



**8** Bitcoin rise sparks new debate amid pandemic



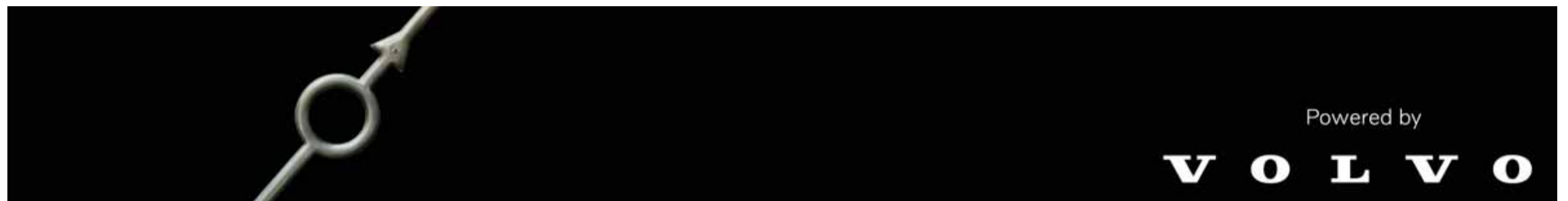
**9** Egypt's GDP grows despite pandemic, so does poverty



**13** Festive Filipinos trying to save Xmas from virus



**14** US sports stars celebrate as Biden wins presidency



# Biden begins transition, calls for healing, unity

## US president-elect urges cooperation, reaches out to Trump voters



WILMINGTON, Delaware: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris stand with spouses Jill Biden and Doug Emhoff after delivering remarks on Saturday after being declared the winners of the US presidential election. — AFP (See Pages 5 & 6)

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden began the transfer of power yesterday that Americans hope will turn the page on four years of divisiveness as his defeated rival Donald Trump refused to concede and continued to cast doubt on the election results. As congratulations poured in from world leaders and supporters nursed hangovers after a day of raucous celebrations, the 77-year-old Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, 56, launched a transition website, BuildBackBetter.com, and a Twitter feed, @Transition46.

It lists four priorities for a Biden-Harris administration: COVID-19, economic recovery, racial equity and climate change. "The team being assembled will meet these challenges on Day One," it said in a reference to Jan 20, 2021, when Biden will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that Biden plans to sign executive orders repealing a ban on travellers from several Muslim-majority nations, rejoining an international climate accord, reversing Trump's withdrawal from the World Health Organization and buttressing a pro-

gram protecting from deportation "Dreamers" immigrants brought to the US illegally as children shortly after taking office on Jan 20 that would reverse several contentious Trump policies.

Biden, who turns 78 on Nov 20, is the oldest person ever elected to the White House. Harris, the junior senator from California, is the first woman and first black person to be elected vice president. Biden has already announced plans to name a task force today to tackle the coronavirus pandemic which has left more than 237,000 people dead in the United States and is surging across the country.

Biden, just the second Catholic to be elected US president, was attending church yesterday morning in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, as Trump was headed for the golf course. Trump, 74, was playing golf at his club near Washington on Saturday morning when the US television networks announced that Biden had secured enough Electoral College votes for victory and he returned for another round yesterday morning. As Trump's motorcade headed to Sterling

Continued on Page 2

## Trump does not plan to concede anytime soon

WASHINGTON: After the declaration on Saturday that Democrat Joe Biden had won the race for the White House, Republican President Donald Trump and his allies made one thing clear: He does not plan to concede anytime soon. The president, who has spent months trying to undermine the election results with unproven allegations of fraud, pledged on Saturday to go forward with a legal strategy that he hopes will overturn state results that gave Biden the win in Tuesday's vote.

Trump aides and Republican allies, while somewhat conflicted on how to proceed, largely supported his strategy or remained silent. "The simple fact is this election is far from over. Joe Biden has not been certified as the winner of any states, let alone any of the highly contested states headed for mandatory recounts, or states where our campaign has valid and legitimate legal challenges that could determine the ultimate victor," Trump said in a statement released by his campaign around midday.

The president's allies and advisers privately admitted that the former New York businessman's chances of overturning the election results and staying in the White House were slim. While preparing for an eventual concession, they called for time to let the legal challenges run their course. "He should allow the recounts to go forward, file whatever claims there are, and then if nothing changes he should concede," said one Trump advisor.

Only two Republican senators - Mitt Romney and Lisa Murkowski - have congratulated Biden on his victory and Democratic Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina said the Republican Party has a "responsibility" to help convince Trump that it is time to concede. "What matters to me is whether or not the Republican Party will step

Continued on Page 2

## Palestinians hopeful; Bibi faces setback

JERUSALEM: Joe Biden's US election win marks a setback for Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu, a staunch ally of President Donald Trump - but it could spur renewed engagement between Washington and the Palestinians, experts said. Netanyahu said Trump was Israel's strongest-ever ally in the White House, and the Republican advanced policies that delighted the Israeli prime minister's right-wing base.

Netanyahu congratulated Biden

and vice president-elect Kamala Harris on Twitter yesterday, before thanking Trump for a raft of moves that, according to Netanyahu, advanced Israel's interests. Trump unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal - an agreement between Tehran and world powers loathed by Netanyahu - and recognized Jerusalem as Israel's "undivided capital", moving the US embassy to the city, breaking international consensus.

He also endorsed Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights - which was seized from Syria - and avoided criticizing Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. According to a pre-vote poll by the Israel Democracy Institute think-tank, 63 percent of Israelis wanted Trump to win a

Continued on Page 2

## Arabs doubt Biden will herald change in the Middle East

BAGHDAD/RIYADH: Arab leaders congratulated Joe Biden on his election victory, but some people in the Middle East expressed cynicism over US policy even if he pursues diplomacy rather than

President Donald Trump's blunt approach to the region's myriad problems. "I was positive that Trump will not make it to a second term. He was too hostile almost towards everybody. He is (more) fit to be a mafia leader than a president of the United States," said Adel Salman, 40, a high school English teacher in Baghdad.

"Let's wait and see with the Biden presidency. And I'm saying to all Iraqis don't count your chickens before they hatch. Is Biden better for Iraq? Let's wait and see his acts." Biden may face some of his most complex foreign policy challenges in the

region: from wars in Libya and Yemen to reassuring the United States' Gulf Arab allies that Washington can protect them from enemy Iran, even though he has said he would return to the international nuclear deal with Tehran.

"Trump was our friend, he loved Saudi Arabia and protected it from enemies. He handcuffed Iran. Biden will let Iran free again and this will hurt us and the whole region," said Mohamed Al Anaizy, a Saudi Uber driver. While Trump had cozy relationships with what critics say are increasingly

Continued on Page 2

## India hails Harris win

THULASENDRAPURAM, India: Residents set off firecrackers in the ancestral home of Kamala Harris yesterday as India celebrated the vice president-elect's victory in the US election, with her uncle hailing her achievement as historic and an inspiration to women and girls. Harris - daughter of breast cancer specialist Shyamala Gopalan from the southern Indian city of Chennai - paid tribute to her late mother, who

"believed so deeply in an America where a moment like this is possible" in a national address with president-elect Joe Biden on Saturday.

At Thulasendrapuram village in Tamil Nadu state, once home to Harris's maternal grandfather P V Gopalan, celebrations broke out with people lighting firecrackers, praying at its main temple and waving posters bearing the vice president-elect's face. Women in the village made a rangoli - a colorful work of folk art drawn on the ground - with the words "Congratulations to Kamala Harris". "It is a matter of pride for the

Continued on Page 2



JERUSALEM: Palestinian man reads the front page of Al-Quds newspaper, headlined in Arabic "Joe Biden the new US President", in front of the Dome of the Rock in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound yesterday. — AFP



THULASENDRAPURAM, India: Residents hold placards with the portrait of US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris as they celebrate her victory at her ancestral village in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu yesterday. — AFP

## Local

# US, Kuwait set to launch Fourth Strategic Dialogue

## US State Secretary, Kuwait Foreign Minister attend closing ceremony Nov 24

**KUWAIT:** The governments of the US and Kuwait are scheduled to launch their fourth Strategic Dialogue talks today through a series of virtual, bilateral working groups, the US Embassy said yesterday. The working groups will run for the next two weeks in the lead up to a closing ceremony in Washington DC on November 24. The closing ceremony will be co-chaired by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

The different working groups serve to strengthen cooperation between the two countries across various fields including political, human rights and development;



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

education and scientific cooperation; security; consular services, customs, and border protection; trade and investment;



### Health deal to be signed

and defense. "The bilateral working groups have to take on a mostly virtual dimension this year because of the pandemic," US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski said. "If anything, however, going virtual is a testament to our commitment and resolve to expand cooperation between our two countries despite



Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

the limitations imposed by COVID-19," Romanowski added.

The US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue,

first launched four years ago, is the overarching framework of efforts to shape the two countries' work on shared issues. The 2020 dialogue will build on the successes from previous years, including past agreements and MOUs on counter-terrorism training, higher education, cybersecurity, counter-narcotics, and customs security. As part of this year's Strategic Dialogue, the two countries are expected to sign the first MOU on health cooperation. "The Strategic Dialogue has become the centerpiece of our enduring relationship and it will continue to serve as a long-term framework for our common vision of continuously expanding cooperation," Ambassador Romanowski said. — KUNA

## India hails...

Continued from Page 1

entire womenfolk," housewife Arul Mozhi Sudhakar told AFP. Harris' uncle, academic Balachandran Gopalan, said his late sister would have been proud of her daughter and that the family would converge in Washington from across the United States and from India, Canada and Mexico to witness her historic inauguration. "Her mother would have been very happy. She would have asked Kamala to continue what she's doing," the 79-year-old academic told AFP in the capital New Delhi as a huge media contingent crowded outside his home.

"Can you think of any other country where a first-generation immigrant would go to the highest office... It's a lot of firsts. And at a major time in US history. And that she's there as VP means a lot." His niece's lifetime of accomplishments - she was also California's first Black attorney general and the first woman of South Asian heritage elected to the US Senate - would be an inspiration to other Indian-American immigrants, he added.

"Lots of (Indian-American) children who earlier were

interested in the annual Spelling Bee contest are now going to be interested in US politics," he quipped. "I think young children, especially young girls, are more motivated and enthused. That's a good thing." Gopalan said he had further hopes for his trailblazing niece - including a presidential run. In Delhi, people cheered the Harris family's Indian origins. Yash Iyer, 25, told AFP: "It's a proud moment for us too as Indians since she traces her roots here."

"Kamala Harris being the US VP is a monumental accomplishment not only for the US and Indians but for women across the globe," Smitashree Mishra, who works in international health and development, told AFP. "What I take away from this victory is a ray of hope, hope to stand strong in a society that constantly judges you on archaic notions of gender, race and ethnicity... I am proud as a woman to see another woman represent our perspective in the politics of the world's most powerful country."

Shopkeeper Murlidhar Aggarwal said Harris' success showed that people from minority backgrounds could "reach the highest offices" in the US. "Even in India, it should be like that - the only thing that should matter is if the person is qualified for the job." — AFP

his legacy if he does not eventually make a graceful exit, eroding his future political power. "It will be impossible for him to run again in 2024 if he's seen as a sore loser," a congressional Republican source said.

Fox News host Laura Ingraham, a staunch Trump defender, on Friday urged the president, if and when the time came, to accept an unfavorable outcome with "grace and composure," and the Wall Street Journal's conservative editorial board wrote that Trump "needs evidence to prove voter fraud". "If Mr Biden has 270 Electoral College votes at the end of the counting and litigation, President Trump will have a decision to make. We hope in that event he would concede gracefully," it said.

Biden crossed that crucial threshold on Saturday by winning the battleground state of Pennsylvania. One Trump adviser said White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows would likely be the aide who would raise with Trump the idea of conceding. Meadows came down with the coronavirus this week and is under quarantine. Another former adviser said Vice President Mike Pence or senior adviser and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner would have the job of telling the president when it was time to concede.

