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# Dubai's Sheikh Mohammed receives trial COVID vaccine

## Bahrain allows experimental vaccine use on frontline workers

### Zain Group records resilient revenues of \$3.9 billion for 9 months of 2020

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third-quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended Sept 30, 2020. The company ended the period with a stable customer base of 48.9 million customers.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented: "The telecom sector is not immune to the current pandemic facing the global community that will continue to play havoc across all aspects of socio-economic life for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, we continue our resolve and commitment to ensuring meaningful connectivity and implementing more digitalization initiatives to better serve



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

businesses, governments, and societies, aiming to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on society."

Regarding key operations, Kharafi noted Zain Kuwait remains the company's most

profitable operation with its 5G network driving digital innovation across the country as well as focusing on profitable opportunities in the country's B2B segment. (See Page 9)

DUBAI: Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum said yesterday he had received an experimental coronavirus vaccine, becoming the latest United Arab Emirates official to take part in the trials. Two vaccines are undergoing third-phase trials in the UAE, one produced by Chinese drug giant Sinopharm, and Russia's Sputnik-V, named after the Soviet-era satellite.

"While receiving the COVID-19 vaccine today," Sheikh Mohammed captioned a photograph of himself he posted on Twitter with his sleeve rolled up, as a healthcare worker in full protective equipment administered the injection. "We wish everyone safety and great health, and we are proud of our teams who have worked relentlessly to make the vaccine available in the UAE," he said, without specifying which vaccine he took.

Chinese drug giant Sinopharm began the third phase of trials for a COVID-19 vaccine in the UAE in July and Emirati officials say the results have been positive. Last month, authorities announced the UAE had also approved clinical trials of Russia's Sputnik V, becoming the first Middle East country to do so. Sheikh Mohammed is also vice-president and prime minister of the UAE, a collection of seven emirates which has so far recorded more than 136,000 coronavirus cases, 503 of them fatal.

Meanwhile, Bahrain has granted emergency approval for the use of Sinopharm's vaccine candidate currently in phase III trials on frontline work-



DUBAI: A handout image provided yesterday shows Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum receiving an injection of a COVID-19 vaccine. — AFP

ers from yesterday, state news agency BNA said. The vaccine candidate, nearing the end of phase III trials in the UAE, Egypt, Bahrain and Jordan, is a partnership between Sinopharm's China National Biotech Group (CNBG) and Abu Dhabi-based artificial intelligence and cloud computing company Group 42 (G42).

The UAE in September authorized similar emergency use of the same vaccine for frontline workers at high risk of infection with the new coronavirus.

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### News in brief

#### Amir condemns Vienna attack

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah strongly condemned yesterday a terrorist attack in the Austrian capital Vienna that killed four people and injured 15. This criminal act, which targets innocent civilians, is contrary to humanitarian principles and morals, the Amir said in a cable to Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen. He reiterated Kuwait's rejection of all forms of terrorism and extremism regardless of their motives. HH the Amir expressed condolences to the president and families of the victims, and wished speedy recovery to the wounded. — KUNA

#### Qatar sets first election

DOHA: Qatar's ruler said yesterday that a long delayed vote for the country's policy reviewing chamber, the Shura Council, will be held in Oct 2021, marking the Gulf emirate's first national election. "We are taking an important step in strengthening the Qatari consultative traditions and developing the legislative process with the participation of a wider range of citizens," Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said. "We have our solid system rooted in the structure of our society and... it is not a multi-party system, but rather an emirate system based on established traditions of fair and rational governance." — AFP

#### Ant Group postpones IPO

SHANGHAI: China's Ant Group yesterday suspended its record-breaking IPO in both Hong Kong and Shanghai as the fintech giant faces growing pressure from Chinese regulators over potential risks. Ant will suspend both legs of its \$34 billion listing — originally set to take place this week — after being ordered by Chinese regulators to postpone its Shanghai offering over concerns it would not meet listing requirements, the company said in a filing yesterday. The move comes after co-founder Jack Ma, Ant Group chairman Eric Jing, and chief executive Simon Hu were summoned to an unusual meeting with regulators on Monday. — AFP

## America on edge as nation decides

WASHINGTON: Americans voted yesterday under the shadow of a surging coronavirus pandemic to decide whether to reelect Republican Donald Trump, one of the most polarizing presidents in US history, or send Democrat Joe Biden to the White House. A record-breaking number of early votes — some 100 million — had already been cast in an election that had the country on edge and was being closely watched in capitals around the world.

The 77-year-old Biden served for eight years as vice president to Barack Obama. The former senator from Delaware, who is making his third bid for the presidency, began his day with a visit to the church in Wilmington, Delaware, where his son, Beau Biden, and first wife and daughter are buried.

Trump, 74, who is seeking to become the first US president to win reelection after being impeached, dismissed the polls showing him trailing Biden. "I think we have a very solid chance of winning," he

said yesterday morning on "Fox and Friends." "We think we're doing very well everywhere. The crowds have been incredible. Our country can never be the same country if they win," Trump said, adding that America would become a "socialist" nation.

At the same time, Trump has cast doubt on the integrity of the election and threatened legal challenges, claiming the only way he can lose is if the results are "rigged". Casting her vote in New York, Megan Byrnes-Borderan, 35, said Trump's threats were "part of why it is so scary". "I believe that Trump will go through all odds to try to win the election," she said.

Trump has waged a campaign against mail-in voting for months, claiming it could lead to fraud and all ballots should be tabulated on Election Day. Several states, including battlegrounds Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, do not begin counting mail-in ballots until Election Day itself. Besides the White House, all 435 seats in the House of Representatives are at stake, and Democrats are expected to hold and possibly expand their majority in the chamber. Roughly one-third of the Senate is up for grabs and Republicans risk losing their 53-47 majority.

## 'Miracle' girl rescued 4 days after quake

BAYRAKLI, Turkey: A three-year-old girl was pulled from rubble yesterday, 91 hours after a powerful earthquake hit western Turkey, offering a ray of hope for grieving families as the death toll soared past 100. But only hours after Ayda Gezgin was miraculously recovered in the hard-hit town of Bayrakli, rescuers found the lifeless body of her mother Fidan, 38, in the same room of their destroyed apartment, Turkey's IHH Islamic charity told AFP.

Rescuers and families have been riding waves of emotion, from profound grief to elated relief, depending on whether bodies or survivors are extracted from the broken slabs of

high-rise buildings leveled by Friday's 7.0-magnitude quake. The quake, felt as far away as Athens, killed two teenagers on their way home from school on the Greek island of Samos, where some homes collapsed.

But most of the damage struck in and around Turkey's Aegean resort city of Izmir, where the death toll reached 107 yesterday. None of the Turkish coastal towns were hit harder than Bayrakli, a residential district dotted with seven- and eight-floor apartment buildings, dozens of which were either damaged or completely destroyed.

The tragedy and sheer joy felt by the Gezgin family within a matter of hours encapsulates the emotions tearing apart Izmir and the entire country as Turkey recovers from its biggest disaster in years. Rescuers, exhausted but determined on their fourth day of round-the-clock work, were zeroing in on four buildings where they felt they still could find someone alive.



IZMIR: This handout picture shows rescue workers carrying 3-year-old Ayla Gezgin out of the rubble of a collapsed building yesterday. — AFP

They broke out in applause and shouts of "Allahu Akbar", or "God is Greatest", the moment they realized they had rescued Ayda. "We have witnessed a miracle in the 91st hour,"

Izmir mayor Tunc Soyer tweeted. "The miracle's name is Ayda," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tweeted moments later.

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## Local

# Amir commends contributions of KDIPA to Kuwait's economy

## Crown Prince praises relentless efforts of KDIPA management, staff



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a copy of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority's 2019-2020 annual report from KDIPA's Director General Sheikh Dr Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as Commerce Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan and KDIPA's Deputy Director General Wafa Al-Qatami look on. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives a copy of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority's 2019-2020 annual report.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday commended Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority's contributions to create a competitive economic environment, and attract direct investments to boost growth and diversify income. His Highness the Amir made the remarks during a reception of Minister of Commerce and Industry, Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Board Chairman of KDIPA Khaled Al-Roudhan, KDIPA's Director General Sheikh Dr Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Deputy Wafa Al-Qatami. They presented KDIPA's 2019-2020 annual report to His Highness the Amir.

His Highness the Amir praised the efforts exerted by KDIPA's executives to create investment opportunities to push forward development in order to



### Premier asserts development's importance

create a competitive economic environment with the objective of promoting the economic status of the State of Kuwait. He also commended KDIPA's constant development of the business environment, wishing them success. Minister of Amiri Diwan

taking the girl out to the neighborhood park just 10 minutes before disaster struck. Her father, who survived, was not at home at the time of the quake.

"Slowly, slowly," the rescue workers told each other as they pulled the mother's body from the wreckage. Hours earlier, many of the same people were hugging each other and crying tears of joy, realizing they had saved a little girl who looked remarkably unharmed and completely calm. "I asked her: Are you okay? I was curious to see if she was alright. She asked for ayran," said rescue worker Ahmet Celik, referring to the salty yoghurt drink. "I told her the ayran would come later," he told AFP, laughing. "She loves ayran."

Rescuers said they realized someone was still alive at the site on Monday night, before painstakingly working to reach her. "It was a child's, a female voice," said fellow rescue worker Ibrahim Topal. — AFP

Jordan. G42 Healthcare CEO Ashish Koshy last month said the vaccine had been administered to more than 31,000 people across those countries.

Several ministers and senior officials have already received the vaccine in both the UAE and Bahrain. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al-Nahyan have taken the experimental vaccine. In September, Bahrain announced that Crown Prince Salman had taken part in third phase trials of the Sinopharm vaccine.

Dozens of companies, from biotech start-ups to Big Pharma, are racing to develop a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. The World Health Organization has identified 42 "candidate vaccines" at the stage of clinical trials. Ten of them are at the most advanced "phase three" stage, in which a vaccine's effectiveness is tested on a large scale, generally tens of thousands of people across several continents. — Agencies

Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, President of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and Amiri Diwan Protocol chief Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received minister Roudhan and the senior KDIPA officials, who presented to His Highness a copy of the authority's annual report. His Highness Sheikh Mishal praised the relentless efforts exerted by all KDIPA management and staff to help boost investment and the country's economy. His Highness the Crown Prince underlined the importance of direct investment to help contribute in sustained developments and serve the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Minister Roudhan and the KDIPA team also

presented a copy of the report to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah; who praised the authority's contributions to create a competitive economic environment, attract direct investments, boost growth and diversify sources of income. His Highness also lauded KDIPA executives' efforts to push forward development and promoting Kuwait's economic status.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace. — KUNA

## 'Miracle' girl rescued 4 days...

Continued from Page 1

"With your smiling eyes, you have inspired new hope for us. Thank God. Get well soon, my lovely little one."

The rescue came a day after a four-year-old and a 14-year-old were found alive in the same district, providing encouragement to rescue workers, despite persistent fears of aftershocks. Ayda called for her mother as she was taken to a waiting ambulance in a gold foil blanket, an AFP correspondent at the scene said. The Milliyet daily said her mother had returned home from

## Dubai's Sheikh Mohammed...

Continued from Page 1

Bahrain's Health Minister Faeqa bint Saeed Al-Saleh said yesterday, in comments carried by BNA, that the use of the vaccine complies with the country's regulations on exceptional licensing in emergency cases. "The results of phase I and phase II clinical trials showed the vaccine is safe and effective," she said, adding that phase III trials were going smoothly and without serious side effects.

Around 7,770 people have so far volunteered in the Phase III trials in Bahrain and have received a second dose, the minister added. The phase III trials of the inactivated virus vaccine began in mid-July in the UAE, and were expanded to Bahrain, Egypt and

## America on edge as nation...

Continued from Page 1

Pennsylvania could lead to "rampant and unchecked cheating". "It will also induce violence in the streets. Something must be done!" he tweeted.

Biden has focused his attacks on Trump's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic which has left more than 231,000 people dead in the United States, and the divisive nature of his presidency. "We're done with the chaos! We're done with the tweets, the anger, the hate, the failure, the irresponsibility," Biden said at an election eve rally in Cleveland, Ohio. "We're coming together for a big win tomorrow." Biden said in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he was joined by pop superstar Lady Gaga. "It's time to stand up and take back our democracy."

Biden, like Hillary Clinton in 2016, is expected to win the popular vote but all eyes are on the 538-member Electoral College that ultimately determines the winner of the race. A candidate needs 270 electoral votes to win and it may come down to voters in the tossup states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Trump won 306 electoral votes in 2016 and he predicted yesterday he would do even better this time. "I think we'll top it," he said.

Trump, who was briefly knocked off the campaign trail in early October by a bout with Covid-19, wrapped up his campaign with a whirlwind day of rallies, addressing supporters twice in Michigan

and making stops in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. He ended up in the early hours of yesterday in Grand Rapids, Michigan — the same place where he concluded his against-the-odds campaign in 2016.

While yesterday was formally Election Day, in reality Americans have been voting for weeks. With a huge expansion in mail-in voting to safeguard against the COVID-19 pandemic, some 100 million people have already made their choice. Trump has lost ground among suburban women, who favor Biden by a double-digit margin, and his "law and order" response to protests for racial justice may have turned off many Black voters.

Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic has also led to a potential loss of support among seniors. In one of US history's great political gambles, Biden stuck to socially distanced gatherings with small crowds while Trump held large rallies where few supporters wore masks. Many early votes are believed to have been cast by Democrats, and Trump's side is hoping for a massive wave of Republican supporters voting in person yesterday.

"When you come to one of these rallies, all you think is, how could he not win?" said Kolleen Wall, who turned out to cheer Trump in Grand Rapids. As voters went to the polls in the US, the eyes of the world were on the fate of a norm-breaking president with the campaign slogan "America First". Trump's first term featured strained relations with NATO allies, withdrawal from the Paris climate accord and World Health Organization and renunciation of the Iran nuclear deal. Relations with China have also become increasingly strained with Trump blaming Beijing for the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP



Local

# Forum explores the potential changes in US-GCC relations following US election

Hosted by Reconnaissance Research in collaboration with 'Harvard Club of Kuwait'

## Reverse the curse

By Nasir Nawaf Al-Sabah

local@kuwaittimes.com



Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah



Professor David Des Roches



Dr Abbas Kadhim



Faisal Al-Hamad

As the official 40-day mourning period for His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the late Amir, ends this week, his vision to transform Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub should be realized now more than ever.

According to the Chairman of the Parliament's Budget Committee, over KD 50 billion of accumulated budget surpluses in Kuwait's General Reserve were depleted over the past few years because oil revenues lagged behind government expenditures. Furthermore, Reuters reported that in the first 100 days alone since the COVID-19 lockdowns started, the General Reserve Fund dropped by 4 billion dinars. Alarming, the Finance Minister recently announced that a liquidity shortage may prevent the government from paying next month's salaries.

With a large sovereign wealth fund, however, Kuwait is still more secure than other oil-dependent countries, many of which teeter on failure, causing potential regional instability.

The world's endowment of oil-fueled global economic growth lifted large portions of Earth's communities out of poverty, but it also carried with it a curse that requires immediate action. Since the adoption of oil as the world's main transportation fuel just before World War II, developing countries raised their standards of living. At the same time, however, this cheap hydrocarbon introduced two curses: the resource curse theory, where oil-producing countries over-relied on their oil revenue to the detriment of their economies, and a curse on geopolitics arising from the indispensable role of oil as a tool of economic growth.

International dependence on oil creates political, environmental, and economic tensions between nations: to preserve human development, the world must strike a balance between economic growth and security, on the one hand, and sustainability, on the other.

Many of the major political events of the last century trace their roots to the insatiable global want for 'black gold.' The war-fighting machinery of World War II required oil to function. Axis countries lacked that natural resource, leading Nazi Germany to target Middle Eastern oil fields, while President Franklin Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz ibn Saud traded oil for national security promises.

About half a century later, the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait threatened to tip the balance of power between oil and security, causing the world immediately to restore the status quo. Since these events, the share of oil as part of the world's energy mix has decreased only slightly, indicating that it remains a volatile ingredient in international economics.

Driving global security policies are the economic calculations necessitated by growing energy needs. Although oil's share in the energy mix dropped from about 40 percent in the 1960s to approximately one-third today, current IEA projections show continued strong absolute oil demand through 2040. Because Gulf producers lie on the lower end of the cost curve, these producers will form a greater percentage of world oil production as other producers ramp down production due to higher economic and environmental costs. At that point, instability in the Middle East will be even more threatening for the world economy.

Kuwait's economy remains almost entirely reliant upon petroleum: with oil revenue accounting for over half of real GDP and 90 percent of government income, Kuwait is in real danger of succumbing to the resource curse. Unless Kuwait urgently reforms its economy, the current generation will face a lower standard of living than the previous two generations. And with a diminished Kuwaiti economy, Kuwait's political influence will wane, causing increased regional instability.

To mitigate the risks brought by reliance on oil, producers and consumers must adopt policies that reduce the social and economic impacts of oil on their societies.

First, Kuwait must take serious steps to diversify its economy. At current oil production levels of approximately 2.3 million barrels per day and prices of nearly \$40 per barrel, Kuwait receives about \$90 million a day from the sale of crude oil. That revenue almost exactly equates to the government's salaries budget, meaning that Kuwait's oil sales go only to pay salaries, leaving barely any government funds for investment.

Second, through research institutions and international energy organizations, oil producers and consumers should invest in technologies that reduce the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels. Because the environmental cost of oil is a major reason for the popularity of renewables, actions to reduce oil's environmental impact will prolong demand for oil, thereby making 'oil-dependent countries' adaptation to a new energy economy smoother.

By preserving Kuwait's powerful economic potency, Kuwait can not only stabilize regional strife, but it can also continue to fulfill the late Amir's vision for the future of Kuwait. If immediate and efficient action is taken, Kuwait will have secured a healthy standard of living for the generations to come.

KUWAIT: Reconnaissance Research hosted a virtual forum in collaboration with the 'Harvard Club of Kuwait' on Oct 30 featuring a panel of four regional experts, as well as moderation by Kirsten Fontenrose, the Director of the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council and a member of Reconnaissance Research's US Advisory Board. The forum discussion reflected an array of perspectives on various aspects of United States-Gulf Cooperation Council (US-GCC) relations, including energy, security, and economic development, with an eye toward potential policy shifts following the upcoming US presidential election.

Professor David Des Roches and Dr Abbas Kadhim provided insight about the Gulf's evolving political and military importance and how US policy toward it may shift moving forward, while Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah and Faisal Al-Hamad spoke more about the consequences of the region's shifting economic circumstances. All panelists urged the necessity of a paradigm shift in US policy in the Middle East as they answered questions from both the moderator and viewers.

### Energy plays key role

Probably the most significant possible impact of the US election mentioned throughout the forum was a shift in energy policy. While Sheikh Al-Sabah believes policy between American administrations has remained fairly consistent aside from shifts in tone, he noted that Biden's plan to reduce drilling in federal lands and increase carbon dioxide sequestration regulations would decrease American market share and increase its cost of electricity production by up to three times. He made reference throughout the forum to the increased popularity of electric vehicles, suggesting that if the Biden platform were to be realized, the resulting increase in the cost of electricity would sustain the viability of the internal combustion engine. For this reason, he felt comfortable about Kuwait and the GCC's long-term oil production outlook.

