

5 Israeli army destroys Palestinian village



8 Flydubai to launch direct Israel flights this month



13 Tunisian startup 3D prints solar-powered bionic hands



16 Maradona undergoes successful brain surgery for blood clot



# US election on knife edge; key states to decide winner

Trump falsely claims victory, alleges fraud • Biden confident of winning

## Amir vows to maintain national security



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is received by Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh during the Amir's visit to the interior ministry's Nawaf Al-Ahmad building yesterday. "We will firmly stand against anyone attempting to undermine security of the nation and its social fabric, nor we will accept any negligence," HH the Amir affirmed during the visit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

WILMINGTON/WASHINGTON: The excruciatingly close US presidential election hung in the balance yesterday, with a handful of closely contested states set to decide the outcome in the coming hours or days, even as President Donald Trump falsely claimed victory and made unsubstantiated allegations of electoral fraud.

Democratic challenger Joe Biden opened up narrow leads in Wisconsin and Michigan yesterday morning, according to Edison Research, as the two Midwestern battleground states that the Republican president won in 2016 continued to count mail-in ballots that surged amid the coronavirus pandemic. Together with Nevada, another state where Biden held a small advantage with votes still left to be tallied, those states would deliver Biden the 270 votes needed in the state-by-state Electoral College to win the White House. But Trump still had a path to victory with those states officially undecided. Opinion polls had given Biden a strong lead nationwide for months, but had shown tighter races in battleground



This combination of pictures created on Wednesday shows Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden gesturing after speaking during election night at the Chase Center in Wilmington, and US President Donald Trump speaking during election night in the East Room of the White House in Washington. — AFP

states, and the vote did not produce the overwhelming verdict against Trump that Democrats had wanted.

In the nationwide popular vote, Biden yesterday was comfortably ahead of Trump, with 2.6 million more votes. Trump won the 2016 election over Democrat Hillary

Clinton after winning crucial battleground states even though she drew about 3 million more votes nationwide. Biden, 77, said in the early hours he was confident of winning once the votes are counted, and urged patience.

Continued on Page 2

## Dems fail to control Senate, retain House

WASHINGTON: A Democratic drive to win control of the US Senate appeared to fall short, with Democrats picking up only two Republican-held seats while six other races remained undecided early yesterday. Democrats defeated Republican Senators Cory Gardner of Colorado and Martha McSally of Arizona but lost the Alabama seat held by Democratic Senator Doug Jones.

With control of the Senate up for grabs, Democrats put their stamp once again on the House of Representatives, securing another two years as the party in power with Speaker Nancy Pelosi - President Donald Trump's chief nemesis in Washington - likely to preside over her flock again.

Popular New York progressive Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez comfortably secured a second term, as did the three other members of "The Squad" - Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley - a liberal quartet that has occasionally faced intense criticism from Trump and his allies. "I'm very, very proud of the fact that tonight - relatively early - we are able to say we have held the House," Pelosi said.

To win the majority in the Senate, Democrats would need to pick up three Republican seats if Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is elected president and Senator Kamala Harris wields the tie-breaking vote as vice president. But the Democratic path to victory narrowed sharply as results poured in and the final outcome may not be known for days, and in some cases, months.

Four Republican incumbents - Joni Ernst of Iowa, Steve Daines of Montana, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and John Cornyn of Texas - fended off Democratic challenges, according to networks and Edison Research. Republicans also held onto an open seat in Kansas, where Republican Roger Marshall was declared the winner over Democrat Barbara Bollier.

Continued on Page 2

## 395 candidates register to run in Assembly election

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: As many as 395 candidates have signed up to run in next month's parliamentary election, with a majority of members in the outgoing house bidding for re-election after registration of candi-

## Saudi to ease restrictions on foreign workers

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday announced new plans to ease foreign workers' contractual restrictions, abolishing a controversial seven-decade-old sponsorship system known as kafala. The plans, to take effect in March 2021, aim to make the Saudi labor market more attractive, the deputy minister for human resources said, by granting foreign workers the right to change jobs and leave the country without employers' permission.

"Through this initiative we aim to build an attractive labor market and improve the working environment," Abdullah bin Nasser Abuthunain told reporters. Saudi Arabia, which chairs the Group of 20 major economies (G20) this year, is seeking to boost its private sector, part of an ambitious plan to diversify its oil-dependent economy.

The move will help attract high-skilled workers and help create more jobs for Saudi nationals, Sattam Alharbi, deputy minister for development of the work environment, told Reuters in a phone interview, adding that hiring would be based on workers' efficiency.

Continued on Page 2

## Athens' first official mosque opens its doors

ATHENS: The first official mosque in Athens, delayed for more than a decade, opened its doors to a few faithful owing to the coronavirus, the capital's Muslim community said Tuesday. The project to open a state-sanctioned mosque in Athens, the only European capital without one, was launched in 2007. Athens

will "finally have a place of worship for its Muslim inhabitants", Naim el Gadour, the president of the Muslim Union of Greece told AFP.

There will be no official inauguration, however, due to restrictions related to the virus outbreak, according to Zaki Sidi Mohammed, the mosque's Moroccan imam. Located in Elaionas, a former industrial district, the mosque is the first to operate officially in Athens since the country's war for independence from the Ottomans in 1821. Built with state funds, the Athens place of worship was completed in 2019 and can accommodate up to 350 people. — AFP



RIYADH: This file photo taken on Nov 3, 2013 shows foreign workers gathering outside an immigration department to legalize their work situation. — AFP



ATHENS: Worshippers pray in the first official mosque in the Greek capital on Tuesday. — AFP



## Local

# KDIPA attracted KD 115.8 million in new direct investments in one year

## KDIPA issues fifth report for fiscal year 2019-2020

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) issued their fifth annual report, which included the authority's achievements, activities and projects performed during the report period of the fiscal year 2019/2020. In a press release yesterday, KDIPA said the report is within the tasks assigned to it in accordance with Law No 116 of 2013. The Council of Ministers, upon receiving KDIPA's fifth annual report, commended the notable efforts exerted by KDIPA in strengthening Kuwait's economic position, maintaining continued improvement in business environment, and attracting value added investments, to attain aspired economic growth and diversification of income sources.

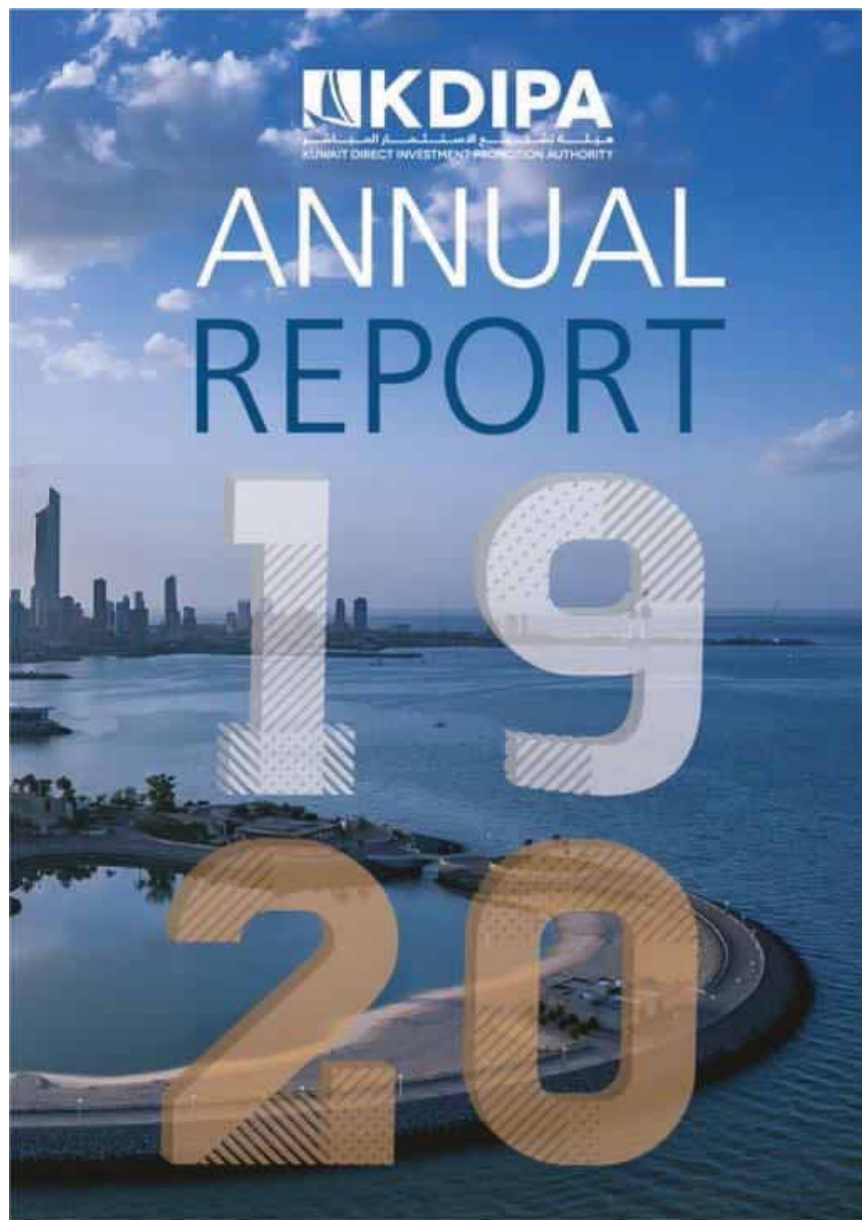
According to the report, KDIPA attracted new direct investments amounting to KD 115.8 million, which raised the total cumulative approved direct investments since KDIPA started its operations in early January 2015 till end of March 2020 to a total of around KD 1.075 billion (around \$3.5 billion), incoming from 21 different countries and local partners. These investments were concentrated in the services sector, covering several vital activities of which information systems, oil and gas services, construction, training, healthcare, and energy. The report



**Over KD 1bn  
in cumulative  
investments**

mentioned that regarding the assessment of the economic and social impact of direct investments in Kuwait, KDIPA developed the 'Economic Benefit Model' used as a systematic and objective tool for measuring the impact of licensed investment entities which started operations in the local economy, by collecting actual expenditure data on the following criteria: salaries of and training for national workers, advanced technological equipment and systems, local goods and services, government taxes and fees, and social responsibility activities. The resulting total expenditure in the local economy reached around KD 458.1 million over the period from early January 2015 till end of December 2018.

On another hand, KDIPA continued to work on improving its investors service model, and providing needed facilitation in coordination with competent government authorities dealing with 204 actual and potential investors during the report period; KDIPA also continued coordination with the Central Bank of Kuwait to improve reporting direct investment data in Kuwait balance of payment statement to better portray actual status of investment in the country; and launched promotional campaigns for targeting investors, strengthening external relations, as well as participating in official delegations, bilateral committees, business councils and forums, and activating its social media channels to stream updates on economic and investment developments in Kuwait.



### Ease of doing business

The report period witnessed improvement in Kuwait's position in the Ease of Doing Business Index DB2020, as Kuwait entered for the first time among the list of the top 10 improvers after raising its score by +4.8 adding up to 67.4 which helped improve Kuwait's ranking by 14 places compared to its position in DB2019. This outcome reflected the concerted national efforts and continued coordination by KDIPA as head of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment and Enhancing Competitiveness in the State of Kuwait (PCK) with membership of competent government authorities along with the private sector and civil society organizations.

KDIPA proceeded during the report period to complete the implementation of the third and final phase of the project 'Study on Improving Kuwait Global Competitiveness: Engine of transformation to Knowledge and Innovation-based Economy' in cooperation with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), being a

developmental project enlisted under Kuwait second medium term development plan, and which is expected to provide an actionable national agenda to help enhance Kuwait competitiveness. In terms of institutional measures undertaken during the report period, KDIPA continued to implement projects under its first strategy (2016/2017-2020/2021) in line with the National vision 2035. It launched the 'Kuwait Investment Road Map' project based on outcome of three technical reports analyzing the legal and regulatory framework for investment in Kuwait, KDIPA's institutional framework, and the investment policy and promotion (IPP) based on the best international practices, utilizing this outcome to enable better preparation for its second strategy.

KDIPA also continued to foster the adoption of digitalization by completing the plan to develop its IT infrastructure and technologies, as well as dealing with crisis and cyber security. KDIPA renewed its ISO certification 9001:2015 and ISO 10002:2018

### 2019-2020 Annual Report Summary

**Cumulative approved direct investments volume KD 1,075,865,892 around US\$ 3.5 Billion** (the beginning of January 2015 until the end of March 2020) **concentrated in the services sector and coming from 21 different countries.**



## 395 candidates register to run in...

Continued from Page 1

In addition, there are a number of promising new faces like Abdullah Al-Mudhaf and Abdullah Hussein Al-Roumi from the first constituency and liberal Hamad Al-Ansari from the third. Thirty-three female candidates have registered - 11 are contesting from the third constituency along with MP Hashem, followed by 10 from the first district. There are no women candidates in the predominantly tribal fourth constituency. Prominent among female candidates are Hashem, seeking reelection for the second time, and Ghadeer Al-Aseeri, a former minister who was forced to

resign following a grilling in the Assembly.

Authorities reiterated yesterday a total ban on election gatherings or pitching tents like in previous years, and called on candidates to run their campaigns through social media. Election authorities said they have not yet disqualified any candidate. The last MP to sign up was Salah Khorsheed, who first handed himself over to police, then filed his papers. Khorsheed was wanted for investigation over his alleged connection to a corruption scandal involving a jailed Bangladeshi MP.

Local experts are expecting around a 40 percent change in the outgoing Assembly. Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh inspected the election department yesterday and assured holding the polls by observing stringent health measures against the coronavirus. He said a special health committee is currently preparing a plan to apply health measures on election day to ensure polling is done safely.

Graham, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, rode to victory after presiding over the Senate confirmation of US Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett. Cornyn was declared the winner against challenger M J Hegar in a state that had appeared to be drifting toward Democrats. Republican Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell won re-election in Kentucky, as expected.

All told, 35 of the Senate's 100 seats were up for election. First-term Republican incumbents also faced challenges in Alaska and in a second Georgia Senate race. Democrat Gary Peters was on the defensive in Michigan. One of two Georgia Senate races was projected to go to a Jan 5 runoff between Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler and Democrat Raphael Warnock.

Final results from a four-way Maine contest among Collins, Gideon and two independent candidates could be delayed for 10 days to two weeks if no candidate wins an outright majority and the race is forced into an automatic runoff under the state's ranked-choice voting system, according to a state election official.

Maine voters can rank candidates in order of preference. With no clear winner on election night, the contest would enter a series of elimination rounds in which lower-ranked candidates drop out until a victor emerges. In Michigan, where Peters could be vulnerable to an upset by Republican John James, state election officials warned final results may not be available until tomorrow. — Reuters

## Saudi to ease restrictions on...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 reform plan is a package of economic and social policies designed to free the kingdom from reliance on oil exports.

The currently applicable kafala system generally binds a migrant worker to one employer. Rights groups, including Amnesty International, have been calling on Saudi authorities to end that system

which leaves workers vulnerable to abuses. "The term kafala does not officially exist in Saudi labor laws since more than 20 years ago; however, there were many wrong practices of it that helped breach the contractual relation," Alharbi said.

However, he said the new regulations will not apply to the country's 3.7 million domestic workers, a highly vulnerable category of employees who are governed by separate regulations which he said are also under review. The new initiative will base the relation between employers and workers on a standard contract that should be certified by the government, and will allow workers to apply directly for services via an e-government portal. — Reuters

## US election on knife edge; key...

Continued from Page 1

"We feel good about where we are," Biden said in his home state of Delaware. "We believe we're on track to win this election."

Trump, 74, appeared at the White House soon after to declare victory. "We were getting ready to win this election. Frankly, we did win this election," Trump said, before launching an extraordinary attack on the electoral process by a sitting president. "This is a major fraud on our nation. We want the law to be used in a proper manner. So we'll be going to the US Supreme Court. We want all voting to stop." Trump provided no evidence to back up his claim of fraud and did not explain how he would fight the results at the Supreme Court, which does not hear direct challenges.

Voting concluded as scheduled on Tuesday night, but many states routinely take days to finish counting ballots. Huge numbers of people voted by mail because of the pandemic, making it likely the count will take longer than usual. The close election underscored the political polarization in the United States. The next president will take on a pandemic that has killed more than 231,000 Americans and left millions more jobless at a time not only of gaping political divisions but of racial tensions and differences between urban and rural Americans.

The trio of "blue wall" states that unexpectedly sent Trump to the White House in 2016 - Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - remained too close to call. Officials in Nevada said they would not update the count until today. Two Southern states, Georgia

and North Carolina, were also still in play; Trump held leads in both. A win for Biden in either one would narrow Trump's chances considerably.

Biden's victory in Arizona, which had previously voted for a Democratic presidential candidate only once in 72 years, so far remained the only state to flip from the 2016 results. Trump's most likely path requires him to win Pennsylvania as well as at least one Midwestern battleground and both Southern states. Officials in Michigan and Georgia said yesterday they expected the states to complete their counts by day's end. At the time of going to press, Biden led 224 to 213 over Trump in the Electoral College vote count, according to Edison Research, aiming to reach the needed 270 electoral votes, which are based in part on a state's population.

Biden's hopes of a decisive early victory were dashed on Tuesday evening when Trump won the battlegrounds of Florida, Ohio and Texas. But the former vice president said he was confident he could win by taking the three key Rust Belt states. During the final days of the campaign, Trump had suggested he would claim victory if ahead on election night and seek to halt the count of additional ballots.

"The president's statement tonight about trying to shut down the counting of duly cast ballots was outrageous, unprecedented, and incorrect," Biden's campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said in a statement. Biden campaign manager later told reporters the former vice president was on track to win election, while Trump's campaign manager separately predicted that the outstanding votes would eventually produce a victory for the president.