Indeed, CNN reported late on Saturday that Kushner had approached Trump about conceding. A White House spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "President Trump is entitled to take the time he wants to absorb this. It was close and it's not productive to demand an immediate concession," said Ari Fleischer, who was a White House press secretary in the George W Bush administration. "The best thing to keep this country together is to give the president a reasonable period of time to accept the results." — Agencies

and Tina Turner, also gave Americans a closer look at Biden's running mate Harris. In her speech, cheered every few seconds by the ecstatic crowd, Harris lauded the record turnout and said that after so much division, "Joe is a healer". "When our very democracy was on the ballot in this election, with the very soul of America at stake, and the world watching, you ushered in a new day for America," she said.

In Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Washington and other majority-Democratic cities, people poured into the streets to celebrate and car horns honked. An excited crowd of several thousand gathered on Black Lives Matter Plaza next to the White House, giving a hostile reception to Trump as his motorcade passed nearby on return from the golf course. "It's been so many years waiting for this day to happen," said Jack Nugent, a 24-year-old software engineer.

There were similar scenes in New York, Trump's birthplace. However, in Arizona, where the race was close, a group of almost 1,000 Trump supporters gathered in Phoenix to protest what they said was a stolen election. "There's a lot of fraud here. It needs to be either redone totally or recounted," Donna McCollum, 77, said.

On Saturday, Trump fired off tweets saying he had won the election "by a lot" and he continued to make unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud on Twitter yesterday. In one tweet, he cited an ally, former Republican House speaker Newt Gingrich, as saying the "best pollster in Britain wrote this morning that this clearly was a stolen election". — Agencies

## Arabs doubt Biden will herald change...

Continued from Page 1

authoritarian leaders, Biden has promised to take a tough line on human rights.

Talk show hosts on Egypt's tightly controlled TV channels have tried to play down the impact of a Biden victory, arguing that Egypt will adjust and adapt. Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi was quick to congratulate Biden. The leaders of Iraq, United Arab Emirates and Jordan also congratulated Biden. Among the six Gulf countries, only Saudi Arabia has not yet reacted.

"This is a region where a... Biden administration is expected to both refocus US policy on issues such as Iran and push for respect of normative values across the region," the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) said in a report. "Biden has made clear he intends to re-enter the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) if Iran also comes back into full compliance and to pursue diplomacy with Tehran on wider issues."

Trump's warm ties with regional regimes, especially in the Gulf, contrasted with those of his predecessor Barack Obama, whose deal-making with Iran appalled archrival Saudi Arabia and its neighbors. In a regional game-changer, the United States agreed just days ago to sell more than \$10 billion worth of top-of-the-line F-35 fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates, to reward its diplomatic recognition of Israel.

Trump's policies generally played well in the Gulf and beyond, especially in Saudi Arabia, despite a lack of action on major incidents like the unprecedented attacks last year against energy giant Aramco, blamed on Iran. "Saudi officials favored a second Trump presidency," said Elham Fakhro, International Crisis Group's Senior Analyst for Gulf States.

"They view Trump as having acted to protect their most important regional interests, by imposing a maximum pressure campaign of sanctions against Iran... and by pushing through arms sales to the

## Palestinians hopeful; Bibi...

Continued from Page 1

second term. Biden's ties with Israel run deep, and he has been a vocal supporter of the Jewish state for decades. He visited Israel in 1973, months after he was first elected to the Senate.

In a 2015 speech, while serving as Barack Obama's vice president, Biden said the United States was wedded to a "sacred promise to protect the homeland of the Jewish people". During the 2012 vice-presidential debate, when Biden was facing criticism over the Obama administration's treatment of Israel from Republican Paul Ryan, Biden asserted that he and Netanyahu had "been friends for 39 years". Netanyahu yesterday praised Biden as "a great friend of Israel" with whom he has had "a long and warm personal relationship".

Biden supported recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital two decades before Trump triggered global outcry by doing so. Biden backed a 1995 Senate bill to establish a US embassy in Jerusalem by 1999. Biden's 2020 campaign said he would not reverse Trump's embassy move, but would reopen a consulate in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem "to engage the Palestinians".

But Biden is expected to walk-back parts of Trump's record, notably by opposing Jewish settlement construction in the occupied West Bank, which the president-elect has described as an obstacle to peace. Biden also said he would restore "humanitarian aid for the Palestinian people," after Trump cut US support - more than \$300 million annually - to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

Israel's former envoy to Washington Michael Oren told AFP that tensions will spike if Biden seeks to revive the Iran nuclear deal, a prospect he said had a "very high" likelihood. The UAE, Bahrain and especially Saudi Arabia are bitter rivals of Iran. Experts have said that the normalization deals, as well as warming ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia under Trump, were partly driven by a desire to forge a united front against Iran.

kingdom." Now they worry "that a Biden administration will abandon these core interests, by rolling back sanctions against Iran, returning to the JCPOA, and limiting arms sales."

Biden's regional strategy will have to grapple with a series of thorny issues where Trump is accused of either neglect or mismanagement, from taking a decisive role in ending the war in Libya, to containing a rising Turkey and facing the threat of attacks in Iraq. Analysts say that one of the administration's first moves will be to restore contact with the Palestinians, who are angered over the Jerusalem embassy issue and also by the US push for the Arab world to normalize ties with Israel.

Biden heartily endorsed the decision by several Arab nations to forge ties with Israel, and he is very unlikely to shutter the new embassy. However, he is expected to "row back the most negative consequences of the Trump era" with a renewal of US aid to the Palestinians, reopening the Palestinian mission in Washington, and returning to the traditional two-state position, the EFCR said. "Still, there is unlikely to be a full return to the status quo."

Lebanese President Michel Aoun congratulated Biden and voiced hope for a "return to balance in American-Lebanese relations" during his term. Nabil Boumonsef, deputy editor-in-chief of An-Nahar newspaper, told Reuters that the timing of the announcement of US sanctions on Friday on Aoun's son-in-law Gebran Bassil, a prominent Christian politician, sent a message that Washington would continue to go after Lebanese politicians over accusations of corruption and aiding Hezbollah.

Ibrahim Matraz, a Yemeni journalist, was also pessimistic about prospects for a shift in US policy after years of conflict that have ravaged his country. "We shouldn't forget that Biden was vice president in Obama's administration when the war began." Trump's allegations of fraud in the election without providing evidence prompted some Arabs to say Washington had no right to preach about democracy in their countries, where leaders often win 99 percent of the vote in rigged elections.

"These elections show the real face of America, a country where elections are a farce with the loser not conceding defeat and claiming he won," said Adel Al-Natour, an industrialist in war-torn Syria, whose leaders face stringent US sanctions. — Agencies

Israeli officials are also concerned that Israel critics in the Democratic Party will influence Biden's administration. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, tipped for a possible cabinet post, has called Netanyahu a "reactionary racist". Israel has meanwhile accused two Democratic congresswomen, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, of supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel over its treatment of the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority cut ties with Trump's administration, accusing it of being flagrantly pro-Israel. In a statement congratulating Biden and Harris, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas urged the incoming administration "to enhance the Palestinian-American relations". Abbas said he wanted to work with the new administration "to achieve freedom, independence, justice and dignity for (the Palestinian) people", indicating he will drop his three-year political boycott of the White House.

Abbas' boycott was popular among Palestinians, who celebrated Trump's defeat yesterday on the streets. But, even as security contacts with Washington continued behind the scenes, the Palestinian leadership felt increasingly isolated, especially after Israel signed agreements with Gulf Arab states to normalize ties. In the days before the election Abbas's inner circle met to discuss whether they should resume political contacts with the White House if Biden won, a Palestinian official told Reuters.

Biden has said he would restore funding to the West Bank and Gaza that Trump had cut, including assistance delivered through the US Agency for International Development and UN agencies. He has also in the past opposed Israeli settlement construction in the occupied West Bank, and voiced support for a two-state solution to the conflict, a formula that would see a future state of Palestine co-existing alongside Israel.

"Trump's losing is a gain for us, for the Palestinian people, because he had sold out the Palestinian cause," said Anwar Abu Amira, 38, a refugee in Gaza's Beach Camp. "Since he took office until he lost, he has been trying to wipe out the Palestinian identity," Abu Amira said. Gaza political analyst Hani Habib said the Biden win would encourage Abbas to re-engage in negotiations with Israel, a move the international community has long called for. — Agencies

## Trump does not plan to concede...

Continued from Page 1

up and help us preserve the integrity of this democracy," Clyburn said on CNN's "State of the Union".

Romney, who voted to convict Trump at his impeachment trial, said the president has "has every right to call for recounts" but he should be careful with his "choice of words". "I'm convinced that once all remedies have been exhausted, if those are exhausted in a way that's not favorable to him, he will accept the inevitable," Romney said. The Utah senator added that he "would prefer to see the world watching a more graceful departure, but that's just not in the nature of the man."

Speaking on ABC's "This Week," another Republican senator, Roy Blunt of Missouri said "it's time for the president's lawyers to present the facts and it's time for those facts to speak for themselves." But Trump ally Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said the president should keep fighting. "We will work with Biden if he wins, but Trump has not lost," Graham said on the Fox News show "Sunday Morning Futures". "Do not concede, Mr President. Fight hard."

Another Trump ally, House minority leader Kevin McCarthy, told the same show it was too early to call the election. "What we need in the presidential race is to make sure every legal vote is counted, every recount is completed, and every legal challenge should be heard," McCarthy said.

Republicans worried that Trump could tarnish

## Biden begins transition...

Continued from Page 1

yesterday, protesters along some streets held signs hostile to him.

In a victory speech in Wilmington on Saturday, Biden promised "not to divide but unify", and reached out directly to Trump supporters, declaring "they're not our enemies, they're Americans". "Let's give each other a chance," he said, urging the country to "lower the temperature". Biden made an explicit call for cooperation between America's two major political parties as he faces political dysfunction and partisan gridlock in Washington. "Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end, here and now," Biden said.

He also thanked black voters, saying that even at his campaign's lowest moments, the African-American community had stood up for him. "They always have my back, and I'll have yours," he said. Casting his eye further, Biden said he would "make America respected around the world again" - a reference to Trump's tearing up of traditional diplomatic ties. "Tonight, the whole world is watching America and I believe that at our best America is a beacon for the globe," he said.

The celebratory event, which featured confetti, fireworks and a soundtrack including Springsteen

# Amir, Crown Prince meet senior state officials



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



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



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. In addition, he received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad, and Saleh at Seif Palace. — KUNA



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

## News in brief

### Cables of congratulations

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received cables of congratulations from Lithuania's President Gitanas Nauseda, Burundi's President Evariste Ndayishimiye, and Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, wishing him luck and expressing eagerness to boost bilateral relations between their respective countries and Kuwait. — KUNA

### Re-election

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to President of Tanzania John Magufuli, congratulating him on his re-election. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA

### 'Special relations'

TIRANA: Albanian President Ilir Meta yesterday received Kuwait's Ambassador in Tirana Fayeze Al-Jassem, on the occasion of the end of his term. President Meta praised the 'special relations' his country shares with Kuwait, and expressed appreciation to Kuwait's envoy for his efforts in strengthening bilateral relations during his tenure. — KUNA

### FINA president

MUSCAT: Asia's swimming federation (AASF) has chosen Kuwait's Hussain Al-Musallam as the region's candidate to contest the upcoming elections to determine the new chief of swimming's world governing body, FINA. "We have created history today by taking the first step towards our next journey," Musallam, who serves as FINA's first vice-president, said after winning the Muscat-based body's general congress elections. —KUNA

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf



## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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

## News in brief

## Kuwaitis in Turkey died of COVID-19

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti couple died of COVID-19 while vacationing in Turkey, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The 52-year-old Kuwaiti man and his wife, 49, went to a hospital in Bursa last week after feeling unwell, and were diagnosed with COVID-19. Their conditions worsened, and they passed away on Thursday, the wife's brother said, adding that they were laid to rest in Kuwait Saturday.

## Work permits

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry is allowing people who obtained a work permit in 2019, but never applied for a residency, to do so as long as they have paid their fines, Al-Qabas reported, quoting sources.