Aside from this point, Sheikh Al-Sabah was in agreement with Al-Hamad that the impact of the election on GCC economies would be marginal. Al-Hamad focused more on the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, which he said has exposed preexisting issues of youth unemployment and fiscal deficits. He urged careful and directed government investment in private sector job creation, alongside educational reform. Al-Hamad pointed to logistics, technology, and green energy alternatives as sectors Kuwait and the rest of the GCC are well-positioned to exploit.

### Balance opinion with action

Each of the panelists considered questions submitted by viewers, ranging from topics like Russia's presence in the Middle East to the impact of potential drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean. A major recurring theme was the increasingly central role of popular opinion and consent in the Middle East. Dr Kadhim in particular noted that regardless of the varied forms of government found throughout the Arab world, each is exhibiting an opening toward popular representation at their own pace. With the exception of older generations of Kuwaitis who still celebrate the US coming to its defense in 1991, Arabs (and especially Arab youth) are increasingly critical of whether they can benefit from a relationship with either a Trump or Biden administration.

When asked how they would pitch the importance of sustained and reshaped GCC relations to whomever wins the election, the panelists honed in on ways their own fields of interest would play a role. Professor Des Roches emphasized that even though Russia is not currently capable of providing sustain-

## GCC economic situation at critical juncture



### Shift in security focus

Though both parties have recently indicated an interest in reducing the US military footprint in the Middle East, Professor Des Roches and Dr Kadhim both argued that a full withdrawal would be unlikely and unwise. Professor Des Roches suggested that the US is far more interested in threats from China and Russia than in the Gulf, and that its regional security policy has mostly reflected this shift as most, but not all, troops have withdrawn. One major exception he noted is the US continued reliance on aircraft carriers in the Gulf and permanent military installations near Iran, which he argues are dangerous relics of past administrations' policies. This inflexible posturing, he said, should be replaced with expeditionary forces and more robust logistics networks such as rail from the Red Sea to the Gulf.

Dr Kadhim spoke more directly to potential shifts in US-Iraqi relations and how they may impact the region at large. If President Trump wins, he says, US policies are not likely to change: Iraq will remain a 'subheading' of policy toward Iran. Re-election may reinforce a number of challenges Iraqis face in complying with trade sanctions under the 'maximum pressure' campaign. In contrast, a Biden administration is likely to relieve tensions with Iran, which would play well throughout Iraq. That said, Biden has indicated support in the past for a variety of less popular positions, including the 2003 invasion and geographic partition.



Moderator Kirsten Fontenrose

able security for the region, a full American withdrawal may provide it or other potentially malicious actors the opportunity to step in. Al-Hamad reiterated the importance of achieving clarity among Arab youth about how a relationship with the US could benefit them, particularly in combating youth unemployment. Dr Kadhim urged a shift away from strictly oil- and security-based relationships to more mutually productive and respectful ones, which might focus more on education or technology. Finally, Sheikh Al-Sabah pointed out that demand for hydrocarbons will persist in the decades to come even as renewable energy surges. Since GCC countries produce them at lower cash and environmental costs than any other part of the world, he believes they will remain important players in the global energy field for the foreseeable future.

### Panel members

- **Kirsten Fontenrose**, Director of the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council and Member of Reconnaissance Research's US Advisory Board
- **Col David Des Roches**, Associate Professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the US National Defense University and Member of Reconnaissance Research's US Advisory Board
- **Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah**, President and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International
- **Dr Abbas Kadhim**, Director of the Iraq Initiative at the Atlantic Council and head of the (Iraq Affaires Department) at Reconnaissance Research.
- **Faisal Al-Hamad**, CEO of NBK Capital.

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## Article 22 visa transfer possible 'after review'

KUWAIT: The interior ministry clarified the categories of expats working in the government sector who can transfer residencies to other sectors. It said that it is possible to transfer to article 22 (family) visas after reviewing each individually, Al-Qabas reported. It said in an answer to an education ministry inquiry that the applicant should go to the residency affairs department for transfers to article 22 (family) and 24 (self-sponsorship). Article 13 of ministerial decree no 957/2019 allowed for issuing temporary or regular residency permits to expats born in Kuwait or those who entered the country according to the articles mentioned in the decision and have a valid passport during their entire stay. Residency can be transferred from one type to another and from one purpose to another as per the rules of the residency affairs department.

The residency period is linked to its purpose and can end even before the residency expiry date. It said transfers between government entities (article 17) requires the approval of the area the expat is working in and the entity wishing to employ them, in addition to Civil Service Commission's approval. As for transfers from the government to the private sector (article 18), it requires an employment permit from the Manpower Public Authority, and the new job should be similar to what the expat was doing in the government sector, with the same specialty and qualifications.

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Cleaning workers move dried palm leaves to a garbage container next to the fish market in Sharq yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Kuwait Blood Bank appeals to recovered COVID-19 patients to donate plasma

## Kuwait's COVID-19 cases up 787 to 128,080, deaths by three

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Central Blood Bank yesterday appealed to all those recovering from COVID-19 to donate blood in order to meet the growing demand for immune plasma. The Director of the Department of Blood Transfusion Services at the Ministry of Health Dr Reem Al-Radwan said in a press statement that due to the update by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on the adoption of immune plasma use to treat infected patients, as well as the continuous demand for blood by hospitals, they appeal to all COVID-19 recovered patients to take the initiative to donate immune plasma to save patients' lives.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health (MoH) announced yesterday it registered 787 additional COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, increasing the total number of infections to 128,080, while three new deaths were added to a death toll of 789. Additionally, active cases amounted to 8,211, with

110 of them in intensive care units, MoH's Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. Health authorities conducted 6,737 swab tests in 24 hours to a total of 933,626, he revealed. Earlier, the min-



694 patients recovered in 24 hours

istry confirmed 694 fresh recovery cases, added to a total of 119,080 recoveries thus far. Dr Sanad urged everyone in Kuwait to adhere to precaution-

ary measures against the virus.

Radwan explained the procedures and conditions that must be met before the plasma donation process, including that 14 days must have passed after the recovering person is symptom-free and the end of the quarantine period in order to donate. Other conditions include that the donor must be older than 18 years of age and not suffering from any chronic diseases. She also urged recovering patients who wish to donate to register through the website link (<https://btas-kw.org/ccpdonation>), to find out the conditions and make an appointment to donate at the Kuwait Central Blood Bank in Jabriya or Sheikhha Salwa Al-Sabah Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center. Since the launch of the plasma donation program last April, the equivalent of 1,700 plasma bags have been collected, and 1,200 bags have been dispensed at a rate of 200 plasma bags per month, she pointed out. — KUNA

## Former veteran MP leads 31 candidates on 9th day

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: As many as 31 new candidates including five women yesterday registered to contest the forthcoming parliamentary polls scheduled for December 5, raising the number of candidates so far to 364 including 33 women. The registration of candidates ends today while withdrawal of candidates will continue until seven days before the elections date.

Two MPs, Mohammad Al-Mutair in the second constituency and Ahmad Al-Fadhl in the third constituency were the only lawmakers who filed their papers hoping to get re-elected. As many as 38 of the 50 MPs in the outgoing assembly have registered as candidates. But the major surprise yesterday was the registration of Hasan Jawhar, a veteran former opposition lawmaker, who has boycotted all elections since 2012 when the single-vote system was introduced by the government.

## Over 200 doctors from Pakistan arrive in Kuwait

KUWAIT: President of the Pakistan Banking and Finance Professional in Kuwait Mohammad Bashir released a statement, in which he commended the cooperation between Kuwait and Pakistan in the medical field, which culminated recently with an agreement by which 221 doctors and other medical staff have arrived from Pakistan to Kuwait to

Jawhar's registration comes amid reports that a number of leading opposition figures, including Obaid Al-Wasmi, were planning to end the boycott and contest the elections. But several leading opposition figures like Mussallam Al-Barrak, Jamaan Al-Harbash, Faisal Al-Meslim and others remain in self-exile in Turkey for the past two years when the top court sentenced them to several years in jail over storming the national assembly building in 2011.

A section of the opposition believes that the best way to stop the slide in the domestic politics is to participate in the elections and increase their presence in the assembly, while the other section still believes that there is no way of reforming domestic politics under the current voting system. In the meantime, head of an assembly panel probing the Malaysian sovereign fund scandal MP Awdah Al-Awdah said the committee voted to approve a report on the issue and send it to the government. The lawmaker said the panel arrived at 19 results and 11 recommendations but the investigation is still incomplete and needs to be continued by the next assembly. The committee was asked to investigate allegations that senior Kuwaiti figures took part in illegal money transfers linked to the Malaysian sovereign fund scandal. The case was also investigated by the public prosecution.

assist in the Gulf state's fight against COVID-19. "The long standing strong brotherly relations between Kuwait and Pakistan is once again proven," he said in a statement. "Pakistani doctors are among the best in the world, and they are found in mainstream health specializations in developed countries," he said. "The Pakistani doctors who have arrived in Kuwait, and the rest to come later, shall be an added value to Kuwait's health system." "We wish that the doctors who have arrived from Pakistan would strengthen the efforts taken by Kuwait to fight against the pandemic of COVID-19. We welcome the newly arrived doctors from Pakistan, and wish them all success on their new endeavor," he concluded.

## Kuwait's embassies urge citizens to adhere to health instruction

KUWAIT: The embassy of Kuwait in Islamabad yesterday issued a health advisory for Kuwaiti citizens in Pakistan amid rising coronavirus cases in the country. The Kuwait embassy called in a statement upon Kuwaiti citizens in Pakistan to adhere to all health and preventive instructions and procedures issued by the concerned authorities in Pakistan. "In case of any required assistance, the respected citizens are advised to communicate with the embassy on the following number round the clock +92317555551," it added. The health advisory was issued a day after Pakistan recorded over 1,100 new coronavirus cases, the highest daily number since July 30.

As a number of European countries have

announced lockdowns due to a second wave of the coronavirus, health experts have warned of a second wave in Pakistan as well. To contain the outbreak, the government has made wearing of masks mandatory in public places. As a precautionary measure, the Pakistan government has announced shutting down of all parks, entertainment venues, markets and restaurants early. In May, Pakistan eased virus restrictions and reopened businesses which were closed in March. Prime Minister Imran Khan is scheduled to chair a meeting of the National Coordination Committee on Covid-19 (NCCC) yesterday to deliberate upon the situation and options for placing further restrictions.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's embassy in Manama called on citizens in Bahrain to abide by the health regulations in the Kingdom which aimed at curbing spread of the coronavirus. The embassy, in a statement, urged citizens to contact the diplomatic mission in emergency cases on: +97332200300. It said Kuwaiti citizens should abide by the health instructions like wearing of masks and stay away from crowded areas. — KUNA

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Prayers for Harris in Indian village, for Trump in Delhi

## More lockdowns in Europe as coronavirus outbreaks grow

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KABUL: A journalist walks inside a damaged class of the National Legal Training center a day after gunmen stormed Kabul University yesterday. — AFP

# Afghan students vow to carry on

## Deadly Kabul University attack kills 22 • IS claims responsibility

**KABUL:** Stunned Kabul University students vowed yesterday to continue their education despite a brutal attack on their campus by the Islamic State group that killed 22 people. As the first funerals took place, many students returned to see the carnage left after Monday's assault, staging a rally and holding banners that read "Stop Killing Us". Afghan security forces have been grappling with surging violence that has only worsened in recent months despite the government holding peace talks with the Taliban in Qatar.

"Today, when I came here and saw these classes, I felt like that there was no sign of a university anymore," Sami Ahmadi, who survived the onslaught, told AFP. "This is the peak of terror and this is not in any system or religion." Officials blamed the Taliban for the attack, saying three militants evaded security at the central Kabul campus. One blew himself up, they said, while the other two rampaged through the site, shooting students in their classrooms.

The Taliban denied responsibility, however, and the attack was claimed by rival militant group Islamic State, which said two of its fighters carried out the assault. "Two Islamic State fighters managed to attack a gathering set up by the Afghan government at the

Kabul University for the graduation of judges and investigators after completing a course at the university," the group's propaganda arm Amaq said.

Bullet riddled walls and burnt desks and chairs bore testimony to the chaos that sent hundreds of students fleeing onto the streets while others barricaded themselves into rooms. Two gaping holes created by explosives were evidence of how Afghan special forces dropped from the ceiling of a classroom to save students. "My message to the terrorists is that we will never stop," said 21-year-old Mohammad Baqir Alizada, who attends a nearby university. "At any cost, we will come again and work for a prosperous and free Afghanistan."

With the country holding a national day of mourning, fellow student Bashamal Sahak from Kabul University said there was no choice but to continue his studies and "fight them through knowledge". "We know one day they will kill us too. But we will never give up," he wrote on Facebook.

### 'Evil elements'

Public administration student Mohammad Rahid, who was killed in the attack, had found fame on cam-

pus for his motivational videos that he posted online. "Life is full of struggle, full of pain, full of problems and full of sorrow," Rahid says in one of his recent clips. "But still you see smiles on our lips. Because time will pass anyway and we have to live," he adds, now denied the joy of graduating.

Monday's attack was the second such assault on an educational center in Kabul claimed by IS in less than two weeks. The previous one killed 24 people. The Taliban have said they were not involved, but Vice President Amrullah Saleh blamed them and their supporters in Pakistan. The Taliban have in turn blamed "evil elements" that have "sought refuge" with the Afghan government, accusing the authorities of harboring and assisting militants.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special envoy who helped bring the warring Taliban and Kabul government together for talks, urged the two sides to accelerate a political settlement. "This barbaric attack is NOT an opportunity for the government and the Taliban to score points against each other. There is a common enemy here," he tweeted. "Deny ISIS or any other terrorist the space to carry out these inhumane acts," he added, using another name for IS. — AFP

## Fearing 'disaster', Lebanon mulls new virus lockdown

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon, mired in economic turmoil deepened by the Beirut port blast three months ago, is weighing a second nationwide lockdown to stem a surge in coronavirus cases. "Today we're at a very dangerous crossroads," said caretaker health minister Hamad Hassan, warning that hospitals are running out of intensive care beds. "We're approaching a disastrous situation," he was quoted as saying Sunday by the official National News Agency.

The country of six million people has recorded 83,697 cases of COVID-19 including 652 deaths since February. Around a third of the population are Syrian or Palestinian refugees, many living in overcrowded camps. A first country-wide lockdown imposed in March was effective in stemming the spread of the virus, and restrictions were gradually lifted as summer beckoned people outdoors.

But then daily infections slowly ticked up again — and they surged after the monstrous Beirut port blast of Aug 4 ravaged swathes of the capital and over-



BEIRUT: A woman adjusts her mask as she walks along a street in the Lebanese capital on Monday. — AFP

whelmed hospitals. Daily new cases have risen from a few dozen in early summer to more than 1,000 now. Hassan sounded the alarm on Sunday, warning that "in some cases, there are no beds in intensive care. This needs to be taken very seriously." But, with poverty rising amid Lebanon's worst economic downturn since the 1975-1990 civil war, many people are deeply fearful about the country grinding to a halt for a second time this trying year.

### 'We'll die of hunger'

"If we shut down for a month, we'll die of hunger," said the owner of a clothes shop in Beirut's southern

suburbs who asked to only be identified as Mike. Until now he has managed to pay the salaries of his two employees, but he says a new lockdown would force him to let them go. "How will I pay them? We've held up as much as we could, but we can't much longer," said the 38-year-old father of two.

Lebanon has already imposed a raft of restrictions in recent weeks, but compliance has been patchy and the country has largely continued to function as usual. In early October it began imposing targeted lockdowns on 111 towns and villages where the virus was spreading fast. And with infections climbing, authorities imposed a night-time curfew from Monday across Lebanon, after ordering the closure of bars and nightclubs. The authorities now fear the health sector will be overwhelmed, especially as several major Beirut hospitals were badly damaged in the Aug 4 explosion that killed more than 200 people and wounded thousands.

The World Health Organization said at the end of October that 88 percent of Lebanon's 306 intensive care beds were occupied. On Monday, Hassan announced that private hospitals — which make up 80 percent of all those nationwide — would have to ready themselves within the next week to receive COVID-19 patients. The first lockdown compounded an already devastating economic crisis that had caused tens of thousands to lose their jobs or take pay cuts. — AFP

## Lanka rescues 120 whales after country's largest stranding

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka has saved some 120 pilot whales in a grueling overnight rescue involving the navy, officials said yesterday, after the island nation's biggest stranding. Three pilot whales and one dolphin died of injuries following the mass beaching on Monday on the country's western coast at Panadura, some 25 km south of the capital Colombo. A handful of whales had started beaching in the early afternoon and their numbers swelled to more than 100 by dusk, overwhelming local volunteers, resident Pathum Hirushan told AFP.

"Some of the fishermen from the area tried to push back the whales. The sea was rough and the waves would bring them back to shore," Hirushan said. "It was very tiring, but later the navy came in with their

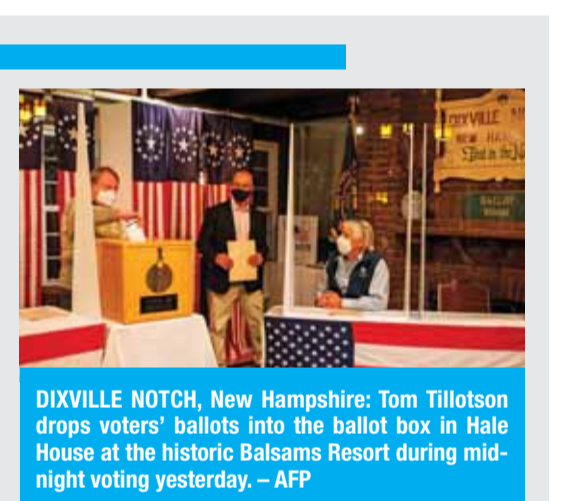
boats and worked through the night." The navy and the coastguard, as well as dozen of volunteers, were able to move the other mammals into deeper waters with the aid of small patrol craft by dawn yesterday, navy spokesman Indika de Silva told AFP.

Volunteers had come forward to help with the rescue despite the region being under a days-long lockdown to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Pilot whales — which can grow up to six meters long and weigh a ton — are highly social. The causes of mass strandings remain unknown despite scientists studying the phenomenon for decades.

The wildlife department's chief veterinarian Tharaka Prasad told AFP autopsies were carried out on the dead whales and officials were "satisfied they were disoriented". He hailed the rescue as one of the most successful in the world. Authorities had braced for mass deaths, after some 360 out of 470 pilot whales that beached in a remote harbor in Australia's southern island state of Tasmania in September were not able to be saved. Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority had said Monday that the Panadura stranding was the South Asian country's largest. — AFP



PANADURA, Sri Lanka: People look at a dead pilot whale on a beach yesterday. — AFP



DIXVILLE NOTCH, New Hampshire: Tom Tillotson drops voters' ballots into the ballot box in Hale House at the historic Balsams Resort during mid-night voting yesterday. — AFP

## New Hampshire hamlet casts first Election Day votes

**DIXVILLE NOTCH, New Hampshire:** Voters in Dixville Notch, a village of 12 residents in the US state of New Hampshire, kicked off Election Day at the stroke of midnight yesterday by voting unanimously for Democratic nominee Joe Biden. The vote and count only took a few minutes, with five votes for Biden and none for President Donald Trump, who is seeking a second term. The tiny northeastern town in the middle of the forest, near the Canadian border, has traditionally voted "first in the nation" since 1960.