No incumbent US president has lost a re-election bid since George H W Bush in 1992. Before his White House appearance, Trump slammed his opponent, saying in a tweet, "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. — Reuters

## Dems fail to control Senate...

Continued from Page 1

Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine, a moderate long viewed as vulnerable to upset, led Democrat Sara Gideon by several percentage points in a race that Gideon predicted would not be called soon. Republican Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina declared victory over his Democratic challenger, Cal Cunningham, while leading by about 95,000 votes. But the race had not been called.

Republicans now hold a 53-47 seat Senate majority. Gardner, a first-term Republican long seen as his party's most vulnerable Senate incumbent, lost to Hickenlooper in a formerly Republican state where demographic changes have increasingly favored Democrats in recent years, according to projections by television networks and Edison Research.

Democrat Mark Kelly, a former US astronaut who had long dominated the Arizona race, was declared winner while leading McSally by nearly 7 percentage points in the one-time Republican stronghold. Jones, the most vulnerable Democrat, lost as expected to challenger Tommy Tuberville in the Republican stronghold of Alabama.



## Local

# Will firmly stand against whoever undermines Kuwait's security: Amir

## Sheikh Nawaf to police: Enforce the law on all, promote discipline



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with senior Interior Ministry officials during a visit to the ministry's Nawaf Al-Ahmad building yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday reaffirmed “we will firmly stand” against anyone attempting to undermine national security and social fabric, nor allow any “negligence” by security authorities. “Strengthening foundations of stability... nationwide and guaranteeing security and safety of citizens and all those living in this land, protecting their lives and properties are on top of our priorities and are under our constant follow-up,” His Highness the Amir said in a speech during a visit to the Ministry of Interior's Nawaf Al-Ahmad building yesterday. “We will firmly stand against anyone attempting to undermine security of the nation and its social fabric, nor we will accept any negligence,” affirmed His Highness the Amir. He urged the security officers and personnel to “enforce the law on all and promote discipline in order to boost status of security and justice, and that the security officer be a good example.”

His Highness the Amir said that the state would spare no effort in the development of the MoI to carry out its duties. He said he was pleased to have

witnessed the development in the MoI, and praised the security forces for their contributing to implementing the health regulations during the coronavirus pandemic despite harsh weather and possible infection. His Highness the Amir recalled contributions and instructions of the late Amir His Highness



### Amir praises police's efforts during pandemic

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and said development would stop amidst lack of security.

Meanwhile, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh thanked His Highness the Amir for his visit and commended his achievements while being

an interior minister. Saleh, also Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, said freedom in Kuwait reflected supremacy of law and justice, indeed mirroring democracy. He said MoI was mobilized throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in order to help curb its spread and impacts. Saleh said there were many challenges that required further vigilance and serious implementation of law. These challenges, he added, “necessitate positive cooperation between citizens and security forces to achieve security and stability in the nation.”

He said the Council of Ministers approved updated versions of laws submitted by the MoI regarding naturalization of a foreign wife of a Kuwaiti citizen, improvement of traffic regulations, addressing trade in residencies of foreigners and the establishment of the national electoral commission. Saleh said the MoI was expanding use of technology with the aim of tackling forgery. His Highness the Amir was accompanied during his visit by President of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and Amiri Diwan Protocol Chief Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech during the visit.

## Amir receives state officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled at Bayan Palace. — KUNA



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



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

### News in brief

#### Qatari Amir remembers Sheikh Sabah

DOHA: Arab nations have lost one of the greatest men in the Gulf, the late Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who worked with all his strength to reconcile Arab countries and the Gulf, whose positions won't be forgotten, Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said Tuesday. Arab nations also lost another great man, late Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said, Sheikh Tamim added in remarks at the opening session of the 49th Qatari Shura Council, expressing hope that the GCC countries to be inspired by their moderation and wisdom for the future of relations between the countries.

#### \$4.7 billion profits

KUWAIT: The Public Institution for Social Security reaped \$4.7 billion worth of net profits in Q2 of current fiscal year, growing by 611 percent as compared to last year's same period. The institution's Director General Mishal Al-Othman said in a statement yesterday that the realized profits in this year's first half amounted to \$12.1 billion, up by 362 percent in contrast to last year's same period. Othman attributed the high and unprecedented earnings to full restructuring of the investment division, upgrading measures, policies and investment governance according to international standards.

#### 78,000 workers

KUWAIT: There are nearly 78,000 workers registered on the files of around 4,000 small and medium enterprises in Kuwait, said Mohammad Al-Ansari, head of the business owners service department at the Manpower Public Authority. The authority has a plan in place to prevent small businesses from becoming a back door for human trafficking or other illegal practices, Ansari said in a statement published in Al-Jarida Arabic newspaper yesterday.

## Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf



KuwaitTimes



94488888



THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

Editor-in-Chief  
**ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN**

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618  
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## Defense Ministry asks bedoons to hand over passports

**KUWAIT:** The defense ministry asked its bedoon uniformed personnel to hand over article 17 passports in their possession - be they valid or expired - by the end of November to the noncommissioned and soldiers affairs directorate at the administration and manpower department to avoid legal action. The ministry stressed they should not go to the nationality and passports department of the Ministry of Interior, Al-Rai Arabic daily reported yesterday. The ministry said an application for a passport by a military person should be directed to the director general of the nationality and passports department with an explanation for the reasons of travel and a document from the ministry, provided that the security ID is valid for at least three months, along with a copy of the health insurance. It said a copy of the birth certificate and military ID should be attached too. A medical report and doctor's appointment should be attached too if the travel is for treatment. In case the travel is to accompany a child to register at a university, proof of registration and the university ID must be attached along with a copy of the mother's nationality certificate if she is Kuwaiti.

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti man watches the US elections update on television in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Kuwait reports 763 new COVID cases as govt mulls restrictions

## Partial lockdown if infections rise steadily: Health Ministry

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health announced yesterday registering 763 new coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 128,843. Deaths reached 794 with the addition of five fatalities. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that there were 114 patients receiving treatment in intensive care units, while those still receiving treatment amounted to 8,307. Health authorities conducted 6,892 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising the whole count to 940,518. Earlier, the ministry announced that 662 patients have recovered from the virus in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 119,742.

The health ministry had hinted on Tuesday that it might reintroduce partial curfew if cases continue to rise. "Based on data of the epidemiological situation, the Ministry may resort to reactivation

of the partial lockdown if the infection rate continues to rise steadily as is the case in several



**Five deaths  
in 24 hours**

countries," Dr Sanad said in a press statement in response to speculations, circulated on local media outlets, on a possible return to coronavirus

restrictions. "The ministry, represented by an expert team from the public health and epidemiological sector, reports regularly to the Cabinet on the latest developments of the situation and the possible options to curb the spread of the pandemic," he pointed out.

The health ministry keeps a watchful eye on the evolving situation of the novel coronavirus pandemic inside and outside the country amid reports of record hikes in infections in many countries around the globe, Dr Sanad further explained. The ministry is constantly updating the COVID-19 figures, including infections, hospitalizations, fatalities and ICU admissions, and mulls the available options to protect public health, he added. Furthermore, he urged the public to abide strictly by the precautions outlined by the ministry to protect public health from the viral illness. — KUNA

## Customs, Port Authority sign memorandum

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti General Administration of Customs (KGAC) announced yesterday signing a memorandum of cooperation with the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA), aiming to improve the joint business environment. In a press state-

ment, KGAC said that the Director General, advisor Jamal Al-Jallawi, met with the KPA Director General Sheikh Youssef Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, to document the memorandum between the two sides. It aims to set up a mechanism for developing procedures for receiving and delivering containers that have passed the legal period estimated at 90 days and are supposed to be referred to 'Bait Al-Mal' in preparation for selling them at public auction, the statement said. This cooperation fulfills the two parties' desire of a fast ending procedure and to avoid any accumulation of these containers in port terminals. — KUNA

## Cancer patients urged to follow on treatment despite COVID fears

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The coronavirus pandemic has had a severe impact on cancer patients, since they are considered a high-risk category if they get infected by the virus. Many patients don't go to hospital for regular checkups or treatment due to the fear of getting infected.

Cancer Aware Nation Campaign (CAN) organized a virtual workshop on 'Cancer During the Time of Coronavirus' on Tuesday, as part of its breast cancer awareness campaign. Dr Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of Kuwait Society for Preventing Smoking and Cancer (KSSCP) and the Chairman of CAN, said awareness shouldn't stop because of the pandemic.

"Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among women around the world. In 2018, around 2.1 million cases were registered globally, which represents 24.2 percent of total tumors in women around the world. It also ranked first among women in Kuwait. In 2016, we registered 621 cases of breast cancer in Kuwait. The incidence of breast cancer among Kuwaiti women reached 63.6 for every 100,000, and 41.7 among non-Kuwaiti women," Dr Saleh said during the workshop.

These numbers show the importance of continuing to fight cancer in general, and breast cancer in particular. "It's easy to discover in the early phase, when its initial signs can be recognized. This can be achieved through systematically training women on early detection of this tumor," he added.

"Early detection increases chances of treatment. Self-examination can be done with easy instructions, so women can avoid pain or treatments in the future. During the COVID-19 pandemic, self-examination is the best way of checking. If a woman finds something, she can contact

the doctor," Saleh concluded.

Prof Samia Al-Amoudi, Founder of the Health Empowerment Initiative at the College of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University, spoke about health empowerment and the importance of informing cancer patients of their health and labor rights. "The cancer patient should be fully aware of their health condition and receive all information about their illness. The patient has the right to keep their job and the right to keep their illness private from their workplace, which doesn't have to know the details of their illness," she said.

"The doctor should preserve the patient's right to have children if the patient is undergoing chemotherapy, radiotherapy or hormonal therapy. This can be done by freezing the eggs before starting any therapy that weakens childbearing ability," explained Amoudi.

According to her, treating cancer is more important than fears of getting infected by the coronavirus. "A cancer patient should not abandon their treatment because of such fears. Only the treating doctor can decide whether a patient can wait and postpone the treatment. If any patient feels symptoms of COVID-19, they can follow up with their clinic through the hotline," she added.

Dr Amaal Al-Yahya, National Tobacco Control Liaison Officer at the Ministry of Health, spoke about e-cigarettes and smoking in general. "Some smokers claim that smoking electronic cigarettes or pipes helps in quitting smoking, which is completely wrong. Statistics show that those smoking e-cigarettes end up smoking both regular and electronic cigarettes," she noted.

"All kinds of smoking are responsible for various diseases. It destroys the special cells of the immunity system, which are responsible for quickly responding to microbes that enter the body. Smoking increases the potential of catching COVID-19 and experiencing symptoms. Also, smoking electronic cigarettes increases the intensity of the resulting inflammation in the lung tissue, and this damages the respiratory system. Furthermore, smoking electronic cigarettes affects people nearby, as the vapor produced by this cigarette contains many carcinogenic and harmful materials," stressed Yahya.

**• Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for FREE**

**• Send Subscribe to +965 944 88888**

**• Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone**

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait  
**Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621**  
**E: info@kuwaittimes.net**





Social media on high alert; US votes tallied

Page 6

Page 7

## Wary Armenians, Azerbaijanis watch war from Moscow



KINMEN, Taiwan: This photo taken on Oct 21, 2020 shows Taiwanese blacksmith Wu Tseng-dong, owner of a knife factory, giving a demonstration to tourists how to make a knife from cases of Chinese artillery shells which were fired decades ago from Xiamen on the mainland at Kinmen island. — AFP

# ‘China is angry’: Taiwan anxiety rises

## US approves sale of armed MQ-9 Reaper drones to Taiwan

**KINMEN:** The tank traps on the beaches of Kinmen Island are a stark reminder that Taiwan lives under the constant threat of a Chinese invasion and fears of a conflict breaking out are now at their highest in decades. Democratic Taiwan has learned to live with the warnings of Beijing's authoritarian leaders that they are ready and willing to seize a place it views as part of its territory. But that background static has reached hard-to-ignore levels recently with China's jets now crossing into Taiwan's defence zone at an unprecedented rate and the People's Liberation Army releasing propaganda simulating an invasion of the island—and even an attack on US bases in Guam.

Not since the mid-1990s, when China fired missiles into the Taiwan Strait during a moment of heightened tension, has the sabre-rattling been so loud. Sitting under a pavilion at National Quemoy University on Kinmen, a Taiwan-ruled island just off the Chinese mainland, freshman Wang Jui-sheng says he feels more than a little unsettled. “China is angry at Taiwan and acting all the more brutish,” he told AFP. “I’m worried about the chance of military conflicts between the two sides, possibly even in the near future.”

The US has agreed to sell four armed MQ-9 Reaper drones to Taiwan, the State Department announced Tuesday, helping to boost the island's defenses as China steps up its threats. The \$600 million sale aids Taiwan's “continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability,” the State Department said. It will also assist in maintaining political stability and the military balance in the region, the department said in a statement.

The sale covers four drones, ground stations, and associated surveillance and communications equip-

ment, but not the bombs or missiles usually associated with it. The drones deal comes on the heel of several other major arms packages to Taiwan announced in recent weeks worth \$4.2 billion, including potent Harpoon anti-ship missiles, air-launched SLAM-ER cruise missiles, air reconnaissance technology and mobile light rocket launchers. Kinmen (population 140,000) lies just 3.2 km from the mainland and was left in the hands of the Nationalist forces at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949 that formed modern-day China and Taiwan. If Beijing's troops ever cross the Taiwan Strait, they would almost certainly have to take Kinmen first. And if war does break out, it could easily rope in the United States—pitting two nuclear-armed militaries against each other.

### Flashpoint

Ian Easton, author of a book about what war could look like, says the world is ignoring the spiralling tensions in the Taiwan Strait at its peril. “This is the most dangerous, the most unstable, and the most consequential flashpoint on the planet,” the senior director at the Project 2049 Institute, a think-tank that specializes in China-Taiwan affairs, told AFP. Historically Beijing has used carrots and sticks to seek what it sees as the unification of China, melding honeyed promises of shared prosperity with warnings of annihilation for Taiwan's 23 million inhabitants.

But in recent years the carrot has all but disappeared. Four years ago Taiwan voted for President Tsai Ing-wen, who views the island as a sovereign state and not part of “one China”. China cut off official communication and piled on economic, military and diplomatic pressure, with the aim of prompting voters to place a more Beijing-friendly politician in office

next time. It didn't work. Tsai won a second term by a landslide in January and polls show a growing number of voters now view themselves as Taiwanese, not Chinese.

### ‘Prepare for war’

The failure to win Taiwanese hearts—exacerbated by Beijing's crackdowns in Hong Kong and Xinjiang—may explain why President Xi Jinping has adopted the most bellicose stance towards Taiwan since the Mao Zedong era. Xi, who did away with presidential term limits two years ago, has made no secret of his goals.

He has described Taiwan's takeover as an “inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people”—a project he aims to complete by 2049, the centennial of communist China's founding. During a trip last month to a PLA base, he told troops to “prepare for war”. Captain James Fanell, former director of naval intelligence for the US Pacific fleet, believes China will move on Taiwan in some form in the next 10 years. “The reality is China's always had a plan and they're on a timeline,” he told AFP from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy which he joined after his retirement in 2015.

“We're in the decade of concern right now.” During his career, Fanell watched China transform from a brown-water force confined to its coast into a globally capable navy equipped with better hypersonic missiles and far more ships than the US. “For every one ship we produce, they produce five times as many,” Fanell said. He added that what makes Beijing's designs on Taiwan so dangerous now, compared with previous moments of tension, is that China may now have enough military might to take the island—although any invasion would be hugely costly.—AFP



Palestinian bedouins stand next to their belongings after Israeli soldiers demolished their tents in an area east of the village of Tubas in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday. — AFP

## Israeli army destroys Palestinian village in Jordan Valley

**TUBAS:** Israel's army has demolished the homes of nearly 80 Palestinian Bedouins in the occupied West Bank, officials and witnesses said yesterday, in a rare operation targeting an entire community at once. Late Tuesday, Israeli bulldozers razed the village - including tents, sheds, portable toilets and solar panels - near Tubas in the Jordan Valley, according to an AFP photographer at the scene, who found dozens of people left homeless.

Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh accused Israeli troops of having “completely demolished the village of Homsa al-Baqia, leaving around 80 people homeless”. The branch of Israel's army responsible for civilian affairs in the West Bank, COGAT, said it had destroyed structures “built illegally in a firing zone (military training area) in the Jordan Valley”.

The Jordan Valley falls in the West Bank's Area C that is fully controlled by Israel's army, which has occupied the West Bank since 1967. Under Israeli rules, Palestinians cannot build structures in the area without permits, which are typically refused, and demolitions are common. According to Abdelghani Awada, left homeless by the operation, the Israelis who arrived in vehicles and with bulldozers gave people “10 minutes to evacuate our homes”. “Then they started bulldozing,” he told AFP.

He stressed that his family had lived in the area for generations and accused Israel of trying to “empty the Jordan Valley of its Palestinian population”. The late-night operation in Homsa al-Baqia was unusual given that so many homes were targeted at the same time, according to the Israeli anti-occupation non-government organisation B'Tselem. “The wiping off of a whole community at once is extremely rare, and it seems like Israel was making use of the fact that everyone's attention is currently set elsewhere to move forward with this inhumane act,” B'Tselem said in a statement sent to AFP, referring to the US presidential election.