## Domestic helpers

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower is coordinating with the interior and health ministries on a mechanism that allows returning domestic helpers stuck abroad, Al-Rai reported quoting the head of the domestic help recruitment department at the authority Nasser Al-Musawi.

## High-tech cameras

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry plans to import new high-tech traffic cameras that can identify the license plate numbers of hundreds of vehicles within minutes, then store them and other information in a database that can be accessed when necessary, Al-Anbaa reported quoting sources.

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Mechanics perform maintenance on all-terrain vehicles (ATV) at a shop in Shuwaikh Industrial yesterday. ATVs are usually very popular at this time of the year during the camping season; which has been canceled this year due to COVID-19 fears. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Officials discuss building hospital for firemen



**KUWAIT:** Head of the Kuwait Fire Force Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad discussed yesterday with the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr Mustafa Redha preparations to establish a dedicated hospital for firefighters and their families. Senior officials from

both departments attended the meeting. The new fire force law, released earlier this year, stipulates providing full healthcare to firemen and their families, which include sending patients in paid treatment trips when necessary. — KUNA

## Kuwait's COVID-19 cases rise by 538, deaths by three

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's confirmed coronavirus cases increased by 538 to 131,743 in the past 24 hours, while three patients passed away, raising the death toll to 811, the health ministry said yesterday. Meanwhile, 687 patients have recovered in the same period, upping the total number of recoveries to 122,576. There are 121 people currently receiving intensive care treatment out of a total 8,356 patients hospitalized, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. Some 5,105 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 965,830 so far, added the spokesman. The official reiterated the strict need to abide by health precautions, urging the public to follow social distancing rules as the only way to keep the virus at bay. — KUNA

**Kuwait Times**  
ESTABLISHED 1961  
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED



- 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



**BEIRUT:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society launched yesterday a campaign to distribute humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, presented by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. — KUNA



Azerbaijan forces take key Karabakh town of Shusha

## Saudi Arabia holds its breath after Biden's win



SAN FRANCISCO: People hold a pinata of US President Donald Trump as they celebrate Joe Biden being elected president of the United States in the Castro district on Saturday. —AFP

# Can Trump challenge election verdict?

## US President rejects election result

WASHINGTON: Minutes after US media declared Democrat Joe Biden victor in the tight race for the US presidency on Saturday, President Donald Trump rejected that conclusion, saying he will prove in court that he was the winner. "The simple fact is this election is far from over," Trump said in a statement. "Legal votes decide who is president, not the news media." But experts say Trump has little chance of reversing Biden's win, without having provided the evidence of widespread vote fraud needed to overturn results in several states.

"Trump's litigation strategy is going nowhere. It is not going to make a difference to the election outcome," said Richard Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine. Trump said his campaign will take to the courts on Monday to "ensure election laws are fully upheld and the rightful winner is seated." He pointed to expected recounts in states where Biden is only a few thousand votes ahead.

And he referred to Pennsylvania, where Republicans allege fraud and say thousands of late-arriving mail-in ballots were illegally counted. "Networks don't get to decide elections. Courts do. Courts set aside elections when they are illegal," Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani declared Saturday in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's largest city.

### Echoes of Florida?

Trump is right: the election is not truly over until each state formally certifies its vote, which will take place over the

coming weeks. But with nearly all the 150 million-plus ballots counted, he simply does not have enough votes in the Electoral College that formally chooses the president, US media collectively concluded Saturday. There is a precedent for a turn to the courts. In 2000, with the election battle between Republican George W Bush and Democrat Al Gore hanging on the outcome in Florida—where Bush led with just over 500 votes—the two sides fought to the Supreme Court over a state-wide recount. The high court narrowly rejected a recount, handing the election to Bush. In Trump's case, he not only has to overcome a deficit of nearly 40,000 votes in Pennsylvania, but he is also down by many thousands of votes each in Nevada, Georgia, Arizona and Wisconsin. It's highly unlikely the Supreme Court would move to overturn election results of those margins in multiple states.

### Recounting the vote

Recounts are expected in Wisconsin and Georgia, and are possible in other states. But recounts rarely reverse verdicts. A recount in Wisconsin in 2016 netted 131 votes to Trump's lead over Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. "In modern American elections, recounting almost never changed results by more than a couple hundred votes," said Steven Huefner, an election law expert at Ohio State University. The Trump campaign's biggest hope has been to overturn a Pennsylvania decision months ago to accept mailed ballots received up to

afterward, Graham was on Trump's favorite Fox News show pledging money for the president's legal defense and repeating unsubstantiated accusations of election irregularities.

### Trump TV?

The thrice-married New York-born hotel developer and television celebrity has made no secret that he longs for some comforts of his pre-White House days. "I had a nice life. I had the greatest life," Trump said in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in his final campaign rally. His main product to fund that lifestyle has been his own name. According to his disgraced former lawyer Michael Cohen, the 2016 presidential run itself was conceived as a "branding opportunity" — until he unexpectedly won.

Trump had rebuilt his public profile in the 2000s as the host of reality TV series "Celebrity Apprentice" following a string of bankruptcies. The president has hinted about seeking to start a "Trump TV" brand as he has increasingly complained about Fox News, accusing the channel that helped fuel his rise of being insufficiently right-wing. Viewers, he tweeted, "want an alternative now. So do I!" And no one can deny Trump has the gift of the gab. At his innumerable rallies, he held large crowds in a kind of mesmerized attention with stream-of-consciousness shifts from conspiracy theories to jokes to pet peeves, like his peculiarly passionate criticism of feeble water pressure in bathroom faucets. And he has a potential ready-made vehicle for the project in the form of openly Trump-supporting cable channels One America News and NewsMax TV — current minnows that a Trump takeover could turn into giants.

### Prison, or a road trip?

No less plausible is a scenario where Trump is embroiled in serious legal problems. Prosecutors in New York are already probing Trump's hush money

three days after Election Day.

Republicans appealed the decision to the Supreme Court in October, which split four-four leaving it in place, but saying it could revisit the issue after the election. Now it has a full bank of nine justices after Trump appointed conservative Amy Coney Barrett, and Republicans are seeking a new hearing. But Pennsylvania officials say the number of late ballots at risk of being disqualified is only in the thousands, much fewer than needed to overcome Biden's lead. It is "difficult to see how the ballots in question will have any relevance to the electoral outcome," said Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar in a Supreme Court filing Saturday.

### Fraud?

Trump is also claiming fraud. Again, to overcome Biden's lead that would have to be proved in multiple states and cancel tens of thousands of votes for his rival. So far they have not delivered the evidence. Giuliani said Saturday that the largely Democratic-leaning city of Philadelphia "has a sad history of voter fraud," claiming dead people submitted ballots. "There certainly is enough evidence to disqualify a certain number of ballots," he said. "And that could affect the election." But the Republican claims remain "vague," said Huefner. "You have to have facts to support what you are claiming," he said. And even with proof, he added, "Republicans must show it was enough to change the results." —AFP

## Kamala husband Emhoff to be first '2nd gentleman'



Doug Emhoff

WASHINGTON: When Kamala Harris makes history as the first woman and first Black US vice president, her husband Doug Emhoff will break his own new ground: as the original "second husband." Harris and Emhoff, who married in 2014 — she for the first time, he for the second—will also be the first mixed-race couple to occupy their positions. He is white while she is the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants. Both are 56. The contours of Emhoff's new role as the nation's "second husband"—some prefer "second gentleman"—have yet to be determined; he has been vague about his plans so far. Traditionally, the spouses of presidents and vice presidents have been expected to forge a careful balance of supportiveness and independence. Many pick a charitable cause to promote. Emhoff, who was credited as a "secret weapon" on the campaign trail for his wife—even earning his own following on social media—is an accomplished lawyer specializing in media, sports and entertainment law.

He took leave in August from the multinational DLA Piper, which has lobbying offices in Washington. That could raise prickly conflicts of interest with Harris's work. Emhoff has been publicly vague about whether he will stay with the firm, though he has stold interviewers he might want to pursue pro bono legal work. Emhoff marks another milestone: he would be the first Jew to be part of America's first or second families. Friends have described him as a less-than-observant Jew but one who identifies strongly with, and is deeply shaped by, Judaism. The Jewish publication Forward embraced him as the "Second Mensch." When its reporter asked Emhoff's mother Barbara about his religious upbringing, she was coy, but offered: "He was bar mitzvahed in New Jersey. I can tell you that." Born in Brooklyn and raised in New Jersey, he is said to have happy memories of Jewish summer camp, where he won athletic awards.

While in high school, his father moved the family to Los Angeles. Emhoff earned a law degree at the University of Southern California, then worked at other law firms before reaching DLA Piper. When Emhoff met Harris on a blind date arranged by friends, it was "love at first sight," he later said. His children by his first marriage—Cole, named after John Coltrane, and Ella, named after Ella Fitzgerald—have embraced their stepmother as "Momala." Emhoff's ex-wife Kerstin Mackin remains friendly and even joins the family at Thanksgiving. The "second husband-elect," incidentally, shares one thing with Donald Trump: both are avid golfers. —AFP

## What next for Trump? Golf, Twitter and maybe another run?

WASHINGTON: When networks projected he had lost his bid for reelection to Joe Biden, President Donald Trump was playing golf. He'll soon have plenty more time to enjoy the links if he so desires. But if there's one constant for Trump, it is his love of the limelight and few expect this most unusual of presidents to pursue a traditional post-White House life of public reticence, reflective memoir-writing and occasional charitable events.

He will lose the keys to the White House but not his login on Twitter, where Trump and his itchy fingers could still wield powerful control over his Republican Party. Some allies have already spoken of Trump planning a rematch in 2024. Only one other president, Grover Cleveland, has served non-consecutive terms, winning in 1892 after narrowly losing reelection four years earlier.

Former White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said with understatement that Trump — who has refused to concede and made unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud — "doesn't like losing." "I would absolutely expect the president to stay involved in politics and would absolutely put him on the shortlist of people who are likely to run in 2024," he told an Irish think tank. "He's a very high-energy 74-year-old."

Trump's children have made clear that they are still demanding loyalty from Republicans. "The total lack of action from virtually all of the '2024 GOP hopefuls' is pretty amazing," Donald Trump Jr tweeted on Thursday. He called out by name Senator Lindsey Graham, a former Trump critic turned supporter who coasted to reelection. Hours



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump returns to the White House after playing golf on Saturday. —AFP

payment to a porn star, his tangled business dealings and mysterious accounting practices. Then there are those old rape and other sexual assault allegations. As president, Trump is largely protected from prosecution. Some have speculated that he may again challenge accepted norms by trying to issue a pre-emptive pardon to himself.

Eight Trump associates, including men who served as his campaign managers, lawyer and national security advisor, have already been indicted or imprisoned for serious crimes including over the 2016 campaign's links to Russia. Or, just maybe, Trump will want to get away from it all. However implausible this sounds, he has dropped a few hints.

In June at the White House he mused about taking a road trip in an RV with his former model wife Melania. Less romantic but equally heartfelt, he paused mid-speech during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania to admire parked trucks. "Nice trucks," the president said. "You think I could hop into one of them and drive it away? I'd love to do it, just drive the hell out of here. Just get the hell out of this." —AFP

## International

# Saudi Arabia holds its breath after Biden's election victory

## Democrat Biden likely to reverse Iran, other policies

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia, which may have more to lose from Joe Biden's US election victory than other Arab states, has taken its time to comment after the defeat of Donald Trump whose Middle East policies and staunch opposition to Iran had Riyadh's backing. As other Arab states raced to congratulate the Democrat challenger, the kingdom's de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman remained silent on the US vote for hours even as he sent warm words to the president of Tanzania on his re-election.

Prince Mohammed's close personal ties with Trump had provided a vital buffer against a tide of international criticism over Riyadh's rights record sparked by the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, Riyadh's role in Yemen's war and the detention of women activists. Those areas may now become points of friction between Biden and Saudi Arabia, a major oil exporter and buyer of US arms.

