city rivals and leaders AC Milan, who visited Udinese yesterday.

Inter had a strong penalty appeal when Botond Balogh hauled down Ivan Perisic in the second half, with Conte skipping his press conference, apparently in protest at the decision. "It is our duty also to protest at the refereeing decisions. This is our only venue for protesting, as we have no other way of making our voices heard," said sporting director Beppe Marotta. "We realize VAR only intervenes with a clear and obvious error, but today there was a clear and obvious penalty. So either the referee pays closer attention or VAR must be used."

"If VAR is only partially used, then that damages everyone and creates a sense of inequality. After six games, it is only right to make this comment." Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta, who drew 2-2 with Ajax in the Champions League in midweek, sit one point behind AC Milan. Inter dominated the first half at the San Siro, but Perisic volleyed off target and Achraf Hakimi nodded over from close range when he should have done better. Parma made their hosts pay in the first minute after the break, as Gervinho powered home his first goal of the season.

The home side were given a mountain to climb just after the hour mark when Roberto Inglese slid the ball through for Gervinho to score his second. Inter were desperate to try and keep pace with AC Milan and got themselves back into the game less than two minutes later thanks to Marcelo Brozovic's deflected strike.

Andrea Ranocchia almost leveled shortly afterwards, but saw his header saved at point-blank range by Parma goalkeeper Luigi Sepe. Ivan Perisic headed in Aleksandar Kolarov's free-kick in the second minute of injury time, but it was too late for Inter to find a winner.

Luis Muriel scored twice as Atalanta bounced back from successive losses in Serie A with a 2-1 win at Crotona earlier on Saturday. Atalanta conceded seven goals in back-to-back defeats by Napoli and Sampdoria. —AFP

enough to secure a seat had to wear a face mask to prevent coronavirus infections. Now in its 10th year as a world championship, League of Legends is a hugely popular team-based strategy game set in a fantasy world of "champions" and jungle monsters. Chinese teams won the 2018 and 2019 crowns, but Koreans claimed the Summoner's Cup in the five years before that.

Following a futuristic opening ceremony featuring virtual and real-life performers, five players each from Suning and Damwon took their seats on a brightly lit podium. Cheers went up as they went into battle. League of Legends' developer Riot Games had estimated that 100 million would watch across the globe. Inside the stadium, spectators - many favouring China's Suning - saw the action unfold on two giant screens. "Hands too sweaty," Damwon tweeted, but held their nerve to take the title, even as Suning threatened an upset during a pivotal third game. —AFP

14 England crowned Six Nations champions; 3rd time in 5 years



15 Mission accomplished: Ruthless All Blacks to retain Bledisloe Cup



15 Barca held by 10-man Alaves to extend winless streak in La Liga



Arsenal stun Manchester United

No home comforts for Man Utd; Everton rocked



MANCHESTER: Arsenal's Brazilian defender Gabriel vies with Manchester United's Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani (up) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Arsenal at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. Arsenal won the game 1-0. —AFP

LONDON: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang condemned Manchester United to fresh misery at Old Trafford as the Arsenal forward's penalty clinched a 1-0 win, while Newcastle stopped Everton returning to the top of the Premier League with a 2-1 victory yesterday. Aubameyang ended a five-game goal drought in the league when he stepped up to convert a 69th-minute spot-kick after Paul Pogba fouled Hector Bellerin. The Arsenal captain's first league goal since the opening weekend of the season gave the Gunners their first league win at Old Trafford since 2006.

Donny van de Beek nearly fashioned a late equalizer when his cross was scuffed by Mohamed Elneny into the face of Arsenal keeper Bernd Leno and on to the post. But United have failed to win any of their four home league games this season, with the three defeats including a humiliating 6-1 rout against Tottenham. It is United's worst start to a home league campaign since 1972-73, leaving Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team languishing just six points above the relegation zone in 15th place.

After an encouraging end to last season when they secured a top-four finish, United have gone backwards and questions will be asked about Solskjaer's ability to hold on to his job if results do not improve soon. Arsenal moved up to eighth place after ending a two-game losing run in the league. Mikel Arteta's men were deserved winners, having dominated for long periods and hit the post through Willian in the first half. Everton would have gone back above leaders Liverpool on goal difference with a win at St James' Park.

But, with James Rodriguez and Richarlison missing from the Everton team, Carlo Ancelotti's side succumbed to a limp defeat as Callum Wilson bagged his brace in the second half before Dominic Calvert-Lewin's late reply. It was a difficult day for Everton, whose England keeper Jordan Pickford was dropped, losing his place to Robin Olsen after a turbulent start to the season. Pickford has made a host of costly mistakes since Ancelotti took charge last season and was fortunate not to be sent off for the challenge which left

Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk needing knee surgery.

Newcastle took the lead in the 56th minute when Andre Gomes was adjudged to have fouled Wilson as he attempted to clear a corner at the near post. It looked a harsh decision but Wilson stepped up to send Olsen the wrong way for his fifth goal of the season. Wilson finished off Everton with a close-range effort from Ryan Fraser's deflected cross in the 84th minute. Netting with a flicked finish, Calvert-Lewin's 11th club goal of the season came too late to stop Everton's second successive defeat. They are without a win in three games and remain three points behind Liverpool in second place.