In a separate statement B'Tselem said that “while the world deals with the coronavirus crisis, Israel has devoted time and effort to harassing Palestinians instead of helping... residents living under its control”. B'Tselem, which tracks demolition data, said that 798 Palestinians in the West Bank have been left homeless by Israeli demolitions so far this year. That is already the highest annual tally since 2016, the year the organization began collecting such data. — AFP



SANTA RITA, Nicaragua: People watch the Humuya River flooding due to heavy rains caused by Eta Hurricane in Yoro department on Tuesday. — AFP

## 3 killed as Eta batters Nicaragua

**BILWI:** Hurricane Eta slowed to tropical storm speeds yesterday morning even as it pummeled Nicaragua, killing two people there and one in neighboring Honduras, while unleashing fierce winds and heavy downpours. The storm had hammered impoverished indigenous communities along the coast when it made landfall a day earlier and caused heavy rains throughout much of Central America. “Quite a lot of trees have fallen and traffic has been badly affected”, said Nicaraguan infrastructure minister Oscar Mojica.

Eta uprooted trees and ripped roofs off homes in Bilwi, the biggest town on the northeastern coast and also known as Puerto Cabezas. “We spent the whole night with strong gusts of wind, accom-

panied by rain,” Kenny Lisby, head of a local radio station said. “It's possible there will be quite a lot of destruction.” Winds tore down the concrete perimeter walls of the town's baseball stadium, and left a trail of fallen trees as dazed cattle and other animals wandered through the streets.

Giovany Nelson, 34, said his family was “locked in a room listening to the wind destroying the roof.” Two Nicaraguans died after they were buried in a landslide while working in a mine in the municipality of Bonanza, the director of the local Red Cross, Auner Garcia, told Channel 10 television. Authorities in Honduras said a child died in a collapsed house there, bringing the death toll in the region to three so far.

The National Hurricane Center warned the effects of Eta could be catastrophic for the region. But it said the storm's winds had slowed to 70 miles per hour yesterday morning, about half the speed at which Eta made landfall. The storm is forecast to continue moving inland over northern Nicaragua and central Honduras through today.—AFP

## Italy agrees curfew as Europe tries to stem virus surge

**ROME:** Italian officials agreed yesterday to impose a night-time curfew, joining a slew of European nations in ramping up restrictions in the face of a dramatic surge in coronavirus cases. But the measure, which restricts Italians to their homes between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am, fell short of the kind of rules in force in countries including France, Belgium and Germany. Governments in Europe are struggling to get a hold of a pandemic that has now infected more than 11 million on the continent.

Yesterday saw Russia announce a daily record for cases and deaths, upping pressure on the government only days after President Vladimir Putin said there were no plans for a lockdown. The United States remains the worst-affected country with more than nine million cases and 230,000 deaths. President Donald Trump, who has suffered from the virus, faced off with Joe Biden in a long-awaited election on Tuesday, with tens of millions of mask-wearing Americans streaming to the polls.

The virus has transformed the election, with many millions avoiding the queues and the risk of infection by returning postal votes before election day. Trump's handling of the virus has also been under the microscope. With results from crucial battleground states not yet returned, the election was on a knife-edge yesterday with neither candidate taking a decisive lead.

### ‘Final straw’ for pubs

From Britain to Turkey, European countries have reimposed strict curbs this week, echoing their moves in spring when the virus first hit Europe following its emergence in China. Many businesses

are still struggling to recover from the damage of those earlier lockdowns—particularly in the travel sector. The Netherlands said yesterday it had agreed to inject 3.4-billion-euro (\$3.9-billion) into its national airline KLM after a row with pilots was resolved.

“The past few days have been incredibly intensive for everyone,” said KLM chief executive Pieter Elbers, adding: “But in the end we, as KLM and unions, came to an agreement.” Although many of the measures imposed this week are not as draconian as those earlier lockdowns, they have been resisted by many business-owners, politicians particularly from the right, and large sections of the population. “Make no mistake, this could be the final straw for thousands of pubs and brewers,” said Emma McClarkin, of the British Beer and Pub Association, with English pubs ordered to close for a month from night.

In Italy, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has struggled to build a coalition backing more stringent measures after sporadic protests broke out over an earlier decision to shut bars and restaurants early. However, the curfew mixed with other restrictions such as the closure of shopping centers on weekends appeared to have struck the right compromise for regional leaders. “We will continue to work to ensure that these provisions are observed by all Milanese,” wrote Milan mayor Giuseppe Sala on Facebook, whose northern city is one of Italy's major hotspots. Senior political figures, meanwhile, continue to fall victim to the virus. Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune is “gradually recovering” from the illness in hospital in Germany, his office said on Tuesday. —AFP



## International

## Ivory Coast stand-off with opposition intensifies after disputed election

## Opposition leaders vow to set up ‘transitional government’

**ABIDJAN:** Security forces surrounded the homes of Ivory Coast's opposition leaders on Tuesday after they rejected President Alassane Ouattara's re-election and vowed to set up a "transitional government". Ouattara won a third term by a landslide in Saturday's vote, which was boycotted by the opposition claiming an "electoral coup" in a nation with a constitutional two-term presidential limit.



## Ouattara wins third term by a landslide

The standoff has pitched Ivory Coast deeper into a three-month crisis that has claimed several dozen lives, triggering appeals for calm and dialogue from the West African ECOWAS bloc, the United Nations, African Union and EU. Hours after 78-year-old Ouattara was declared winner of the presidential election, with more than 94 percent of the vote, Justice Minister Sansan Kambile accused the opposition of "acts of assault and plotting against the authority of the state". The public prosecutor has been asked to investigate, Kambile said, warning that "all options are on the table."

Opposition leader Pascal Affi N'Guessan had told reporters late Monday that opposition parties and groups were forming a "council of national transition". "This council's mission will be to... create a transitional government within the next few hours," N'Guessan said. The goal, he said, was to "prepare the framework for a fair, transparent and inclusive presidential election".

Ouattara's landslide in Saturday's vote had been widely expected—two opposition leaders had called for a boycott and a civil disobedience campaign.

But there were protests and bloody clashes—at least 30 people died before Saturday's vote. The violence is stirring memories of a crisis a decade ago that tore the country apart and dealt it lasting economic damage. Around 3,000 people died after then-president Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept defeat by Ouattara. N'Guessan late Monday said the "transitional council" would be led by opposition veteran Henri Konan Bedie, 86, a former president and long-term adversary of Ouattara. "Keeping Mr Ouattara as head of state could lead to civil war," he warned.

## Confrontation

In Abidjan, the economic capital, security forces blocked off roads close to Bedie's home, AFP journalists said. They fired teargas to disperse small groups of supporters and journalists outside, preventing the staging of a press conference. The forces then entered Bedie's home but a diplomatic source said he was not worried. Bedie's deputy Maurice Kakou Guikahue was taken away by police, according to several journalists at the scene.

But sources close to the government said that Guikahue was not arrested, instead taken back to his home. Two other opposition figures told AFP that their homes were being guarded by police. "I am at home, there are 12 officers in the street in front of my house and a police van around the back," said Assoa Adou, secretary general of the Ivorian Popular Front.

"I'm fine, but it's the blockade. We cannot leave my home," said Albert Abdallah Mabri Toikeusse of the small UDPCI party. Police were also outside N'Guessan's home, his spokesman Issiaka Sangare said. In Daoukro, an opposition stronghold 235 kilometers north of Abidjan, anti-Ouattara protesters were manning barricades. "These results are a farce," said one,



**TOUMODI, Ivory Coast:** A cyclist reads a sign on a burnt truck calling for violence to stop in the market of Toumodi yesterday during a campaign of non-violence and peace awareness by young volunteers. — AFP

who gave his name as Firmin. "We are going to carry on with civil disobedience until Ouattara steps down." In Geneva, the UN's refugee agency said more than 3,200 people had fled into neighboring Liberia, Ghana and Togo, fearing violence.

## EU appeal

The crisis is another test for a region where Guinea is mired in a post-election dispute of its own, Nigeria is mired in widespread unrest and Mali has a transition government following a coup. The UN, AU and ECOWAS in a joint statement called on Ivory Coast's opposition to "respect constitutional order" and seek dialogue, while urging all sides to show "restraint to

preserve human lives". EU diplomacy chief Josep Borrell meanwhile expressed "deep concern over tensions, provocations and incitements to hatred" and called for violence to be "independently investigated." A mission from the US watchdog Carter Center said "the overall context and process did not allow for a genuinely competitive election," but an African Union observer team said the vote was "generally satisfactory". Ouattara had said after his second term he planned to make way for a new generation. But the sudden death of his chosen successor in July prompted him to seek a third term. He says a constitutional court ruling approved his move, allowing him to reset the country's two-term presidential limit. — AFP

## US formally quits Paris agreement as election hangs in balance

**WASHINGTON:** The United States left the Paris accord yesterday, becoming the first country to ever withdraw from an international climate change pact as the fate of its presidential election hangs in the balance. It may prove to be a temporary blip before Democrat Joe Biden's administration rejoins the agreement. Otherwise, the global effort to rein in the Earth's warming will have to proceed without the government of the world's second biggest carbon emitter.

Either way, it all depends on the outcome of a knife-edge vote where both candidates have predicted victory. Biden has proposed a \$1.7 trillion-plan to take the US to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, while President Donald Trump has aggressively championed the fossil fuel industry, questioned the science of climate change and weakened other environmental protections. If Trump wins, it will be left to states, cities and businesses to take the lead.

However, a report last month by the group America's Pledge found that even without help from Washington, action from these groups would still make it possible for the US to cut emissions by 37 percent by 2030. "The easy part, relatively speaking, is to send a notification to the UN that the United States intends to rejoin the Paris Agreement," Andrew Light, a climate advisor to former president Barack Obama said.

The US will still be "outside the conversation" when Britain and the UN host a climate summit on December 12, the fifth anniversary of Paris, but poised to re-engage. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in order to have a chance of keeping end-of-century warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, global emissions need to reach net zero around mid-century.

The target warming level was chosen to avoid triggering a series of catastrophic climate tipping points that could force humanity to inhabit only the planet's far north and south latitudes. Niklas Hohne, a climate scientist at Wageningen University in the Netherlands and a member of a simulation group called Climate Action Tracker, wrote on Twitter that "Biden's climate plan alone could reduce temperature increase in the order of 0.1°C. "This election could be a make or break point for international climate policy. Every tenth of a degree counts," he said. Environmentalists say Trump's announcement that he would withdraw from the Paris agreement three years ago made it easier for countries such as Australia, Saudi Arabia and Brazil to weaken their own ambitions. —AFP

## Wary Armenians, Azerbaijanis watch war from Moscow

**MOSCOW:** At a bustling produce market in southwest Moscow, Azerbaijani salesman Avas' fruit and vegetables kiosk is a few steps away from Armine's where she sells cheese from Armenia. When Avas was 26 years old, conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region and he was forced to leave his home. The early 1990s war between the two ex-Soviet rivals killed around 30,000 people, displaced hundreds of thousands and left a legacy of hate and mistrust.

Since the long-simmering conflict ignited again at the end of September, both Armenian and Azeri sellers at the market in Moscow have been anxiously scrolling through news on their phones, pouring over images of

devastation and homes destroyed by shelling. Yet for Avas, whose stall stands next to Armenians who come from the region he fled, the conflict at home has not inflamed tensions in Moscow. "We are all like family here. Like during the Soviet Union, we eat together,



**MOSCOW:** A man visits a makeshift memorial for Azerbaijanis killed during the military conflict with Armenia over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh outside the Azerbaijani embassy on Oct 23, 2020. — AFP

**HELSINKI:** As millions across Europe face new lockdown measures to tackle the resurging coronavirus, Finland is bucking the trend: infection rates are falling, while attitudes to restrictions remain the most positive on the continent. Although much international attention has been focused on next-door Sweden's light-touch response to the virus, Finland has quietly succeeded in keeping infection levels five times below the EU average, with a lesser hit to its economy and one-tenth the number of deaths per capita of its Scandinavian neighbor.

In the last two weeks, the Nordic country has recorded 45.7 new cases per 100,000 population—the lowest rate in the EU according to the WHO and the only country in the bloc whose rate of new infections has slowed since the previous fortnight. "The situation looked worrying when there was a rapid growth in infections" earlier in October, the country's top epidemiologist Mika Salminen said last week. "But it's clear that the peak has passed." Officials credit the

## Ethiopian PM orders riposte after 'attack' on army camp

**ADDIS ABABA:** Ethiopia yesterday declared a state of emergency in Tigray after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said he ordered a military response to a deadly attack by the ruling party of the restive region on a camp housing federal troops. A statement from Abiy's office said the government made the declaration "recognizing that illegal and violent activities" in Tigray, a region locked in a long-running dispute with Addis Ababa, were threatening national sovereignty, constitutional order and peace and security.

It followed an announcement by Abiy on social media that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) "has attacked a military camp" in the northern region, and "tried to loot" military assets. The attack resulted in "many martyrs, injuries and property damage", Abiy said later in a five-minute address on state television. "Our defense forces... have been ordered to carry out their mission to save the country. The final point of the red line has been crossed. Force is being used as the



**HELSINKI:** People wear facemasks at the Hakaniemi Sunday market on Nov 1, 2020. — AFP

outcome to factors such as early government action, which included a two-month lockdown in March and a ban on travel in and out of the capital.

Since then, society has largely re-opened and an effective test and trace system was developed, revolving around a smartphone app. The "Corona Flash" application, downloaded 2.5 million times in a country of 5.5 million people, has escaped the privacy or functionality problems that have hit similar initiatives in countries from the UK to Norway. Like elsewhere in the Nordics, high levels of trust towards authority in Finland have meant that there has been little resistance to the government's measures.—AFP

last measure to save the people and the country," he said in an earlier post on Facebook and Twitter.

It was not immediately clear what form the federal military response might take, or what the state of emergency declaration will entail. But analysts and diplomats have been warning for weeks that the standoff between the federal government and the TPLF could spill over into violence. "This war is the worst possible outcome of the tensions that have been brewing," said William Davison, an analyst with International Crisis Group.

"Given Tigray's relatively strong security position, the conflict may well be protracted and disastrous," he said, adding it could send "shockwaves" into the wider Horn of Africa region. Internet monitoring group Netblocks reported that internet appeared to have been cut in Tigray as of one am (2200 GMT Tuesday). Abiy said on state TV that "traitorous forces" had turned on the military in the regional capital, Mekele, and the town of Dansha in western Tigray.

The assault on Dansha was "repelled" by security forces from Amhara region, which borders Tigray to the south, he added. A separate statement from Abiy's office accused the TPLF of dressing its soldiers in uniforms resembling those of the army of neighbouring Eritrea to "implicate the Eritrean government in false claims of aggression against the people of Tigray." —AFP

chat and argue," says Avas, 50, wrinkles lining his face as he smiles.

Armine says the market vendors often exchange videos from the war, wondering together when it will end. But lowering her voice, the 37-year-old saleswoman admits she sometimes wonders whether Azerbaijani colleagues are smiling at a video that made her cry. Fighting over Karabakh between separatists and Azerbaijan's army has persisted for weeks despite repeated attempts by Russia, France and the United States to bring about a ceasefire. Both Armine and Avas say they have relatives fighting in Karabakh.

Karabakh's self-declared autonomy has not been recognized by governments including Armenia's and it remains part of Azerbaijan under international law. "For the moment, all is calm. All day, everyday our Armenians and Azerbaijanis watch the videos from their war, then they go for a smoke together," says Irina Kaputerko, a Russian saleswoman at the market. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have large diasporas in Russia, and when hostilities erupted over Karabakh late September, the two communities of around two million each urged calm. —AFP

## News in brief

## 11 Cameroon teachers kidnapped

**YAOUNDE:** Between six and 11 teachers have been kidnapped from a school in a western Cameroon region gripped by a three-year-old armed campaign by anglophone separatists, local sources said. The abduction comes on the heels of the killing of seven schoolchildren, which the government has blamed on militants. The incident happened on Tuesday in Kumbo, in Cameroon's Northwest Region. Armed men raided the local Presbyterian primary and secondary school, taking away 11 teachers, said Reverend Samuel Fonki, head of the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon, and Stephen Afuh, head of a presbyterian teachers' union called PEATTU. A local official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that six teachers had been kidnapped. — AFP

## Fury in Brazil amid rape trial

**SAO PAULO:** Outrage erupted in Brazil Tuesday over video footage of a rape trial where the defendant's attorney verbally attacked and humiliated the alleged victim, leaving her in tears and vainly begging the judge to intervene. Mariana Ferrer, a 23-year-old event promoter, accused wealthy businessman Andre Aranha, 42, of raping her during a party she was hired to promote in 2018 in the trendy beach resort of Florianopolis in southern Brazil. She says she was drugged before the assault happened. Aranha hired high-profile defense attorney Gaston da Rosa Filho, who virulently attacked Ferrer's credibility during the trial. Filho aggressively questioned Ferrer over sensual photos she had posted online and told her, "I pray to God my son never meets a woman like you." — AFP

## Mississippi voters back new flag

**WASHINGTON:** Voters in Mississippi approved on Tuesday a new state flag that will feature the magnolia flower, months after the southern state retired its old banner bearing a Confederate battle emblem. Mississippi's flag was the last in the US to include a symbol of the Confederacy, a collection of southern states where slavery was legal and which seceded from the union in 1860. Many African Americans believe the flag carries racist connotations, while white southerners argue it is a symbol of Southern heritage. US media reported that Mississippi voters had backed the flag's new design, which also will carry the words "In God We Trust." — AFP

## Top Indian news anchor arrested

**MUMBAI:** One of India's top TV news anchors, Arnab Goswami, was arrested by police in Mumbai yesterday for alleged abetment of suicide in a case registered in 2018, his channel said in a statement. According to local media, the case related to the suicide of an interior designer who said he was owed money by Goswami's Republic TV. Republic showed footage of more than a dozen police officers entering Goswami's house and taking him away in a van. Republic, in the statement, said Goswami and his son were physically assaulted by the police and access to his legal team was denied. A spokesperson for Mumbai police said the arrests were carried out by officers from the neighboring Raigad district. —Reuters



## International

## US ELECTION

## As America counts, the world holds its breath for US election outcome

## From White House, Trump claims he has won the election

**LONDON:** A day after Americans voted in a bitterly contested election, the rest of the world was none the wiser yesterday, with millions of votes still to count, the race too close to call and a mounting risk of days or even weeks of legal uncertainty. Donald Trump's pre-emptive declaration of victory at the White House was condemned by some US political commentators and civil rights groups, who warned about the trampling of long-standing democratic norms.