The former US vice president pledged in his campaign to reassess ties with the kingdom,

demanding more accountability over Khashoggi's killing in Riyadh's Istanbul consulate and calling for an end to US support for the Yemen war. "The only



### Saudi crown prince enjoyed close ties with Trump

thing worse than COVID-19 would be BIDEN-20," wrote Saudi Twitter user Dr Muna, while many other Saudi users of the social media platform simply ignored the result in the initial hours after US networks called the election for Biden.

A Saudi political source played down the risk of a falling out between the kingdom and the United States, pointing to Riyadh's historic ties with Washington. But Saudi Arabia's Okaz newspaper offered a sense of the uncertainty about how the future plays out for the kingdom. "The region is waiting ... and preparing ... for what happens after Biden's victory," it wrote in a front page article. The kingdom may not have to wait long. Neil Quilliam, associate fellow at Britain's Chatham House think-tank, said the Biden administration would likely seek to signal early on its discontent with Saudi domestic and foreign policies.

"The Saudi leadership is concerned that a Biden administration and a hostile Congress will carry out a full review of relations, including re-evaluating defense ties and therefore will likely make positive sounds and moves towards ending the Yemen conflict," he said. Saudi Arabia was an enthusiastic backer of Trump's "maximum pressure" of tough sanctions on regional rival Iran. But Biden has said

he would return to a 2015 nuclear pact between world powers and Tehran, a deal negotiated when Biden was vice president in Barack Obama's administration.

Abu Zaid, a cashier at a supermarket in Riyadh, said he hoped Biden would take a different approach. "I am not happy with the Biden win, but I hope he learns from Obama's mistakes and realises that Iran is a common enemy," he said. A Saudi political source said the kingdom had "the ability to deal with any president because the U.S. is a country of institutions and there is a lot of institutional work between Saudi Arabia and the United States." "Saudi-US relations are deep, sustainable, and strategic and not prone to change because a presidential changes," he said. Prince Mohammed had denied ordering Khashoggi's killing but in 2019 he acknowledged some personal accountability by saying that it happened on his watch. Riyadh has jailed eight people for between seven and 20 years in the case. — Reuters

## Biden's win a chance for US to 'compensate for mistakes': Tehran

**TEHRAN:** Iran's President Hassan Rouhani yesterday said the next US administration has an opportunity to "compensate for its previous mistakes" following Joe Biden's victory in the presidential election. "Now there is an opportunity for the future American administration to compensate for its previous mistakes and return to the path of adherence to international commitments," Rouhani said, in a statement on his official website.

US President Donald Trump, who lost Tuesday's election to Democratic challenger Biden, has applied a "maximum pressure" policy and crippling sanctions against Iran since his 2018 withdrawal from a landmark nuclear agreement with Tehran. The reimposed sanctions targeted Iran's vital oil industry and banking ties, among other sectors. This US "administration's harmful and wrong policy for the past three years was not only condemned by people all around

the world, but was also opposed by the people of (the US) in the recent election," Rouhani said.

He added that the Iranian people's "heroic resistance against the imposed economic war" by the Trump administration "proved that America's maximum pressure policy is doomed to fail." Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tuesday that the US election result would have "no effect" on Tehran's policies towards Washington. Biden has said during his campaign that he plans to embark on a "credible path to return to diplomacy" with Iran, and raised the possibility of returning to the 2015 nuclear deal, negotiated when he was vice president under Barack Obama.

### 'Deeds matter most'

Iran's top diplomat, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said on Twitter that "the world is watching" whether the new US administration "will abandon disastrous lawless bullying of outgoing regime and accept multilateralism, cooperation & respect for law." "Deeds matter most," he added. Most of Iran's daily newspapers reported on Biden's victory on their front pages with pictures of him and Trump.

The conservative Resalat paper wrote that "the unmasked enemy left, the masked enemy arrived,"



**TEHRAN:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani chairs a cabinet meeting yesterday. — AFP

echoing the official line that US policies will not fundamentally change with presidents. The ultra-conservative Vatan-e Emrooz focused on Trump's allegations of fraud in the election, in a report titled "the graveyard of democracy," featuring a cartoon Biden sneaking away with a ballot in a skeleton's hand. "The complaining president!" reformist Arman-e Melli wrote, while the mainstream Hamshahri daily said "it's over: the age of Trump came to an end after four days of uncertainty." — AFP

## New York says good riddance to native son Donald Trump

**NEW YORK:** Joyous New Yorkers poured into the streets Saturday after Democrat Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump to win the White House, erupting in celebration as the business mogul and former star of The Apprentice was told: "You're fired." Revelers cheered across a city that has sparred for years with the president who rose to prominence in the New York real estate world. A reliable Democratic stronghold, the US financial capital's disdain for the Republican's conservative policies was no secret. On an unseasonably balmy fall day Manhattan residents yelled and clapped, some waving flags and others banging pots from their balconies as car horns punctuated the applause.

Catherine Griffin cried tears of joy outside with one of her two kids, telling AFP: "I'm happy that Trump has gone from our lives, hopefully forever." "Having a little normalcy back in our lives, and my kids being able to see a decent human being in charge again - that just makes me happy for the day," the 47-year-old said. Hundreds of people gathered outside Trump Tower, while large crowds at Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza - in a nod to the outgoing president's "You're fired!" catchphrase from his days hosting The Apprentice reality show - chanted: "Trump got fired!"

Thousands more began amassing at Times Square and Columbus Circle, where a demonstra-



**NEW YORK:** People celebrate at Times Square after Joe Biden was declared winner of the 2020 presidential election on Saturday. — AFP

tion to protect the integrity of ballot tallying turned into a giant party. "Biden has won finally," said JD Beebe, a 35-year-old who works at an online company. "I just feel like it's a very American moment," he said, adding: "I know the country is split almost 50/50, but I still think this is a very good day for democracy. I'm honestly looking forward to not every day having to be on a roller coaster about what ridiculous thing our leadership is going to say, or what they're going to do to any oppressed portion of the community."

### 'Queens man evicted'

The homepage of the Queens Daily Eagle, a local newspaper from the borough where Trump was

raised, sent off the brash celebrity-turned-erratic president with a wry wisecrack: "Queens man evicted." "A 74-year-old Jamaica Estates developer has less than three months left at his current address after Americans overwhelmingly voted him out of the White House," the paper wrote.

Social media footage showed the renowned filmmaker Spike Lee jumping in elation on the streets of his home borough Brooklyn, popping champagne as onlookers danced and cheered. In another clip a United States Postal Worker paraded past a throng of exuberant New Yorkers, who applauded the national mail service much maligned by Trump, who has made baseless claims that many mail-in ballots were fraudulent. — AFP

## At pivotal moments, Trump failed to win over doubters

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump had reason to count on the loyalty of the large chunk of Americans who drove his improbable election victory in 2016. But in 2020, he needed a wider swath of voters to believe in his promise to "Make America Great Again." Faced with three crises - mounting coronavirus infections and deaths, the ensuing economic collapse and protests against police killings of Black Americans - Trump as US president had an opportunity to unite people across political persuasions in the final year of his tumultuous first term.

Instead, at almost every pivotal moment, the brash businessman and former reality television star stayed true to his divisive brand. Spurning the advice of scientists and advisers, he stuck to a script embraced by his hardcore supporters and mocked those who dared to disagree. His approach ultimately left a majority of American voters convinced he was not the right man to lead the country forward.

"If he had buckled down with a coherent and reassuring strategy dealing with the coronavirus, he absolutely could have made up the small margins that he lost several states by," said Republican strategist Ryan Williams, who advised Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign. "Instead of addressing the pandemic by listening to the advice of his best advisers, he doubled down on his instincts, which is what Donald Trump has done his entire life," Williams said.

Even after major networks had declared Democrat Joe Biden the winner on Saturday, Trump refused to concede. Among Republicans, there was a feeling Trump did better than expected. Pre-election opinion polls had signaled a Democratic tidal wave. But Trump kept it close, helped Republicans down the ballot and attracted more than 70 million votes, seven million more than he did in 2016. "Trump delivered," Republican strategist Scott Reed said. "And he's



**WASHINGTON:** Supporters of president-elect Joe Biden celebrate on Black Lives Matter Plaza across from the White House on Saturday. — AFP

still going to have a major impact on the party."

Trump began the year riding high and looking poised to coast to re-election. The economy was booming. His impeachment trial was behind him after the Republican-led Senate cleared him on two charges brought

by Democrats. The Democratic Party, meanwhile, was fractured in its search for a presidential nominee. On Air Force One in February, Trump chuckled and critiqued the performances of each potential rival as he watched them debate on the TV in his front cabin. — Reuters

## World's media welcome Trump defeat, warn of Biden challenges

**PARIS:** Media outlets worldwide hailed Joe Biden's defeat of Donald Trump in the US presidential election, but attention quickly turned to the consequences for US policy. The international press also focused on the feat of Kamala Harris, Biden's running mate who will become the United States' first female, and first Black, vice president. "A new dawn for America," read the headline of The Independent in Britain, showing a photo of Biden standing next to Harris and noting her historic achievement. The Sunday Times went with a picture of a Black woman draped in the US flag and the headline: "Sleepy Joe wakes up America", taunting Trump with his own derogatory nickname for Biden. And the left-leaning Observer went simply with "It's Joe" over an image of the smiling Democrat.

### 'Heavy burden'

Germany's mass-market Bild newspaper carried a photo of Trump with the headline: "Exit without decency." "What a liberation, what a relief", said the left-leaning Sueddeutsche Zeitung broadsheet. But it noted that Biden "inherits a heavy burden" like nothing faced by his predecessors, and warned that Trump accepting defeat was "unthinkable". In Australia, the Daily Telegraph tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch's media empire also focused on Trump's expected defiance against "a foe he perceived to be feeble and barely worth turning up to fight".

### 'No more lessons in democracy'

Iran's ultraconservative papers celebrated the downfall of Trump, a leader who has applied "maximum pressure" and punishing sanctions since his 2018 withdrawal from a landmark nuclear agreement. Still, they reserved little warmth for Biden. "The maskless enemy left, the masked enemy arrived," warned conservative publication Resalat. Another theme was the false claim of voter fraud with the ultraconservative Vatan-e Emrooz, seemingly before the Biden win was announced, headlined on "The graveyard of democracy", and focused on false allegations. Similarly, Egypt's government daily al-Akhabar used a long editorial to zero in on the un-fundamentally "violations" of fraudulent voting, and said that "it is time for the United States to stop giving us lessons in democracy".

### 'Trump went golfing'

In Saudi Arabia, the only Gulf country yet to comment on the result, pro-government online newspaper Okaz wondered if Biden would persist with Trump's close ties to the kingdom. The kingdom's pan-Arab Asharq al-Awsat paper urged Biden to continue a "period of economic prosperity and stability in security" for the Middle East. Turkey's mainstream dailies were muted. Major paper Hurriyet ran a small front-page news story on the result, along with a piece titled: "Trump went golfing". One pro-government newspaper, Sabah, did not even report on Biden's victory until page 10, with an opposition daily also running one small front-page election story.

### Warnings for populism

Brazil's leading media outlets reported Trump's defeat in the context of its own populist leader, Jair Bolsonaro, who has similarly sought to diminish democratic institutions and reject science-based facts. "Trump's defeat punishes the attacks against civilization, it is a lesson for Bolsonaro," wrote Folha de Sao Paulo, one of Brazil's major daily newspapers. "May Brazil's leaders seize the spirit of the times-or die, like Trump." Spain's centre-right El Mundo newspaper said Biden's win was a goodbye to Trump's populism, and described Harris as a "symbol of renewal". — AFP

## International

# Azerbaijan forces take key Karabakh town of Shusha

## Armenia denies capture, insists fighting is still ongoing

**BAKU:** Azerbaijan said yesterday its forces had captured the key town of Shusha from Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh, but Armenia insisted that fighting for the strategically vital area was ongoing. The capture of Shusha would be a major victory for Azerbaijan six weeks after new fighting erupted over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave that broke away from Azerbaijan's control in the 1990s.