Neighboring village Millsfield also begins voting at midnight but a third village in the area, which typically follows the same tradition, canceled overnight voting due to the coronavirus pandemic. Electoral laws in New Hampshire allow municipalities with fewer than 100 residents to open their polling stations at midnight and to close them when all registered voters have fulfilled their civic duty. Most polling stations on the East Coast opened at 6:00 or 7:00 am (1100 or 1200 GMT) yesterday. But with a huge expansion in mail-in voting to safeguard against the COVID-19 pandemic, a record of nearly 100 million people have already cast ballots. — AFP



## International

# More lockdowns in Europe as coronavirus outbreaks grow

## Virus infects over 47 million worldwide, with more than 1.2 million deaths

VIENNA: Austria and Greece yesterday became the latest European nations to impose spirit-crushing curbs to combat the coronavirus surge, with a deadly terrorist attack in Vienna ahead of a partial lockdown compounding the misery. The virus has infected over 47 million people worldwide, with more than 1.2 million deaths, and the acute outbreaks in Europe and America are sparking further alarm about the state of the already devastated global economy.

in Greece's second-biggest city Thessaloniki, with flights suspended and everything closed except schools. The restrictions follow localized lockdowns in the regions of Kozani and Kastoria earlier this month. The COVID-19 crisis has deepened in Europe in recent weeks with health experts warning the spikes in infections could overwhelm healthcare infrastructure across the continent.

To curb the spike in Germany, Europe's biggest economy, Chancellor Angela Merkel appealed to citizens to help achieve a "turnaround" by respecting a new round of shutdowns from Monday until the end of the month. Much of Portugal also faces a lockdown from today while France, having imposed its second shutdown last week, is also preparing to further tighten restrictions. England will begin a new nationwide lockdown tomorrow, bringing it into line with other parts of the UK and Europe.

**'Let's hope we still get Christmas'**

The frustration over the economic and social cost of lockdowns has led to protests in many parts of the world, especially Europe, with some leading to violent skirmishes, notably in Spain and Italy as well as the Czech capital Prague and the eastern German city of Dresden. "I'm very much against it, quite honestly. I think the whole situation has been blown up out of all recognition," said one shopper, who gave his first name as Andrew, referring to the new curbs in Britain. "It's wrecking the whole economy of the country basically," he complained, pointing to the impact on the hospitality and catering sectors.

And some of Germany's top orchestras staged protests on Monday, warning that coronavirus lockdowns pose an existential threat to the arts and entertainment industries.

Musicians from internationally-renowned ensembles



PARIS: French Junior Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Alain Griset (L) listens to a shop keeper in Paris yesterday as nonessential businesses are closed due to the new lockdown to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. — AFP

in Berlin and Munich, as well as the orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, staged a minute's silence at the start of their respective concerts, according to video footage posted on social media.

**'This isn't working for anybody'**

The COVID-19 crisis is among the biggest factors in the American presidential election yesterday, with the United States hit harder than anywhere else in the world. President Donald Trump, seeking a second term, has faced intense criticism over his handling of the pandemic, with more than 9.2 million infections and over

231,000 deaths.

His challenger Joe Biden has stuck to socially distanced gatherings with small crowds or people segregated in their cars right up to the last moment in the campaign—in contrast to Trump's constant, large rallies where few supporters bother with masks. In chilly downtown Pittsburgh, Justine Wolff said she had cast her ballot for Biden already and was cautiously hopeful he would carry the state. "I hope that people have seen the writing on the wall," said the 35-year-old nurse. "We need some kind of change because this isn't working for anybody."—AFP

“ Let's hope we still get Christmas ”

Austria's cases in recent weeks have surged well past the levels recorded in the spring, forcing the government to impose a curfew between 8 pm and 6 am starting Tuesday until the end of November.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz had announced the measures on Saturday, describing them as "dramatic interventions in our social life". No meetings will be allowed between people from more than two households, and there will be limited curfew exceptions for care responsibilities and essential work travel. Universities and high schools will move to distance learning, but kindergartens and other schools will remain open. Just hours before the beginning of the lockdown, with people enjoying a final night of relative freedom, gunmen opened fire at multiple locations across central Vienna, killing at least two people.

A two-week lockdown came into force yesterday



This undated handout file photo released by Al-Andalus shows Abdelmalek Droukdel, also known as Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, a leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), with his fighters in Azawad, an unrecognized state in northern Mali. — AFP

## French airstrikes kill over 50 jihadists in Mali

BAMAKO, Mali: The French government said Monday its forces had killed more than 50 jihadists aligned to Al-Qaeda in air strikes in central Mali. The offensive took place on Friday in an area near the borders of Burkina Faso and Niger, where government troops are struggling to rout an Islamic insurgency, French Defense Minister Florence Parly said after meeting members of Mali's transitional government.

"On October 30 in Mali, the Barkhane force conducted an operation that neutralized more than 50 jihadists and confiscated arms and material," Parly said, referring to the French-led anti-jihadist Operation Barkhane.

She added that around 30 motorcycles were destroyed. Parly, who earlier met Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou and her Nigerian counterpart Issoufou Katambe before heading to Bamako, said the operation was launched after a drone detected a "very large" motorcycle caravan in the "three borders" area. When the jihadists moved under trees to try and escape surveillance, the French force sent in two Mirage jets and a drone to launch missiles, leading to the "neutralisation" of the insurgents, Parly said.

Military spokesman Colonel Frederic Barbry said that "four terrorists have been captured". Explosives and a suicide vest had been found, he told a reporters in a conference call, saying that the group had been "about to attack (an army) position in the region".

Barbry also said that another operation, this time targeting the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, was also underway, with a total of 3,000 soldiers. The results of the operation, launched about a month ago, would be announced in the coming days, he said.

### Significant blow

Parly said the action marked a "significant blow" to the Ansarul Islam group which she said was linked to Al-Qaeda via the GSM alliance led by Iyad Ag Ghaly. Ghaly has emerged as a top jihadist leader in the Sahel since the death of the Qaeda commander Abdelmalek Droukdel, who was killed by French forces in Mali in June. The United Nations has some 13,000 troops deployed in Mali as part of its peacekeeping mission, known as MINUSMA, while France has 5,100 deployed in the Sahel region. Mali has been struggling to contain a brutal jihadist insurgency which first emerged in the north of the country in 2012, overtaking a rebellion by mostly ethnic Tuareg separatists. Former colonial power France launched a military operation to drive back the Islamists in 2013, but fighting has spread to central Mali, and to neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger, leaving thousands dead and hundreds of thousands forced to flee their homes. Vast swathes of Mali lie outside effective government control. Frustration over the seemingly endless conflict contributed to mass protests against president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita this year, culminating in his ousting in a military coup on August 18. —AFP

## Lady Gaga, car horns trumpet Biden's grand campaign finale

PITTSBURGH: Honking horns, huge American flags and pop superstar Lady Gaga: on the eve of the presidential election, Joe Biden brought an air of spectacle to workers' stronghold Pittsburgh as he capped a campaign largely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. "The power's in your hands, Pennsylvania!" the Democratic White House nominee thundered late Monday to several hundred supporters gathered for a drive-in rally in what has become the pivotal state in Biden's battle against President Donald Trump. "It's time to stand up and take back our democracy," the 77-year-old added, prompting a crescendo of car horns outside the stadium that is home to the Pittsburgh Steelers American football team.

In the biting November cold, Biden took up the clarion call of a campaign that he launched 18 months ago: "This is a battle for the soul of America," he said. "We have to win this."

Lady Gaga, clad in a white sweatshirt with "Joe" printed on the front, listened and applauded from her stage. Minutes earlier she had peeled off her gloves and sat down at a white piano to give a short but inspired musical warmup to the Biden headliner.

"Gloves off because it's a fight—a fight for what you believe in," she said before launching into her hit "Shallow." The 34-year-old Grammy winner called on the audience to vote for Biden because "we needed somebody that was going to bring us all together for this moment, for this very important moment." "No matter who wins tomorrow, we're going to have to do this together. Tomorrow's got to be peaceful," she added somberly, in an allusion to the tensions that have swelled in the United States ahead of the poll. The singer, who once lived in Pennsylvania, has been in this

position before. In 2016, she helped close out the campaign of Democrat Hillary Clinton, who lost in a shocker to Trump.

### End of Trump era?

Dancing in the parking lot was Jamie Scafuri, a 26-year-old hairdresser, who came with friends invited by someone who works for the campaign. "We're hoping that it's the end of the Trump era," Scafuri told AFP. "We're hopeful. That's why we're here."

These drive-in rallies have become a staple of the Democrat's mostly low-key campaign, which has scrupulously adhered to social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines to guard against the coronavirus, which has already killed more than 230,000 Americans. But despite efforts to put on a show at least partly resembling concert-infused mega-rallies that have traditionally marked the end of a campaign, the cars parked at distance, sparse spectators and few journalists allowed to enter makes it clear: the pandemic has upset the face of American politics in 2020.

"Stay close to your cars!" urged an announcer as fans rushed forward for the arrival of Lady Gaga, in scenes far removed from the massive Trump rallies that often bring thousands of supporters packed together, very often without wearing masks. But here, Biden's supporters understand the constraints.

"I feel safe being here around our car with masks on, but it's a great opportunity to celebrate life for sure," Scafuri said. Biden is "a pro-science, pro-healthcare candidate, so it makes sense that he would want to protect his constituents," added Scafuri's friend Katie Soulen, 32, who owns the salon where they work.—AFP



PITTSBURGH: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden (center) kneels as he looks on with Lady Gaga (3L) before a drive-in rally in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Monday. — AFP

## Twitter, Facebook flag Trump post as 'misleading'

WASHINGTON: Twitter and Facebook on Monday labeled as "misleading" an election eve post by US President Donald Trump claiming mail-in ballots in the key state of Pennsylvania would lead to "rampant" fraud and street violence. The US Supreme Court dealt Trump's reelection campaign a blow last week when it ruled to allow mail-in ballots in the swing state to be counted up to three days after the actual election night on November 3.

The Republican leader has been vocal about his opposition to mail-in ballots, often claiming without evidence that the process will be rigged against him. "The Supreme Court decision on voting in Pennsylvania is a VERY dangerous one. It will allow rampant and

unchecked cheating and will undermine our entire system of laws," Trump said in a post on both Twitter and Facebook. "It will also induce violence in the streets. Something must be done!"

Twitter marked the post with a content warning that said: "Some or all of the content shared in this Tweet is disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process." Users were required to click through the warning message to see the tweet. Twitter had also added a link to the bottom of Trump's post where people could "learn how voting by mail is safe and secure." Facebook also added a label to Trump's post, which said, "Both voting by mail and voting in person have a long history of trustworthiness in the US. Voter fraud is extremely rare across voting methods."

Twitter in recent months has marked a number of Trump tweets as "misleading" or "glorifying violence," including a post on anti-racism unrest in Minneapolis in May. Twitter has also appended fact-checks to two of the president's previous tweets on mail-in voting, sparking a furious reaction from Trump and his right-wing surrogates who accuse social media firms of bias against conservatives. —AFP



US President Donald Trump addresses a campaign rally at Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City, Michigan on Monday. — Reuters

## Superstitious Trump ends campaign in same city as 2016

GRAND RAPIDS, US: Normally, Republicans don't win Michigan—but Donald Trump took the US state in a shocking upset four years ago. On Monday evening he headed back to the city of Grand Rapids—exactly like in 2016 — for the last rally of his reelection campaign, and possibly his political career.

Is it superstition? Well... yes. "We finished up there four years ago," the president said at a rally in Kenosha, Wisconsin, ahead of his appearance in Grand Rapids. "I'm a little bit superstitious. Let's do it the same way." Supporters concurred. "I heard he might be a little of that," said Melanie Thorwall, 63, who had been waiting since the morning so as not to miss the grand finale of the Trump 2020 campaign.

Along with her son, an engineer like her, Thorwall had been unable to enter the rally four years ago. Both nostalgically recall the emotion that night, the sense of watching a phenomenon. Trump was the first Republican presidential candidate to take Michigan—historically one of the sturdiest bricks in the Democrats' "blue wall"—since 1988. "Did you ever think you'd be hearing a major speech like in around close to one o'clock in the morning? Are we crazy? Is this crazy? It's crazy," he said at the time. "You'll get up after about two hours, you'll vote and you'll go to work. I know my Michigan people," he added.

And his people came back Monday, hyped up by the idea of dealing the world another surprise four years on. In a field, under cold sunlight, voters young and old waited in line, decked out in proof of their loyalty that has become de rigeur at Trump rallies: hats, T-shirts, flags. In one spot, a hoodie that says "Lesbians for Trump."

"He's the only man I would go straight for," joked the hoodie's owner, Abigail Wall. The 27-year-old came with her wife, and her mother Kolleen. Mother and daughter also attended the 2016 rally. "Whether he wins or loses, this is history," said Kolleen. But "when you come to one of these rallies, all you think is, how could he not win?"

### No 'better choice'

2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton was so sure of winning Michigan that she barely set foot in the state. She had added a last-minute rally in Grand Rapids on the last day—prompting Trump to schedule his own. Unlike in the American South, there is no Michigan county that votes 90 percent Trump. The electorate is more evenly divided, more moderate. Between Democratic apathy in the cities and the over-the-top enthusiasm of suburban and rural Republicans, Trump beat his opponent by 10,704 votes—just 0.3 percent of the state total.

It's a land of unions and skilled labor, where car-makers Ford, General Motors and Chrysler cemented Detroit's reputation worldwide. Grand Rapids, the second-largest city in the state, is better known for its furniture makers, and automotive suppliers specializing in plastics and air bags, whose buildings cut into the farmland that stretches to the shores of Lake Michigan, an hour to the west.—AFP



International

# Ivory Coast's President Ouattara re-elected to contested 3rd term

## Several thousand flee West African country in post-vote unrest: UN

ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara was re-elected to a contested third term yesterday after a vote marred by deadly unrest and a boycott by the opposition, who vowed to set up a rival "transitional" government. The standoff pitches francophone West Africa's top economy deeper into a nearly three-month-old crisis sparked by Ouattara's decision to seek a third term. Among early reactions, the European Union swiftly voiced concern and pleaded with all sides to engage in dialogue. "The President Alassane Ouattara has been elected," the election commission's president, Ibrahime Coulibaly-Kuibiert, declared in the early hours of yesterday.

Ouattara won 94 percent of the vote in a turnout of 53.9 percent, the commission said. The landslide had been widely expected after two opposition leaders called for a boycott of the ballot and a civil disobedience campaign. Anti-Ouattara protests and clashes that have claimed several dozen lives have revived traumatic memories of a decade ago.



DAOUKRO: A general view of residents in a street in Daoukro yesterday where commercial activities resumed after the announcement of the results of the presidential election won by Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara. — AFP

ered President Alassane Ouattara into a contested third term, had prompted more than 3,200 people to seek refuge across the borders in Liberia, Ghana and Togo. "Most of the arrivals are women and children from Cote d'Ivoire's west and southwest regions," spokesman Boris Cheshirkov told reporters. "Many report fears of getting caught up in the escalating violence." Some of the newly arrived were former Ivorian refugees who had recently returned to their country, but were forced to flee once more, he said.

### Halt 'hate speech'

"UNHCR calls on Ivorian political and opinion leaders to refrain from inciting violence, resorting to hate speech, and to resolve any disputes peacefully and through dialogue," Cheshirkov said.

The landslide result had been widely expected after two leading opposition leaders called for a boycott of the ballot and a civil disobedience campaign. Streets in the economic capital Abidjan were mostly deserted overnight. Activists and residents said shots or small detonations were fired outside the homes of two opposition leaders in the city, though no one was injured. In Daoukro, an opposition stronghold 235 kilometers (146 miles) north of Abidjan, anti-Ouattara protesters were manning barricades.

"These results are a farce," said one, who gave his name as Firmin. "We are going to carry on with civil disobedience until Ouattara steps down."

The Ivorian crisis is another test for a region where Guinea is mired in a post-election dispute of its own, Nigeria is emerging from widespread unrest and Mali has faced a coup.

Ouattara has been praised by supporters for bringing infrastructure projects and economic growth after a decade of instability in the world's top cocoa producer. But anger sparked by his quest for a third term has revived memories of past feuds left mostly unreconciled after a 2002 civil war split the country in two. Thirty people died in clashes before Saturday's vote, often between local ethnic groups allied to the opposition and Dioula communities seen as close to Ouattara, himself a Muslim from the north. At least nine more have died since then.

### EU appeal

The 27-nation EU swiftly urged calm following the results announcement. European diplomacy chief Josep Borrell issued a statement expressing "deep concern over tensions, provocations and incitements to hatred" and calling for violence to be "independently investigated." "The EU expects all stakeholders to take the lead in easing the climate and resuming dialogue... and promoting reconciliation through very concrete measures that will bring an end to violence and division," his statement said.

A mission from the US watchdog Carter Center said "the overall context and process did not allow for a genuinely competitive election." "The process excluded a number of Ivorian political forces and was hampered by an active boycott." In contrast, an African Union observer mission said the election was "generally satisfactory". Ouattara, 78, had said after his second term he planned to make way for a new generation, but the sudden death of his chosen successor prompted him to seek a third term. — AFP

## Donors likely to pledge less aid for Afghanistan

KABUL: Afghanistan is likely to receive reduced pledges for aid from international donors gathering in Geneva next month, three sources familiar with discussions said, amid uncertainty over how the government's peace talks with the Taliban will progress. Washington is hoping the intra-Afghan peace process will eventually bring the curtain down on the United States' longest war, as it plans to withdraw the remaining few thousand personnel still in Afghanistan by May.

But the withdrawal of foreign forces will leave behind a country still dependent on foreign aid, and one in which the Taliban could secure greater influence, making donors uneasy over whether the hardline Islamists will try to roll back progress made on human rights and girls education. The Taliban did not respond to requests for comment on the concerns, and it was not known whether their representatives would be invited to the donors conference in Geneva on Nov. 23/24.

But some analysts see foreign aid as vital in helping donors shape policies of any future Afghan government. "It's one of the primary forms of leverage the US and international community believe they have over the Taliban," said Andrew Watkins, an analyst covering Afghanistan for International Crisis Group. "Any future Afghan state will rely on foreign aid almost as much as the current one does." The impact of the coronavirus epidemic this year has made Afghanistan's plight worse, with government revenues sinking, and unemployment and poverty projected to rise dramatically.