Most world leaders and foreign ministers sat on their hands, trying not to add any fuel to the electoral fire. "Let's wait and see what the outcome is," said British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. "There's obviously a significant amount of uncertainty. It's much closer than I think many had expected." But while Raab and others urged caution, the Slovenian prime minister broke ranks, congratulating Trump and the Republican party via Twitter.

"It's pretty clear that American people have elected @realDonaldTrump and @Mike\_Pence for #4moreyears," wrote Janez Jansa, one of several east European leaders, including Hungary's Viktor Orban, who are fervent Trump allies. "Congratulations @GOP for strong results across the #US." The latest vote tally showed Democrat challenger Joe Biden with a lead in the Electoral College - 224 votes to 213, with 270 needed for victory - but with counting still to be completed in at least five major 'battleground' states: Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Georgia.

In 2000, the election between George W. Bush and Al Gore hinged on Florida. It was ultimately decided in Bush's favor by the US Supreme Court, in a ruling five weeks after the vote. In his comments, Trump suggested the Supreme Court - to which he has nominated three of the nine justices - would have to decide the winner again. On Twitter, the hashtags #Trump, #Biden and #USElections2020 were trending from Russia to Pakistan, Malaysia to Kenya and across Europe and Latin America, underscoring how much every region of the world sees the outcome as pivotal.

In Russia, which US intelligence agencies have accused of trying to interfere in the election, there was no official reaction. But Pro-Kremlin lawmaker Vyacheslav Nikonov, the grandson of Stalin's foreign minister, advised Russians to stock up on popcorn to



DETROIT: Detroit election workers work on counting absentee ballots for the 2020 general election at TCF Center yesterday. —AFP

watch the show he predicted was about to unfold, saying US society was fatally split. "The result of the elections is the worst outcome for America," Nikonov, who welcomed Trump's 2016 win, wrote on Facebook. "Whoever wins the legal battles half of Americans will not consider them the lawful president. Let's stock up on large quantities of popcorn."

In Australia, crowds watched the results roll in while drinking beer in an American bar in Sydney. "The news is so much better when Trump is in," said Glen Roberts, wearing a red 'Make Europe Great Again' baseball cap. "You never know what he said, it's so good. I think it'll be less interesting if Trump loses."

Others were quick to underline the ramifications of

the U.S. vote worldwide. "I think it affects us all, what happens over there really matters for the next four years over here," said Sydney resident Luke Heinrich. New York-based Human Rights Watch, one of the world's leading civil rights groups, warned about the need to reserve judgment on the results until every vote is counted. —Reuters

## Senate Republican leader McConnell wins reelection

**WASHINGTON:** US Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky won reelection Tuesday, ensuring that the most powerful Republican in Congress will remain in the chamber for another six years. McConnell was leading his Democratic challenger, former fighter pilot Amy McGrath, by 19 percentage points with more than 70 percent of precincts reporting, and Fox News and The New York Times called the race.

"You've given me the honor of a lifetime," McConnell said in a victory speech in Kentucky. "I'll always be grateful. I will never let you down." The Republican power broker, 78, has been an important ally on Capitol Hill for President Donald

Trump, helping him confirm a record number of federal judges over the past four years.

He has overseen the contentious process for getting three of Trump's picks on to the US Supreme Court, and also managed to hold nearly the entire 53-member Republican majority together early this year to acquit Trump in his impeachment trial. But McConnell has been quietly critical of the president's coronavirus pandemic response. In early October he said he had been avoiding the White House since August 6 over concerns that Trump and other officials had not taken sufficient Covid-19 precautions.

The perpetually unruffled Republican lawmaker has served in the Senate since 1985 and as the majority leader since 2007, a record tenure for the position. It is a remarkable run for a lawmaker with one of the lowest approval ratings in the United States, and all the more impressive given the tumult in the GOP since Trump took the reins. But McConnell's power—especially behind the scenes—has been undeniable. He lacks Trump's telegenic



LOUISVILLE, Kentucky: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell delivers his victory speech next to his wife Elaine Chao at the Omni Louisville Hotel on Tuesday. —AFP

charisma and bravado. But he is even-tempered, does not shoot from the hip, and is a top political tactician, his colleagues have said. —AFP



MIAMI: Supporters of US President Donald Trump rally in front of Cuban restaurant Versailles on Tuesday. —AFP

told AFP. He said BLM and the loose leftist grouping called Antifa were used by the Democrats "to create panic and terror." Jorge Duany, head of the Cuban Research Institute at FIU, said it's not just Hispanics - they make up 20 percent of the electorate in the Sunshine State - that fueled Trump's win. You can win without them if you capture the support of rural Floridians, Duany said. But the "tight relationship" Trump cultivated with the Cuban and Venezuelan communities in Miami yielded good results, he said. —AFP

among rural whites, experts said. "The Democrats lost the Hispanic vote. Not just among the Cubans. Also the Venezuelans, Argentines, Bolivians, Colombians. They are all pro-Trump here," said Eduardo Gamarra, a professor of political science at Florida International University (FIU). Antiracism protests that swept America after the police killing of George Floyd in May did not persuade Florida Latinos to vote for Biden - who unlike Trump supports the Black Lives Matter movement - as they do not identify with Blacks in the United States, Gamarra said. South Americans living in Florida tend to come from the middle and upper class in their home countries, the scholar said. "But Latinos in the rest of the country have a different image of themselves because of their social origin, and are more committed to the debate on civil rights," he said. According to Gamarra, Black Lives Matter actually hurt Biden among Latinos in the Sunshine State.

#### 'Praying' for Trump to win

Take Carlos Rizo, a Cuban who was watching the election returns at home and "praying" for Trump to win. He said Black Lives Matter is a leftist ploy to undermine democracy - an opinion not uncommon among the state's Latinos. "Everybody knows what Black Lives Matter is and what they have provoked," Rizo, a 53-year-old truck driver,

occurred in the 2016 campaign, Facebook, Twitter and Google-owned YouTube have all implemented policies aimed at heading off the spread of false information designed to sway the outcome of this year's poll.

Twitter covered the Trump tweet with a notice that it contained information that was potentially misleading, requiring people to click through to see an unfounded claim of an effort to "steal" the election and deprive the president of an election victory. Trump posted the same message on his Facebook page, where it was tagged with a disclaimer that ballot

counting remained in progress, and a link to reliable information about the election.

"We applied labels to two posts from President Donald J. Trump this evening in accordance with the policies we shared ahead of Election Day," Facebook said. Facebook earlier said it had a command center watching the platform and ready to react to misinformation during the vote. "Our Election Operations Center will continue monitoring a range of issues in real time," said a Facebook statement posted on Twitter. —AFP

## For Latinos, Trump's tough talk against socialism rang true

**MIAMI:** US President Donald Trump's big win in Florida owes much to his strident denunciation of leftist governments in Latin America, which resonated loud and clear with conservative Hispanics in the southeastern state. In Florida, this demographic is led by Cubans who loathe the communist government in Havana, against which Trump adopted a hard line during his presidency and the campaign for the White House. In Miami's Little Havana neighborhood, dozens of Cubans listened to salsa music and waved American flags Tuesday night as they celebrated Trump's victory in Florida, and its rich prize of 29 electoral votes. The state famous for its tight presidential races was seen as critical to Trump's reelection bid against Democrat Joe Biden. Outside the famous Cafe Versailles, a popular Spanish song urging people to vote for Trump rang out. "Freedom for Cuba!" one woman shouted as TV crews filmed her.

Trump won Florida because of his anti-communist rhetoric and also because of his popularity

## New York progressive Ocasio-Cortez easily wins 2nd House term

**NEW YORK:** New York progressive Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez comfortably secured a second term in US Congress on Tuesday with an expected win over her Republican challenger, who was outspent despite raising \$10 million. As the neck-and-neck presidential race kept American voters on edge, the quartet known as "The Squad" that includes Ocasio-Cortez posted successes for the Democratic Party's left wing. John Cummings, 60, hoped fundraising from conservative donors nationwide could propel him past one of the left's most popular stars. But the former police officer and high school teacher was no match for the charismatic 31-year-old representative of parts of New York City's Bronx and Queens. Democratic socialist Ocasio-Cortez raised more than \$17 million for her second congressional campaign, making it the second most expensive House race in the country even though her primary win all but guaranteed her House seat was safe.

With 65 percent reporting, the congresswoman known as "AOC" led Cummings by 38 percentage points, according to The New York Times. In 2018 she won the seat by nearly 80 percent. "Serving NY-14 and fighting for working class families in Congress has been the greatest honor, privilege, & responsibility of my life," Ocasio-Cortez tweeted. "Thank you to the Bronx & Queens for re-electing me to the House despite the millions spent against us, & trusting me to represent you once more."

#### 'Resilient'

Ocasio-Cortez is part of a group of like-minded congresswoman known as "The Squad," who are admired on the Left for challenging the Washington status quo. Her three allies were set to duplicate her electoral achievement. US media called races for Minnesota's Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, with Michigan's Rashida Taib also leading her Republican opponent by a wide margin.

"Our sisterhood is resilient," Omar tweeted alongside pictures of all four women as she celebrated her victory. Pressley called her successful reelection bid a win for "our shared humanity." "We have organized. We have mobilized. We have legislated our values," she said. "I believe in the power of us. And we're just getting started." Ocasio-Cortez in particular has been the target of near-constant Republican ire while also endorsing leftists who take on members of the Democratic party's old guard.

The former organizer for Bernie Sanders—the long time Democratic socialist senator from Vermont—rose to prominence thanks to her relaxed social media personality and willingness to shake things up on Capitol Hill. She's been floated as a potential future challenger to New York's Democratic Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, or a primary opponent against New York's centrist Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2022. Many of her supporters have also urged Ocasio-Cortez to consider a presidential run. —AFP

## Social media on high alert; US votes tallied

**WASHINGTON:** Twitter labeled a Donald Trump post as potentially misleading while social media platforms kept on high alert against election misinformation yesterday, with the outcome of the US presidential vote yet to be called. Aiming to avoid problems that



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020

# Business

## Scrapping of Ant IPO leaves investors baffled

### Regulators pull the plug on its dual debut in Hong Kong and Shanghai

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong's "mom and pop" investors had been looking forward to an instant jackpot via Ant Group's record-busting \$34 billion IPO. Instead, China's shock suspension of the listing has left them baffled and angry.

The financial tech titan's listing came crashing down on Tuesday evening as regulators pulled the plug just two days before its dual debut in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Demand was so strong in Hong Kong that Ant announced it was going to stop selling a day early, while in Shanghai it was more than 800 times over-subscribed.

Unlike in mainland China, Hong Kong allows margin financing, permitting investors to borrow large sums of money in the hopes of boosting their chance of share allocation. Investors bet on a debut share spike, pay back the loan and pocket the gains while banks and brokers make money from interest. Barring small interest payments—which some institutions may forgive—investors will get their money back.

But many in Hong Kong nonetheless expressed frustration at how Chinese regulators had made their decision so late. "This is an international joke," fumed Winni Cheung, 31 and self-employed who invested over HK\$200,000 (\$25,800) on Ant. Adding salt to her wounds, she said, was the HK\$10,000 her shares in Alibaba-Ant's parent company—had lost yesterday morning as markets reacted.

"(Chinese) state media said the suspension was to protect investors like us but if they really wanted to protect us, they should have stopped the IPO when the company submitted its application for scrutiny," she added.

#### No payday

Jackson Wong, an asset management director at Amber Hill Capital, said investors were "expecting a huge pop on the first day... anything from 30 to

50 percent." "So that would be a pretty good payday for lucky investors who will be allotted shares. Now, instead, they will not get any allotment, the IPO is not going to come. And also they might face some interest payment on their margins."

Chris Liu pulled together a HK\$1.3 million pot for Ant shares—HK\$900,000 from margin financing.

"When I saw the news last night, my first reaction was that the Chinese government is really unbelievable," he told AFP. "I didn't expect the IPO to go wrong like this." It has been a grim economic year for Hong Kong, hit by the US-China trade war, the coronavirus pandemic and last year's roiling pro-democracy protests.

The city is deep in recession, unemployment is rising and the stock exchange is down about eight percent since the start of the year. But first time listings have been a rare opportunity—as of September Hong Kong was third in the global IPO ranking for 2020, according to KPMG.

Bankers will be mourning the loss of some handsome commissions. Three of the four IPO sponsors in Hong Kong were US banks. Alongside China International Capital Corp, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase and Morgan Stanley were expected to reap the lion's share of the estimated \$400 million in fees from both Ant and investors, according to Bloomberg.

#### What can we do?

One regular investor, who asked to only give his surname Choy, said he had pulled together HK\$500,000 cash and a further HK\$4.5 million in margin financing. "I invested in new IPOs all year round, no way I wasn't going to invest in this one," he said. Choy, who described himself as a committed stock market "gambler", shrugged off the interest payment losses of around HK\$4,000.

"If you count my earnings from IPOs all year



SHANGHAI: People walk outside the Shanghai Stock Exchange building in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

round, this is not a big loss to me at all," he said. But he was unhappy with how things unfolded. "The suspension was announced way too late, but China has no rules. The regime is a jerk, but we can still earn money off it." China's last-minute decision was quickly interpreted as a signal from the nation's communist leaders that they were uncomfortable with the enormous influence of Ant, which has helped revolutionize commerce and personal finance but eroded the power of state financial institutions.

The opaque and often unpredictable relationship between the Chinese state and business is something many in semi-autonomous Hong Kong are becoming more familiar with. Beijing has blanketed the city in a sweeping national security law following months of democracy protests last year and has made it clear it expects big business in the finance hub to get on side. Liu said he felt Ant's sudden troubles were a reminder of the Chinese state's power. "When a giant like Ant can fall like this, what can we ordinary people do?" —AFP

## flydubai to launch first commercial service to Tel Aviv

**DUBAI:** Dubai budget airline flydubai

said yesterday it will start direct flights to Tel Aviv this month, the first commercial service between the cities, after the UAE and Israel agreed to normalize ties. "The carrier will operate 14 flights a week, offering a double daily service between Dubai International Airport and Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport," it said in a statement, adding that flights will start from November 26. The United Arab Emirates signed a US-brokered deal in September to formalize relations with Israel, the first such agreement by a Gulf Arab state.

"The start of scheduled flights will contribute to economic development and create further opportunities for investment," flydubai CEO Ghaith Al-Ghaith said. With their economies hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic,

ic, the UAE and Israel are hoping for rapid dividends from the normalization deal. They have already signed treaties on direct flights and visa-free travel, along with accords on investment protection, science and technology.

The UAE is only the third Arab country to normalize ties with Israel following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. However, its move was quickly followed by Bahrain and last month Sudan followed suit.

The agreements, which have been roundly condemned by the Palestinians, break with years of Arab League policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The consensus had been that there should be no relations with Israel until it makes peace with the Palestinians. Regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia has so far refrained from formalizing relations with Israel but has greenlighted UAE and Bahrain overflights, marking a sign of cooperation with the Jewish state. After the UAE deal was announced by President Donald



DUBAI: Budget airline flydubai announced yesterday that it is launching regular commercial service between the Gulf city state and Tel Aviv.

Trump in August, Israel's El Al airline flew a delegation of US and Israeli officials to Abu Dhabi in the first commercial flight between the two countries.

That was followed by an official visit by a UAE delegation to Tel Aviv last month as well as a string of direct flights carrying business groups. —AFP



LIVERPOOL: Shoppers queue to enter a Primark store in Liverpool, northwest England yesterday. England heads into a second national lockdown tomorrow to try to cut coronavirus cases. —AFP

## UK heading for double-dip recession

**LONDON:** Britain looks on course to enter a double-dip recession this winter, as business surveys show economic growth almost halted last month even before the latest England-wide lockdown was announced, financial data company IHS Markit said. The IHS Markit/CIPS services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to a four-month low of 51.4 in October from 56.1 in September, closer to the 50 mark that represents zero growth than an initial reading of 52.3. "October data indicates that the UK service sector was close to stalling even before the announcement of lockdown 2 in England," IHS Markit economist Tim Moore said. From today all non-essential shops, pubs and restaurants in England will close for four weeks, except where they serve takeaway food.

"The UK economy seems on course for a double-dip recession this winter and a far more challenging path to recovery in 2021," Moore added. The new orders component in the services PMI fell sharply, and businesses shed jobs for the eighth month in a row.

The composite PMI, which includes stronger manufacturing data released on Monday, sank to 52.1 from 56.5, also weaker than the initial 'flash' estimate. The restrictions are less wide-ranging than in March and April, but some economists have predicted output in November will fall by as much as 10 percent, reducing output for the fourth quarter by around 3 percent. Samuel Tombs, chief UK economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, only predicts a 0.7 percent drop in fourth-quarter GDP, followed by a 2.0 percent rise in the first three months of 2021, but said the PMIs still represented bad news. "Hopes of a V-shaped recovery are dead and buried," he said. British gross domestic product slumped by 20 percent during the longer lockdown in the second quarter of 2020, the biggest decline of any major advanced economy, but recovered rapidly early in the third quarter before COVID cases rose. The Bank of England looks set to launch another round of bond purchases today and downgrade its economic forecasts from those it gave in August, when it predicted GDP would be back to pre-crisis levels by the end of 2021. —Reuters

## Markets volatile as Trump disputes US vote count

**LONDON:** Volatility gripped financial markets yesterday with the US election outcome clouded by huge uncertainty. European stock markets, which opened sharply lower after President Donald Trump said he would go to the Supreme Court to dispute the US vote count, turned higher in late morning deals.