The fortress town sits on cliffs around 15 km from Nagorno-Karabakh's main city Stepanakert and on the main road through the region to the territory of Armenia, which backs the separatists. Both sides have reported fierce clashes around the town in recent days, after Azerbaijani forces swept across the southern flank of Nagorno-Karabakh and pushed through its mountain passes. In a televised address to the nation on Sunday, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced that the town had been captured.

"With great pride and joy, I inform you that the town of Shusha has been liberated," said Aliyev, dressed in military fatigues and standing in front of an Azerbaijani flag. He said November 8 would "go down in the history of the Azerbaijani people" as the day "we returned to Shusha". "Our liberation march continues. We will go to the end, until the complete liberation of the occupied territories," Aliyev said.

Flag-waving Azerbaijanis took to the streets of the capital Baku to celebrate after Aliyev's announcement. Armenian officials confirmed there

were heavy clashes for the town but said the battle was far from over. "The fighting continues in Shusha, wait and believe in our army," Armenian defense ministry official Artsrun Hovhannisyán said, using the Armenian name for the town, shortly after Aliyev's announcement.

### The fortress city withstands

Armenian defense ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said there was "the most ferocious combat" overnight for the town, while the Armenian government said taking Shusha was an "unattainable pipe dream for Azerbaijan". "Despite heavy destruction, the fortress city withstands the blows of the adversary," it said. The new clashes broke out in late September between Azerbaijan and the Armenia-backed separatists over control of Karabakh, which declared its independence nearly 30 years ago.

That declaration has not been recognized internationally, even by Armenia, and it remains a part of Azerbaijan under international law. The recent flare-up has been the worst in decades, with more than 1,000 people confirmed dead including dozens of civilians, although the death toll is believed to be much higher. Fighting has continued despite several attempts by Russia, France and the United States to help reach a lasting ceasefire.

The three countries make up the "Minsk Group" of mediators that helped broker a truce between the ex-Soviet rivals in 1994 but have failed to find a last-



**BAKU:** People hold Azeri flags as they celebrate of the capture the town of Shusha yesterday. —AFP

ing solution to the long-simmering conflict. Armenia and Azerbaijan have each accused the other of targeting civilian areas during the fighting and the United Nations this week decried indiscriminate attacks that could amount to "war crimes". The fighting has raised fears that both Russia, which has a military alliance with Armenia, and Azerbaijan's ally

Turkey could be further drawn into the conflict.

Turkish leaders congratulated Azerbaijan yesterday. "I congratulate my Azeri brothers' Shusha victory... I believe (it) is a sign that the rest of the occupied lands will be liberated soon too," Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said, addressing crowds in Turkey's northwestern province of Kocaeli. —Agencies



## Celebrations erupt in Baku

## Abiy replaces army chief as Tigray casualties mount

**SANJA, Ethiopia:** Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed replaced his army chief yesterday, as reports of wounded soldiers continued to rise in a five-day-old conflict in the country's northern Tigray region. Deputy army chief Berhanu Jula will take over the Ethiopian National Defence Force, a statement from Abiy's office said, without giving a reason or specifying the fate of Berhanu's predecessor, General Adem Mohammed.

The announcement came as a medical official told AFP that nearly 100 government soldiers had been treated for gunshot wounds at a hospital in the northern Amhara region, the latest indication that fighting has been intense. Abiy and military leaders have touted Ethiopian soldiers' successes against forces loyal to the Tigray ruling party, but a communications blackout in the region has made their accounts difficult to verify.

On roads in the northern part of Ethiopia's Amhara region, ambulances can frequently be seen ferrying wounded combatants to hospitals. In the town of Sanja, 98 government soldiers have been

treated for "gunfire" injuries, a doctor told AFP. "We have had 98 cases. All of them are soldiers from the national army," said the doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said there were no fatalities at the hospital, but noted more serious cases have been transported to larger hospitals in the city of Gondar and elsewhere.

Reports of dead and wounded soldiers have mounted in recent days in Amhara, where a humanitarian aid worker said three died and 35 were treated on Saturday. On Friday 105 were reported injured and five killed in the region. They coincide with growing fears of civil war after Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, on Wednesday sent federal troops and aircraft into Tigray in a major escalation of a long-running feud.

Yesterday's reshuffle also saw new appointments for deputy army chief, foreign minister and federal police commissioner, while the president of Amhara was transferred to head Ethiopia's intelligence service. No reason was given for those changes either.

### Airstrikes

Abiy ordered airstrikes on military assets in the Tigrayan regional capital, Mekele, last week, while warning more would be on the way and urging civilians to avoid gatherings to limit "collateral damage". A UN advisory distributed yesterday morning reported an "ongoing air strike in Mekele"

could bite the dust this winter, caretaker culture minister Abbas Mortada told AFP.

The port explosion, which authorities say was caused by a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate that caught fire, killed more than 200 people and damaged or destroyed around 70,000 homes. Now, the weather is worsening that destruction. Carla, a 52-year-old who grew up near the Rmeil 24 building, said Lebanon's history was on the line. "This is our heritage," she said. "It's such a shame for it to be lost in this way."

### Too little, too late

The Rmeil 24 building has been abandoned for more than 40 years. But its ground floor continued to house the Hanna Mitri ice cream shop - one of the capital's most prized traditional parlors, beloved by tourists and locals alike. The Beirut gem, which has since reopened in a new location, was forced to shut after the explosion caused the shop's ceiling to crumble.

Heavy rainfall on Thursday night accentuated the "cavities in the roof" of Rmeil 24, leading to the "partial destruction" of the building, said Yasmine Makaroun, an architect from the Association for

es - 8.5 million - behind the United States.

With studies strongly linking air pollution to increased coronavirus deaths, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the intense annual smog from farm fires, cars and industry was worsening the pandemic crisis. As he fretted over the x-ray of one pneumonia patient, Kundra said he spots at least one coronavirus suspect a day in his small clinic and orders them to get tested. "Tiny microscopic pollutants act as carriers for the virus and go deep into the lungs. So Delhi is facing a double whammy because of pollution and coronavirus cases," he said. "Patients who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and are exposed to increased pollution are prone to have more severe forms of the infection."

### Smog guns

With more residents on the streets ahead of India's main holiday, Diwali - the festival of light - on Saturday, doctors fear dark days ahead for the city of 20 million people. Kejriwal has banned Diwali firecrackers and launched legal action to get private hospitals to set aside more beds for Covid-19 patients. The city has deployed smog guns, which blast out clouds of water



**TEKELDENG, Ethiopia:** Zeleke Alabachew, farmer and militia fighter, poses on his land near this village northwest of Gondar yesterday. —AFP

close to the airport, with an update specifying "there was only one strike heard and the related ripost [sic] from the ground."

Hours before he was named the new army chief, a state media report quoted Berhanu saying federal forces had "fully destroyed the heavy weaponry of the traitorous clique", a reference to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional ruling party. Berhanu also said federal forces had "completely captured" four towns in western Tigray, where much of the fighting has reportedly been concentrated. —AFP



**BEIRUT:** A man walks past a building damaged by the August 4 port blast that collapsed due to heavy rain in the Karantina neighborhood on Nov 5, 2020. —AFP

Protecting Natural Sites and Old Buildings in Lebanon (APSAD). The worst could have been prevented if the landowner hadn't delayed access to the site while the weather was favorable, she told AFP. "We could have started the first rescue interventions... and we could probably have partially saved it," she said. —AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Lung specialist Davinder Kundra checks an x-ray of a patient at his Breathe Better clinic on Nov 5, 2020. —AFP

intended to bring pollution particles to the ground. But environmental activists such as Vimlendu Jha say the authorities are not serious about the problem, and have demanded suspensions on construction and even some power stations. —AFP

## Jordan faces virus-era polls in crisis mode

**AMMAN:** Voters in coronavirus-battered Jordan go to the polls tomorrow in an election focused on the Arab country's economic crisis which has been heightened by the devastating pandemic. Resource-poor and dependent on foreign aid, in particular from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), public debt in the small country of 10 million people - which is also hosting more than one million Syrian refugees - exceeds 100 percent of GDP. And unemployment was running at 23 percent in the first quarter of 2020.

"This vote is different, with people in greater distress because of the epidemic," said Orabi Rintawi of the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies. Coronavirus has claimed more than 1,180 lives from over 104,800 cases in Jordan, according to health ministry data. However, Rintawi doubted there would be a high turnout because "most Jordanians think parliament plays a marginal role in the political system", as the formation of governments in the Hashemite kingdom is not party-based or dependent on the outcome of the vote.

There have been some calls on social media to postpone the elections, but the government has said the vote will go ahead. Parliament was already dissolved in late September ahead of the vote, and under the law new elections must be held within four months. Jordanian Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs Musa Al-Maaytah insisted Friday it would be better to hold the vote now than in a few months' time. "Economic, political and social life must continue," he added.

King Abdullah II last month named veteran diplomat Bisher Al-Khasawneh as prime minister ahead of the vote, after parliament reached the end of its term. "People will vote along tribal lines, for a candidate from their clan or for representatives who will provide them with services," not for political reasons, Rintawi told AFP. Some 4.5 million people eligible to vote will cast their ballots for candidates to fill 130 seats in parliament, 15 of them reserved for women, from a field of 1,674 candidates running on 294 lists. —AFP

## Austria Muslims wary of backlash after attack

**VIENNA:** When Osama Abu El Hosna found himself under a hail of bullets during the shooting rampage in Vienna, he heroically risked his life to save a policeman at the scene. But while Hosna has been lauded for his courage, other Muslims say they are now scared to walk the streets of the city they call home as they fear a backlash against their community. Monday's attack was carried out by an Islamic State supporter who had been convicted and imprisoned for trying to join the IS group in Syria.

Hosna's own story is testament to the Islamophobia present in many parts of Austrian society - and which has been fanned by right-wing politicians. In the majority Catholic country, half of Austrians believe mosques should not be tolerated and say they have a negative image of Muslims, according to a 2019 study by the University of Salzburg. Muslims make up eight percent of the population, one of the highest proportions in the European Union.

The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) openly uses Islamophobic and racist imagery, including during its spell in government between late 2017 and May last year. According to the Dokustelle group, which documents anti-Muslim harassment and racism, incidents targeting Muslims went up from 309 in 2017 to 1,051 in 2019. —AFP

## Delhi fears worst amid smog cloud, coronavirus wave

**NEW DELHI:** A steady stream of patients is coming out of New Delhi's brownish atmosphere for treatment at the Breathe Better clinic, where lung specialist Davinder Kundra is confronting what he calls the "double whammy" of deadly smog and the coronavirus. Kundra is among a growing number of doctors who are worried as the capital's notorious air again hits peak pollution levels while a new pandemic wave is battering hospitals.

Every winter pollution season, demand for beds spikes in the world's most polluted capital because of an increase in lung diseases and chronic bronchitis. Now the coronavirus has come back after a lull, new cases reaching a record 7,000 a day. Some official predictions say the figure could soon exceed 12,000. India already has the world's second-highest number of cas-

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020

# Business

## Zain offers advanced cloud-managed network solutions to Al-Maousherji

### To supply all 71 McDonald's restaurants in Kuwait with superfast Wi-Fi

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, signed a partnership agreement with Al-Maousherji Catering Company to offer the most advanced cloud-managed network solutions by Cisco Meraki, supplying all 71 McDonald's restaurants in Kuwait with superfast Wi-Fi featuring the highest security standards. The agreement aims at elevating the company's customer experience and reinforcing its telecom infrastructure with world-class solutions.

As part of this agreement, Zain will offer a wide range of telecommunications and networking solutions built on the most advanced technologies, including 5G, with the aim of serving Al-Maousherji Catering Company's technical needs as per the highest standards. Al-Maousherji, the owner and operator of McDonald's restaurants in Kuwait, is considered one of the oldest national catering companies in the country, where it has been contributing to progressing national economy since 1994.

Zain is set to offer Al-Maousherji with the most advanced cloud-managed network solutions by Cisco Meraki to supply all 71 McDonald's restaurants in Kuwait with high-speed Wi-Fi, featuring the highest security stan-

dards with the wireless intrusion prevention system (WIPS) to protect it from external security threats. This allows Al-Maousherji to offer Zain's superfast internet at McDonald's high-density indoor and outdoor environments with simple multi-site management tools, ultimately contributing to elevating the company's customer experience and reinforcing its telecom infrastructure with the latest tech has to offer.