Yet, donors are likely to tell Afghanistan to expect, possibly significantly, less aid, while also imposing stricter conditions and committing funds for a shorter period, said the three sources, who declined to be named because the discussions are private. All three sources said the United States, Afghanistan's largest donor, is likely to make deep cuts to its current annual contribution of around \$800 million for civilian funding, beyond the money allocated for defense and security needs. — Reuters

on condition of anonymity. "Tanzania's democracy really is on very, very shaky ground."

Aside from a landslide win in the presidential race, the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party took 97 percent of the 264 seats in parliament, with the most popular opposition MPs losing their seats.

"I expected the opposition would take nearly half of the parliamentary seats this time round but what happened is actually strange. We are almost going back to a one-party system," said Professor Gaudence Mpangala of the Ruaha Catholic University in southern Tanzania. A fruit vendor in Dar es Salaam, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he believed there was "an agenda" behind the massive victory.—AFP

### News in brief

#### Uganda candidate Wine arrested

KAMPALA: Ugandan opposition presidential candidate Bobi Wine was arrested yesterday after handing in his nomination papers to the election body, his party's spokesman said. "They (police) used a hammer and broke the windows of his vehicle and forcefully dragged him out... they bundled him into their own vehicle and took off," Joel Senyonyi, spokesman for the NUP party, said, adding he did not know why Wine was arrested. Police spokesman Luke Owoyesigire said he had yet to receive a briefing on the arrest and promised to comment later. — Reuters

#### Court battle over Quebec law

MONTREAL: A court challenge of Quebec's secularism law began on Monday with a Muslim woman testifying that the ban on public servants wearing religious symbols at work in the Canadian province derailed her teaching career. Quebec last year legislated the ban on wearing a crucifix, yarmulke or hijab, as well as enshrined into law a previously adopted rule that denies government services to people wearing face veils. According to public broadcaster CBC, lead plaintiff Ichrak Nourel Hak testified that the law made her "feel excluded from Quebec society." — AFP

#### Voters to elect Palau president

KOROR, Palau: Voters in Palau head to the polls yesterday to elect a new president for the tiny Pacific nation, one of the few places in the world to remain coronavirus-free. President Tommy Remengesau is standing down after serving two four-year terms, during which he kept the country closely allied to Taiwan and the United States amid a push by China to increase its influence in the region. Both candidates vying for the top job — Vice President Raymond Oilouch and businessman Surangel Whipps Jr. — are expected to retain existing foreign policy priorities.—AFP

#### N Korea building 2 submarines

SEOUL: North Korea is building two new submarines, including one capable of firing ballistic missiles, a South Korean lawmaker said yesterday, following a closed-door briefing by the South's National Intelligence Service. North Korea has a large submarine fleet but only one known experimental submarine capable of carrying a ballistic missile. "One of the submarines North Korea is building can carry a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)," Ha Tae-keung, an opposition party lawmaker on parliament's intelligence committee, said. — Reuters



A representational image

## India, US, Australia and Japan kick off joint naval drills

NEW DELHI: India, the United States, Japan and Australia began their largest joint naval exercises in over a decade yesterday, Indian government sources said, seen as part of efforts to balance the vast military and economic power in the region.

The annual "Malabar" wargames that India holds with the United States and Japan have been expanded to include Australia this year to cover all members of the Quad, an informal group of the four largest democracies in the Indo-Pacific.

China has accused the United States, which has been leading the effort to forge a common front among its allies, of a "Cold War mentality" and ideological prejudice. Five ships of the Indian Navy, including a submarine, were deployed in the exercise along with US Navy's John S McCain missile destroyer, Australia's Ballarat frigate and a Japanese destroyer, the Indian ministry of defense said.

There will be no contact between the military personnel of the four nations because of COVID-19 restrictions during the first phase of the drills running till Nov 6, it said. Later this month, India and the United States will deploy aircraft carriers in the drills, a military source said. "The exercise will showcase the high-levels of synergy and coordination between the friendly navies, which is based on their shared values and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order," the defense ministry said in its statement. — Reuters



### Vote marred by violence, boycott

Around 3,000 people died in post-election violence in 2010-11 after then-president Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept defeat by Ouattara. Hours before the results, the opposition said it would create a transitional government, insisting Ouattara's mandate was over as he had broken the country's two-term presidential limit. Ouattara, a former IMF economist first elected in 2010, says a 2016 constitutional reform allowed him to run again. "The opposition parties and groups announce the creation of a council of national transition," Pascal Affi N'Guessan told reporters. "This council's mission will be to... create a transitional government within the next few hours."

He said it would work to hold "a fair, transparent and inclusive presidential election". "Keeping Mr Ouattara as head of state could lead to civil war," he warned. The transitional council would be led by opposition veteran Henri Konan Bedie, 86, a former president and long-term adversary of Ouattara.

Meanwhile, several thousand people have fled into neighboring west African countries from the Ivory Coast fearing more violence following a presidential election there marred by deadly unrest, the United Nations said yesterday.

The UN refugee agency warned that violence and tensions surrounding Saturday's elections, which ush-



CHENNAI: A woman walks past a poster of US Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Kamala Harris, at her ancestral village of Thulasendrapuram in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu yesterday. — AFP

## Prayers for Harris in Indian village, for Trump in Delhi

CHENNAI/NEW DELHI: Supporters of US vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris held prayers near her ancestral village in India ahead of yesterday's US election, while a Hindu fringe group sought divine blessings for her rival Donald Trump. The southern Indian region where Harris' maternal grandfather was born is rooting for the Democratic Party to win because of the family connection.

Meanwhile, a group that claims to have the support of 5 million Hindus says it wants Trump to be re-elected in order to keep India's main rivals - Pakistan and China - in check. Hours ahead of the US presidential election, people living in and around

Thulasendrapuram, the village of Harris' grandfather, gathered at a temple for special prayers.

One local politician conducted an "abhishekam", a practice that involves pouring milk over a Hindu idol while religious verses are recited, in the presence of about 20 villagers, said R Manikandan, a shopkeeper near the temple. He said more than 15 cars and motorcycles, belonging to reporters working for local and international media outlets, had assembled in Thulasendrapuram to cover the ritual. RR Kalidas Vandayar, a businessman and the head of a cricket association in the nearest town, plans to offer food to more than 150 people to seek their blessings for Harris, who is running alongside Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

"She is from here and we are proud of her," said Vandayar's brother R R Jayakumar Vandayar. Hundreds of miles north in Delhi, nearly two dozen members of a group known as Hindu Sena (Hindu Army) joined a priest wearing saffron robes to conduct fire rituals and chant verses for Trump's victory. — Reuters

tory in a presidential race since the first multi-party vote in 1995, and the opposition has alleged massive fraud.

Even before the October 28 vote, few believed it would be free and fair, after Tanzania's steady decline into autocracy in his first term, with arrests and attacks against the opposition, a ban on political rallies and squeezing of press freedom. But even seasoned observers have been stunned by what they see as a brazen effort to completely rid the country of any opposition.

"No election anywhere in the world is perfect but this was just so blatant. They (ruling party) didn't care. They decided to take all power and they did it in a way that was obvious," a western diplomat told AFP

## Tanzania's 'sham' election leaves democracy reeling

NAIROBI: Tanzanian President John Magufuli's landslide re-election has been dismissed as a sham by the opposition and diplomats who say democracy has been dealt a crushing blow in one of Africa's most stable nations. Magufuli's win with 84 percent of votes was the largest margin of vic-



# Business

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2020

## Festive cheer lacking for London shoppers

### England to close all 'non-essential' stores for four weeks from tomorrow

**LONDON:** Filling her shopping basket with Christmas cards in a central London department store glittering with baubles and tinsel, 84-year-old Marie Thomas was "fed up".

She was among a scattering of shoppers rushing to buy festive goodies Monday as England is set to close all "non-essential" stores for four weeks from tomorrow, as part of new lockdown measures to cut soaring infection rates. While many shoppers said they supported the measures, Thomas and others said they resented the lockdown, which comes just as shops geared up for the pre-Christmas rush. "When we've finished the lockdown, the virus is still going to be out there, so where's it getting us?" said Thomas, who wore a facemask.

"I'm doing my Christmas shopping, you can see my cards, because they're closing, you can't go anywhere after Wednesday." "Let's hope we still get Christmas," she said, adding that she hoped to celebrate with her large family including great-grandchildren. "I said to my daughter: Father Christmas has still got to come to the kids, hasn't he? You've still got to carry on with your lives."

Another shopper, who gave his first name as Andrew, expressed similar skepticism over the lockdown as he admired baubles. "I'm very much against it, quite honestly, I think the whole situation has been blown up out of all recognition," he said, decrying the impact on the catering and hospitality sectors.

"It's wrecking the whole economy of the country basically," he complained.

A major clothing chain, Primark, which does not sell online, has predicted it will lose £375 million (\$484 million, 416 million) from the latest lockdown. Restaurants, pubs and bars will also have to close their doors, although they can remain open for take-aways or deliveries.

The Night Time Industries Association, a lobby group for the hospitality sector, has warned the shutdown will spell "financial armageddon" for businesses that are already struggling.

#### 'Quietest ever'

On Oxford Street, London's best-known shopping hub, the John Lewis department store flew rainbow flags to honor the state-run National Health Service. The showpiece Christmas light display is normally switched on by a celebrity in front of huge crowds but social distancing restrictions forced organisers to shelve the event.

This year's elaborate lights feature angel wings and a message about "the spirit of Christmas".

Every week they will feature the name of a "hero" who helped others during the pandemic, nominated by the public. Outside Hamleys toy shop, which was founded 260 years ago, the Disney song "The Bare Necessities" blared out as staff danced in red boiler suits and welcomed customers. Amanda Crook, a 48-year-old reflexologist visiting London for the day, emerged from the store with a bag full of board games and said she was shocked by the lack of customers. "It's so sad to see shops so empty. I've not been to London for a long time. It's the quietest I've ever seen it," she said. "I just hope that the economy can recover from this." Nevertheless, she said of the lockdown: "If it's going to save lives then I'd say, yes, it's probably the best thing for everybody."

Teenagers at a nearby bus stop were concerned at the physical closures, despite mainly shopping online. "It's really annoying if you don't know if you're going to be able to find anything online and then not being able to go to the shops," said Poppy Edwards, 16, a student who wore dramatic cat-eye makeup. Lawyer Lucy James, photographing her three-year-old daughter outside the half-timbered luxury store Liberty, said she thought this Christmas would be less about consumerism as the virus hit many people financially. "I think this year's going to be a smaller Christmas... Less spending, I think, conscious that everyone's had a difficult time," said the 35-year-old. "It's what we've got to do to slow everything down and hopefully go into the new year in a much better place." — AFP



**LONDON:** Shoppers with masks because of the coronavirus pandemic walks past stores and a sign urging people to keep a 2-metre social distance from each other in London as England prepares to enter into a second lockdown in an effort to stem soaring infections. — AFP

## Aramco profits plunge in Q3

**RIYADH:** Energy giant Saudi Aramco yesterday posted a 44.6 percent slump in third-quarter profit, as the coronavirus pandemic weighs heavily on the global demand for crude oil. Aramco, seen as Saudi Arabia's cash cow, has revealed consecutive falls in quarterly profits since it began disclosing earnings last year, piling pressure on government finances as it pursues ambitious multi-billion dollar projects to diversify the oil-reliant economy.

The world's most valuable listed company said it was committed to a bumper dividend even as third quarter net profits dropped to 44.21 billion Saudi riyals (\$11.79 billion), compared to \$21.3 billion in the same period last year. Aramco's net profit for the first nine

months of this year also dropped 48.6 percent to \$35.02 billion, the company said.

The latest results are in line with analysts' expectations but stand in contrast to the losses reported by Aramco's rivals, which are reeling from pandemic-driven economic shutdowns that have suppressed energy requirements. Although the results underscore a downbeat market, Aramco's July-September results showed an improvement amid relatively steady crude prices compared to the second quarter, when it posted a profit of \$6.57 billion.

"We saw early signs of a recovery in the third quarter due to improved economic activity, despite the headwinds facing global energy markets," Aramco's chief executive Amin Nasser said in the statement. "We continue to adopt a disciplined and flexible approach to capital allocation in the face of market volatility. We are confident in Aramco's ability to manage through these challenging times and deliver on our objectives." —AFP



### Net Income

# 132

### Million KD

48.9  
Million

Customers

1.2  
Billion KD

Revenue

502  
Million KD

EBITDA

30  
Fils

EPS

9M 2020 results



Business



# Zain Group records resilient revenues of \$3.9 billion for 9 months of 2020

Net profit reaches \$429m • Q3 saw revenues increase 9%, net profits up 33%

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third-quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended 30 September, 2020. The company ended the period with a stable customer base of 48.9 million customers.

For 9M 2020, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.2 billion (\$3.9 billion), down 2 percent Y-o-Y, while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 502 million (\$1.6 billion), down 7 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 42 percent. Consolidated net income amounted to KD 132 million (\$429 million), reflecting a 14 percent Y-o-Y decrease. Earnings per share amounted to 30 fils (\$0.10) for the nine-month period. For 9M 2020, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 14 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 46 at 9M 2019 to 53.7 at 9M 2020 (SDG / USD), cost the Group \$78 million in revenue, \$36 million in EBITDA and \$9 million in net income.

In Q3'20, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 408 million (\$1.3 billion), down 1 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 166 million (\$542 million), a decrease of 9 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a 41 percent EBITDA margin. Net income for the three months amounted to KD 48 million (\$157 million), a 14 percent decrease Y-o-Y. Earnings Per Share for Q3'20 reached 11 fils (\$0.04).

**Key operational notes for 9M 2020**

- Expansion of 4G networks across markets, including 5G networks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and launch of 5G commercial services in Bahrain, saw Zain Group consolidated data revenue grow 9 percent Y-o-Y to reach \$1.61 billion, representing 41 percent of the Group's revenue for 9M 2020.
- The 9M 2020 period was highlighted by the notable 68 percent Y-o-Y increase in net income at Zain Iraq and healthy 28 percent revenue growth in USD terms at Zain Sudan.
- Zain Saudi Arabia successfully raises at preferential terms a Murabaha facility of SAR 6 billion (\$1.6 billion) loan to refinance existing debt of SAR 3.85 billion (\$1.03 billion) with access to additional liquidity of SAR 1 billion (\$267 million) with a consortium of eight banks.
- Zain crowned 'Best Brand' at 2020 Telecom World Middle East Awards for 7th consecutive year
- Supporting innovation and youth creativity, Zain Group partners Mentor Arabia to launch "Youth Awareness Film Competition" as well as partnering the 14th edition of MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Startup competition.

Commenting on the performance to date, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "The Board is working closely with management in overcoming the impact of COVID-19 across our footprint with a particular focus on expanding 4G and 5G networks and at the same time seeking new lucrative opportunities in the ICT sector to drive revenue growth. I would like to thank the government ministries and regulatory authorities across our markets for their collaboration with the telecom sector during these unique times." Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The telecom sector is not immune to the current pandemic facing the global community that will continue to play havoc across all aspects of socio-economic life for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, we continue our resolve and commitment to ensuring meaningful connectivity and



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

- Chairman, Ahmed Al-Tahous: The Board working closely with management in expanding 4G and 5G networks to drive growth and minimize impact of COVID-19**
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi: A challenging nine months necessitating more digitalization to support businesses, governments, and societies; we are optimistic of the telecom sector's resilience in such times**
- Rollout of 'Zain Data Park' for cloud hosting, managed services and cybersecurity**
- Zain enters digital infrastructure strategic partnership with TASC Towers Holding**
- Continued COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions in key markets impact financials**
- Ongoing efficiency drive reduces operational costs by \$130 million**
- Consolidated data revenue growing 9% Y-o-Y for the nine months**

implementing more digitalization initiatives to better serve businesses, governments, and societies, aiming to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on society."

He continued, "Zain personnel have remained at the forefront of this mission of providing vital telecommunication services and business continuity as the business fundamentals of Zain remain strong. Our decisive efficiency drive succeeded in reducing operational expenses by \$130 million since the start of the pandemic. Moreover, we believe the worst of the pandemic on our financials is behind us, given the healthy turnaround specifically in our Q3 2020 performance that saw revenue up 9 percent and net profit up 33 percent, when compared to Q2 2020, which was then a peak time of the pandemic."

Al-Kharafi added, "Over the last nine months we have invested \$923 million in CAPEX including spectrum fees, expanding 5G networks in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and most recently Bahrain as well as upgrading and expanding our 4G networks and FTTH services across our footprint. Such investments allow us to wisely monetize the networks and offer more innovative customer focused and B2B services to government, business, IoT, and smart city sectors. Moreover, our Group API platform continues to grow exponentially offering rich entertainment content and gaming, and we are making profitable progress in various fintech and e-health services. These initiatives are proven instrumental in countering the negative impact of the crisis to some extent with data revenue growing 9 percent Y-o-Y and now representing 41 percent of total revenue."

Al-Kharafi highlighted the company's significant progress on its '4Sight' strategy which is centered on evolving Zain's core telecom business to maximize value

and building on the company's many strengths to selectively invest in growth verticals beyond standard mobile services and support Zain's vision of becoming a leading ICT and digital lifestyle provider. "We are very enthusiastic with the rollout of Zain Data Park (ZDP), providing our government and enterprise customers with the very best IT support services focused on cloud hosting and managed services across the ICT stack, including applications, cybersecurity and networking."

Al-Kharafi continued, "Furthermore, to exploit the full potential of our infrastructure investments across our footprint, we have entered into a strategic partnership with TASC Towers Holding with regards to digital infrastructure."

**Key operations**

Regarding key operations, Al-Kharafi noted, "Zain Kuwait remains the company's most profitable operation with its 5G network driving digital innovation across the country as well as focusing on profitable opportunities in the country's B2B segment. Zain Saudi Arabia's successful refinancing and extension of its Murabaha facility at preferential terms reflected a vote of confidence from the Kingdom's and international banking community of Zain KSA's financial strength and growth plans. The company is currently undergoing a capital restructuring that will further strengthen the company's balance sheet and support its digital growth strategy."

"Moreover, the impressive performance of Zain Iraq for the period is very encouraging as is the recent granting of a 4G license in Iraq coupled with our mobile license extension there to 2030. With the improving bilateral relations of Sudan with western powers and resulting currency stability, we are very hopeful that Zain Sudan's

recent growth trajectory in all key financials will continue in the years ahead. Regarding Zain Jordan, we will continue to expand our 4G and FTTH services there and seek to exploit the multiple opportunities in the B2B space there." Al-Kharafi concluded, "We are optimistic of the telecom sector's resilience in such times and firmly believe 5G technology will create vast opportunities in the value chain proposition in numerous industries and will push the telecom sector to a new and exciting phase of growth."

**Operational review of key markets for the nine months ended 30 September, 2020**

**Kuwait:** Maintaining its market leadership, Zain Group's flagship operation saw its customer base serve 2.6 million. It remains the Group's most profitable operation with revenue for 9M 2020 reaching KD 236 million (\$770 million), EBITDA reaching KD 85 million (\$277 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 36 percent. Net income reached KD 58 million (\$189 million) for 9M 2020, with data revenue accounting for 39 percent of total revenue.