Asian indices mostly closed up but that was ahead of Trump declaring he would dispute the election. Around 1015 GMT, London's benchmark FTSE 100 index was 0.3-percent higher, while the pound fell 0.7 percent against the dollar. In the eurozone, the Frankfurt stock market edged up 0.1 percent and Paris added 0.5 percent. The euro was down around half a percent versus the dollar, while oil prices surged almost three percent. "With Donald Trump already claiming victory even though millions of votes are still uncounted, investors may have to belt up and brace themselves for some volatile sessions of trading ahead," noted Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

The US election was plunged into chaos yesterday as Trump prematurely declared victory and sought Supreme Court intervention to stop vote-counting — even as his Democratic rival Joe Biden voiced confidence in his own chances. In a divisive election cast under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic that has claimed more than 230,000 lives in the United States, Trump appeared to have avoided a Democratic wave predicted by some polls but he still needs key states to secure another four-year term. Biden's



FRANKFURT: US President Donald Trump is displayed on a television screen as traders work at the stock exchange in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, yesterday. —AFP

White House campaign slammed Trump's threat to try to stop the election vote count as "outrageous", saying its legal team was ready to prevent such an "unprecedented" act.

#### 'Nightmare situation'

"The US election has become a mess," said Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at Avatrade. "Basically, we are seeing a nightmare situation come true because now we are talking about legal battles. This uncertainty is going to keep traders on edge."

Aslam added that investors still saw the dollar as a safe bet amid the volatility on stock markets. Before Wednesday's shock turn of events, world equities had rallied this week as traders piled bets on Biden winning, with opinion polls showing him with a big national lead

though with slim advantages in battleground states. While Tuesday was formally Election Day, in reality, Americans have been voting for weeks. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a huge expansion in mail-in and early voting, and nearly 100 million people had already cast their ballots. While a failure for Biden and the Democrats would jolt markets, the general consensus is that whoever wins will still push through a major stimulus package for the struggling US economy as it battles the virus.

Meanwhile on US futures markets, the tech-heavy Nasdaq was up more than two percent.

Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, said Biden is "arguably negative for tech stocks on the grounds that he might begin more strenuous antitrust reviews and potentially increase their tax bills" if elected. —AFP



## Business

# Wall Street executives fret as US election is too close to call

## A drawn-out count could keep markets and businesses hanging

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street and financial industry executives urged caution as no clear winner emerged in the hours after polls closed in the 2020 US presidential election, threatening a drawn-out count that keeps markets and businesses hanging.

While Republican President Donald Trump has handed the financial industry huge tax breaks and deregulatory wins, his first term has also been marked by volatility and unpredictability, particularly in international trade. This year, the administration's uneven response to the coronavirus pandemic came under criticism. The US economy slumped, with markets gyrating wildly and unemployment skyrocketing, as cities and states took different approaches to lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus.

Wall Street has been leaning left this election, with Democratic challenger Joe Biden outstripping Trump in financial industry fundraising. While many executives said they did not support all of Biden's policies, they believed he would be more predictable and better for the country.

"This is a vote for the soul of our nation. Who we really are. Who we aspire to be," Mike Novogratz, chief executive of New York-based Galaxy Digital and a major Democratic donor and fundraiser, tweeted early on Tuesday. "Have to admit a feeling of Deja vu. Don't like it. Still early though," he tweeted later as results started to roll in. Early yesterday, Trump was poised to take the vital battleground state of Florida and was leading in other swing states, but Biden pinned his White House hopes on Arizona and a "blue wall" of three Rust Belt states - Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin - that could take days to count their votes.

Global investors late on Tuesday began reversing some Biden trades that had prompted a jump in Wall Street's main indexes earlier in the day, although investors warned it was still too early to predict the election outcome. Analysts expected

record voter turnout, especially through mail-in ballots, which means it could take days to get certainty about a final tally. Both Trump's and Biden's teams were prepared to litigate the outcome.

Investors and fund managers said they were expecting a long night. Max Gokhman, the head of asset allocation at Pacific Life Fund Advisors, said he was working from his home in California with a glass of bourbon and a cold brew coffee and not expecting to get any sleep as he pores over computer models.

Anthony Scaramucci, a hedge fund industry executive who spent 11 days as Trump's communication director in 2017 and has long voted for Republicans, said after many polls closed on the East Coast that the race would likely be closer than he initially thought but that he still expected Biden to win. Scaramucci said he voted for the Democratic nominee. "Yes, he can win and it will be very good for stocks. Wall Street was already expecting a blue wave, which ignited the recent gains, a market rally based on a Biden victory."

In anticipation of possible protests, some buildings and stores were boarded up in cities including Washington and New York. While there were few signs of disruptions or violence at polling sites on Tuesday, some finance executives said it was too soon to rule out civil unrest. "Those boards are not coming down tonight, and they're not coming down tomorrow. There are no problems right now, but that's only because there's no answer right now," said Billy Weber, CEO of Checkpoint Capital, a fixed-income trading platform.

### 'Perfect storm'

The US stock market has risen 48.8 percent during Trump's tenure through Tuesday's close, according to the S&P 500 Index, which he has frequently cited as a measure of success. Policy-wise, the Trump administration has focused on lower taxes,



NEW YORK: A view of the New York Stock Exchange in Wall Street with US national flag on Election Day. — AFP

deregulation and rethinking the US position on global trade agreements in order to boost domestic manufacturing. Trump has not been uniformly loved, however, by the financial industry. He has attacked corporate leaders, including JPMorgan Chase & Co CEO Jamie Dimon, and close Wall Street associates have distanced themselves from Trump as he came under fire over his handling of the pandemic and racial justice protests. Biden has called for higher corporate taxes, tougher regulation and a less combative stance with trade partners. The financial industry is also worried about an enforcement crackdown and an emboldened consumer watchdog, which Trump had diminished.

The former vice president has cast himself as

someone who will unify the country and has aligned himself with progressive politicians fiercely critical of Wall Street. But many financial executives and their Washington operatives said they were less worried about Biden than a second dose of Trump chaos. Still, some young Republican finance executives who had donated to Trump said they were looking forward to his victory. Charles Kolean, a 25-year-old investment industry worker who spent months raising cash to re-elect Trump, was in a celebratory mood, having reserved a chunk of a Dallas bar where he and some 100 young friends planned to toast another four years for the president. "The perfect storm is coming together to make Donald Trump a two-term president." — Reuters

## Dutch govt backs KLM bailout after pilots agree to pay cut

**THE HAGUE:** The Dutch government approved a multi-billion-euro coronavirus bailout for struggling airline KLM after pilots agreed a five-year pay cut deal. Finance Minister Wopke Hoekstra on Saturday dramatically suspended plans to rescue the beleaguered Dutch arm of Air France-KLM after unions refused to budge.

But after KLM announced that the pilots' union had backed down, the government said it was now ready to sign off on the 3.4-billion-euro (\$3.9-billion) state aid injection. "Intensive consultations" between KLM and the unions led to a "positive outcome", Hoekstra and Infrastructure Minister Cora van Nieuwenhuizen said in a letter to parliament.

"The cabinet can therefore agree to its restructuring plan and has since confirmed this to the KLM management board," they wrote. KLM chief executive Pieter Elbers had earlier announced the deal with the pilots' union, hailing it as an "important step" for the airline's survival.

"The past few days have been

incredibly intensive for everyone, with great pressure on the company, negative impact on reputation and internal divisions," he said.

"But in the end we, as KLM and unions, came to an agreement." The suspension of the rescue plan had put the future of the world's oldest airline at risk as it struggles to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 'Unprecedented time'

In the spring, Paris gave Air France seven billion euros (\$8.3 billion) in loans, and The Hague also granted KLM state aid. But arguments over the restructuring plan for KLM meant that the government kept back most of the money. Talks between KLM and unions representing pilots, cabin and ground crew then failed to reach a deadline set by Hoekstra on Saturday.

The Dutch pilots union VNV had refused to sign what they termed a "last minute" change to conditions to the deal. The bitter feud centers around a clause in the agreement that



AMSTERDAM: In this file photo, Dutch airline KLM planes are parked on the tarmac of the Schiphol Airport, in the outskirts of Amsterdam as several airlines cancel their flights related to the COVID-19 outbreak hitting Europe. — AFP

asks the airline's staff to take salary cuts for the next five years. KLM presented the finance ministry with an austerity plan that requires a 15 percent cut in costs and would see 5,000 jobs shed, as a result of a global slump in air travel owing to the pandemic. It included an agreement from unions to cut pilots' salaries until March 2022 and ground and cabin crew salaries until the start of 2023. But on Friday, Hoekstra rejected the plan, insisting that salary cuts run concurrently with

the government's five-year bailout package.

KLM chief Elbers admitted that the coronavirus pandemic meant the airline was "asking a lot from all colleagues." "This unprecedented time requires unprecedented and unusual steps," he said.

Air France-KLM posted a net loss of 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) for the third quarter, compared with a 363 million euros profit over the same time last year. — AFP

## Walmart to end experiment with robots in US stores

**NEW YORK:** Walmart has pulled the plug on a program to use robots to scan items in stores and help maintain inventory, a company spokeswoman said Tuesday. The retail giant had worked with Bossa Nova Robotics for five years employing elongated robots that take readings on inventory and utilize artificial intelligence to predict product movement and inventory needs.

Walmart had announced earlier this year plans to employ the robots in around 1,000 of its 4,700 US stores. But the company reversed course after bringing the machines into around 500 stores, Walmart said.

"We've worked with Bossa Nova for five years and together we learned a lot about how technology can assist associates, make jobs easier and provide a better customer experience," the Walmart spokeswoman said. "We will continue testing new technologies and investing in our own processes and apps to best understand and track our inventory and help move products to our shelves as quickly as we can." Walmart garnered higher sales from an expanded consumer base amid the upheaval of the coronavirus that has seen consumers flock to "essential" stores like Walmart and spend more on e-commerce.

Walmart, which has invested heavily on e-commerce ventures in recent years in a race with Amazon, in September launched a membership program that will charge \$98 annually or \$12.95 a month that will provide free delivery as soon as the same day as well as "scan and go" feature that lets consumers pay for items with a smart phone application. —AFP

told Sydney radio station 2GB. Although China's Ministry of Commerce had publicly denied the reports of a trade ban, more certainty was needed for Australian exporters, he added.

Australian winemakers were also bracing for possible tariffs—which would signal a spike in tensions that have already impacted beef, barley and coal exports. China-Australia's biggest trade partner has threatened economic blowback on a range of Australian goods since Canberra called for an inquiry into the Covid-19 pandemic.

Beijing has already launched a litany of measures this year—including probes into alleged dumping of Australian wines, suspending beef imports, and issuing warnings to its citizens against travelling to Australia. Treasury Wine Estates—producer of Penfolds—said in a statement that the China Alcoholic Drinks Association had called on the Chinese government to impose retrospective tariffs on some Australian wine. —AFP



In this file photo cars drive past a Walmart store in Washington, DC. — AFP

## Norway court begins to review oil licenses in Arctic

**OSLO:** Norway's Supreme Court began examining yesterday a case brought by two environmental groups seeking the cancellation of oil licenses granted by the Norwegian state in the Arctic.

The case is being watched closely in a country that owes its vast wealth to its abundant oil and gas reserves, as it could impact its future oil production. Greenpeace and Natur og Ungdom have already had their complaint dismissed by two lower courts, and have appealed to Norway's highest court to cancel the Barents Sea exploration licenses granted to 13 oil companies in 2016. They argue

the concessions violate the Norwegian constitution, which since 2014 guarantees the right to a healthy environment.

They also say that new oil activities in the region would be contrary to the 2015 Paris climate accord, which seeks to limit average global warming to under two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

"Opening up the Arctic for oil drilling in the time of climate emergency is unacceptable, and the Norwegian government must be held accountable," the head of Greenpeace Norway, Frode Pleym, said in a statement.

A legal victory for the two NGOs "could outlaw new oil drilling in the Arctic and set a precedent for similar climate cases all over the world." Symbolically, they placed a globe carved out of ice in front of the Supreme Court building before the hearing began Wednesday-by video link, due to corona restrictions—which coincided with the formal exit of the United States from the Paris accord. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Spanish unemployment rises

**MADRID:** Spain reported a 1.31 percent rise in unemployed people in October from the previous month as fresh restrictions to contain a second wave of coronavirus infections hobbled the job market, official data showed yesterday. Registered job seekers increased by 49,558 from September, leaving 3.83 million people out of work, Labor Ministry data showed. Some 600,000 people are being supported by a government furlough scheme, preventing a steeper rise in jobless figures. "This indicates the important challenges we have as a country to improve access to employment," Labor Minister Yolanda Diaz tweeted. — Reuters

#### Spain lifeline for Air Europa

**MADRID:** The Spanish government said Tuesday it would offer a 475-million-euro (\$553-million) lifeline to Air Europa to help see the airline through the coronavirus pandemic. The aid is to come from a 10-billion-euro fund set up in August to help strategic companies weather the crisis, government spokeswoman Maria Jesus Montero said after the weekly cabinet meeting. "Air Europa provides an essential service to guarantee connectivity in Spain," she said. The firm, which serves long-haul routes to the Americas and the Caribbean, is the second-most popular Spanish carrier for international destinations, Montero said. —AFP

#### BMW reports higher Q3 profit

**FRANKFURT:** German luxury carmaker BMW said yesterday that its third quarter net profit grew, beating expectations, as demand recovered from the crippling lockdowns of the early months of the coronavirus pandemic. The Munich-based company posted a net profit of 1.8 billion euros, up from 1.5 billion euros in the same period last year as it "recovered from the previously massive impact of the pandemic," BMW said in a statement. Sales were down 1.4 percent to 26.3 billion euros. Analysts had predicted third quarter net profit of 1.5 billion euros on sales at 26.1 billion euros, according to the FactSet financial information service. —AFP

## Australia calls for clarity from China over embargo reports

**SYDNEY:** Australia's trade minister yesterday called for "greater clarity" from China over reports an embargo could hit a slew of industries by the end of the week and further escalate tensions.

Simon Birmingham said he had raised concerns with Chinese officials over several trade issues including increased testing of live rock lobsters that "came out of the blue". "There are lots of different rumors and stories at present and it is hard to quite define and discern which things are true, which things are inflated," he



## Business

# KFH profits resulted from revenues of core banking activities: Al-Roshood

## KFH's subsidiaries' contribution forms about 51.4% of net profits

**KUWAIT:** Abdulwahab Al-Roshood, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) said that the profits realized until end of Q3 of 2020 resulted mainly from revenue items of the core banking activities. Net finance income until end of Q3 of 2020 grew 13.9 percent to KD 450.5 million compared to the same period of 2019. The net operating income rose 2.2 percent to KD 401.8 million in Q3 2020 compared to the same period of last year.

### Subsidiaries

Al-Roshood pointed out, during an interview with CNBC Arabia TV, that KFH's subsidiaries contribution forms about 51.4 percent of the net profits for KFH shareholders until end of Q3 2020, of which 41.4 percent contribution from KFH Turkey.

He indicated that KFH Turkey's financing portfolio enjoys good and stable position as well as the fact that it balances between the Turkish Lira and major foreign currencies.

### Exiting from non-strategic investments

Al-Roshood said that despite the drop in the exit of investments until end of Q3 of 2020 compared to the set plans due to coronavirus pandemic and its negative economic impacts locally and globally, the bank managed to exit investments of about KD 21.4 million, achiev-

ing a net profit of KD 1.5 million compared to KD 24.6 million for Q3 2019.

He stressed that exiting non-core assets is part of the bank's strategy in focusing on core banking business and exiting from non-strategic investments that consume the capital and are not in line with the bank's strategy of achieving sustainable profits.

### Financial indicators

KFH has reported net profit of KD 101.2 million until end of Q3 of 2020 for KFH shareholders; a

decrease of 46.9 percent compared to the same period last year. Net financing income until end of Q3 of 2020 reached KD 450.5 million; an increase of 13.9 percent compared to the same period last year. Total assets rose to reach KD 21.0 billion, i.e. an increase 8.1 percent. Financing portfolio until end of Q3 of 2020 reached KD 10.1 billion, i.e. an increase of 8.5 percent. In addition, depositors' accounts reached KD 14.9 billion i.e., an increase of 10.0 percent.



Abdulwahab Al-Roshood



### Interview with CNBC Arabia TV

## Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection arrives in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Huawei Consumer Business Group yesterday announced that its latest high-end smart watch, the Huawei WATCH GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection, is arriving to [country]. This new launch marks the latest addition to Huawei's award-winning WATCH GT 2 Series, one of the best-selling smartwatches in the world. With its luxurious Moonphase collection, a premium design, two-weeks battery life, professional health monitoring, advanced sports tracking with 5 ATM water resistance, and a wide range of handy assistant features the new Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection is set to be a big hit with high-end luxury watch aficionados, fitness fanatics and casual users alike.

Pre-orders for the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro start from 12th November 2020, while it is schedule to hit the shelves starting 19th November 2020. The Huawei Watch GT2 Pro will sell in Kuwait and will be available in different color variants like Night Black for sport edition and Nebula Grey for classic edition.