#### Certifications

Recently, Zain received three international certifications from Cisco, the global leader in telecommunications and networks technologies. The certifications from Cisco reflect Zain's commitment in offering the latest and most advanced technology solutions as per the highest international standards for customers in Kuwait's business sector.

The first certification from Cisco, Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialized Partner, acknowledges Zain's capabilities with respect to Cisco's HCS solutions over the cloud in the Kuwaiti market. The second certification, Advanced Cloud and Managed Services Certified Partner, affirms Zain's capabilities in

offering the latest advanced cloud and managed services to corporate customers. The third certification recognizes Zain as a Premier Certified Partner of Cisco. The bundle of services and solutions Zain offers in collaboration with Cisco aims at raising operational efficiency and increasing productivity for businesses while providing high levels of security.

Zain continues to achieve its strategy towards fully transforming into an integrated digital service provider, reflecting its commitment in further pushing the digital transformation wheel in Kuwait by contributing to advance the local business sec-



شركة الموشرجي الغذائية  
AL-MAOUSERJI CATERING CO.



## EU, UK say Brexit gap still large, talks to continue

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union and Britain said on Saturday major divergences remain but that post-Brexit negotiations would continue next week to clinch a trade deal in the scant time left. Following a phone call with Boris Johnson, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said the differences were "large", while the British prime minister described them as "significant".

EU negotiator Michel Barnier said he would head back to London to resume talks with UK counterpart David Frost next week. Despite multiple rounds of talks, including two weeks of "intense" meetings that ended Wednesday, the sides remain far apart on fishing rights and rules for competition between British and European companies. "Some progress has been made, but large differences remain especially on level playing field and fisheries. Our teams will continue working hard next week," von der Leyen tweeted.

Johnson said the negotiating teams would reconvene in London today, "in order to redouble efforts to reach a deal", according to a Downing Street spokesperson. "The prime minister set out that, while some progress had been made in recent discussions, significant differences remain in a number of areas, including the so-called level playing field and fish," he said.

Both leaders agreed to remain in personal contact as well, signaling a stepped-up political effort to secure a new trading partnership before Britain ends a post-Brexit transition period on December 31. Before then, several weeks are needed for any treaty to be vetted and ratified by both sides, and observers have said they will be cutting it very fine if agreement is not reached by mid-November.

#### Red lines

Both sides had warned earlier in the year that a draft deal should be on the table before the end of October if it is to be ratified by the EU and UK parliaments before the end of the year. But the talks blew past this unofficial deadline, and Britain could yet leave the EU single market and customs union at midnight on December 31 with no follow-on framework for cross-Channel business. Both sides say they would prefer to avoid the economic disruption that this would entail, but both insist they are ready if it comes to that, and neither is yet ready to cross their red lines. For Britain, this means reasserting sovereignty over its fishing waters and for Brussels agreeing rules to prevent UK businesses gaining an unfair advantage over EU competitors.

Barnier said he was going to London "to find an agreement that respects the interests and values of the EU and its 27 member states." —AFP

## Stimulus, taxes top Biden agenda for stricken US economy

**WASHINGTON:** When Joe Biden walks in to the White House as president in January, he will have the opportunity to reshape the world's largest economy, but first he will have to get it back on its feet. The United States is starting to recover from a historic contraction in growth and tens of millions of job losses caused by the world's largest Covid-19 outbreak, which spoiled the previously healthy economy and contributed to voters' decision to oust President Donald Trump in this week's election.

On the campaign trail, the 77-year-old former vice president promised a slew of policy departures from Trump, such as raising the minimum wage, rewriting the tax code, investing massively in infrastructure and lowering the country's carbon emissions. But in order to achieve those, he will first have to subdue the coronavirus pandemic, while navigating a Congress that could be split, with Biden's Democrats holding a narrow majority in the House and control of the Senate still undecided.

"He has an ambitious policy agenda, it's hard to argue with that. You can certainly argue it's not ambitious enough," said Shai Akabas, economic policy director at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

#### Tax the rich

Like former president Barack Obama, under whose tenure he served as vice president, Biden takes office with an economy that is reeling. The \$2.2 trillion CARES Act stimulus package passed in March helped temper some of the damage caused by business shutdowns to stop COVID-19 from spreading, but key parts of that law expired and the economy is far from healed. If the outgoing Congress fails to approve a package in the closing weeks of Trump's presidency, getting a stimulus measure approved will be one of the first things Biden does, Akabas said.

Next, Biden likely will turn to the tax code, as practically every American president does at some

## Virtual gold? Bitcoin's rise fuels new debate

**LONDON:** Bitcoin's rally above \$15,000 has reignited debate over whether the cryptocurrency is so-called digital gold or a perilously risky bet as investors grapple with the coronavirus pandemic. The world's most popular virtual unit has gained over 30 percent in value in almost three weeks up to Friday, taking it close to its December 2017 peak when it reached nearly \$20,000.

After a rollercoaster ride on markets since then, it began its latest meteoric rise on October 21, after US online payments provider PayPal announced that it would enable account holders to use cryptocurrency. "It is the validation of a market which was still relatively uncertain a few years ago," said Simon Polrot, president of Paris-based crypto-assets association ADAN. Bitcoin was created in 2008 by the pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto, and marketed as an alternative to traditional currencies.

Unregulated by any central bank, it was sold as an attractive option for investors with an appetite for the exotic-although criminals have also seen its under-the-radar appeal.

However, after bitcoin surpassed \$1,000 for the first time in 2013, it has increasingly attracted the attention of financial institutions. The more recent arrival of big players in the virtual market, such as PayPal and Mastercard, are "very important signals" solidifying that trend, according to Polrot.

#### Millennial appeal

PayPal said it would allow users to buy and sell using bitcoin as well as other cryptocurrencies such as Ethereum and Litecoin. "The migration toward digital payments and digital representations of value continues to accelerate, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic and the increased interest in digital currencies from central banks and consumers," the company said. The US Federal Reserve and European Central Bank are holding consultations on the possible launch of their own virtual currencies, while China's central bank started experimenting with digital payments in four cities in April. Investment banking giant JPMorgan Chase has joined industry players in the increasing optimism

point in their term. Trump did so in 2017 lowering taxes on corporations and the rich.

Mark Duggan, director and senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, said Biden will likely try to reverse those cuts, cranking rates back up on the country's largest businesses and people making more than \$400,000 a year. "For the typical American, tax policy changes from a Biden administration are going to be pretty minimal. I think for high income people they're going to be quite significant," Duggan said.

#### Trade entanglements

Kyle Pomerleau, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, warned the short-term gains from higher taxes on the wealthy could eventually depress business activity and undermine whatever benefits a stimulus package brings. "I think it would be unwise for him to, on one hand, provide a stimulus and then, on the other hand, take some of it with a very large tax increase on employers," he said.

Other planks of "Bidenomics" include a \$1.3 trillion infrastructure investment along with increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per-hour, expanding paid medical and family leave and a "Buy American" policy meant to boost US domestic manufacturing. But some of his fellow Democrats may demand more aggressive action from the new administration, particularly on health care policy.

And the party is also far from united on how Biden should handle the country's commercial relationships after Trump entangled Washington in a trade war with China. JP Morgan investment bank said Biden will probably focus on executing his domestic policies before tackling commerce, and likely won't immediately modify this year's "phase one" trade deal that cooled tensions with Beijing.

When he does act, it will be in concert with allies in Europe-unlike Trump's go-it-alone approach.

"We expect that a Biden administration would continue to de-couple technological links with China, but would do so systematically within the structures of the domestic and international rule-making," the bank said in a report.

#### The deficit looms

Another obstacle looming for his administration

tor. The company considers itself an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait on all levels, especially within business areas.

The offering of these services and solutions to Al-Maousherji Catering Company comes as part of Zain's commitment to offer the latest and most advanced solutions to Kuwait's business community, whether large companies or SMEs, and as per the highest international standards. This commitment comes in line with Zain's digital transformation strategy through which it aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the Kuwaiti market.



**NEW YORK:** US President-elect Joe Biden has promised to raise the minimum wage, rewrite the tax code, invest massively in infrastructure and lower the country's carbon emissions which should help the US economy recover. —AFP

is the budget deficit, which skyrocketed to \$3.1 trillion in the fiscal year ended September 30 — more than double its previous record-fueled by the coronavirus emergency spending measures. Duggan, who worked in the Obama administration, blamed the tax cuts passed under Trump for fueling the deficit's growth prior to the pandemic, but acknowledged raising levies on high earners may not be enough.

"If you raise taxes, you're going to potentially influence economic activity in some ways. That will generate a lot of revenue (but) not nearly enough to eliminate the deficit," Duggan said. A more formidable obstacle for Biden is a potential Senate majority for Republicans, who have shown little inclination in the upper chamber to compromise on the proposals of Democratic presidents.

During Obama's term, they used concerns over the debt and deficit to hamstring his economic policies after the 2008 global financial crisis, though no such worries were raised when Trump cut taxes.

Pomerleau said the expiration of parts of Trump's tax cuts in 2025 could offer Democrats negotiating leverage with Republicans, but he has slim hopes for many changes under Biden if the legislature remains divided. "If he doesn't get a majority in the Senate, then it doesn't look good for much of anything," he said. —AFP



**In this file photo illustration taken in Washington, DC shows bitcoin medals. —AFP**

around bitcoin. After PayPal's announcement, analysts at the bank compared the cryptocurrency to gold. "Bitcoin could compete more intensely with gold as an 'alternative' currency over the coming years given that millennials will become over time a more important component of investors' universe," they said.

They noted that the total capitalization of the cryptocurrency market is 10 times lower than gold, with some speculating it could steadily close that gulf. That viewpoint represents a significant shift given JPMorgan chief Jamie Dimon described bitcoin as a "fraud" two years ago. —AFP



## Business

# Egypt's GDP grows despite COVID, but so does poverty

## Around 2.7 million jobs lost in April-June, mainly in retail and wholesale

**CAIRO:** Despite the pandemic and tourism collapse, Egypt is projecting healthy economic growth this year, even as one third of the Arab world's most populous country remains mired in poverty. Critics question, however, how much of the GDP growth is driven by ostentatious mega-projects, such as a new administrative capital being built in the desert, financed by ballooning debt that will have to be repaid.

The International Monetary Fund in September predicted economic growth of 3.6 percent for 2020. Although lower than earlier forecasts, this still makes Egypt the only North African economy set to expand this year. At the same time, almost one third of Egypt's more than 100 million people live below the poverty line, defined as surviving on less than \$2 a day, according to the most recent data, for 2017-18.

Egypt's government initially predicted six percent GDP growth for the fiscal year 2020, which ran from early July 2019 to the end of June 2020. Toward the end of that twelve-month period, the novel coronavirus outbreak hit, infecting more than 100,000 people in Egypt since and killing over 6,000 of them, according to official data. The public health crisis forced lengthy lockdowns and hit the tourism sector of the country famed for its archaeological heritage and Red Sea beaches, at the cost of countless livelihoods.

Around 2.7 million jobs were lost in April-June, mainly in retail and wholesale, manufacturing, tourism, transport and construction, pushing official unemployment to 9.6 percent, according to World Bank data. One of the many people left jobless was a hotel worker who gave his name as Gaber, 36, from southern Egypt, and who was laid off in April by a Red Sea resort suddenly devoid of holiday-makers.

Gaber told AFP he is hoping desperately to find another job as Covid-19 confinement measures are

eased, explaining that "I support my four children, my wife and my mother".

### Future debt

Some economists argue the solid GDP growth is the fruit of tough reforms taken since President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi took office in 2014, including austerity measures and a devaluation of the Egyptian pound. Ahmed Al-Saifi, managing director of the Delta research center in Cairo, said the currency devaluation by nearly 48 percent in November 2016 spurred investment and helped



**Govt predicts 6% GDP growth for fiscal year 2020**

improve the balance of payments. The currency devaluation, slashed state subsidies and new taxes qualified Egypt for a three-year \$12 billion IMF loan from 2016.