**Saudi Arabia:** For the 9M 2020, Zain KSA generated revenue of SAR 5.9 billion (\$1.6 billion), EBITDA for the period reached SAR 2.6 billion (\$695 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 45 percent. Net income for the nine months reached SAR 224 million (\$60 million). Data revenue represents 51 percent of total revenue and customers served stood at 7.0 million.

**Iraq:** Zain Iraq's 9M 2020 revenue reached USD 708 million and EBITDA amounted to \$285 million, reflecting EBITDA margin of 40 percent. The operation reported an impressive net profit of \$61 million for 9M 2020. The operator served 15.7 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

**Sudan:** For 9M 2020, Zain Sudan generated revenue of SDG 14.9 billion (\$278 million), with EBITDA amounting to SDG 6.5 billion (\$121 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Net income for the period reached SDG 1.9 billion (\$36 million). Data revenue represented 25 percent of total revenue, while the operator's customer base reached 16.0 million, maintaining its market leadership.

**Jordan:** For 9M 2020, Zain Jordan revenue reached \$359 million, EBITDA reached \$160 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent, with net income reaching \$56 million. With the ongoing expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenue represented 46 percent of total revenue. Zain Jordan served 3.5 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

**Bahrain:** Zain Bahrain generated revenue of \$123 million for 9M 2020. EBITDA for the period amounted to \$42 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 34 percent. Net income amounted to \$10 million.

**Scott Gegenheimer: A successful eight years at Zain Group**

Zain Group CEO-Operations, Scott Gegenheimer will be leaving his position at Zain after eight years with the company. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO expressed his appreciation of all that Scott 'had achieved for the company during his tenure and wished him success in his future endeavors.'

**Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for third-quarter (Q3) 2020**

Consolidated Revenue	KD 408 million - USD 1.3 billion
EBITDA	KD 166 million - USD 542 million
EBITDA Margin	41%
Net Income	KD 48 million - USD 157 million
EPS	11 fils - USD 0.04

**Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the first nine months (9M) 2020**

Consolidated Revenue	KD 1.2 billion	- USD 3.9 billion
EBITDA	KD 502 million	- USD 1.6 billion
EBITDA Margin	42%	
Net Income	KD 132 million	- USD 429 million
EPS	30 fils	- USD 0.10



## Business

# Gulf Bank records KD 18 million in net profit for first 9 months of 2020

## Bank delivered positive results despite challenges: Boodai

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. has announced its financial results for the first nine months of 2020. The bank recorded a net profit of KD 18 million for the nine months ending 30 September 2020, a decline of KD 19 million compared to a net profit of KD 37 million reported a year ago. This reduction was mainly driven by lower interest income on loans and lower fee / foreign exchange income offset partially by lower interest expense and lower operating expenses.

Net Loans and Advances totaled KD 4.4 billion at the end of September 2020, up KD 254 million or 6 percent from the end of September 2019. The non-performing loan ratio stands at 1.5 percent as of 30 September 2020, lower than the prior year level of 2.6 percent.

As of the end of September 2020, Gulf Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio remained strong at 17.3 percent, well in excess of minimum regulatory requirements. Commenting on the results, Jassim Mustafa Boodai, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: 'Although the first nine months of 2020 have been challenging, Gulf Bank was able to deliver positive results and positive trends through our prudent

and persistent cost reduction measurements. Our Kuwait-focused strategy has enabled Gulf Bank's Consumer Banking segment to continue to outperform the industry. We are continuously adapting to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and remain committed to servicing and supporting our clients during these challenging times.'

### Amir of Kuwait

On the sad event of the passing of the late Amir, Boodai said: 'We were deeply saddened by the passing of our late Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and extend our deepest condolences to the people of Kuwait and the government. He was a man of wisdom and peace; may God have mercy on his soul.' On the occasion of nominating the previous Crown Prince HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Amir of Kuwait, Boodai added: 'We would like to congratulate HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on his assumption of the reins of power as Amir of Kuwait, and are praying to the Almighty to guide His Highness in leading Kuwait to more progress and prosperity.'



Jassim Mustafa Boodai

We would also like to extend our sincere congratulations on the appointment of HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Crown Prince.'

### Credit ratings

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized internationally in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength. The

Bank is currently rated 'A' by all the four leading credit rating agencies.

Fitch: Long Term Issuer Default Rating 'A+' rating with a 'Stable' outlook

S&P Global Ratings: Issuer Credit Rating 'A-' rating with a 'Negative' Outlook

Moody's Investor Services: Long Term Deposits 'A3' rating with a 'Stable' Outlook

Capital Intelligence: Long Term Foreign Currency 'A+' rating with a 'Stable' outlook.

### Local talent

On the most recent senior management promotions, Boodai commented, 'We aspire to attract and promote skilled professional talent. I am happy with the recent additions to our senior management team: Mohammed Al-Qattan, General Manager of Consumer Banking; Abdulrahman Al-Saddah, Deputy Chief Risk Officer; and Momtaz Saif, Head of the Corporate Strategy Unit. I wish them all the best in their new posts, and I am confident they will continue a successful journey with Gulf Bank.'

### Appreciation

Boodai concluded his remarks by stating: 'I would like to thank everyone that contributed to these results, specifically our shareholders for their ongoing trust, and our employees for their commitment and dedication. I would also like to thank the Central Bank of Kuwait for their continuous support. Last but not least, I want to thank our customers for their loyalty, and reiterate our commitment to offering them the best banking experience.'

## Jazeera Airways announces Q3 2020 earnings

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways yesterday announced its earnings for the third quarter (Q3) of 2020, which continues to be affected by restrictions imposed on travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commercial flights at Kuwait International Airport resumed on August 1, 2020 with limited capacity and a suspension of flights from 34 countries. This follows a five-month suspension of all commercial flights between March 13 to July 31. All incoming passengers are mandated to quarantine for 14 days.

'With restrictions affecting demand for travel and tourism, Jazeera Airways relocated its efforts to serve "COVID-safe" tourist destinations such as Turkey and Dubai, while also focusing on charter and transit flights that connect cities in Asia to others in the Middle East, which have eased restrictions earlier. We've seen demand from large numbers of expatriates who are returning home or

are now able to return to their place of work,' said Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai.

'The sector remains under pressure worldwide, with the Middle East particularly affected. The situation is expected to continue until Q2 2021 with the newly imposed curfews in Europe. Financially, Jazeera maintains its strict cost control measures to safeguard its financial position and liquidity.'

The company ended the period with a cash balance of KD 23.3 million.

Operating revenue for 9M 2020 was KD 32.8 million and the net loss was KD 15.5 million. Number of passengers flown was 605,877 which include passengers of scheduled commercial flights from January 1 to March 12, as well as passengers of repatriation flights during the suspension period.

9M 2020 Financial and Operational Highlights:

- Operating revenue: KD 32.8 million
- Operating loss: KD 14.7 million
- Net loss: KD 15.5 million
- Passengers: 605,9,000
- Load factor: 66.0%

Q3 2020 Financial and Operational Highlights:

- Operating revenue: KD 6.1 million
- Operating loss: KD 6.5 million
- Net loss: KD 5.6 million
- Passengers: 65,6,000
- Load factor: 51.8%

Since then, however, a California district judge has expressed major reservations about the settlement's validity, forcing Bayer to back down on part of the agreement involving future cases. Bayer said there were around 125,000 claims involving Roundup in June, but it will now 'take more time' to address legal issues, and it had taken provisions in the third quarter of \$2.0 billion (1.7 billion euros), up from \$1.25 billion previously.

'The company is continuing to work on a joint proposal to address potential future Roundup claims together with plaintiffs' counsel and is working in good faith to address the issues raised by the court,' Bayer said. Its agrochemical business was also impacted by the depreciation of the Brazilian real, which is 'weighing heavily' on trading in the world's second-largest agricultural market.

However, Bayer confirmed its outlook for the full year 'thanks to stringent cost management and the acceleration of our structural measures,' chief executive Werner Baumann said in a statement.

In October, Bayer said it would accelerate a cost-cutting program that may lead it to slash jobs as it also tries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The

Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramachandran, added: 'Commercially, our team is doing a phenomenal job at securing charter flights requests. Jazeera has the advantage of a flexible model and a network that includes destinations that are in demand and underserved, giving us a unique position to serve large numbers of passengers who need to travel during flights suspensions.'

'We've also launched new service to Trabzon, Turkey early in August, serving a need for tourism to destinations deemed safe from the pandemic. There is always demand for travel, and this is what we aimed to focus on. We also announced new services to Dhaka, Bangladesh and Muscat, Oman. Flights to Dhaka will serve outbound customers from Kuwait as well as connect to other cities in the Middle East.'

Jazeera launched its first service to the tourist destination of Trabzon on August 3, with two return flights per week every Monday and Friday. The airline operates 11 flights per week to four airports in Turkey. Boodai concluded: 'We continue to support the efforts of the State of Kuwait as our Park & Fly facility remains a COVID-19 drive-through testing center. We are also working closely with the Ministry of Health and our colleagues in the industry on solutions to enable more commercial flights while ensuring the safety of all incoming passengers.'



Customer Gary Harms shopping for Roundup products at a store in San Rafael, California. — AFP

company expects to save 1.5 billion euros by 2024, on top of the 2.6 billion euros of annual savings it expects to make from 2022, Bayer said. That has not stopped Bayer's share price tumbling. It is now down 43 percent in the year to date. Its pharmaceuticals division recovered in the quarter. Bayer said, helped by its blockbuster blood thinner Xarelto, although the drug's patent expiry in 2024 poses a challenge for future earnings prospects. —AFP

## Bayer posts another multi-billion euro loss on legal woes

FRANKFURT: German pharmaceuticals and chemicals giant Bayer yesterday posted another huge loss in its third quarter as it struggles to manage legal issues surrounding its glyphosate weed killer linked by plaintiffs to cancer cases. The company made a net loss of 2.7 billion euros (\$3.2 billion), compared with a profit of 1.05 billion euros in the same quarter last year and well down on analyst estimates for 798 million euros in profit, according to the FactSet financial information service.

However, the result improves on the 9.5 billion euro loss Bayer posted in the second quarter after it settled most lawsuits against its Roundup glyphosate weedkiller produced by Monsanto, the US agrochemical company it controversially acquired for 63 billion euros in 2018.

## Australia CB cuts rates to near zero, ramps up bond buying

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank trimmed interest rates to near zero yesterday and ramped up its bond-buying plans in a much-needed salve to aid economic recovery from the country's worst downturn in a generation. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) said it would buy A\$100 billion (\$70.4 billion) of government bonds with maturities of around five to 10 years over the next six months, a more aggressive pace than some had expected.

The RBA also cut its target for three-year bond yields to 0.1 percent, from 0.25 percent, to align with the cash rate, which, it pledged will remain unchanged for at least three years. The move nudged the local dollar down to \$0.7042, while yields on bonds out to five years all hit historic lows.

'Today's decision reflects the Reserve Bank's commitment to do what we reasonably can, with the tools that we have, to support the recovery of the Australian economy,' Governor Philip Lowe said in a speech in Sydney.

'The Board views addressing the high rate of unemployment as a national priority and it wants to do what it can to support job creation.'

While the central bank did nudge up forecasts for economic growth to take account of the country's success in containing the coronavirus, Lowe bluntly dismissed talk the recession was over.

'I don't know how anyone concluded that we're not in recession,' said Lowe, referring to recent media reports that the recession had ended.

'On any reasonable definition we're in a recession.' Australia's A\$2 trillion (\$1.41 trillion) economy was hit hard as the coronavirus pandemic forced businesses to down shutters, leaving hundreds of thousands without work. The jobless rate is hovering near 7 percent, having risen from around 5 percent before the COVID-19 pandemic. Economists say the actual level of unemployment would be even higher if those on government support are included. For its part, Australia's conservative government has unleashed A\$300 billion in emergency stimulus to prop up growth this year, including A\$17.8 billion in personal tax cuts.

While the RBA has welcomed the fiscal largesse, some critics have said the government's tax cuts weren't the best way to spur consumer spending. Instead, they say direct cash transfers



SYDNEY: People walk in the central business district of Sydney yesterday. — AFP

to low-income households would have given a bigger bang for the buck while greater childcare support would aid incomes and labor supply.

And with the RBA's pledge to keep rates lower for longer, economists expect the government to further boost spending. 'We see fiscal policy continuing to play a key role in stimulating the economy and expect that the government will need to do more,' National Australia Bank economists wrote in a note.

Lowe himself noted the responsibility for job creation fell mainly on the shoulders of business and government.

### Bottom of barrel

Some economists said the RBA's

efforts were unlikely to have a huge impact on the economy, though they would help indebted households and spur demand for new housing while a weaker Australian dollar would help exporters. With yesterday's easing, the RBA was also now running low on rate ammunition. Lowe emphasized the RBA could and would buy more bonds if needed, though he argued a move to negative interest rates was 'extraordinarily unlikely'. 'The RBA has now hit the bottom of the barrel in terms of conventional interest rate cuts, but as other major central banks have shown, there is still plenty it can do in terms of ongoing quantitative easing,' said AMP Chief Economist Shane Oliver. — Reuters

## Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold partner with Caesars Holidays

KUWAIT: Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold, the award-winning global leaders in premium and luxury guided holidays is thrilled to announce a partnership with Caesars Holidays in Kuwait. Caesars Travel Group, one of the largest travel management companies in Kuwait, has expanded its portfolio by adding the quality services of Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold as the General Sales Agent (GSA) for Kuwait.

To help travellers restart their travel plans in 2021, Insight Vacations has 120 immersive itineraries across Europe, USA, Canada, Latin America Africa and Asia. With Luxury Gold, there are over 40 immersive worldwide journeys. A journey with Luxury Gold is about having personalized space with the help of a travelling concierge, who attends to all the details, so the guest can truly relax and enjoy their holiday.

We are excited to introduce these outstanding holidays offered by Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold, with the huge potential for premium and luxury travel products here in Kuwait. This strategic move allows us to offer a broader range of services to our customers while driving sales and awareness of our partners' quality products,' said Sebastian Joseph, Director for Caesars Holidays.

To assist guests in adapting to this new world of travel, Insight Vacations & Luxury Gold have implemented 'New Normal Safe and Seamless Traveller Journey' global protocols. 'With over forty years of experience, travellers can book with confidence with us knowing that they are in good hands with our exceptional care team. For 2021, not only will they have a Travel Director during their journey, but also a specially trained Well-Being Director, who takes a proactive approach to their welfare,' said Anthony Lim, Managing Director for Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold. 'This partnership with Caesars Holidays will allow us to present our unique holidays to discerning travellers seeking unique travel experiences. With new innovations such as our Small Private Group tours, we are able to cater to those seeking to travel exclusively with friends and family.' Customers who book a journey for 2021 can enjoy a reduced deposit of \$99 per person (regularly \$200) and save 10 percent. They also have the flexibility to change their booking up to 30 days prior to the departure of their trip.

## France's BNP profits steady in Q3 despite virus

PARIS: Top French banking group BNP Paribas reported yesterday a third quarter net profit of 1.89 billion euros, down 2.3 percent from a year earlier despite the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic. After getting through the second quarter relatively unscathed, the bank said the three months to September saw a sharp rebound in the economy, although those gains may now be in jeopardy due to a resurgence in coronavirus cases and new restrictions.

Third quarter net banking income a broad measure of profitability came in at 10.89 billion euros, little changed from a year earlier and was up 2.1 percent on a constant exchange rate basis. The bank said it increased bad loan provisions by nearly 50 percent to 1.2 billion euros but this was still some 200 million euros less than in the second quarter. BNP's finance and investment arm saw revenues jump 17.4 percent but its international financial services unit which groups consumer credit, insurance and retail banking fell 7.2 percent. — AFP



# Classifieds

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

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

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**Civil Aviation**  
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 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)

## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

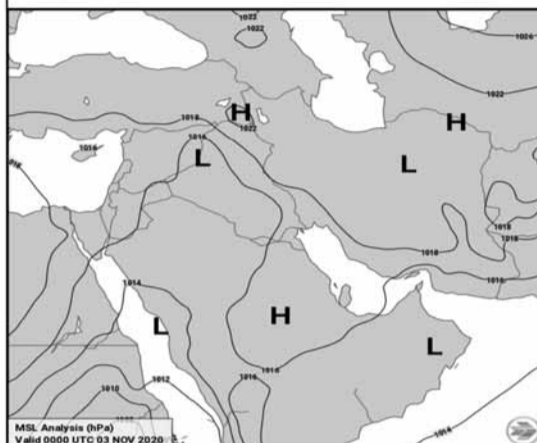
**BY DAY:** Rather hot and with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 06 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

**WEATHER WARNING** No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	32 °C	23 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	35 °C	16 °C
ABDALY	34 °C	16 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	34 °C	20 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	29 °C	24 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	34 °C	18 °C
WAFRA	34 °C	15 °C
SALMY	33 °C	17 °C

**SFC. CHART** 03/11/2020 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	11/04	Rather hot	34 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	11/05	Rather hot and Humid specially over coastal areas and Clouds will increase gradually with a	34 °C	16 °C	SE	12 - 38 km/h
Friday	11/06	Partly cloudy to cloudy and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming	31 °C	17 °C	SE	10 - 38 km/h
Saturday	11/07	Partly cloudy to cloudy and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming	32 °C	17 °C	SE	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:41
Sunrise	06:02
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:38
Sunset	17:01
Isha	18:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	35 °C
MIN. Temp.	16 °C
MAX. RH	92 %
MIN. RH	14 %
MAX. Wind	S 25 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## LOST

**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

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## 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
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8

## Word Search

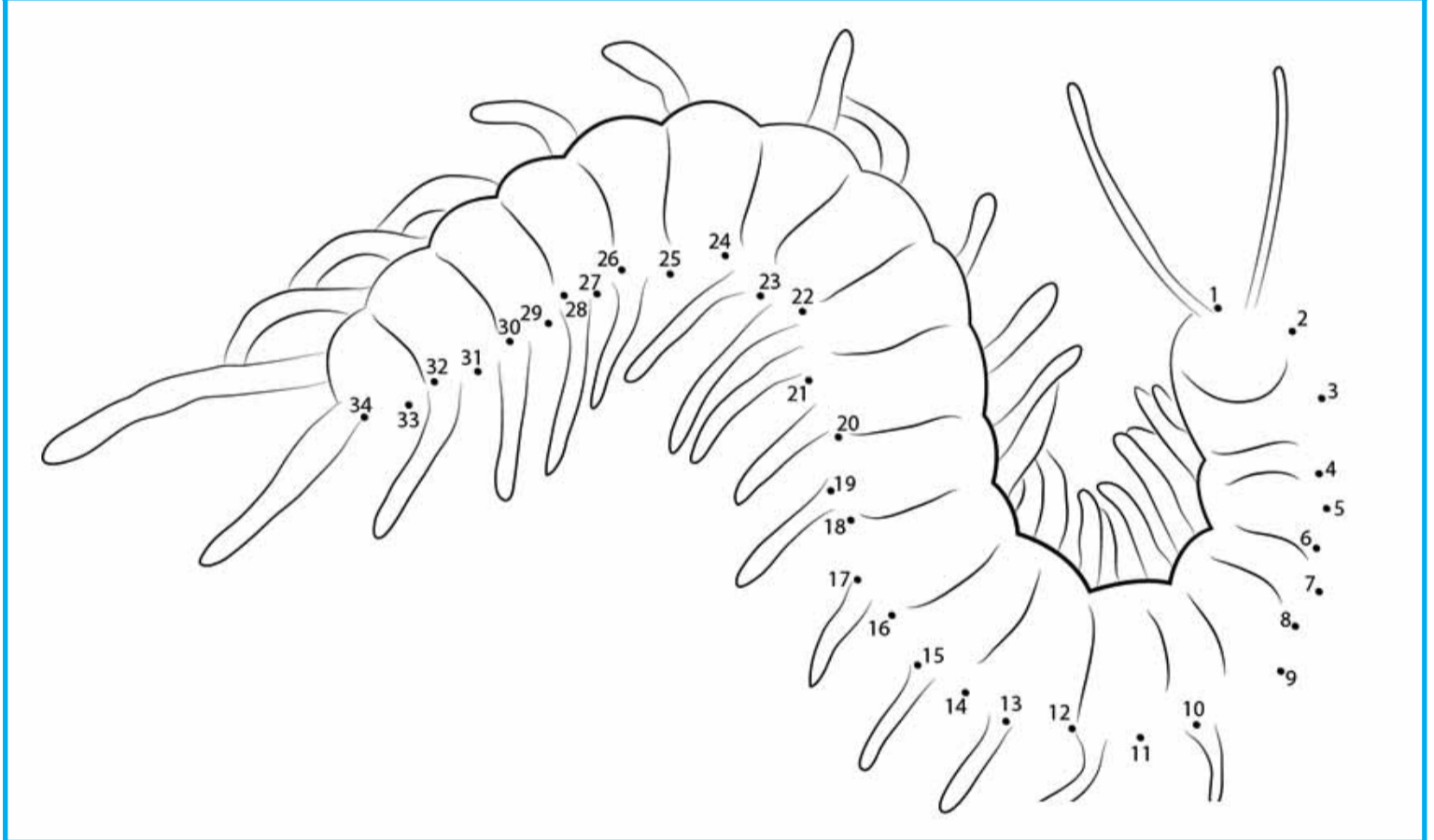
### Let's Go Camping

Find all of the camping related words from the list below. The words can be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal.