Birthday bash

Elsewhere in yesterday's action, James Ward-Prowse celebrated his 26th birthday by scoring two fine free-kicks in Southampton's 4-3 win against Aston Villa. Ralph Hasenhuttl's side lost their first two matches this

term, but they have bounced back impressively and sit in third place after their fourth win in their last five games. On the heels of a 3-0 defeat against Leeds, Villa's second successive loss served as a reality check after Dean Smith's men won their first four league games. Southampton made their pressure pay in the 20th minute when Jannik Vestergaard headed in Ward-Prowse's free-kick.

Ward-Prowse curled a stunning free-kick past Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez from 25 yards in the 33rd minute, then netted another majestic free-kick from the edge of the area on the stroke of half-time. Danny Ings bagged Southampton's fourth in the 58th minute, curling a superb shot into the top corner for his fifth club goal of the season. Tyrone Mings reduced the deficit in the 62nd minute and Ollie Watkins converted a 90th-minute penalty after a foul on Grealish, who scored Villa's third with the last kick. Tottenham hosted Brighton - looking to climb into the top four in the final match of the day. — AFP

Volland off the mark as Monaco thrash Bordeaux 4-0

PARIS: Germany international Kevin Volland scored his first goals for Monaco since joining the club in September as Niko Kovac's side thrashed Bordeaux 4-0 in Ligue 1 yesterday. Monaco struck three times in as many minutes through Wissam Ben Yedder, Gelson Martins and Volland in the first half to take control at the Stade Louis II. Volland then grabbed another in the second half as Monaco won for just the second time in six matches to climb up to seventh place.

France forward Ben Yedder crashed home a spot-kick on 27 minutes after his header was handled by Pablo, with a penalty awarded despite the ball looping over Benoit Costil and into the net following the deflection. Martins grabbed his first goal since serving a six-month ban for pushing a referee last season when he lunged at the far post to poke in a Ruben Aguilar cross. And former Bayer Leverkusen forward Volland promptly headed in from a Ben Yedder delivery to end his drought following his 11 million-euro (\$13 million) move from Germany.

The 28-year-old tapped in a second on 57 minutes

as Martins slid the ball across goal for his unmarked team-mate. Nice moved up to fourth as Patrick Vieira's team extended their unbeaten domestic run to five games with a 3-0 victory at Angers. Rony Lopes put Nice ahead on 11 minutes and Pierre Lees-Melou added a second from the spot. Hicham Boudaoui came off the bench to net a third as Nice stayed four points behind leaders Paris Saint-Germain.

Metz continued their fine recent form with a 1-0 win at Nimes while Montpellier defeated Saint-Etienne by the same scoreline courtesy of a goal from Englishman Stephy Mavididi. Reims beat Strasbourg 2-1 while Dijon remain the only team without a victory following a goalless draw at home to Lorient. Lille put their undefeated record on the line in yesterday's late game when they hosted a resurgent Lyon. Christophe Galtier's Lille have won five and drawn three of their opening eight games. They could go back level on points with PSG at the top with victory.

In another development, Kylian Mbappe scored from the penalty spot as Paris Saint-Germain eased to their seventh straight Ligue 1 win on Saturday, beating Nantes 3-0 away to move provisionally three points clear at the top of the table. All the goals came in the second half at the Stade de la Beaujoire, with Ander Herrera opening the scoring two minutes after the restart and Mbappe converting a 65th-minute spot-kick before Pablo Sarabia secured the points late on. — Agencies

'Cristiano is back': Ronaldo returns with double

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo came off the bench to score a brace on his return from coronavirus as Juventus got back to winning ways in Serie A with a 4-1 victory against promoted Spezia yesterday. The champions ended a run of three consecutive draws to move second in Serie A, four points behind leaders AC Milan, who beat Udinese 2-1 earlier in the day thanks to a spectacular late winner from Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Ronaldo replaced Paulo Dybala in the 56th minute in Cesena with the match level after Tommaso Pobega had cancelled out Alvaro Morata's opener for Juventus.

But the Portuguese striker put Juve in front just three minutes later. Adrien Rabiot grabbed a third on 68 minutes, with Ronaldo scoring a second from the penalty spot with 15 minutes to go for his fifth goal in three league games this season. "Cristiano is back. This is the important thing," said Ronaldo, who had been furious at missing Juventus' Champions League 2-0 defeat in midweek by Lionel Messi's Barcelona. "I was stopped for a long time even though I had no symptoms and felt good. Today I got back to doing what I like, playing football."



CESENA: Juventus' Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo (center 7) celebrates with teammates after French midfielder Adrien Rabiot scored during the Italian Serie A football match between Spezia and Juventus yesterday. — AFP

Ronaldo had been COVID-positive for 19 days after a test while on national duty with Portugal, missing four games. The nine-time defending champions had won their opener against Sampdoria in September, their only league victory on the pitch, before three draws. Between those matches they were awarded a 3-0 victory after Napoli refused to travel to Turin on October 4 because of coronavirus cases. Before Ronaldo took to the pitch, Juventus had labored against 16th-placed Spezia, playing their first ever top-flight campaign. — AFP