Sisi's government has touted the tough measures as essential to revitalizing an economy that had taken multiple hits since the 2011 popular uprising that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak. Tourism revenues have grown in the years since, and reached a new record of \$12.6 billion in 2018-19. Remittances from Egyptians living abroad also hit a record level, of about \$28 billion in 2019-20.

But the wealth has been distributed unevenly and many are missing out. Official figures show that 32.5

percent of Egyptians lived below the poverty line in 2017-18, many impacted by the austerity measures.

"The reforms came at a price," said Saifi, "but this price would have been far higher if the government had not implemented the reforms."

The coronavirus outbreak further exacerbated the crisis, especially among the already-vulnerable five million informal sector workers. Egypt has launched social protection programs for low-income families. But Sarah Smierciak, an independent political economy analyst in Cairo, argued these "are a drop in the ocean, and they fail to reach millions in need".



**CAIRO:** This file picture shows an elevated view of the "King Salman overpass", currently under construction in the Omraniya district of the Egyptian capital's twin city of Giza, which links up with the ring-road network encircling the Greater Cairo area. — AFP

percent of Egyptians lived below the poverty line in 2017-18, many impacted by the austerity measures. "The reforms came at a price," said Saifi, "but this price would have been far higher if the government had not implemented the reforms."

The coronavirus outbreak further exacerbated the crisis, especially among the already-vulnerable five million informal sector workers. Egypt has launched social protection programs for low-income families. But Sarah Smierciak, an independent political economy analyst in Cairo, argued these "are a drop in the ocean, and they fail to reach millions in need".

She also criticized Egypt's focus on ambitious

mega-projects, such as a new administrative capital being built outside Cairo, replete with new ministry buildings and hundreds of thousands of flats, an estimated cost of tens of billions of dollars.

Smierciak believes such projects are unlikely "to generate large and sustainable returns" while being "largely financed by (foreign) debt", which soared to \$11.2 billion in 2020 from \$48 billion in 2015.

"The numbers increasing the GDP now will have to be repaid with interest in the future," she said.

Gaber, the unemployed hotel worker, also feared that these projects "may provide job opportunities to some, but a large segment of the people will not benefit". — AFP

## Apps win, labor frets after Uber-led 'gig worker' win

**SAN FRANCISCO:** A victory for the "gig economy" in California is likely to echo across the US, in a boon for app-based services while igniting fear that big business is rewriting labor laws.

Rideshare and delivery apps matching tasks with those willing to perform them as independent contractors sidestepped a labor law with the passage of Proposition 22 in a referendum put before state voters. "Going forward, you'll see us more loudly advocate for new laws like Prop 22," Uber chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi said. "It's a priority for us to work with governments across the US and the world to make this a reality."

Proposition 22 — backed by Uber, Lyft and other app-based, on-demand delivery services like DoorDash and Instacart-effectively overturns a state law requiring them to reclassify their drivers and provide employee benefits.

"This is very positive for anybody who has a humans-as-a-service type mentality," said analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights and Strategy. "Those companies avoided a death sentence; and I do think classifying those folks as employees would have been a death sentence."

The vote came after a contentious campaign with labor groups claiming the initiative would erode worker rights and benefits, and with backers arguing

for a new, flexible economic model.

Backers of Prop 22 spent some \$200 million to win voters to their side, dwarfing the budget of those opposing the referendum. The Independent Drivers Guild, which describes itself as the largest "gig worker" organization in the US, has vowed to fight for the rights of workers to get the pay, benefits, and collective bargaining rights due to employees.

"The big platform companies may have won in California, but the gig worker fight has only just begun," said guild executive director Brendan Sexton. The guild touted winning a negotiated minimum wage of \$27.86 per hour in New York for Uber and Lyft drivers, according to Sexton.

"Worker power through collective bargaining, not ballot measures and protracted legal battles, is the only real long-term solution for gig workers," Sexton said.

### Third way?

Uber, Lyft, DoorDash and other Prop 22 backers persuaded voters that a new gig economy calls for a "third way" of treating workers to be added to being employees or purely independent contractors, according to University of California-Los Angeles labor researcher Brian Justice. "Uber wants you to think this is a new world, requiring a third categorization but I am not sure I buy that," Justice told AFP.

"It is a way for an extremely unprofitable sector to buy themselves a new lease on life and hoodwink legislators."

Playing the situation as drivers loving flexibility and labor law forcing the companies to become "dogmatic bosses" was disingenuous, according to Justice. While Uber claims drivers are free to work as



**App-based on-demand services won a major victory in a California referendum, which disappointed labor activists pressing for an end to the contractor model to enable workers to get full benefits.**

they please, they are at the mercy of software in the app guiding them to customers and neighborhoods, an institute survey revealed.

"The drivers keeping Uber functional think of work as a manipulative, over controlling thing recast as something new and technological," Justice said. The referendum deals a blow to labor, and has strong potential to spread to other states, according to Justice. "I would be shocked if it didn't ripple out," Justice said of other states, or even countries, adapting labor laws along the lines of Prop 22. "It absolutely gives Uber and Lyft a case study in how to make this work... There is a very real prospect that more and more work becomes gig work." — AFP

## Investors celebrate Biden victory

**NEW YORK:** Investors and financial executives took a big sigh of relief on Saturday after major networks declared Democrat Joe Biden winner of the US presidential election, offering some certainty after days of conflicting reports about who might run the White House next term.

Although current President Donald Trump said he would fight the results in court, Wall Streeters who offered comments felt there was little doubt Biden would ultimately succeed. Election predictors including the Associated Press, NBC, Fox News and Edison Research, upon which Reuters relies, called the presidency for Biden. "Biden is good news for the markets," Christopher Stanton, chief investment officer at Sunrise Capital Partners, said on Saturday. "We're all so tired of the whip-saw that came with the Trump tweets."

Major US stock indexes registered their biggest weekly gains since April this week, as investors bet Biden would win and Republicans would hold onto the Senate. That scenario would create a steadier hand in the Oval Office and a Congress that would check left-leaning impulses on taxes or regulations that pinch companies, investors said. However, there are lingering risks to asset prices in the days and weeks ahead. Republicans have already filed several lawsuits over ballot counting and Trump said his campaign will file more. The litigation could drag out election proceedings.

Investor focus also now turns to the Senate, which remains undecided ahead of two runoff elections in Georgia on Jan. 5. The significance of those races, which could potentially end up with the Democrats controlling all three of the White House, Senate and House of Representatives, means January is "the new November" in terms of election volatility risk. Michael Purves, founder and CEO of Tallbacken Capital, said in a note to clients. Purves said that was evident when looking at contracts for the stock market's fear gauge, the VIX, stretching out into the months ahead. Beyond those battles, investors have been worried about the people Biden might appoint to his Cabinet. Some of those officials would be negotiating with Congress about a relief package and have extensive powers to craft Wall Street rules.

Current US Federal Reserve governor and former McKinsey consultant Lael Brainard's name has been floated as a potential Treasury Secretary, while Biden has already tapped former derivatives market regulator and Goldman Sachs Group Inc banker Gary Gensler for advice on financial regulation.

For the moment, investors and prominent Wall Street figures said they were happy with the election finally being called after what seemed like unending tension as ballots were counted through the week. "Now is a time for unity," JPMorgan Chase & Co Chief Executive Jamie Dimon said in a statement. "We must respect the results of the US presidential election and, as we have with every election, honor the decision of the voters and support a peaceful transition of power." — Reuters

## Zimbabwe looking underground for golden revival

**HARARE:** Reeling from decades of economic mismanagement, Zimbabwe is banking on gold to shore up revenue and tackle the upshots of rampant hyperinflation, corruption and coronavirus restrictions.

Global gold prices have surged more than 30 percent this year, topping a record \$2,000 (1,700 euros) an ounce in August, as the precious metal became a safe haven for investors in the face of Covid-induced volatility. The landlocked southern African country boasts vast gold reserves, alongside chrome, diamonds, platinum and another 40 other minerals.

The government is eyeing gold as a possible magic bullet for an economy forecast to contract by a tenth this year, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to official figures, gold production in the first eight months of 2020 rose 10 percent, driven especially by output from small-scale miners.

Plans are under way to reap \$12 billion (10.2 billion euros) from mining by 2023, mainly through gold.

The sector already accounts for 60 percent of Zimbabwean exports, raking in around \$1 billion a year, and represents half of the southern African country's foreign direct investment. "Mining will be a leading sector in sustaining high and shared growth," Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube said in a pre-budget statement last month. Gold is expected to bring in \$4 billion a year by 2023, followed by platinum at \$3 billion, although the government gave few details about how such a huge increase from current figures will be achieved.



**The landlocked southern African country boasts vast gold reserves. — AFP**

### Not all that glitters

And experts warn that the ambitious plans face big hurdles. One is that miners, particularly small-scale miners, are not happy with the system which requires them to sell their gold to the state-owned buyer, Fidelity Printers and Refiners. Under regulations set by its owner, Zimbabwe's central bank, a maximum of 55 percent is paid to small-scale miners in foreign currency, with the remaining 45 percent in Zimbabwean dollars, which is notorious for its weakness.

"The money is not coming in (to) the formal system," economist Persistence Gwanyanya told AFP. The government has promised new regulations to stem gold leaving the country illegally. Even so, policy inconsistencies and delayed payments for bullion deliveries are frustrating the few international mining companies operating in the country. Large-scale gold producers are subjected to a more generous 70 percent foreign currency threshold for their sale proceeds. — AFP

## Foreigners join China livestream sales army

**BEIJING:** Late at night, Lalo Lopez heads to a small Shanghai studio for a livestream, punting Chinese products from cycling shorts to vacuum cleaners to Spanish speakers around the world.

The 33-year-old Spaniard, who describes himself as an artist, DJ and YouTuber, is in the vanguard of the growing ranks of foreigners hired by mainland agencies to extend China's livestream sales mania beyond its borders. By some estimates, livestream shopping is a near \$70 billion industry inside China, attracting influencers who scour markets and malls for items to peddle to live audiences via social media. Once an obscure form of shopping, livestreaming is predicted to change the habits of global consumers, whose footfall has already headed from the high street to online marketplaces.

Buoyed by the success of livestreams at home, Chinese companies crave bridgeheads for their goods overseas. Enter hosts such as Lopez, who has lived in China for around nine years and was approached by Beijing-based marketing firm Linkone Interactive after it saw videos he posted on YouTube and Instagram. "When I speak, I look at the product through my culture, through my experience," said Lopez, whose streams can attract up to 15,000 viewers.

The medium allows him to answer viewers' questions on everything from clothing and household appliances to gadgets in real-time, while entertaining them with trivia and flamboyant sales patter. In one livestream, Lopez appears wearing a pink bathrobe over his regular clothing as he demonstrates using a handheld vacuum cleaner, at one point testing it on his hair. "It's easier (for me) because of the cultural background we share," said Lopez, who earns up to 1,500 yuan (\$226) per session, referring to his foreign customers. — AFP

## Business

Earnings Webcast A3-2020

# Al-Roshood: Financial results of KFH confirm successful strategy

**KUWAIT:** Acting Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) at KFH AbdulWahab Al-Roshood, said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported a 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.

He added during Earnings Webcast Q3-2020, that earnings per share until end of Q3-2020 reached 13.31 fils; a decrease of 47.1 percent compared to the same period last year. Net financing income until end of Q3-2020 reached KD 450.5 million; an increase of 13.9 percent compared to the same period last year. Cost to income ratio dropped to reach 35.5 percent as of Q3-2020, compared to 36.1 percent for the same period last year. Total assets rose to reach KD 21.0 billion, i.e. an increase of KD 1.6 billion or 8.1 percent compared to end of last year 2019.

Financing portfolio until end of Q3-2020 reached KD 10.1 billion, i.e. an increase of KD 794 million or 8.5 percent compared to end of last year 2019. Investment in Sukuk until end of Q3-2020 reached KD 3.2 billion; an increase of KD 928 million i.e., a growth of 40.5 percent compared to end of last year 2019.