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

BACKPACK	FOREST	HAP	SPORES
BUS SPRAY	HIRE	MOSQUITOES	STREAM
CAMPFIRE	ICE CHEST	NAPKINS	SUNBLOCK
COMPASS	KNIFE	RACCOON	SHINISUIT
FIRE	LAKE	RANGER	TENT
FISHING POLE	LANTERN	SLEEPING BAG	TRAIL
FLASHLIGHT			

## Join the Dots



## STAR TRACK

<p><b>Aries (March 21-April 19)</b>                  Today, Aries, you can expect to be somewhat more enterprising in your relationships. You may find new friends or enjoy spending quality time with some old ones, if possible. Perhaps you will look forward to an intensification of your love life. With today's planetary configuration, you will surely find excellent resources for improving your emotional well-being.</p>	<p><b>Cancer (June 21-July 22)</b>                  Today's planetary configurations indicate that this would be a good moment to get rid of everything that's still holding you back from an impending rebirth, Cancer. One stumbling block for you may be the impulse that you seem to have to blend in with others. You're an individual, Cancer. This isn't something to overcome. It should be celebrated!</p>	<p><b>Libra (September 23-October 22)</b>                  You can interpret today's aspects in several ways, Libra. The planetary configurations correspond to a search for space, whether physical or intellectual. You may be asking yourself philosophical questions, or perhaps you're thinking of taking a long trip in the future. What will you decide to do? Will you read Kant or plan your dream trip?</p>	<p><b>Capricorn (December 22-January 19)</b>                  For you, Capricorn, the changing planetary configuration portends a period of timidity. You will probably go out less, introduce yourself to fewer new people, and be less prone to show off. But any relationships you form will be much more intense than usual. The weeks ahead are quite promising, although you may have to readjust some of your attitudes.</p>
<p><b>Taurus (April 20-May 20)</b>                  Recent aspects have allowed you to affirm yourself at work and, in a more general way, cement some aspects of your personality. Now you will be consolidating things. It's as if you've conceived of a product, created it, and are now finally ready to put it on the market. If this is in fact the case, Taurus, the current period corresponds to incoming money - and profits.</p>	<p><b>Leo (July 23-August 22)</b>                  Today's planetary configurations indicate that you can expect a very profitable period coming up, Leo. You've worked hard lately, and it's only natural that you should finally arrive at this stage. You're going to be able to measure the distance you've come, and above all, evaluate your power. Whatever you do, think big!</p>	<p><b>Scorpio (October 23-November 21)</b>                  In navigating the seas of your emotional life, Scorpio, you may feel as though you've made a great effort over the past month. You've been available and conciliatory and have done your best to maintain harmony. With today's celestial energy, you want to be more spontaneous. The enterprising and reckless you has returned!</p>	<p><b>Aquarius (January 20- February 18)</b>                  You may have spent the past few weeks exploring new horizons, talking to new people, going out more frequently in the evening, when possible, or even making short trips away from home. But this is a moment to settle down. Today's celestial configuration is giving you the incentive you need to stabilize yourself. Expect some pleasurable moments in the comfort of your home, Aquarius.</p>
<p><b>Gemini (May 21-June 20)</b>                  Today's planetary aspects herald the beginning of an especially agreeable period. You will carry confidence, clarity, and positive influence wherever you go, Gemini. You've used up a lot of your reserves recently and made it to this stage just in the nick of time. Enjoy your new strength.</p>	<p><b>Virgo (August 23-September 22)</b>                  Today's aspects ask you to make more of an effort, Virgo. You will have to come back down to Earth and join the rest of us mere mortals. You may be cultivating your independence a bit too much. It pulls you away from people. You should try to mingle and get involved in a cause that's bigger than you. Working with others is a necessary part of any job.</p>	<p><b>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)</b>                  With today's celestial configuration, your emotional universe will once again glow with positive energy. You will be meeting more people, and your encounters are likely to be more profound. The coming weeks are quite promising for you, Sagittarius. The music will be in the key to pleasure and sensuality. Allow the music to fill your senses!</p>	<p><b>Pisces (February 19-March 20)</b>                  You're likely to enjoy today's change of tone, Pisces. Don't you feel a need to take friendships beyond the superficial level? Perhaps you should reestablish contact with some former friends, too, although you may find that you have some bonds to repair. In any case, you can expect another month devoted to sweeping the cobwebs out of your emotional universe in order to let in sunlight and promise.</p>





Syrian Kurdish dog breeder Mohammed Derbas, 27, rides his motorcycle alongside his running hunting dogs in the village of Al-Darbasiyah in Syria's Kurdish-held northeastern Hasakah province near the border with Turkey.—AFP photos



Hunting dogs run together in the village of Al-Darbasiyah in Syria's Kurdish-held northeastern Hasakah province near the border with Turkey.

## SYRIAN VILLAGE TRAINS RACING DOGS DESPITE WAR AND PANDEMIC

On his motorbike, Mohammed Derbas speeds across a field in northeast Syria, slender Saluki dogs galloping behind. He hopes to export them for racing in the Gulf, despite war and coronavirus. Salukis, cousins of the greyhound, have been used for hunting for thousands of years in the Middle East and are some of the fastest of canines. Saluki dogs were revered in ancient Egypt, being kept as royal pets and mummified after death. The village of Ad-Darbasiyah in Syria's Kurdish-held northeast is famous for breeding and exporting them to the Gulf, notably to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where desert dog races are popular.

The once-lucrative export business, however, was dealt a blow by Syria's conflict since 2011 and this year's coronavirus pandemic that has hampered trade and travel. "Before the conflict, people from the Gulf used to visit us here, in search of the best pedigrees," said 27-year-old Derbas, who says he has been



A woman comes to retrieve her horse after being surrounded by hunting dogs in a field.

breeding dogs for 15 years. Even though business is slowing, Derbas keeps his 100 dogs in top shape.

Tails wagging, they rally around him as soon as he enters the fenced enclosure where they are kept. Some hounds

have their ears cropped, while others boast long legs partially dyed orange with henna. To improve their speed and endurance, he straddles his motorbike and sets off at full speed across the arid fields on the outskirts of his village, the

pack of dogs darting after him in a cloud of white dust. The dogs he breeds can be sold for one to four million Syrian pounds (around \$400 to \$1,600 at the black market exchange rate), depending on their characteristics, Derbas said. The breeder used to export between 100 and 150 dogs annually before the conflict, but that figure has dropped to 20 in recent years.

### Coronavirus complications

Airport closures over Covid-19 have further weakened his trade, especially since his dogs are shipped to the Gulf via Damascus airport. "Because of the novel coronavirus crisis, the airports were closed and our activity stopped," he told AFP. But the breeder expects a timid recovery after flights between Syria and Qatar resumed in late October. In the meantime, he hopes to attract customers through social media. His Instagram profile shows pictures of dead rabbits caught by his Salukis, and videos of the

dogs sprinting behind a motorcycle. Forty-year-old Jihad Mohammad shares the same passion. "I'm so happy when I go out hunting" with the dogs, he said.

Mohammad said what was once a beloved hobby—training dogs to hunt rabbits—had now become a business for many in the area. "I bought puppies and now I'm looking after them and training them to run," he told AFP. Shukri Moussa, 70, said some families in Ad-Darbasiyah started breeding Salukis in earnest around 20 years ago. "Back in the day the Kurds only had them for hunting, but now it's become a trade," he said, sitting under a tree in his courtyard, surrounded by his grandchildren. But he said not everyone welcomed the idea as socially acceptable. "Sometimes it upsets the villagers because they eat the chickens," he said.—AFP



A greyhound hunting dog, with its lower limbs dyed with henna as a form of decoration and protection, rests on the ground at a dog-breeding facility.



Syrian Kurdish dog breeder Mohammed Derbas, 27, sits next to one of his greyhound hunting dogs, with its lower limbs dyed with henna as a form of decoration and protection.



(From left to right) A greyhound with its lower limbs dyed with henna as a form of decoration and protection, stands together with a saluki dog inside a pen.



A greyhound hunting dog, with its lower limbs dyed with henna as a form of decoration and protection, stands leashed at a dog-breeding facility in the village of Al-Darbasiyah.

### Netflix to debut its first Egyptian original series 'Paranormal'

Netflix Inc will debut its first Egyptian television series "Paranormal," a major step in the streaming service's Middle Eastern strategy tomorrow. The series is based on Egyptian novelist Ahmed Khaled Tawfik's books about a doctor whose lifelong scientific convictions are suddenly called into question. His critically acclaimed novels in Arabic have sold more than 15 million copies. "Our plan is: invest in Arab creators, in Arab production, in Arab content. We have announced four projects, plus 'Paranormal,'" said Ahmed Sharkawi, director of Arabic and African original series at Netflix.

Paranormal centres around Refaat Ismail, a cynical doctor with a dark wit and whose convictions about the natural world are put to the test when he begins to experience paranormal activities. "This is one of my life's projects. I loved (the novels) since I was a kid... We've been trying to get (a series) out since 2006, so finally it has been shown to the audience," said Amr Salama, co-producer on the show along with Mohamed Hefzy. Egypt was historically dubbed the "Hollywood of the Middle East" and produces the most Arabic films and television series which are viewed widely across the region. "We are on a global platform... so this is an opportunity that is different from any other opportunity we've worked on. We can now have fans from other regions, other countries, who speak other languages," said Ahmed Amin who plays the show's protagonist. —AFP

## Tourists return to misty Machu Picchu after months of isolation

Mists hung low over Machu Picchu, adding an eerie, otherworldly atmosphere as delighted tourists entered the iconic Inca citadel for the first time after eight months of lockdown due to the coronavirus. Two couples from France and Chile were the lucky first visitors on Monday to the UNESCO World Heritage site. They were brought to the ruins by bus from the tiny Machu Picchu Pueblo village at the foot of the 2,400-meter (7,874 feet) mountain atop which the ruins sit. "We're really happy to be here today," Frenchwoman Veronique, who declined to give her surname, told AFP. She was left stranded in Peru with her husband and two children by the pandemic. Peru ordered a total lockdown and closed its borders in March. It has since become one of the worst-affected countries in Latin America, with the highest mortality rate in the world, after the tiny republic of San Marino.

While the confinement was hard on the couple, it was like a "holiday" for her children, said Veronique, whose family plans to return to France next year. "We may

continue our travels in Central America," added her husband Arnaud. The gates reopened the morning after a ceremonial Inca ritual was performed at the former religious site. "It was a surprise to see that effectively we were the first international tourists to enter this complex," Chilean Juan Jose Garcia, 34, told AFP. "I feel lucky to be able to visit here without people," added his wife Victoria Moran. The citadel's eight-month isolation was nothing compared to the four centuries it lay covered by dense vegetation before being rediscovered by American explorer Hiram Bingham in 1911. Before the pandemic, around 3,000 people a day would visit Machu Picchu, which means "Old Mountain" in the Quechua language that predominated in the Inca empire. Now, visitors and staff must pass through a temperature control before entering the site.

### 'An unexpected sight'

On Monday, the first visitors—mostly Peruvians—were met by low-lying clouds as they followed paths around the citadel

built in the 15th century by the Inca emperor Pachacutec. It was a ceremonial center, but there were also areas dedicated to agriculture and living quarters. It took a couple of hours for the low-lying clouds to lift and reveal the famous Huayna Picchu peak that provides the backdrop to the typical postcard picture of the site. Those low-lying clouds, as well as the dense mountainside vegetation, ensured that the citadel and its treasures—such as the Temple of the Sun or Intihuatana stone—remained hidden for four centuries until they were rediscovered by Bingham on July 24, 1911.

Having spoken to locals, the Yale University professor became convinced there were treasures to be discovered in the area, although he never imagined what he would find. He organized an expedition up the mountain led by a child guide. "We were confronted with an unexpected sight, a great flight of beautifully constructed stone terraces, perhaps a hundred of them, each hundreds of feet long and 10 feet high," Bingham wrote in his book "Lost City of the Incas." As he

continued, he came across a cave "as fine as the finest stonework in the world."

### 'Rise up to be born with me'

While Bingham (1875-1956) rediscovered the archeological ruins, historians say it was Chilean Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) who "discovered" its poetry. The site's reopening coincides with the 75th anniversary of Neruda's poem "The Heights of Machu Picchu," which helped give the citadel global exposure at a time when neither television, internet nor social media existed. Neruda rode a mule up to the citadel in 1943, three years after it opened to tourism. Two years later, he wrote his famous poem in which he tells the indigenous builders of the citadel to "rise up to be born with me, my brother." "Cling to my body like magnets. Hasten to my veins and to my mouth. Speak through my words and my blood," he tells them.—AFP



Tourists poses for a photo in front of the archaeological site of Machu Picchu, in Cusco, Peru amid the new coronavirus pandemic.



French citizens, Veronique (left) and Arnaud pose for a photo under a door at Machu Picchu, in Cusco, Peru amid the new coronavirus pandemic.—AFP photos



Lifestyle | Features



Manal Ataya, director-general of the Sharjah Museum Authority is pictured during an interview with AFP at Sharjah Art Museum. — AFP photos



An Emirati woman, wearing a protective mask due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visits Sharjah Art Museum.

# BEYOND DUBAI'S SHADOW, SHARJAH SHINES LIGHT ON ARAB ART

It doesn't have the malls of Dubai or the mega-projects of Abu Dhabi, but the conservative Gulf emirate of Sharjah has carved out a role for itself as a cultural capital. The unassuming emirate, often overlooked by visitors in favor of its glitzier neighbors, is ruled by Sheikh Sultan bin Mohamed Al-Qasimi, known for his keen interest in art and history. Its cultural calendar has evolved to feature book fairs, exhibitions at more than a dozen museums and festivals that celebrate photography, theatre, poetry and calligraphy. At the Museum of Sharjah, works on display showcase everything from daily life in the Old City of Yemen's capital Sanaa to a massacre of Palestinian refugees by Israel-allied Christian militia during Lebanon's civil war.

"We are providing an artistic service for the Arab world," said Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi, a well-known Emirati academic with half a million followers on Twitter, strolling through the galleries. The Barjeel Art Foundation which he founded in 2010 aims to preserve and exhibit more than 1,000 modern and contemporary pieces by Arab artists.



Manal Ataya, director-general of the Sharjah Museum Authority, speaks during an interview with AFP.

"Sharjah is not the richest emirate in the Gulf, but it is in terms of being the richest culturally," said the 42-year-old who has taught in universities in the United States and France.

### 'Go local'

Sharjah is one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, an innovative and oil-rich country which has poured huge sums into culture. In

2017, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a branch of the iconic Paris museum, opened its doors—attracting some two million visitors in its first two years of operation. The financial and entertainment hub of Dubai hosts a number of contemporary art galleries, and is next year to host the multi-billion-dollar world exhibition—Expo 2020—with major arts components. But it is Sharjah, probably best known for its total ban on alcohol, that has claimed the country's cultural crown.

Its place on the global art scene has been sealed by the Sharjah Biennial, a large-scale exhibition of contemporary works which it hosts every two years.

"For a desert, Sharjah is an uncommonly fertile location for a biennial. There are countless untapped histories in the land and surrounding waters—and just as many suppressed ones," ARTnews magazine said. UNESCO named Sharjah the cultural capital of the Arab world in 1998 and last year it was declared the World Book Capital. And the emirate this week launched the Sharjah International Literary Agency, a first in the Gulf, with the goal of promot-

ing Emirati and Arab writers.

"It's very easy to continue to support artists from Europe, but it's our artists here that need our support, resources and confidence," said Manal Ataya, director general of the Sharjah Museums Authority. "There's been an under-representation of Arab artists globally," she told AFP. Qassemi said the eureka moment that inspired his collection came when he saw crowds flocking to view a Van Gogh at Paris's renowned Musee d'Orsay. "I told myself one day I will see such a queue of people wanting to view the works of the best Arab artists," he said. "The Arab world is rich in art... Unfortunately many young Arabs are not aware of it. We must fight against Western domination and the orientalist vision of the Arab world. We must know local art and Arab artists before we learn about Picasso and Dali."

### Free expression a challenge

Moza Almatrooshi, a young Emirati sculptor, has set up shop in Sharjah where her quaint studio overlooks the museum, flanked by bright low-rise

buildings. Originally from the nearby emirate of Ajman, she splits her time between London and Sharjah, which she describes as "human-size" and the UAE's most habitable city. "I worked in Dubai for a little while and felt that the art there was more focused on being commercial, and my art practice is not very commercial," said Almatrooshi, whose creations focus on everyday life and culinary traditions. With only a few skyscrapers in sight, Sharjah's alleyways and old buildings are an "inspiration", she said.

But in a region where conservatism is deep-rooted in society and dissent is not tolerated, artists can fear censorship and reprisals—a dynamic that can have a suffocating effect on expression. "Western artists can freely show ideas we cannot, not because we are against them but because we are a little fearful," said Almatrooshi. The challenge, she says, is to convey the message even when "we can't say everything we want".—AFP



An Emirati man, wearing a protective mask due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visits Sharjah Art Museum.