### Moonphase collection with high-end design

The Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection is designed to help users explore more. Whether exploring the world around them, learning new skills or exploring the limits of their fitness potential. Its high-end design is complemented by a Moonphase function that brings to users unique watch faces from which they can observe the different phases of the moon as it changes. This includes 8 moon phases such as new moon, full moon and first quarter moon and more. Apart from moonphases, users can choose different layouts showing tide times, constellation and more to master the elements as they explore outdoors.

The Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection is a minimalistic and comfortable yet robust smartwatch. The watch face is made of sapphire for the 1.39 inch AMOLED display, has a harder, more durable and textured exterior which is scratch-resistant while the watch frame is made from titanium. With over 200 watch face options to choose from, the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection gives users many customization options.

### Two weeks battery life

The Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection uses a low power consumption chipset and Smart Power Saving 2.0 to give it a long battery life of two weeks, even under everyday normal use with health and fitness tracking features on.

### Professional health tracking

Huawei has significantly improved its health tracking capabilities on the new Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection. Heart rate tracking is at its most advanced: The Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection also supports real-time heart rate monitoring, whether running, swimming, or practicing another sport, it monitors real-time heart rate, workout heart rate, high heart rate alert, highest oxygen uptake, recovery time and more. In health management scenarios, the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection supports 24-hour heart rate monitoring, resting heart rate monitoring, abnormal heart rate notifications, blood oxygen saturation (SpO2) detection scientific sleep tracking and all-day stress monitoring.

### Perform like a pro

Whether users are just getting into new sports or looking to push their performance to the next level, the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection offers over 100 workout modes to choose from. This includes new sports modes such as skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding and golf driving range. The skiing modes monitor users' average speed, distance, trajectory, cumulative descent, maximum slope, heart rate, blood oxygen saturation and more, with voice reminders to ensure safety. Golf driving range mode is ideal for perfectionists as it analyses the user's swing tempo and speed, even providing visual swing demonstrations on the watch face.

In addition to the new sports modes, Huawei continues to cater for a diverse range of extreme sports, leisure activities, water sports, ball games and snow sports. Huawei also offers automatic workout detection for six workout modes, delivering a seamless experience. Users don't have worry about their watch while enjoying water sports, because the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection comes with water resistance for up to 5ATM3.

Many consumers have spent a lot of time working out alone or at home recently, leading to a high demand for virtual personal training. The Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection delivers on this front as it comes pre-installed with over 10 running courses offering a guided service to keep users motivated.

### Handy assistant features for everyday use

In order to add more value to the user experience overall, the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro Moonphase collection comes with a wide range of handy smart features for everyday use. This includes wireless charging for easy recharge, Bluetooth call functionality, music control, a remote camera shutter and an easy Find my phone solution.

## ABK reports third quarter 2020 results

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) reported a total operating income of KD 103.3 million, with a net income of KD 53.2 million for the third quarter ended 30th September, 2020. The bank reported a net loss of KD 7.9 million compared to a net profit of KD 15.4 million in the corresponding period of 2019, due to the drop in interest rates and large provisions taken as a result of the effect of COVID-19. Loans and advances increased by KD 107 million to reach KD 3.3 billion and customer deposits increased by KD 89 million to reach KD 3.3 billion. The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio at 5.4 per cent, and NPL coverage at 126 per cent. The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) remained healthy at 18.74 per cent.

Talal Mohamed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK said: "The unprecedented government measures taken to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, whether at the International or local level, led to the cessation of business in general. Many business and economic activities have been affected by these strict measures, which had a direct impact on some customers financially, forcing the bank to take additional provisions on the loan portfolio. Nevertheless, ABK has a strong financial position and has a good Capital Adequacy Ratio. We still have the ability to face any challenges that may arise in the future. ABK continues to prioritize its customers while remaining operationally resilient

during the pandemic, and during the gradual reopening of various sectors as we entered the new phase of economic activity.

While most of the business areas all round were adversely impacted by the pandemic, prompt measures and sound decisions have contributed to enhancing the performance of the bank and staying ahead of the ongoing economic uncertainty. As we move forward, we are well equipped to handle a varied range of scenarios and will operate pragmatically to manage any risks that lie ahead."

Abdulla Al-Sumait, Deputy Group CEO commented: "The disruption caused by the pandemic has led to economic slowdown and social impediments never witnessed by the world before. However, it has also accelerated innovation across all fields of the banking industry. ABK has been at the forefront in taking initiatives, and collaborating with all its stakeholders to introduce new solutions that reinforces our digital transformation strategy and support customers, employees and partners with uninterrupted access to all banking services during this challenging phase.

The true value of ABK appeared in its continued dedication to innovation and investment in technology. The implementation of sophisticated digital technology enabled the bank to continue operations unhindered. With efficient employees from key business units well equipped to work from home, access was provided across key banking functions including HR, Operations and Sales, and security was bolstered by rigorous cyber security measures."

The Bank has also continued to invest in employee upskilling, and is using this period to advance

## Jack Ma: Ebullient billionaire and totem of China's rise

**BEIJING:** Jack Ma, the ebullient and unconventional billionaire founder of tech giant Alibaba, now finds himself battling the ignominy of having the world's biggest-ever IPO halted days before its launch by Chinese regulators. The most recognizable face in Asian business, Ma was set to see his wealth bulge to over \$70 billion in a record-breaking IPO of the group's financial arm Ant Group in Hong Kong and Shanghai today.

But with IPO fever peaking, Chinese regulators abruptly slammed on the brakes, over what initially appeared to be concerns about the company's reach into the finances of hundreds of millions of Chinese people. Now China's poster boy for entrepreneurialism finds himself caught in the glare of the Communist-run state, called in for a dressing down this week before the \$34 billion listing was abruptly halted.

It is a public relations nightmare for Ma, a Communist Party member, whose

rags-to-riches backstory has come to embody a self-confident generation of Chinese entrepreneurs ready to shake up the world. Charismatic, diminutive and fast-talking, Ma was a cash-strapped entrepreneur working as an English teacher when someone showed him the internet on a 1990s trip to the United States-and he was hooked.

He toyed with several internet-related projects, before convincing a group of friends to give him \$60,000 to start a new business in 1999 in China, then still emerging as an economic giant. Alibaba was the result, an e-commerce empire founded from his bedroom in Hangzhou, which started an online shopping revolution and grew into a fintech titan.

The company changed the shopping habits of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, and catapulted Ma into the global limelight. "The first time I used the internet, I touched on the keyboard and I find 'well, this is something I believe, it is something that is going to change the world and change China,'" Ma once told CNN.

In 2014, Alibaba listed in New York in a world-record \$25 billion offering. Ant Group, in which Ma is the largest shareholder, is now the world-largest digital payments platform, claiming 731 million

potential for simplifying personal finance in China. He envisioned a cashless society based on "trust and credit" where buyers' cash is held in escrow by Alipay for merchants to send their goods with a guarantee of return for any unhappy customers.

In interviews Ma likes to recount how the start of Alipay was met with derision, saying: "Everybody said 'Jack this is the most stupid model we've ever seen, nobody will use it.'" From payments for food deliveries, instant loans to micro-investment and insurance, Ant has mushroomed into an integral part of everyday Chinese life. It now claims one billion users, partly thanks to Ma's gift for navigating China's red tape and gatekeepers. But he may have crossed the line last month at a Shanghai business forum where he appeared to criticize regulators for being too heavy-handed and stifling technological innovation-prompting criticism in state media over the risks of Ant becoming too big.

### Colonizing Chinese finance

Ant's reach is astonishing. It is the world-largest digital payments platform, claiming 731 million monthly users on the Alipay app using more than 80 million stores. That equated to \$17.6 trillion in payments as of June this year, 25 times more than US giant PayPal. The company



SHANGHAI: This file photo taken on August 29, 2019 shows Elon Musk (right), co-founder and CEO of Tesla, and Jack Ma, co-chair of the UN High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, speaking on stage during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai. —AFP

monthly users on the Alipay app.

### Crossed the line?

Ma long enjoyed an image as the benevolent and unconventional billionaire. Often known in China as "Father Ma", he is praised for his self-deprecation-he

recounts being rejected by Harvard "10 times"-and a knack for lighting up company events with song and dance appearances as Lady Gaga, Snow White and Michael Jackson. As his fortune grew, Ma rebranded as a philanthropist-in 2019 retiring from the business to focus on giving. —AFP



SHANGHAI: An Alipay logo is seen next to Shanghai office building of Ant Group in Shanghai on Tuesday. —AFP

is leading the line on blockchain technology and says it has a capacity to match one billion transactions a day on the so-called AntChain. Its financial products have revolutionized personal finance across a country where around 10 percent of the population remains unbanked.

The Alipay app launched in 2013 a "Yu'eBao" service, which allows ordinary people to play money markets from their

e-wallet. The "leftover treasure" concept gave entry to investments of as little as one yuan, briefly becoming the world's biggest fund with nearly \$200 billion in circulation. Meanwhile, Zhima Credit (or Sesame Credit) is its credit scoring system, and Bangnitou-an artificial intelligence powered investment adviser-hoovered up 200,000 customers within six months of its launch. —AFP



# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199



**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant

**American Board Certified in General Surgery**  
**Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)**  
**Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation**  
**Member of many prestigious surgical societies.**

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

<http://www.international-clinic.com>

**Tel: 1886677**



**DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY



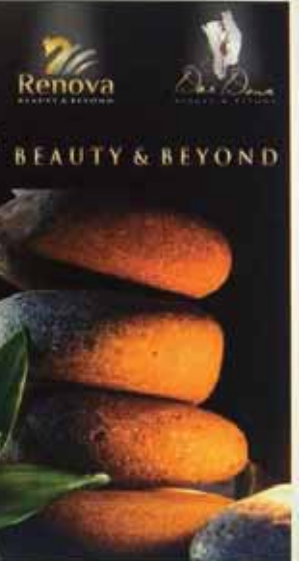
SHARQ, Ahmad Allaber st., Building B8, Floor 13.  
Tel.: (+965) 22060777.  
@DrFahadmeed, @Renovabbb, @dardonsbb  
Email: drfahadmeed@beautybeyond.com.kw  
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

#### ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

#### SPECIALIZED IN:

- o Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.



**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery



#### Academic Certificates – Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member.
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

#### Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.



email: wbuhaimeed@gmail.com

Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228

Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
Head of Cardiology department  
at Dar Al Shifa hospital



- ◆ Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- ◆ Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

مستشفى دار الشفاء  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele: 1802 555



To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617  
or email: [ads@kuwaittimes.com](mailto:ads@kuwaittimes.com)

**Hadi Clinic**  
Ophthalmology Services

**Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally**  
Senior Registrar

**Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid**  
Consultant

**Dr. Abeer Khattab**  
Specialist

Follow us on Social Media @hadiclinic

Tel: 1828282  
Whatsapp Us +965-6000 2184

Cataract Surgery, Glaucoma, Retina, General Ophthalmology, Follow-Up All Treatments

**DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY**  
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology  
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

**Salmiya, Belajaf Street, Tel: 1881122**

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

**Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

- ◆ Kuwait Board of Otolaryngology.
- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship, McGill University- Canada.
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck surgery.
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association.
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society.
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.

**Experienced In:**

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Diagnosis and treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Myringotomy and ventilation tube insertion.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Diagnosis and treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- Tympanoplasty.
- Diagnosis and treatment of vertigo.
- Thyroid surgery
- Diagnosis and treatment of snoring.

**2536 0000**  
[www.royalehayat.com](http://www.royalehayat.com)

ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL

**Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family**  
Book your appointments today!

**Dr. Kiran Turaka**  
Ophthalmologist

**Dr. Zareena Zahir**  
Ophthalmologist

**Dr. Hasan Khan**  
Senior Cardiologist

**Dr. P. Seshendra Nath**  
Orthopedic Consultant (AUSTRIA)  
Specialised in Neck, Shoulder Hip and Knee

**EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALTIES CENTER**  
Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

50721507  
24551555  
[www.exircenterkw.com](http://www.exircenterkw.com)

Tel : 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo – Rectal Surgeon

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment  
◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass  
◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

**daralshifa**  
Email: [aalhaddad@daralshifa.com](mailto:aalhaddad@daralshifa.com)





## CHINA Fashion Week



Models display creations from Tianxi collection designed by Su Juanjuan during the China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP photos



## Sounds and the city: Artists put Asia's changing urban identity on tape

When composer Ng Chor Guan started commuting by bicycle in car-obsessed Malaysia a decade ago, he was struck by how quickly his city was changing and the sounds he would not have heard if he had been driving. It led him to start recording the everyday sounds of Malaysian cities, one of a growing number of artists in Asia from India to Hong Kong who are seeking to preserve audible heritage in the region's fast-changing urban hubs. "Sound has many powerful hidden messages. It's not only about recording a certain event, but also the evolution of a place," said Ng, 39, who records urban soundscapes from pockets of jungle to communal areas threatened by redevelopment. Today the award-winning composer combines sound preservation with contemporary art, taking his performances to audiences across Asia and Europe.

"I realised some sounds are disappearing or changing," said Ng, citing multicultural Malaysia's 'rojak' pidgin. Blending several local languages and named after a mixed fruit salad, the pidgin can often be heard in places like street markets. "From one city to another, these sounds each have their own identity and uniqueness. I'm hoping more people can hear them and rediscover their cities," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in the capital, Kuala Lumpur. Asia-Pacific has one of the world's fastest urbanization rates, according to the United Nations, with half of its population - or some 2.3 billion people - living in cities for the first time in 2019. As the region becomes more developed, urban soundscape studies have often focused on noise pollution, while efforts to preserve the identity of cities have concentrated on heritage buildings or through visual works, conservation experts said.

"There are certainly not enough efforts to record 'historic sounds' related to places and activities," said Jeff Cody at the California-based Getty Conservation Institute, which seeks to preserve cultural heritage. "This is very lamentable, not only for nostalgic reasons, but also because often these sounds relate to the social significance of the historic places where they're present," said Cody, an architectural historian whose work focuses on Asia. William Chapman, a historic preservation professor at the University of Hawaii, said sound conservation gave a peek into how a city once was, noting a recording of 18th century Paris in which the sound of pigs being taken to market could be heard.

### Vendors, trams

In Delhi, the sing-song chants of hawkers who roam neighborhoods selling everything from vegetables to shoes are a fixture of life in India's capital, but their numbers have dwindled in recent years, said Indian artist Rashmi Kaleka. In 2000, she began to record the calls of the vendors - known locally as the pheriwalla - who are coming under increasing pressure due to the rise of e-commerce and official efforts to regulate where they can trade. "With coronavirus and lockdowns now, it has just become extremely difficult for them to come back to these middle-class colonies," said Kaleka, who has more than 2,000 clips she recorded over 15 years before she took a break in 2015. Her sound installations on the vendors have been featured domestically and abroad, and she is considering starting a digital platform to archive her work more systematically. "They are disappearing, they are doing something else, it's not feasible or economical for them to be hawking," said Kaleka, 63.

In Hong Kong, Kan Hei-chun runs an online sound library archiving the natural soundscape he recorded from forests across the densely packed city which he feared would one day give way to development and skyscrapers. He also records urban sounds - from an ancient Chinese ritual of beating away the evil spirits with a pair of shoes that still thrives in Hong Kong today, to the city's famous trams which are nicknamed "ding ding" for the sounds they emit. Despite their iconic status, the trams have faced persistent noise pollution complaints from some residents and have been undergoing upgrading work in recent years that includes coating the tram lines in rubber to make them quieter. "Will our children ask why the trams are called the ding ding if these sounds disappear one day?" said Kan, 26, a sound designer who works on concerts and productions. "They are quieter and it's good to tackle noise pollution, but we are also losing a slice of our collective memory in this city. These sounds symbolise our era, our generation - they're all part of our culture and identity that we need to preserve." Fei Chen, an architecture expert from Britain's University of Liverpool, said sounds are an "important carrier" of the memory and identity of a place as they represent the social dynamics that once existed there. "Nevertheless, with the change of the social dynamics over time, place identity is evolving. —AFP





Tunisian engineers test a prototype of an artificial hand at Cure Bionics startup in Sousse.— AFP photos

## TUNISIAN STARTUP 3D PRINTS SOLAR-POWERED BIONIC HANDS

A Tunisian startup is developing a 3D-printed bionic hand, hoping the affordable and solar-powered prosthetic will help amputees and other disabled people across Africa. Unlike traditional devices, the artificial hand can be customized for children and youths, who otherwise require an expensive series of resized models as they grow up. The company Cure Bionics also has plans to develop a video game-like virtual reality system that helps youngsters learn how to use the artificial hand through physical therapy. Mohamed Dhaouafi, the 28-year-old founder and CEO of Cure Bionics, designed his first prototype while still an engineering student in his home city Sousse. "One team member had a cousin who was born without a hand and whose parents couldn't afford a prosthesis, especially as she was still growing up," he said. "So we decided to design a hand."

Dhaouafi launched his start-up in 2017 from his parents' home, at a time when many of his classmates chose to move abroad seeking higher salaries and international experience. "It was

like positive revenge," he told AFP. "I wanted to prove I could do it. I also want to leave a legacy, to change people's lives." Dhaouafi pointed to hurdles in Tunisia, where it can be hard or impossible to order parts via large online sales sites. There is a lack of funding and, he said, "we lack visionaries within the state". But by pooling money raised through sponsored competitions and seed investment from a US company, he was able to recruit four young engineers. They are now fine-tuning designs, writing code and testing the artificial hand.

### 'Climb like Spiderman'

The device works with sensors attached to the arm that detect muscle movement, and AI-assisted software that interprets them to transmit instructions to the digits. The hand itself has a wrist that can turn sideways, a mechanical thumb and fingers that bend at the joints in response to the electronic impulses. To teach youngsters how to use them, Cure has been working on a virtual-reality headset that "gamifies" the physical therapy



Tunisian engineers test a prototype of an artificial hand.

process. "Currently, for rehabilitation, children are asked to pretend to open a jar, for example, with the hand they no longer have," said Dhaouafi. "It

takes time to succeed in activating the muscles this way. It's not intuitive, and it's very boring."