Curator Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi is pictured during an interview with AFP.

## 'MAO'S LAST DANCER' GLIDES THROUGH PANDEMIC

Since Li Cunxin was plucked from rural China to join Madame Mao's elite ballet school, through his exile in the US and now the pandemic, his life has been a reluctant pas de deux with politics. The 59-year-old artistic director of the Queensland Ballet—one of Australia's premier dance companies—prefers to focus discussion on his art. But his ascent from humble beginnings has been punctuated by political turmoil—from the horrors of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward to life in exile, to the anti-Chinese backlash of today's coronavirus pandemic. Li was born in 1961 as Mao's flawed development plan led to raging famine across China.

Every day was "a struggle for survival" for Li's poverty-stricken farming family, he told AFP. Things began to change when recruiters from Madame Mao's Beijing Dance Academy visited his school when he was 11 years old. "My class teacher stood by the door and she did something very unusual. She stopped (the) last gentleman from

Beijing to leave the room and said 'What about that one?' And she pointed at me." Li passed tough auditions to become one of 44 children selected from among millions to begin seven years of "absolutely brutal" ballet training. "We started from 5:30 in the morning to 9:00 at night. Six days a week we trained," he said.

### Defiance and defection

The rigorous program instilled a life-long sense of discipline and perseverance, but at first the young Li found himself bored and hating ballet. Eventually another teacher stepped in and helped Li to become, he says matter-of-factly, "widely considered the best dancer China had ever produced". In 1979, in the throes of the Cold War, he was invited to study with the Houston Ballet, where he fell in love and married an American dancer—leading to his "darkest moment".

On arriving at the city's Chinese Consulate to share what he thought was good news, Li was immediately

detained for defying the Communist Party. "For over 21 hours I was interrogated. And I felt really my life was on the line," he said. Then came a crucial intervention: US President George Bush and his wife Barbara, who was on the board of the Houston Ballet, successfully lobbied for his release. Li defected, cutting all ties with China. He went on to become top-ranking principal at the Houston Ballet and later, after moving to Melbourne with his second wife, the Australian Ballet.

Li was banned from returning for many years, and today assiduously avoids politics, deflecting questions about Beijing's present-day targeting of citizens overseas. Relations between his current and former homes are frosty, with relations between Canberra and Beijing reaching new lows after Australia called for an inquiry into the origins of the pandemic.

### Racism has spiked

Its a "very complicated time" for Chinese-Australians, many of whom feel "caught in the middle" of the two nations, according to Centre for Asian-Australian Leadership director Jieh-Yung Lo. Australians' opinion of China has plummeted while racism against Chinese-Australians has spiked, Lo said, making role models like Li—who can bridge the divide—more important than ever. "The real hope in combating this is having more Chinese-Australians in leadership positions across Australia's public and private institutions," Lo said. As artistic director of Queensland Ballet since 2012—following a lengthy stint as a stockbroker after retiring from performance—Li has been credited with revitalising the company.

It has grown from a 24-member company with an annual budget of Aus\$5 million (US\$4 million), to 60 dancers with a Aus\$24 million (US\$17 million) budget. As for many in the arts worldwide, those hard-won gains are suddenly at risk from the coronavirus

pandemic. As the first cases of Covid-19 emerged, Li took a "huge risk" by deciding to move Queensland Ballet's entire season to 2021. While the decision provided much-needed certainty, it also created a revenue hole. Though Australia has largely curbed the virus outbreak Li says he cannot be more than 50 percent sure the company will perform next year. Nor can he rule out more "tough decisions"—including job cuts—but wants to help steer the industry through the crisis, particularly through his position on a government arts advisory board.



In this picture artistic director of the Queensland Ballet Li Cunxin poses for a photograph during an interview at a studio in Brisbane.

"We do want to engage with our community because we do believe arts will play such a vital part of helping people emerge from this pandemic... the arts is inspirational, it does lift up people's spirits and give people hope," he said. "But there's no doubt: The road ahead I see, for the next two years at least, is going to be very, very challenging." After a lifetime of success emerging from struggle, Li is nevertheless upbeat about the future. "I'm an optimist. I tend to look at challenges, difficulties or obstacles as opportunities in disguise."—AFP



In this picture artistic director of the Queensland Ballet Li Cunxin (center) instructs dancers at a studio in Brisbane. — AFP photos

## Not forever: World's biggest pink diamond mine closes

The world's largest pink diamond mine has shut its doors after exhausting its reserves of the expensive gems, global mining giant Rio Tinto said yesterday. The Argyle mine, in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia, churned out more than 90 percent of the world's pink diamonds—sought after for their incredible rarity. The seam was discovered in 1979 and the Anglo-Australian firm began mining operations there four years later. It has since produced more than 865 million carats of rough diamonds, including a small but steady stream of prized pink stones, according to Rio Tinto.

Argyle employees and indigenous landowners attended a ceremony at the shuttered mine to mark the end of operations. The company expects efforts to decommission and dismantle the 37-year-old site will take around five years. "A new chapter will now begin as we start the process of respectfully closing the Argyle mine and rehabilitating the land, to be handed back to its traditional custodians," mine manager Andrew Wilson said. Over the past two decades, the value of pink diamonds has risen by 500 percent, Rio Tinto's Sinead Kaufman told public broadcaster ABC. The end of operations at Argyle is likely to push the price of the diamonds even higher, jewelers say. At current rates, the gems can fetch up to \$3 million per carat. —AFP



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Dani Morshead shows off her talent at Red Bull Bay Climb in San Francisco, California. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Irish raider Twilight Payment wins Melbourne Cup marred by tragedy

### Death of Anthony Van Dyck cast shadow over the event

MELBOURNE: Irish raider Twilight Payment won the coveted Aus\$8.0 million (US\$5.5 million) Melbourne Cup yesterday in a race run without spectators and marred by the death of English Derby winner Anthony Van Dyck. With Jye McNeil in the saddle, the eight-year-old gelding held off a charging Tiger Moth and Prince of Arran in a thrilling finish to the grueling 3,200-metre (two mile) handicap, considered the ultimate test of stamina and staying power.

But Anthony Van Dyck, one of the pre-race favorites at Flemington, broke down with a leg injury and was later put down—the seventh Melbourne Cup horse to perish on race day since 2013. McNeil, one of the rising stars of the sport, triumphed in his maiden Melbourne Cup, which was held behind closed doors for the first time because of the coronavirus pandemic. “There’s so many emotions, it’s such a big moment, it’s a miracle,” said McNeil.

“It’s very overwhelming. There was a lot of hard work getting to this stage and I couldn’t be more impressed with how everything played out today.” “I’ve been dreaming about this since before I could ride,” he added. “It was a very surreal feeling crossing that line.” Veteran owner Lloyd Williams’ seventh Melbourne Cup win came against a top-quality field heavy with overseas runners, mostly Irish

and British, despite the coronavirus pandemic. Racing out of barrier 12, the Joseph O’Brien-trained Twilight Payment led for much of the race with Ireland’s Tiger Moth charging late alongside Britain’s Prince of Arran, last year’s runner-up ridden on Tuesday by female jockey Jamie Kah.

#### ‘Strange feeling’

First staged in 1861, the Melbourne Cup has been run on the first Tuesday of November since 1876, and the winning horse instantly becomes a household name in Australia. It is the highlight of Australia’s racing calendar and ordinarily up to 90,000 colorfully dressed and boozy punters would be trackside. But despite Melbourne emerging from months of Covid-19 lockdown last week, organizers decided it was too soon to allow fans and just jockeys, trainers, security and operations staff were on site.

It meant that instead of Flemington erupting in cheers to the sound of popping champagne corks on a glorious, sunny day, the only sound was the thundering of hooves across the turf. There was drama before the race with the Williams-owned French gelding King of Leogrance, winner of the Adelaide Cup this year, scratched after showing signs of lameness, reducing the field to 23. The death of Ireland’s Anthony Van Dyck, from the sta-



WERRIBEE: A handout photo shows Irish horse Anthony Van Dyck enjoying a sand roll after galloping at Werribee Racecourse ahead of the Melbourne Cup horse race. — AFP

ble of trainer Aidan O’Brien, then cast a shadow over the event.

“The horse received immediate veterinary care, however he was unable to be saved due to the nature of the injury sustained,” said Racing Victoria’s Jamie Stier. He added that research was underway aimed at the early detection and prevention of bone injuries in thoroughbred racehorses.

Social media reacted in horror to the death and animal rights activists, demonstrating outside Flemington, were outraged. —AFP

## Champion Kyoguchi catches coronavirus, title bout scrapped

TOKYO: Japan’s WBA light flyweight super champion Hiroto Kyoguchi has tested positive for the coronavirus, his gym announced Monday, forcing organisers to scrap his title defense against Thailand’s Thanongsak Simsri. Kyoguchi, 26, who had been due to face Thanongsak in Osaka yesterday, tweeted simply: “I’m really sorry” without giving any further details. “We learned today that Kyoguchi and his trainer tested positive for the coronavirus,” a staff member at Kyoguchi’s gym told AFP. “The title match scheduled for tomorrow is cancelled,” she said, adding it might be rearranged for a later date. Kyoguchi has so far shown no symptoms, local media said.

Both Kyoguchi and Thanongsak, 20, are currently 14-0 as professionals. Kyoguchi had been due to defend his title in May, but the bout was postponed

because of the pandemic. The Thai boxer had been self-quarantining in Japan ahead of the bout at an Osaka arena where organizers planned to halve the number of spectators to around 2,000 as part of anti-infection measures. The abrupt announcement came just hours after the two boxers passed their weigh-ins. It would have been the first men’s world title match held in Japan since the pandemic began.

Kyoguchi’s local fans appeared understanding of the cancellation, with one tweeting: “You should not be sorry. We are looking forward to the next match.” Japan is making a tentative return to hosting events with international athletes as it navigates difficult questions over how it can stage next year’s virus-postponed Olympics. Questions arose over a gymnastics event featuring China, Russia, the US and Japan when the International Gymnastics Federation said Kohei Uchimura, the two-time men’s all-around Olympic champion, had tested positive.

But the test was later revealed to be a false positive, with Uchimura testing negative and now scheduled to take part in the competition this weekend in Tokyo. Officials are also trialling a series of sports events with capacity crowds with an eye on next year’s Games. On Friday, thousands of fans flooded



OSAKA: Japan’s Hiroto Kyoguchi (right) and Thailand’s Thanongsak Simsri pose for a photo during their weigh-in in Osaka ahead of their World Boxing Association (WBA) Light Flyweight Super Championship bout. — AFP

into a baseball stadium near Tokyo that will host Olympic events next year as a test for coronavirus prevention measures. — AFP

## Delhi seal second spot in IPL play-offs; Bangalore qualify

DUBAI: Pacemen Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada combined to help Delhi Capitals take second spot in the Indian Premier League play-offs with a win over Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday. Virat Kohli’s Bangalore, who are chasing their maiden IPL title along with Delhi, also made the play-offs despite their six-wicket loss in Abu Dhabi.

“It’s a mixed bag, you come to games to try and get a result your way,” said Kohli, whose team ended the league phase with seven wins and seven losses. “I think we’ve played good enough cricket in this tournament to qualify. We can be more brave in the back end, probably be better in the powerplay (with the ball) which has been our strength.” The South African bowling duo of Nortje and Rabada shared five wickets between them as Delhi restricted Bangalore to 152 for seven.

Shikhar Dhawan and Ajinkya Rahane scored half-centuries as Delhi completed their chase in 19 overs to be placed behind holders and table-toppers Mumbai Indians. Delhi will clash with Mumbai in the first qualifier tomorrow and the loser will get another chance in the second qualifier to make the final on November 10. Bangalore will meet either Sunrisers Hyderabad, who need to win this season’s last league game against Mumbai to book their last-four spot, or Kolkata Knight Riders in the eliminator on Friday. — AFP

## Formula E takes minority stake in Agag’s Extreme E

LONDON: Formula E has become a minority shareholder in Extreme E, the electric off-road series due to start next year with six-times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton a team owner, the two sides announced yesterday. No financial details were provided for what was described as a strategic investment. Formula E, a city-based all-electric single-seater championship, counts Liberty Global and Discovery Communications as major shareholders. The series were both founded by Spanish businessman Alejandro Agag, who is chairman of Formula E and chief executive of Extreme E. Formula E chief executive Jamie Reigle will have a seat on the Extreme E board but the businesses will be independent of each other. Agag, who also owns a stake in Formula E, told Reuters that he would be the majori-

ty shareholder in Extreme E. “What it gives is clearly the backing of Formula E to Extreme E and also the backing of the Formula E shareholders, so Liberty Global and Discovery have backed this investment,” said the Spaniard. “To have the backing of those two companies for Extreme E gives a very strong financial peace of mind.” Reigle said there was a perception already that the two series had common equity, due to Agag’s involvement in both, and the move provided clarity.

There was also an ‘industrial logic’ to accelerate the use of electric vehicles. “We’re an electric motorsport, we’re not a venture capital fund,” he said. “So we’re not making this investment because we’re responding to shareholders. It’s really a strategic alliance.” Extreme E aims to highlight climate change and promote sustainability with races in some of the world’s most remote and harsh environments that are already suffering from global warming and pollution. Nico Rosberg, the 2016 Formula One champion, also has a team while other entries include US-based Ganassi Racing and Andretti Autosport. — Reuters

## News in brief

### Villarreal up to third

MADRID: Villarreal climbed to third place in La Liga on Monday with a 2-0 victory at home to rock-bottom Real Valladolid that left Unai Emery’s side two points off top spot. Nigeria winger Samuel Chukwueze bagged his first goal of the season with a classy left-foot finish on 21 minutes and Pau Torres added a second before half-time. Villarreal are unbeaten in seven games in all competitions since a 4-0 defeat by Barcelona on September 27. Real Sociedad occupy first place in Spain with Real Madrid a point back in second. Atletico Madrid are another two points behind but have two games in hand on the leaders. — AFP

### Okolie gets world title shot

LONDRES: Lawrence Okolie will fight Poland’s Krzysztof Glowacki for the vacant WBO cruiserweight title on the undercard of Anthony Joshua’s bout with Kubrat Pulev in London next month, promoters announced Monday. British boxer Okolie will bid for a maiden world title in his home city on December 12 when Joshua puts his WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO heavyweight belts on the line against Bulgaria’s Pulev at the O2 Arena. The 27-year-old Okolie, unbeaten in 14 professional fights including 11 knockouts, won the European cruiserweight title with a seventh-round stoppage of Yves Ngabu in October last year. “It has been a long and hard road to get here,” said Okolie in a statement issued by promoters Matchroom Boxing. “I’m very excited and blessed to have this opportunity. I’ll be grabbing it with both hands. “I will become Britain’s next world champion on December 12.” Okolie added former two-time world champion Glowacki was a “great fighter” who is going to be my “biggest test on paper as a professional”. — AFP

### Atletico lose to Palmeiras

SAO PAULO: Atletico Mineiro missed the chance to return to the top of Brazil’s Serie A on Monday after losing 3-0 to Palmeiras. A first-half opener from Raphael Veiga was followed by goals from Roni in the 70th minute and Wesley seven minutes later to seal the points for the Sao Paulo side. Atletico, three points behind joint leaders Internacional and Flamengo, remain in third place, although they have played a game less. Palmeiras are in seventh, seven points off the lead. — Reuters

### Betts eyes rare double

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Dodgers star Mookie Betts could become only the second player in history to win Most Valuable Player in both of Major League Baseball’s top leagues after being named among the finalists for the National League award on Monday. Betts, who played a pivotal role in helping the Dodgers win their first World Series since 1988 with their 4-2 series victory over the Tampa Bay Rays last week, was named alongside the Atlanta Braves’ Freddie Freeman and the San Diego Padres’ Manny Machado. The 28-year-old Betts was the American League’s MVP in 2018 when he helped the Boston Red Sox to their World Series crown. Betts was sensationally traded away by the Red Sox to the Dodgers in February this year, and later signed a \$365 million contract that will keep him at the Dodgers through to the end of the 2032 season. — AFP

### Ravens star Humphrey positive

LOS ANGELES: Baltimore Ravens defensive star Marlon Humphrey said Monday that he has tested positive for COVID-19. “I got the Rona hopefully I’ll be back soon,” Humphrey wrote on Twitter. The 24-year-old, one of the best cornerbacks in the NFL, played in all 53 defensive snaps on Sunday in Baltimore’s 28-24 defeat to the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Ravens said in a statement that Humphrey’s positive test was discovered early Monday, and that they played had entered self-quarantine. “In coordination with the league, we have started the process of contact tracing and are following the guidelines of intensive protocol,” the Ravens said. The Pittsburgh Steelers meanwhile said all tests of its team carried out on Sunday had come back negative. “We will follow the NFL’s intensive protocols and take precautionary measures at the UPMC Rooney Sports Complex to ensure the safety of our players, coaches and staff,” spokesman Burt Lauten said. — AFP

### Ibra flirts with international return

STOCKHOLM: Zlatan Ibrahimovic on Monday sent a signal that he might be considering an international comeback as he continues to produce show-stopping displays for AC Milan that defy his advancing years. Ibrahimovic, who turned 39 last month, posted a picture of himself on his social media channels in a Sweden kit with the message “Long time no see”. However when asked by Swedish sports daily Sportbladet, Sweden’s team manager Stefan Pettersson said he had no recent contact with Ibrahimovic. Sportbladet also reports the Swedish Football Federation has not contacted AC Milan about the player. Ibrahimovic, who retired from international football after Euro 2016, has been in superb form since the start of the new Serie A season. His haul of seven goals in just four matches has made him the league’s top scorer despite missing two of Milan’s six Serie A matches after testing positive for coronavirus. — AFP



Sports

# Ajax missing 4 key players after coronavirus setback

## Four positive in latest Premier League COVID-19 tests

**THE HAGUE:** Ajax will be without four key players including captain Dusan Tadic and goalkeeper Andre Onana in their Champions League clash against Midtjylland after testing positive for coronavirus, news reports said Monday. Two other regular starters, midfielders Davy Klaassen and Ryan Gravenberch, were also omitted from Erik ten Hag's 17-man squad to face the Danish-based club yesterday. At least seven other players including reserve goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg and attacking midfielder Zakaria Labyad were left off the plane as well.

Ten Hag, at a press conference ahead of the Group D encounter, remained vague about the players and their COVID-19 status, and why they could not travel to play at the MCH Arena in the western Danish city of Herning. "There are a number of players who did not get permission to enter Denmark to play here. They are allowed to play in the Netherlands but not in Denmark," Ten Hag said at the livestreamed conference.

Pressed for a reason Ten Hag said: "I can't say anything about the exact reasons and I'm also not going to comment on individuals because of privacy reasons." "All I know is that they did not get permission to enter Denmark," he said. Ten Hag then added "it has to do with testing. All I can say is the players affected by this are healthy in the sense that they don't have any symptoms or complaints."

Denmark enforces stricter anti-coronavirus rules than many other European countries.

It could be that some players who tested positive before still have residual traces of the virus showing up in blood tests, even though they have recovered completely, the RTL Nieuws private broadcaster said. "I find this rather odd," said Ten Hag. "We are playing in a European competition. But European countries have different rules when it comes to corona," he said. "That's strange and it is not fair play either," added Ten Hag. Dutch news reports say the missing players are now pinning their hopes on a second test, hoping that would come up negative. "I am therefore hopeful that they will still be welcome on Tuesday," Ten Hag said, adding "we are still working on it".

### Premier League tests

In another development, the Premier League said on Monday that four people have returned positive results in its latest round of COVID-19 tests conducted on players and staff last week. The league said the individuals who had tested positive for the novel coronavirus would now self-isolate for 10 days. "The Premier League can today confirm that between Monday, October 26 and Sunday, November 1, 1,446 players and club staff were tested for COVID-19," the league said in a statement. "Of these, there were four new positive tests."



**BERGAMO:** Ajax's Serbian forward Dusan Tadic (right) scores a penalty kick past Atalanta's Italian goalkeeper Marco Sportiello during the UEFA Champions League group D match, between Atalanta and Ajax at the Atleti Azzurri d'Italia stadium. —AFP

A total of 48 people have tested positive for the virus in nine rounds of testing since the new league campaign began in September. The UK government has allowed Premier League football and other elite sports to con-

tinue without spectators during the four-week lockdown from Thursday. There have been more than a million COVID-19 infections and over 46,000 deaths in the UK, according to a Reuters tally. —Agencies

## Chinese football sets 'miserable' record as teams see red

**SHANGHAI:** Referees dished out dozens of yellow cards and at least 12 players were sent off in only eight matches in what state media yesterday branded a "miserable" record in the Chinese Super League. The flurry of cards came as the CSL approaches its nervy climax to the coronavirus-hit season, with the title and automatic relegation both set to be decided over the next 10 days.

Wuhan Zall's defeat on penalties to Qingdao Huanghai on Monday in a bitter relegation dogfight was particularly bad-tempered, with three players dismissed. Wuhan's coaching staff were so incensed at one point that they stormed on to the pitch, reportedly causing South Korean referee Ko Hyung-jin to temporarily halt the match.

"We are very confused about this now and it is not our bad performance that caused the current situation," coach Pang Li fumed, referring to the performance of Ko, who was drafted in to raise the standard of refereeing in an attempt to avoid just this kind of controversy. There were so many incidents in the 18th round of matches, involving both players and coaching staff, that Chinese media tallies differed. But all agreed the deluge of cards was an unwanted record.

The state Beijing News said that there were 60 yellow cards and 13 red - "the highest number of sin-



**SUZHOU:** Photo shows Wuhan Zall's Leo Carrilho Baptista (left) heading the ball next to teammate Song Zhiwei (2nd left) during the Chinese Super League football match (CSL) between Wuhan Zall and Beijing Guoan in Suzhou in China's eastern Jiangsu province. Wuhan Zall are fighting for survival in the Chinese Super League, desperate to avoid a heart-breaking conclusion to a year that began with them stranded outside their coronavirus-scarred city. —AFP

gle-round red and yellow cards in the history of the Super League". It said with the CSL revamped to make up for five months of the season lost to the coronavirus, and teams living in secure "bubbles", players and coaches were under extreme pressure. Teams are now playing two-legged ties in a knockout formula to decide league placings, including the title and relegation spots.

The chaotic round of just-concluded matches saw Shanghai SIPG's title hopes obliterated by Jiangsu

Suning, who pulled off a shock victory in extra-time despite having only 10 men for over an hour. Defender Abduhamit Abdugheni was dismissed after he raked his studs down the base of the spine of Brazilian star Oscar. "The closed-game system (bubble) and the brutal knockout system of the second stage of the league has made the games full of uncertainty," said the Beijing News. "Every team is in a state of physical and mental overload. This miserable scene is not a surprise.—AFP

## Moroccans Berkane win CAF Confederation Cup

**JOHANNESBURG:** Defender Issoufou Dayo scored a rare goal to give Renaissance Berkane of Morocco a 1-0 win over Pyramids of Egypt in Sunday's CAF Confederation Cup final. Dayo only previous effort in the competition came more than a year ago at home to Ashanti Gold of Ghana in a round-of-32 second leg. The title decider was delayed five months because of the coronavirus pandemic. Beaten in the final of the secondary African club competition last season by Zamalek of Egypt, Berkane made no mistake at the second attempt and should have won more convincingly in Rabat.

The Moroccans created far more scoring chances than the Egyptians before surviving a tense finish when reduced to 10 men on 89 minutes after Bakr el Helali was shown a red-card. Burkina Faso international Dayo—the only non-Moroccan in the starting line-up—struck after 15 minutes at the Stade Moulay Abdallah in a match staged behind closed doors. A goalmouth scramble after a free-kick ended with the centre-back credited with the goal that proved the match-winner.

Berkane are the fifth Moroccan club after FAR Rabat, FUS Rabat, Moghreb Fes and Raja Casablanca to win the African equivalent of the Europa League. North African clubs have dominated the 17 editions of the Confederation Cup with Tunisian clubs also lifting the trophy five times, and Egyptian giants Al Ahly and Zamalek once each. Berkane will defend the trophy next season while Pyramids go into the CAF Champions League or Confederation Cup depending on whether they finish second or third in the Egyptian Premier League.

### Pre-match surprise

Croatian coach Ante Cacic sprang a pre-match surprise by omitting Ghanaian forward John Antwi from the team that beat Horoya of Guinea in a semi-final last Tuesday. He preferred defender Abdallah Bakry, signalling a cautious approach that backfired during the opening half with the Cairo outfit lacking numbers on the rare occasions they attacked.

Berkane pressed Pyramids and 35-year-old forward Mouhssine Iajour was a constant threat with his pace. It took the Egyptians 25 minutes to worry Berkane when Mohamed Farouk fired narrowly wide from an Omar Gaber pass. Cacic changed his approach as the second half progressed, bringing on attackers Ibrahim Hassan and Antwi. Farouk once again came close to equalising.

Hamid Laachir wasted a chance to put Berkane further ahead on 72 minutes by blazing over from close range after a defensive mix-up. El Helali was sent off after a VAR (Video Assistant Referee) review for a reckless challenge on Omar Gaber, but Pyramids could not find the equaliser that would have taken the final to extra time. It was a disappointing end to the first African campaign of Pyramids, who are called the 'Manchester City' of Africa because the club has benefited from spending sprees by Saudi and Emirati owners. Renaissance are known as the Orange Boys as they are based in Berkane, the northeastern hub of citrus fruit production in Morocco. —AFP

## Diego Maradona taken to hospital

**BUENOS AIRES:** Diego Maradona has been admitted to hospital in Argentina with undisclosed "health problems" although it is not related to COVID-19 and his condition is not thought to be serious, his personal doctor and local media reported on Monday. Maradona, 60, was taken to the Ipena clinic in La Plata, about an hour from Buenos Aires. Maradona coaches the local club Gimnasia y Esgrima.

Maradona, who won the World Cup with Argentina in 1986 and is widely considered to be one of the greatest players of all time, was admitted to hospital to undergo tests, his doctor Leopoldo Luque said. He had been feeling poorly for some time and will be held under observation for "at least three days", Luque told reporters.

"He is not well psychologically and that has an impact on his physical wellbeing," Luque said. "He's not as well as I would like and as well as I know he can be. He needs help, this is the time to help him." "Diego is a person who is sometimes excellent and sometimes not so much," Luque added. "He could be 10 thousand times better. And bringing him here helps him." "It's very difficult being Maradona."

Luque did not give specific details of Maradona's ailment but said it was not related to COVID-19. Maradona last appeared in public on his 60th birthday last Friday before his side's league match against Patronato. He was gifted a plaque and a cake to celebrate the occasion but he did not stay to watch the game and witnesses said he looked unwell and weak. The former Napoli, Barcelona and Boca Juniors player has suffered frequent periods in hospital over the years, often due to the extravagant lifestyle that accompanied and followed his playing career.

The former Napoli striker was admitted to hospital in January 2019 with internal bleeding in the stomach. He also fell ill at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, where he was filmed passing out in an executive box at the Argentina-Nigeria game. Maradona was taken into hospital in 2004 with severe heart and respiratory problems linked to cocaine use. He later underwent drug rehabilitation in Cuba and Argentina before a stomach-stapling operation in 2005 helped him



Argentine former football star Diego Maradona

lose weight. In 2007 he checked himself into a clinic in Buenos Aires to help him overcome alcohol abuse problems. — Reuters



### UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Zenit St Petersburg v Lazio	20:55
beIN Sports HD 2	
Istanbul Basaksehir v Man United	20:55
beIN Sports HD 1	
Sevilla v Krasnodar	23:00
beIN Sports HD 3	
Chelsea v Stade Rennais	23:00
beIN Sports HD 2	
Barcelona v Dynamo Kiev	23:00
beIN Sports HD 1	
Ferencvárosi v Juventus	23:00
beIN Sports HD 4	
Club Brugge v Borussia Dortmund	23:00
beIN Sports HD 5	
Leipzig v Paris Saint-Germain	23:00
beIN Sports HD 6	

## Inspirational Rashford making a difference on and off the field

**LONDON:** Marcus Rashford's impact now stretches far beyond the football field as the Manchester United and England forward has become a global icon by taking on politicians to fight for an end to child poverty. In the week of his 23rd birthday, Rashford scored his first career hat-trick in a 5-0 thrashing of RB Leipzig in the Champions League, gained the support of over one million signatures in a petition to try and extend free school meals during half-term holidays and inspired thousands of volunteers across the country to step into the breach when parliament did not intervene.

After his campaign forced a government U-turn over free school meals over the summer holidays, Rashford has formed a taskforce with major food suppliers, which is now helping to provide over seven million meals per week for those in need. Rashford's message has been powerful as he went through the difficulties millions face in the economic crisis caused by coronavirus as he relied on the help of friends and neighbors during an impoverished childhood.

The determination to make a difference has proved infectious with major brands, other football clubs and players inspired by the movement. On Monday, Rashford announced a partnership with fashion brand Burberry that will provide grants to two youth centers he attended as a child, as well as a donation to provide over 200,000 meals. Brighton, Bradford, Luton and Yeovil were among a host of other English clubs to provide meals during half-term week. England international teammate Reece James has set up a similar project to raise £100,000 for a London food charity by the time he turns 21 on December 8.

Following in the footsteps of NBA stars' activism on racial injustice, footballers are no longer satisfied just doing their talking on the pitch. Empowered by millions of followers on social media, they are using their platform to positively enact change. After a disagreement on the government's policy for hungry children Conservative MP Steve Baker tweeted: "You have 3.4m followers Marcus, to my 96k. The power is yours here." —AFP



**14** Irish raider Twilight Payment wins Melbourne Cup marred by tragedy



**15** Ajax missing 4 key players after coronavirus setback



**15** 'Miserable' record in Chinese Super League; teams see red



## Buccaneers hold off Giants

NFL mulling 16-team playoff field if games lost to pandemic



EAST RUTHERFORD: Mike Evans #13 of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers pulls in this touchdown reception against James Bradberry #24 of the New York Giants in the fourth quarter at MetLife Stadium on November 02, 2020. — AFP

**RUTHERFORD:** Tom Brady threw two second-half touchdown passes as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers rallied from an early 11-point deficit to post a 25-23 victory over the New York Giants on Monday night at East Rutherford, N.J. Brady completed 28 of 40 passes for 279 yards as Tampa Bay (6-2) won its third straight game and moved a half-game ahead of the New Orleans Saints in the NFC South. Rob Gronkowski and Mike Evans caught touchdown passes, and Ryan Succop booted four field goals.

Daniel Jones connected on 25 of 41 passing for 256 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions for the Giants (1-7), who dropped to 1-3 at home. Wayne Gallman rushed for a touchdown while Dion Lewis and Golden Tate caught scoring passes for New York. The Giants pulled within 25-23 on Jones' 19-yard scoring pass to Tate with 28 seconds left. Antoine Winfield Jr broke up the two-point conversion pass to Lewis, and Justin Watson covered the ensuing onside kick to seal the Buccaneers' victory.

Tampa Bay went ahead to stay on Brady's 8-yard scoring pass to Evans with 9:02 left in the game.

The diving grab in the right corner of the end zone gave the Buccaneers a 22-17 advantage, and Succop added a 38-yard field goal with 3:41 remaining. The two touchdown passes raised Brady's total to an all-time leading 561, one ahead of Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints.

Carlton Davis and Sean Murphy-Bunting notched interceptions for the Buccaneers, who were outgained 357 yards to 344. Tampa Bay moved ahead at 15-14 on Brady's 3-yard touchdown pass to Gronkowski with six minutes left in the third quarter. A two-point conversion pass for Evans was incomplete. The score marked the 93rd time-counting the postseason—that Brady and Gronkowski teamed up for a touchdown, moving the duo into second place on the all-time list, ahead of the San Francisco 49ers' combo of Steve Young and Jerry Rice.

The leaders are the Indianapolis Colts pair of Peyton Manning and Marvin Harrison at 114. The Giants went back ahead at 17-15 on Graham Gano's 33-yard field goal with 15 seconds left in the quarter. Earlier, Jones threw a 7-yard touchdown pass to

Lewis in the first quarter, and Gallman scored on a 2-yard run with 1:46 left in the second as the Giants held a 14-3 lead. Succop connected on a 40-yard field goal—his second field goal of the first half—with seven seconds left before intermission as Tampa Bay cut its deficit to eight points. Succop added a 43-yard field goal with 10 minutes left in the third quarter as the Buccaneers moved within 14-9.

### 16-team playoff field

Meanwhile, the NFL has not yet lost any scheduled games because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. But the league is constantly preparing in case it does. The latest evidence is a plan that potentially could adjust this season's playoff format to a 16-team field, with eight teams in each conference qualifying for the postseason, ESPN reported Monday. The fall-back option was discussed on a conference call conducted by the NFL competition committee on Monday, with the purpose to soften some of the league's financial blow in case multiple games are eventually canceled and bye weeks are lost due to COVID-19.

NFL sources were cited describing the idea that would hypothetically increase the numbers of playoff teams by two to 16, with one additional team each from the AFC and NFC. This postseason was already slated for a two-team playoff spike, with one more wild-card team in each conference, after the league approved the switch in March. If approved and instituted, the seeding system would include no byes for division champions and instead rank each team by conference from No 1 through 8. In the opening round, the top seed—the division champion with the best overall record—would face the wild-card team with the worst record as the No 8 seed.

Then the second seed would face the seventh seed, with No 3 versus No 6 and No 4 against No 5 in the opening weekend. The league office has reportedly remained steadfast in its hopes to avoid any schedule changes that could threaten its current Super Bowl LV date, currently slated for Feb. 7, 2001 in Tampa. In case of major postseason scheduling changes, the NFL's likely first move would be to eliminate the week off scheduled between the conference championships and the Super Bowl. — Agencies

## Leicester power into 2nd place; Fulham earn first victory

**LONDRES:** Leicester swept into second place in the Premier League with an impressive 4-1 victory at Leeds, while Fulham beat West Bromwich Albion 2-0 to finally clinch their first win of the season on Monday. Brendan Rodgers' side are just one point behind leaders Liverpool after winning five of their first seven games in a top-flight season for the first time in their history.

Harvey Barnes and Youri Tielemans put Leicester two up before half-time at Elland Road. Stuart Dallas got one back for Leeds but Jamie Vardy's eighth goal of the season and a late Tielemans penalty wrapped up Leicester's fourth successive away league win. After the disappointment of missing out on a place in the Champions League last term, Leicester have shown they are capable of mounting another top four challenge.

Even a title push might not be impossible given they have already thrashed Manchester City 5-2. "We were technically brilliant. We had the quality to play when we had the opportunities. I thought we were amazing right across the team," Rodgers said. "This team has got an amazing mentality with lots of young, hungry players.

It's still very early and most of our games have been away but we've had brilliant performances." Leeds boss Marcelo Bielsa said: "In the first 30 minutes we defended poorly and after we didn't create enough danger. That is one of the main responsibilities of the manager."

Leicester made the perfect start in the third minute. A poor back-pass from Robin Koch was intercepted by Vardy and he rounded keeper Illan Meslier before squaring for Barnes to tap into the empty net. Leicester didn't have to wait long to double their lead in the 21st minute. Marc Albrighton's cross picked out Vardy at the near post and his diving header was unconvincingly pushed out by Meslier to Tielemans, who slotted home from close range.

Dallas gave Leeds a lifeline in the 47th minute when his cross evaded everyone and looped past the flat-footed Schmeichel. Leeds had the momentum and Pablo Hernandez almost equalized with a curling strike from the edge of the area. But Leicester weathered the storm and Vardy struck in the 76th minute with a close-range finish after Cengiz Under flicked James Maddison's pass over Meslier. Belgian midfielder Tielemans got the fourth with a stoppage-time spot-kick after Mateusz Klich's foul on Maddison.

### 'We have to wake up'

At Craven Cottage, Fulham avoided their worst start to a season since 1951 thanks to first half goals from Bobby Decordova-Reid and Ola Aina. Scott Parker's

side deservedly ended a run of six games without a win - a dismal stretch including five defeats - since their promotion from the Championship last term. The Cottagers had lost all three of their previous home games this season, but their first success in west London lifted them out of the relegation zone.

"We knew how important this game was. I'm pleased we got a result. We played very well," Parker said. "Defeats are going to happen but they can't bury us. Wins breed confidence." Third bottom West Brom are still chasing a first win since returning to the top-flight last season. With just three points from their opening seven league games, West Brom have made their worst start

to a campaign since 1985-86, failing to win any of their opening seven games for the first time since 2004-05.

"We have to wake up. We have to be much better than this. Everything starts with work rate, commitment and dedication," Albion manager Slaven Bilic said. Fulham went ahead in the 26th minute through Decordova-Reid. Antonee Robinson fired in a cross from the left to an unmarked Aleksandar Mitrovic at the far post, who nodded across goal before the ball was turned in by Decordova-Reid. Four minutes later, Fulham doubled their lead when Nigerian defender Aina blasted his shot past Sam Johnstone from the edge of the area. — AFP

### English Premier League standings

English Premier League table after Monday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Liverpool	7	5	1	1	17	15	16	Newcastle	7	3	2	2	10	11	11
Leicester	7	5	0	2	17	9	15	Leeds	7	3	1	3	13	13	10
Tottenham	7	4	2	1	18	9	14	Crystal Palace	7	3	1	3	8	11	10
Everton	7	4	1	2	15	11	13	West Ham	7	2	2	3	13	10	8
Southampton	7	4	1	2	14	12	13	Man Utd	6	2	1	3	9	13	7
Wolves	7	4	1	2	8	8	13	Brighton	7	1	2	4	11	14	5
Chelsea	7	3	3	1	16	9	12	Fulham	7	1	1	5	7	14	4
Aston Villa	6	4	0	2	15	10	12	West Brom	7	0	3	4	6	16	3
Arsenal	7	4	0	3	9	7	12	Sheff Utd	7	0	1	6	3	10	1
Man City	6	3	2	1	9	8	11	Burnley	6	0	1	5	3	12	1