In Cure's version, the engineer said: "We get them to climb up buildings like Spiderman, with a game score to motivate them, and the doctor can follow up online from a distance". 3D printing meanwhile makes it possible to personalize the prosthesis like a fashion accessory or "a superhero's outfit", said Dhaouafi. Cure hopes to market its first bionic hands within a few months, first in Tunisia and then elsewhere in Africa, where more than three-quarters of people in need have no access to them, according to the World Health Organization. "The aim is to be accessible financially but also geographically," said Dhaouafi. The envisaged price of around \$2,000 to \$3,000 is substantial, but a fraction of the cost of bionic prostheses currently imported from Europe.

### 'Leapfrog technology'

Cure also aims to manufacture as close as possible to the end users, with local technicians measuring the patients and then printing individually

fitted devices. "An imported prosthesis today means weeks or even months of waiting when you buy it, and again with each repair," the inventor said. The bionic hand is made of Lego-like parts that can be replaced if damaged or to match a child's physical growth. It can also be solar-powered via a photovoltaic charger for use in regions without a reliable electricity supply. The 3D printing of rudimentary prostheses started about a decade ago and is becoming standard.

It is not a magic solution because specialized medical know-how is still crucial, said Jerry Evans, who heads Nia Technologies, a Canadian non-commercial organization that helps African hospitals manufacture 3D-printed lower limbs. "3D printing is still in its early stages," he said, "but it is a major game changer in the field of prosthetics and orthotics." "Developing countries will probably leapfrog to these technologies because the cost is much lower." — AFP

## Sudan holds first unisex fashion shows after Bashir ouster

In a move that would have been almost unthinkable under ousted Islamist president Omar al-Bashir, Sudanese designers have organized a series of mixed-gender fashion shows to present their new lines. The shows in upmarket Khartoum hotels saw female and male models parading down the catwalk together for the first time since before Bashir seized power more than three decades ago. "In the old days, it was very difficult to organize a show like this. One would not dream of getting approval for it from authorities," Sudanese designer Khaled Onsa told AFP. "We used to face repression instead, but now we are ruled by a system that guarantees public freedoms."

Bashir, a general who seized power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, ruled Sudan with an iron fist until his ouster in a palace coup in April last year following months of mass protests on the streets. He imposed a harsh form of Islamic law, criminalizing everything from drinking alcohol to women wearing clothes deemed as "revealing". The transitional government installed after his overthrow has set about dismantling his legacy of repression. It scrapped Sudan's 1996 public order laws which empowered policemen to take action against people dressed "indecently". Female designer Nermin Awad Sharif, who organized one of the shows, said there had never been much opposition to such events among the people. "What we offer are outfits that everyone will accept," she told AFP. "I don't think anyone in Sudanese society would object to them." Model Barza Mostafa said the show was an opportunity to introduce fashion to the Sudanese people and Sudan to the fashion world.

"We want to introduce the world to our culture," she said. "Previously, people did not understand the idea of a fashion show but now we can see the audience watching and interacting." Spectator Sawzan Hassan recalled how policemen under Bashir used to stop her for simply not wearing a headscarf. A decade ago, Hassan had attended a fashion show in Sudan that ended with organizers and models behind bars. "Some were even flogged," she said. Designer Hossam Mohamed Ahmed believes the shows are testament to the spirit of change in Sudan. —AFP



Photo shows a crown of Thorns Starfish at Swains Reef, part of the Great Barrier Reef off the east coast of Australia in the South Pacific Ocean.

## Scientists find chink in coral-eating starfish armor

The discovery that coral-eating starfish are late risers and feed mostly at night could help slow the decline of the Great Barrier Reef and other shallow-water corals already ravaged by global warming, scientists reported yesterday. Crown-of-thorns starfish suck the color and life out of corals, a favorite food, but in a healthy ecosystem their numbers are held in check. When marine heatwaves bleach large swathes of coral, however, bigger fish leave the area and the spiky multi-armed predators proliferate and zero in on what's left. "Mass-bleaching, outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish, and a myriad of other disturbances and pressures are leading to widespread coral loss and degradation of reef ecosystems," James Cook University professor Morgan Pratchett told AFP.

Efforts to manually remove the ravenous starfish have largely failed, in part because they are not always easy to find. But a study published in the Royal Society's Proceedings B has found a chink in their spiky armour which could help scientists buy time for the world's

embattled reefs. "The starfish appear to sleep in, and will be harder to find on the reef before about midday," lead author Scott Ling, also from James Cook University, explained. That means they would be most active and exposed after the Sun goes down, Ling said. But the logistics of scooping them up during night dives are daunting. "We recommend culling dive efforts be focused from midday until early evening," he added. Crown-of-thorns starfish have a special liking for Acropora, a coral species that has been the foundation for reefs across the world for the past two million years.

### A lifeline for corals

But the main threat to coral reefs-on which half-a-billion people and a quarter of marine species depend-remains climate change. Increasingly severe marine heatwaves cause healthy corals to expel algae living in their tissues, draining them of their vibrant colors in a process known as bleaching. Half of the Great Barrier Reef's corals have died over the past 25 years. The remaining

healthy coral are red meat, so to speak, for famished starfish. In the study, Ling and colleagues showed that the crown-of-thorns species-like sea urchins-forage for food and then find shelter before daybreak. If the feast is close to home, they don't roam. But if the pickings are slim, they will wander up to 20 meters and then find their way back, a pattern known as homing behavior.

"Saving coral reefs requires major changes not only in the on-the-ground management actions, but also concerted efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," Pratchett said. The UN's climate science advisory panel, the IPCC, has found that 1.5 degrees Celsius of atmospheric warming above pre-industrial levels would doom 90 percent of the world's shallow-water corals. A 2C rise would spell their near-complete demise. Loss of coral reefs around the world would double the damage from coastal flooding, and triple the destruction caused by storm surges, according to a study last year. — AFP



This undated handout picture received from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies shows a crown of Thorns Starfish at Swains Reef, part of the Great Barrier Reef off the east coast of Australia in the South Pacific Ocean. — AFP photos





## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Rafael Goberna performs during Red Bull Acro Cross in Sopot, Bulgaria. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## NFL tightens gameday mask rules, expands sideline area

**NEW YORK:** Face masks will be required for post-game interactions and in locker rooms for all NFL players and staff, the league announced Tuesday in a tightening of its Covid-19 safety protocols. The NFL and its players union also expanded the designated sideline area to space between the 20-yard lines in a bid to stretch the room for benches and promote social distancing.

Players must now wear face coverings in locker rooms before games, during half-time breaks and following every contest. They must also wear masks for any post-game interaction with teammates or opponents, with a memo from the NFL discouraging such interactions altogether. The move follows positive game-day tests with several high-risk close contacts after weekend NFL games. The NFL strongly recommended all players and personnel to wear masks when not actively involved in the game, including players on sidelines.

Seven high-risk close contacts were noted within a single club that could have been prevented if players had worn face masks during interactions. Such players must isolate for five days, jeopardizing their ability to play the following week. "What we are trying to say is masks can prevent you from becoming a high-risk contact," NFL chief medical officer Dr. Allen Sills said Tuesday. Home teams must provide at least 250 disposable surgical masks on the sidelines for the home and visiting teams. —AFP

## IPL final four: Mumbai again, or can Kohli cause an upset?

## Warner powers Hyderabad to IPL play-offs, Kolkata out

**DUBAI:** The Indian Premier League playoffs begin today in the UAE with last year's champions Mumbai as favourites and Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore among the teams looking to cause an upset. Surprise package the Delhi Capitals, who like Bangalore are aiming for a first title, will take on the Mumbai Indians in the first qualifier today with a place in the November 10 final at stake. The losers of that match will get another crack at qualifying on Sunday against either Kohli's Bangalore or Sunrisers Hyderabad, who clash on Friday in an eliminator. AFP Sport looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the four teams still standing in the world's richest Twenty20 league:

## Mumbai Indians

Rohit Sharma's four-time champions underlined their status as tournament favorites by being the first team to qualify for the playoffs as they topped the standings with nine wins in 14 games. South African wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock has led the batting with 443 runs while getting key support from Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan and Kieron Pollard. Pace bowlers Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah battered the opposition with a combined 43 wickets. The 2019 champions had already qualified top of the table before they were hammered by Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday and, despite fitness doubts over Sharma, are targeting back-to-back titles for the first time.

## Delhi Capitals

The Ricky Ponting-coached Capitals made a sensational start, winning five of their first six games, before losing four in a row but then beating Bangalore to reach the playoffs. India opener Shikhar Dhawan is the key batsman and this year became the first player to score two consecutive IPL centuries. But Rishabh Pant, India's new batting hope, has been misfiring. The South African pace duo of Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada have been impressive with Nortje bowling the fastest ever IPL delivery, a 97 miles per hour (156 kph) thunderbolt, and Rabada leading the IPL wicket-takers with 25 victims.

## Sunrisers Hyderabad

Skipper David Warner came into his own with an unbeaten 85 off 58 balls to take Hyderabad into the playoffs on Tuesday. The 2016 IPL winners benefited from the return of wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha, who hit two half-centuries in three successive wins to help them to third in the standings. With West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder contributing and the deadly spin of Rashid Khan, who has taken 19 wickets, Warner will be hoping for the same result in this week's eliminator as in the 2016 final when Hyderabad beat Bangalore to lift the trophy.

## Royal Challengers Bangalore

India captain Virat Kohli has never won an IPL

title and it hurts. RCB finished bottom of the eight-team table last year, and after seven wins and seven defeats they scraped into the playoffs on run rate after losing their final match to Hyderabad. Kohli leads a strong batting line-up, combining with young opener Devdutt Padikkal for 932 runs while South African veteran AB de Villiers has been the go-to man in crunch situations with an overall strike rate of 163. Spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar will be key with their ability to choke an opposition team's run-flow while claiming wickets. Kohli insists his team are worth their place, but said he needs them to be "more brave" when chasing runs.

## Warner powers Hyderabad

Meanwhile, Skipper David Warner struck an unbeaten 85 as Sunrisers Hyderabad sealed the final play-off spot in the Indian Premier League with a 10-wicket win over Mumbai Indians on Tuesday. Warner put on an unbeaten opening stand with Wriddhiman Saha, who made 58, to drive home Hyderabad's chase of 150 in 17.1 overs in Sharjah and knock Kolkata Knight Riders out of the Twenty20 tournament with a better run rate.

Hyderabad won their third straight league match to finish third in the table ahead of Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore with the two teams scheduled to meet in the eliminator. The result of the last league game was disappointing for Mumbai's returning captain Rohit Sharma who said he was "fit

and fine" at the toss after missing four games due to a hamstring injury. "Not the day we want to remember. Probably the worst performance of the season for us," Sharma, whose number one team will meet second-placed Delhi Capitals in the first qualifier on Thursday, said after the loss.

On his return after the injury break, Sharma said: "I was happy to be back. It has been a while. I was going through some tough times. I am looking to play a few games here and see what happens." Sharma, who was left out of India's squad for the upcoming tour of Australia, added the hamstring is "absolutely" fine. He was out early after facing just seven balls, falling to paceman Sandeep Sharma for four. Mumbai though went on to score 149 for eight after a crucial 41-run cameo from Kieron Pollard. In reply, the left-right batting combination of Warner and Saha took the attack to the opposition who had rested their top pacemen in Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah.

"I pride myself on giving the team a great start. That is my duty and responsibility," Warner who hit 10 fours and one six in his 58-ball knock, said. "Fortunately we haven't had to chase a big total." On the eliminator on Friday, Warner said: "RCB are a very good side. They have a lot of dangerous players. We beat them in the 2016 final. Another do-or-die game. Hopefully we can carry the momentum from this game." The winner of the eliminator will then meet the loser of the first qualifier to fight for a place in the final on November 10. —Agencies



## Kuwait boxing championship

**KUWAIT:** The first boxing championship was concluded on Tuesday night with Sulaibikhat Club securing the first spot. The second spot went to the recently established Club Qurain, with Fahaheel boxers taking the third place. Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi, board member of Kuwait Club Balsam Alayoub and Federation Director Mansour Alakshan attended the tournament that was held at the Fahaheel Club.

Chairman Mohammad Mansi said the tournament started and ended successfully as all clubs participated - and the athletes' performance was outstanding in various categories. Mansi congratulated the participants. The results were as follows: Mutlaq Humba from Sulaibikhat won the 48 kg category; Huthaifa Mohammad from Sulaibikhat won the 57kg, Abdelaziz Jamal won the 63 kg, Ibrahim Saad from Fahaheel won the 69kg, Ali Saad from Fahaheel won the 75kg, Yousuf Jassim from Sulaibikhat



won the 81 kg, Bader Jaza from Qurain won the 91 kg and Abdelaziz Abdallah from Kuwait won the 91+ kg category.

## Women's indoor football season to kick off

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The women's third indoor football season will start on Saturday with the participation of five clubs - Kuwait, Arabi, Qadisiya, Salwa Al-Sabah and Alfatat Club. The top four teams will qualify for the semifinals which will be in the form of playoff to get the best team out of three matches. The competition is expected to be completed in February. The draw which was carried out at Kuwait Football Association placed Salwa Al-



Sabah team against Qadisiya (4 pm), to be followed by Kuwait against Arabi at 6pm.

KFA board member, chairperson of the women's committee Fatima Hayat thanked Kuwait club for allowing the competition to take place at the club's hall, adding that the women's committee is ready to cooperate with all clubs for the sake of improving women's football. Meanwhile Fatima

Hayat met with Chairman of Kuwait Winter Games Club Fuhaid Al-Ajmi in the presence of board members as well as member of the women's committee at Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem Al-Sabah. The meeting discussed means of enhancing cooperation between the Olympic committee and the Winter Games Club and the means of supporting women athletes.

## Promotion chasers stumble; Norwich held; Bournemouth lose unbeaten record

**LONDON:** Championship promotion chasers Bournemouth lost English football's last unbeaten record after Barry Bannan's penalty gave struggling Sheffield yesterday a 1-0 victory. Bannan tucked away the decisive spot-kick in the 71st minute after Josh Windass was bundled over by Steve Cook, who was red-carded. Yesterday also finished with 10 men after Kadeem Harris was dismissed for violent conduct at the death, but they held on for a victory that lifts them to within seven points of safety after starting the season with a 12-point deduction for breaching financial fair play regulations.

Third-placed Norwich stretched their unbeaten run to six matches but it was a frustrating night at Carrow Road as they were held to a goalless draw by

Millwall. The Canaries, who had taken 13 points from a possible 15 leading into the game, dominated for long periods but found the visitors in a determined frame of mind and could find no way through. Goalkeeper Bartosz Bialkowski was in fine form, making a number of good stops, while - at the other end - the Lions rarely troubled Tim Krul, although substitute Shaun Williams nearly won it at the death with a shot which clipped the angle of post and crossbar.

Swansea moved up to second after Andre Ayew secured a 1-1 draw at Brentford after Ivan Toney had scored his 10th goal of the season. The Bees took the lead in style, Bryan Mbeumo's powerful run finding the overlapping Mathias Jensen who crossed first time

for Toney to slam home. But Ayew equalized with 12 minutes to go, bundling home Matt Grimes' low right-wing cross from close range to set up a nail-biting finale.

Ayew thought he had earned the Swans all three points with the last touch of the game but his powerful header from Grimes' free-kick was ruled out for offside. Bristol City scored twice in the closing moments to snatch a 2-1 win at Huddersfield and move into the top six. Jay Dasilva tapped home from a yard out with 13 minutes to go from a cross by Antoine Semenyo. And Jamie Paterson won it for City six minutes later with a fine finish from the edge of the box Huddersfield led at the break following Josh Koroma's 43rd-minute opener. Goals from Junior Hoilett, a Joe Ralls penalty and Harry Wilson gave Cardiff a 3-0 win at Barnsley, while Middlesbrough drew 0-0 at Blackburn. —AFP



## Sports

# Tsitsipas knocked out of Paris Masters by Frenchman Humbert

## Wawrinka ready for 'last push' in tennis career

**PARIS:** Second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was dumped out of the Paris Masters on Tuesday after losing to in-form Frenchman Ugo Humbert in a marathon second-round tie. Humbert, who is on a seven-match winning streak after winning the Antwerp title last month, missed four match points but battled to a 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3) victory. He was visibly struggling in the final-set tie-break after over three hours on court, but Tsitsipas said he was also not at full fitness.

"I'm just disappointed with the way I played," said the world number six, who lost to world number one Novak Djokovic in an epic French Open semi-final last month. "During the second set my Roland Garros injury came back, and it wasn't as bad as at the French Open, but it kind of had me on the edge of things, and I wasn't sure if that's good for me to be out there. "But that's not an excuse, for sure. I still fought and gave my best out there, despite this thing that I had on court." The 22-year-old Humbert will face former US Open champion Marin Cilic for a place in the quarter-finals.

Tsitsipas will next defend his ATP Tour Finals title in London at the season-ending tournament which gets underway on November 15. Humbert appeared poised to secure the win in the second-set breaker, but saw three match points come and go before Tsitsipas forced a decider. The Greek star battled back from a break down as the third set also went the distance, but Humbert held his nerve, taking his fifth match point with a forehand winner after seeing Tsitsipas overturn a line call on the previous point. It was a second straight narrow defeat for Tsitsipas after his loss to Grigor Dimitrov in Vienna last week.

### Wawrinka ready for 'last push'

Earlier on Tuesday, Stan Wawrinka said he is hoping to produce a "last push" in his career to challenge for tennis' biggest titles again after beating Britain's Dan Evans to reach the second round. The 35-year-old won the last of his three Grand Slam titles at the 2016 US Open but was then hit by multiple injuries and is now ranked 20th in the world. But the Swiss thinks he can still rediscover past glories in his final years on the ATP Tour. "I'm close to the end of my career," he said after beating Evans 6-3, 7-6 (7/3). "But I also believe I have one last push that I really want to, again, one more time push myself to the limit, make the sacrifice that you need to make to be at my top, and I'm trying to do that.

"I'm going to try to even push it more during the off-season and see what next year brings." Wawrinka, whose only Masters title came in 2014 at Monte Carlo, has not won an ATP event for more than three years. "I think in general my form has been going okay. It's been going well. I'm playing well," he added. "I still need to work on many, many aspects." Wawrinka will face the United States' Tommy Paul next. Belgian eighth seed David Goffin fell at his first hurdle, losing 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) to Slovakian world number 105 Norbert Gombos.

Matteo Berrettini's hopes of a second straight Tour Finals appearance ended, with the seventh-seeded Italian losing 7-6 (7/3), 6-7 (0/7), 7-5 to American Marcos Giron in a match which finished at almost 01:00 local time. Pablo Carreno Busta, who reached the US Open semi-finals and French Open quarters this year, kept his bid to reach the season-ending



**PARIS:** Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas returns the ball to France's Ugo Humbert during their men's singles second round tennis match on day 2 at the ATP World Tour Masters 1000 - Paris Masters (Paris Bercy) - indoor tennis tournament on November 3, 2020. —AFP

tournament in London alive by easing past Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 7-6 (7/3), 6-2. Former Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic also booked a second-round

place, beating Aljaz Bedene 6-3, 6-2, while Richard Gasquet won a match for the first time since the US Open by edging out Taylor Fritz in three sets. —AFP

## Liverpool showdown: Guardiola welcomes Gabriel Jesus return

**MANCHESTER:** Pep Guardiola welcomed the option of having a striker fit for Sunday's blockbuster Premier League clash with Liverpool after Gabriel Jesus marked his return from injury with a goal to seal a 3-0 Champions League win over Olympiakos. City are cruising towards the last 16 of the competition after gaining maximum points from three games in Group C thanks in large part to Ferran Torres' free-scoring form. The Spaniard became the third youngest player to ever score in four straight Champions League games when he opened the scoring on 12 minutes.

However, the English side have lacked a ruthless streak in the recent weeks in the Premier League without a natural striker as both Jesus and Sergio

Aguero have had an injury-hit start to the season. Jesus was introduced for the final quarter to boost his match fitness and took just 11 minutes to thrash the ball high past Jose Sa to double City's advantage. "We played an exceptional first-half, but unfortunately we cannot finish the games, we struggle a bit for the second goal," said Guardiola.

"Finally, an incredible goal from Gabriel (finished the game). In general, it is good news that he is back," Guardiola's wish for a hassle free passage through the group given the gruelling schedule his side face in the coming months looks set to be granted with a point in Greece in three weeks' time enough to book their place in the knockout stage with two games to spare.

### City dominate

Kevin De Bruyne wasted a huge early chance to open the scoring when Olympiakos were caught out by the City press. But within seconds the Belgian made amends with a sumptuous one-two that sent Torres clear to slot home his fourth goal since signing from Valencia in August. Guardiola was able to make five



**SHEFFIELD:** Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola reacts with Manchester City's Portuguese defender Ruben Dias at the final whistle during the English Premier League football match between Sheffield United and Manchester City at Bramall Lane in Sheffield. —AFP

changes from Saturday's 1-0 win over Sheffield United with one eye on the clash with Liverpool. —AFP

## Schalke beat lowly Schweinfurt to win first game since Feb

**GELSENKIRCHEN:** Struggling Schalke enjoyed their first win since February on Tuesday when they came from behind to beat fourth-tier minnows Schweinfurt 4-1 in a re-arranged German Cup, first round match. Schalke are winless in 22 Bundesliga games, dating back to January, and their previous win in any competition was a German Cup tie the following month. Schalke head coach Manuel Baum got his first win on his fifth game in charge despite Schweinfurt taking a shock early lead through winger Martin Thomann at the Veltins Arena. Schalke roared back in Gelsenkirchen with goals by striker Vedad Ibisevic and winger Benito Raman while attacking midfielder Alessandro Schoepf netted twice. —AFP

## Bale and Spurs on Europa League relaunch mission

**PARIS:** Gareth Bale will hope to use today's Europa League game against Ludogorets to further sharpen his fitness following his return to Tottenham, while Arsenal and Leicester can take a step towards the knockout stages with a third win in a row. Bale, 31, scored his first Spurs goal in seven years since rejoining the club on loan from Real Madrid to earn Jose Mourinho's side a 2-1 victory over Brighton at the weekend. The Welshman is gradually working his way back to form after a knee injury delayed his second debut, with his only starts for Tottenham so far coming in Europe.

"I'm feeling good," said Bale. "I'm getting a lot fitter, obviously it's been good to get a couple of starts in the Europa League, getting more minutes (Sunday) will benefit me again. "I'm staying patient, I know I have to build my match fitness, it's been a while since I put a couple of games together, so I'll continue to work hard in training every day, and in the games when I'm given the chance." Spurs must hit the reset button after a limp 1-0 defeat by Antwerp in Belgium last week left Mourinho unimpressed, and bemoaning not being able to replace the entire team at half-time. They visit a Ludogorets side hunting their first points in Group J after Elvis

Manu's hat-trick came in a 4-3 loss for the Bulgarians at Austrian outfit LASK Linz on match-day two.

### Arsenal 'creating expectations'

Arsenal will be on course for the last 32 with victory at home to Norwegians Molde. Both teams have six points in Group B. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's penalty earned the Gunners a 1-0 win at Manchester United on Sunday—their first Premier League victory at Old Trafford since 2006. "We are creating expectations as well because we beat United and then we beat Chelsea, and then we beat Man City, then Liverpool in the cup. We want to build them all the time," said Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta. "We need to generate the belief that we can go to any ground and be competitive. It's something that we've got already, in my opinion."

Leicester have shrugged off last season's collapse that saw them fall short of the Champions League by winning five of their first seven games in a top-flight season for the first time in their history. The Foxes have beaten Zorya Luhansk and AEK Athens in Group G and next host Braga, who also have six points after two rounds. Serie A leaders AC Milan put their 24-match unbeaten run on the line against Lille, who are second in Ligue 1 and also yet to lose in any competition this term. Celtic host Sparta Prague in the other game in Group H, while Steven Gerrard's Rangers are chasing a third win in as many fixtures away to Group D frontrunners Benfica. —AFP



**ANTWERP:** Tottenham's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (front) vies for the ball with Antwerp's Belgian defender Ritchie De Laet during UEFA Europa League football Group J first-leg match between Royal Antwerp FC and Tottenham Hotspur FC at the Bosuilstadion. —AFP

## Kuwait League roundup: Salmiya, Al Shabab win

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Al Shabab Sports Club snatched its fifth point with its first win in the fifth round of Kuwait football league aimed at ranking the teams based on their performance. Al Shabab played against Khaitan - beating them 2-1. Al-Shabab's Hussein Nader opened the score in the 21st minute, then Khaitan's Jimmy Siyaj equalized the score in the 29th minute. The winning goal was scored by Abdelhadi Khamis in the last minute of the first half. This puts Al Shabab in 8th place while Khaitan remains in 12th with 4 points.

The second half saw both teams going back and forth as they exchanged attacks. Both the goalkeepers were outstanding and kept the forwards from scoring. In the second match, the coronavirus stricken team Al Jahra (with seven of its players infected) beat Al Sahel 2-0 - raising their points total to six which is the same with Al Sahel. Favez Alzafiri and Abdallah Musameh were Jahra's goal scorers.

In the third match, Salmiya won 2-1. Yarmouk's Uday Al Dabbagh scored in the 10th minute of the match. In the 33rd minute, Salmiya's Hamad Al-Qallaf equalized. Salmiya's winning goal was scored by their seasoned

player Musaed Nada in the 45th minute. Al Yarmouk entered this match with its new manager Hussein Yaseen and the players were highly disciplined and focused. They were able to score early. Salmiya's experience made the difference as they started to regain their balance - and it was not too long before they scored the equalizer. Salmiya attempted to add to its tally but the defense kept all attacks at bay and Salmiya escaped with its valuable win. The final match which was all about claiming the top stop, saw Qadisiya beat Fahaheel. Qadisiya won 2-0. Lucas scored in the 34th minute while Fahad Alansari scored in the 74th minute. The victory gave Qadisiya 12 points as Fahaheel lagged behind with 9 points. It was obvious from the onset that Qadisiya was determined to come out winners as they started with an attacking strategy with most of its players from all lines, while Fahaheel took a back step in defense. This gave Qadisiya more control.

Fahaheel made several attempts in the second half but did not constitute a real threat. Things remained the same until Qadisiya's substitute Fahad Alansari scored his team's second goal. Fahaheel's Fawaz Alrashidi had the opportunity to score from the penalty spot, but he



sent the ball over the cross bar and the match ended.

Tuesday night saw Al Arabi club draw 1-1 with Tadhamon. Sico Keta scored for Al Arabi from the penalty spot in the 30th minute. Al Arabi players were not able to break up Tadhamon's defense at the start of the match and it was not until the 18th minute when Mohammad Furaih was able to shoot at the target but the ball went over the bar. Referee Hashim Al Refae awarded a penalty kick to Cedric Henry in the 30th minute which was converted into a goal by Keta.



Al Tadhamon seemed to abandon its defense strategy during the second half and attacked without constituting any danger, and this continued until the Nigerian Emmanuel was able to score the equalizer after a pass from Mishal Adailem. Kuwait was surprised with a goal by Sulaibikhat's Bader Jamal in the 35th minute and it was not until the 51st minute until Faisal Zayed equalized for Kuwait which was followed by another goal in the 54th minute. Kazma and Nasser match ended in a scoreless draw.



**15** Kuwait League roundup: Salmiya, Al Shabab win



**15** Liverpool showdown: Guardiola welcomes Gabriel Jesus return



**15** Tsitsipas knocked out of Paris Masters by Frenchman Umbert



## Liverpool and Bayern run riot

### Champions League: Real Madrid edge Inter



**BERGAMO:** Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (2nd right) scores a goal despite Atalanta's Italian goalkeeper Marco Sportiello (left) during the UEFA Champions league football match Atalanta Bergamo vs Liverpool on November 3, 2020. — AFP

**PARIS:** Diogo Jota scored a stunning hat-trick in Liverpool's 5-0 demolition of Atalanta in the Champions League on Tuesday, as holders Bayern Munich scored six and Real Madrid struck late to beat Inter Milan in a thriller. On a prolific night across Europe which also saw a rampant Borussia Moenchengladbach hit six in Ukraine, the star individual performances came from Jota and Alassane Plea. Portugal forward Jota joined Liverpool from Wolverhampton Wanderers in September and has wasted little time making an impact with seven goals from just five starts.

In Bergamo, against an Atalanta side who reached the quarter-finals last season, Jota was brought into the starting line-up in place of Roberto Firmino and required just 16 minutes to open the scoring. Another emphatic finish allowed the 2019 Champions League winners to double their lead before the break, and

Mohamed Salah then broke away to get the third just after the restart. Salah set up Sadio Mane for Liverpool's fourth before Jota got his hat-trick goal as the Premier League champions recorded their biggest win in Europe since beating Porto 5-0 away in February 2018.

"I'm playing in the best team of my career so far. I don't know if it's the best moment of my career but obviously scoring goals is my way of playing football," Jota told BT Sport. With three wins from three, Liverpool are well on course to top Group D, with Ajax and Atalanta both five points back. Ajax won 2-1 away to Midtjylland in Denmark, as Brazilian youngster Antony opened the scoring in the first minute and Dusan Tadic netted from an indirect free-kick inside the box soon after. Anders Dreyer got one back for the hosts, who remain pointless.

French forward Plea had earlier scored a hat-trick as Gladbach claimed a stunning

6-0 victory over Shakhtar Donetsk in Kiev, the German side's biggest European triumph since their 1970s heyday. The unfortunate Valeriy Bondar scored an own goal, with Ramy Bensebaini and Lars Stindl also scoring as Gladbach went top of Group B, a point clear of Shakhtar and Real Madrid. Gladbach coach Marco Rose said: "Six-nil is extraordinary. We did a lot right today-not to say almost everything."

#### Rodrygo wins it for Real

Real, the 13-time European champions, ran out 3-2 winners in a dramatic encounter with Inter behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium, as Vinicius Junior set up his fellow Brazilian substitute Rodrygo to lash in the decisive goal 10 minutes from time. Karim Benzema had put the hosts ahead and Sergio Ramos headed in his 100th Madrid goal in the 33rd minute, but Lautaro Martinez pulled one back shortly after.

Inter were missing the injured Romelu Lukaku but looked set to escape with a draw when Ivan Perisic equalized midway through the second half, only for Rodrygo to pounce and leave the Italians bottom of the group.

#### Bayern make it 14 in a row

Reigning champions Bayern have now won a record-extending 14 consecutive Champions League games after a 6-2 victory against Salzburg in Austria. German forward Mergim Berisha gave Salzburg an early lead only for Robert Lewandowski to level from the penalty spot, and a Rasmus Kristensen own goal put Bayern ahead before the break. Japanese substitute Masaya Okugawa restored parity midway through the second half only for Bayern to run away with the game late on.

Jerome Boateng headed them back in front, Leroy Sane got their fourth and Lewandowski strained to head in his 12th

of the season, before Lucas Hernandez wrapped up their win. "We never give up-that's what sets us apart," Boateng told Sky Germany. Hansi Flick's side are firmly in control of Group A, five points ahead of Atletico Madrid, who drew 1-1 at Lokomotiv Moscow. Jose Maria Gimenez's header for Atletico was cancelled out by Anton Miranchuk's penalty.

Meanwhile Marseille's 3-0 loss away to Porto saw them equal Anderlecht's record of 12 consecutive Champions League defeats. Moussa Marega gave Porto an early lead before Dimitri Payet blazed a penalty over for Marseille. Sergio Oliveira then scored from the spot to make it 2-0 for Porto and Luis Diaz sealed the win for the home side in Group C. Manchester City are firmly in control of that section after Pep Guardiola's side eased past Olympiakos 3-0, with Ferran Torres, Gabriel Jesus and Joao Cancelo netting. — AFP

## Maradona undergoes successful brain surgery for blood clot

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentine football great Diego Maradona underwent successful brain surgery for a blood clot in a specialist private clinic in Buenos Aires on Tuesday, his doctor said. "We managed to successfully remove the clot. Diego coped well with the surgery," Leopoldo Luque said at the icon's private clinic in the capital Buenos Aires. "It's under control, there's a little drainage (of blood). He'll remain under observation."

World Cup winner Maradona had been taken to hospital in La Plata-where he is the coach of top-flight side Gimnasia y Esgrima-on Monday for a series of tests after feeling unwell. A scan revealed the blood clot, and on Tuesday he was transferred to the specialist clinic in a northern neighborhood of the capital. Maradona, who turned 60 on Friday, has suffered ill health before. He has survived two heart attacks, and also contracted hepatitis and undergone gastric bypass surgery.

Groups of fans congregated outside the clinic with banners showing Maradona's face and the words "Come on, Diego!" "I came with my wife to support the greatest player of all time," fan Oscar Medina said. "Once more his health has played a trick on him but he has antibodies to recover with the help of the people," added Medina. Earlier on Tuesday, Luque insisted it was "a routine operation" and that Maradona was "lucid" and "calm." Argentine media speculated the clot was the result of a blow to the head.

Luque said the clot was "imperceptible" and that those suffering from one rarely remembered receiving a knock to the head. "The operation consists of a small incision to drain the blood. In 24 or 48 hours the patient can leave the hospital," neurosurgeon Raul Matera told TyC Sports channel. Maradona's daughter Dalma said she had visited her father after his surgery but did not give further details of his condition. — AFP

## Schwartzman edges closer to Tour Finals debut

**PARIS:** Argentinean Diego Schwartzman moved within two wins of sealing a debut appearance at the ATP Tour Finals in London by beating Richard Gasquet to reach the Paris Masters third round on yesterday. The 28-year-old was too strong for the Frenchman, taking a 7-5, 6-3 victory, and will next face Spanish qualifier Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the last 16 at Bercy Arena. Schwartzman will secure the final spot at the season-ending tournament by reaching the semi-finals in Paris, but would qualify even if he fails to do so, as long as neither Pablo Carreno Busta, Milos Raonic or Stan Wawrinka win the title.

"I have it in my hands but I have to say that I'm watching the other matches," said the sixth seed. "I want to be there so I'm doing my best on court." The Tour Finals get underway on November 15. Schwartzman had never beaten Gasquet in three previous meetings, but the home player's first win since the



**PARIS:** Argentina's Diego Schwartzman returns the ball to France's Richard Gasquet during their men's singles second round tennis match on day 3 at the ATP World Tour Masters 1000 - Paris Masters (Paris Bercy) - indoor tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP

US Open came in the opening round.

"Richard is such a player, he's always playing really good tennis," added Schwartzman. "I never beat him before so it was tough but I think I played a really good match." Schwartzman reached his maiden Grand Slam semi-final at last month's French Open after making his first

Masters final in Rome. Third seed Daniil Medvedev also progressed to the third round after Kevin Anderson retired injured from their encounter. The Russian will next play either Australia's Alex de Minaur or Italian Lorenzo Sonego, who beat Novak Djokovic in Vienna last week, for a last-eight place. — AFP