Depositors' accounts reached KD 14.9 billion i.e., an increase of KD 1.4 billion or 10.0 percent compared to the end of last year. Al-Roshood explained that the capital adequacy ratio reached 16.25 percent which is above the minimum required limit. He said "Despite of the negative economic trends, the bank's recent financial results confirm the successful strategy of KFH Group, its solid financial position, and its ability to handle these exceptional market conditions. This has been achieved with the support of a conservative policy and the efficiency of KFH's prudent approach to risk management."

Al-Roshood indicated that profit rates fell in the first nine months of 2020 because of the challenging operating environment as a result of the pandemic, and the additional precautionary provisions taken by KFH to maintain the quality of financings and build solid buffers against crises.

With regards to the Acquisition, he said: "we have disclosed to the regulatory authorities and the market the latest developments in this regard. All these disclosures were published via the official website of Boursa Kuwait and any new development will be updated as and when it comes available."

**Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem- Group Chief Strategy Officer (GCSO)**

Group Chief Strategy Officer (GCSO) at KFH, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, highlighted the Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH. He also shared KFH's strategy, as well as Q3-2020 results.

Al-Mukhaizeem said that during the third quarter, Kuwait witnessed a sad event with the passing of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah have mercy on his soul. It was a great loss to the Kuwaiti people as well as the international and regional community. Kuwait witnessed a smooth transition of authority, with the ascension of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the Amir of Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the new Crown Prince, which brought the markets back to their recovery.

For interest rates, Al-Mukhaizeem explained that the Central Bank of Kuwait kept interest rate at 1.5 percent after the last cut of 100 basis points on the 16th of March 2020. He added "On the other hand, according to the IMF latest forecasts, GDP growth is expected to witness a decrease in 2020 compared to a slight growth in 2019."

Al-Mukhaizeem confirmed that "KFH" enjoys a high creditworthiness, indicating Fitch Ratings Affirmed Kuwait Finance House Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A+' with a Stable Outlook, and Moody's assigned A2 long-term deposit rating with a Stable Outlook. In addition, KFH Group has recently been named the number one safest Islamic Bank in the GCC by Global Finance Magazine.

He indicated that "KFH" has made a marked progress in the digital transformation strategy, adopting the state-of-the-art technological financial services "FinTech" and applying AI and robotic technology in banking transactions. This is a continuous process with long term benefits and efficiencies.

Further, he said that "KFH" continues to offer many advanced digital services on the mobile app, KFHonline, Web, XTMs and through various alternative channels including KFH Go "smart branches" in several areas of Kuwait. This helps enhance the customer's digital experience as a leader in the digital development of the banking



AbdulWahab Al-Roshood

Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

Shadi Zahran

• Al-Mukhaizeem: Adopting state-of-the-art FinTech services and applying robotic technology in banking transactions

• Zahran: KFH-Kuwait C/I ratio is below both local Islamic and conventional banks average



industry.

He emphasized that KFH continues supporting the national economy, financing mega-projects (such as Oil and Gas) and contributing to the development plans and projects in Kuwait and the region.

**Shadi Zahran, Group Chief Financial Officer (GCFO)**

Group Chief Financial Officer (GCFO)- Shadi Zahran, highlighted the financial performance of Q3-2020. He explained that the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax (NPAT) attributable to Shareholders for the period ended 30th September 2020 of KD 101.2 million lower by KD 89.3 million or 46.9 percent compared to 9M-19 of KD 190.5 million. The lower profits is mainly due to higher provisions including precautionary provisions on potential COVID 19 consequences considering the uncertainty from current unprecedented regional and global situation. We will explain later in this presentation on provisions.

Zahran added that the net financing income (NFI) has increased by KD 54.9 million or 13.9 percent compared to last year mainly on account

of lower COF improved significantly in Kuwait and Turkey. The decrease in COF is mainly due to decrease in benchmark rates across the globe, lower distributable profits impacting distribution to depositors. In addition to the improvement in CASA deposits at Kuwait and group level.

He indicated that the net operating income at KD 401.8 million increased by almost KD 9 million or 2.2 percent compared to same period last year; the increase is mainly from Net Financing Income by KD 54.9 million and Net gain from FX by KD 23.6 million offset by the decrease in Investment income by KD (57.6) million and fees and commissions by KD 9.8 million as a result of lower business and investment activities due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Zahran said that the decrease in investment income by KD 57.6 million is mainly attributable to prior year gains, which led to decrease in investment income to total operating income to reach 6 percent compared to 16 percent last year. However, the other non-yielding income contribution remained at 20 - 22 percent.

As a result the non-financing income dropped from KD 219.6 million last year to KD 172.3 mil-

lion lower by) 21.5 percent (Total Operating Expenses at KD 221.0 million has decreased by KD 1.2 million or 0.5 percent compared to same period prior year.

Worth to mention the continuous efforts at all Group entities for containment of costs towards cost optimization and rationalization. He said that cost to income ratio improved by a further 63bps to reach 35.48 percent due to increase in operating income, while maintaining the group operating expenses at the same level. He added that at KFH-Kuwait, C/I ratio at 33.95 percent which is below both the local Islamic Banks average of 49.3 percent and local conventional Banks average of 40.5 percent (calculated from published financials for H1-20).

Zahran illustrated that Average Yielding Assets is up by 8.3 percent compared to Dec-19 and 9.0 percent compared to 9M-19, resulted from the growth in both Financing receivables and Sukuk. (avg. YoY financing receivables is up by KD 0.5 billion and avg. Sukuk is up by KD 0.9 billion)

Group NFM at 3.22 percent shows 8bps increase over 9M-19 average of 3.14 percent.

Average Yield decreased by (89)bps due to drop in DR by CBK and Fed rates. However, average COF decline by 97bps due to increase in CASA deposits in the major entities and drop in distributable profits, with regards to provisions, he explained that the group total provisions and impairment charge increased by KD 100.9 million or 69.6 percent to reach KD 245.9 million.

Higher financing receivables and investments provisions are mainly on account of conservative provisions on potential consequences of COVID-19. Net Operating Income (before provisions) from banking activities improved by 6 percent to form 98 percent of Group Net Operating income.

Total Assets at KD 20.96 billion increased by KD 1.6 billion or 8.1 percent over 9 months period, (10.3 percent compared to Sept 19).

Financing receivables at KD 10.1 billion increased by 8.5 percent over 9 months period (8.3 percent compared to Sept 19).

Zahran said that significant portion of the corporate banking business growth in financing receivables was during the first quarter "pre-COVID-19" and contributed mainly from Kuwait and Turkey while third quarter witnessed more growth in Retail banking business. Growth in financing receivables was mainly contributed from Kuwait, Turkey, then Bahrain, while other demonstrated slower growth with focus on asset quality.

Investments in Sukuk at KD 3.2 billion increased by KD 0.9 billion or 40.5 percent since Dec-19 (48.4 percent compared to Sept 19) with major growth contribution from Kuwait Turk Participation Bank in Sovereign Sukuk. The growth in Sukuk portfolio is a response of growth in deposits in all markets in which we operate where limited good asset quality financing opportunities are available within the Group's overall Risk appetite.

The group achieved significant growth in deposits in 9M-20 of KD 1.4 billion or 10.0 percent (12.6 percent compared to Sep 19) with contribution from all banking operations reflecting depositors' confidence in KFH group. He added "Additionally, the favorable deposits mix continues to show very healthy contribution from CASA deposits which now represents 52.4 percent of total group deposits as at the end of September 2020 compared to 44.3 percent at the end of 2019."

It is also worth to mention that KFH Kuwait dominates the saving accounts with market share of 40.4 percent (as per CBK latest published reports, August-20).

Customer deposits as a percentage of total deposits at 82.2 percent continues to improve reflecting healthy funding mix and shows robust liquidity. In the last slide looking at the key performance ratios, the group compared to last year same period is as follow:

- ROAE from 13.41 percent to 6.94 percent.
- ROAA from 1.47 percent to 0.87 percent.
- C/I improved from 36.11 percent to 35.48 percent, and,
- EPS from 25.15 fils to 13.31 fils.

NPL ratio increased to reach 2.35 percent (as per CBK calculation) in Sept-20 compared to 1.88 percent for 2019. Coverage ratio (provision) for Group is 209.7 percent in Sept-20 compared to 231.5 percent for 2019. Coverage ratio considering the secured amounts (provision + collateral) for Group is 261.6 percent in Sept-20 compared to 284.5 percent for 2019.

## Ukraine's small businesses fear new lockdown

**SLOVYANSK, Ukraine:** Impoverished and conflict-ridden Slovyansk in eastern Ukraine already was a tough market for Maryna Novikova's ceramics workshop to thrive in. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit. A months-long lockdown in the spring pushed her small business to the brink of collapse-just as it was finally getting off the ground-forcing her to cut staff

and slash salaries as sales plummeted.

"It was difficult both morally and in practical terms," the 59-year-old said, standing in a room heated by a pottery kiln. Now, ex-Soviet Ukraine-one of Europe's poorest countries with an ageing public health system-is suffering a surge in infections that small-business owners such as Novikova fear will bring about new restrictions and serve a final blow to their livelihoods.

If a new quarantine is imposed, Novikova says she will "close everything and not continue," noting that she is already offering massage services after work to make ends meet.

With a shortage of hospital beds and medical staff, Ukraine's health minister Maksym Stepanov warned

this week that the country had "passed the point of no return". Health officials have already registered more than 440,000 cases and 8,000 fatalities in the country of 40 million, but Stepanov warned that "the worst was yet to come."

Despite seeing record new virus infections on a nearly daily basis, Ukraine has yet to join European countries like France and Germany and follow through on promises to introduce a new lockdown. That has offered some relief to 59-year-old Novikova, who was only able to start her business in 2018 with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) grant money.

Her company in a two-storey building in the outskirts of Slovyansk, now with only five staff, produces

decorative handmade vases and figurines that go on sale locally as well as in Italy and Romania. After two years, she made her first profit of 2,000 hryvnias (\$70) in February, a meager monthly sum that was decimated as the lockdown set in.

These struggles are familiar to businesses throughout the country hit by the pandemic, which the UNDP said in September was "pushing the country towards its worst recession in decades - possibly a depression, with terrible consequences for the most vulnerable." Its report said that 84 percent of households have lost income, 43 percent have at least one family member who has been made redundant and more than 8 percent of small and medium-sized enterprises are on the brink of bankruptcy. — AFP

# Classifieds

Monday, November 9, 2020

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
 e-mail: [info@kuwaittimes.net](mailto:info@kuwaittimes.net)



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

## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy to cloudy and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to southerly wind with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy to cloudy and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered light

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 08/11/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	32 °C	26 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	24 °C			
ABDALY	34 °C	24 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	34 °C	24 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	30 °C	27 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWASIB	33 °C	21 °C			
WAFRA	33 °C	22 °C			
SALMY	35 °C	21 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/09	Partly cloudy to cloudy and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for scattered	32 °C	20 °C	SE	12 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	11/10	Partly cloudy to cloudy and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rain that	31 °C	18 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	11/11	Cloudy and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rain that might be thundery at	28 °C	20 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 40 km/h
Thursday	11/12	Cloudy and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rain that might be thundery at	28 °C	19 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:45
Sunrise	06:07
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:36
Sunset	16:57
Isha	18:16

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	33 °C
MIN. Temp.	20 °C
MAX. RH	85 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	S 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## LOST

**I, Kurian T. Mathew, S/o Tharian Mathew, Kottenkulathu House, Punnackadu P.O., Kozhencherry, Pathanamthitta Dist., PIN 689 652, hereby bring to the notice of the public that my 1st & 2nd, 3rd to 7th semester mark lists with the following Reg. Nos. of Calicut University have been irrecoverably lost while I was travelling by car from Salmiya to Farwaniya and so I am applying to Calicut University for issue of the aforesaid duplicate mark lists.**

Semester I & II	Semester III
1) 3034 - Sept. 1984	1) 2036 - June 1985
2) 3121 - May 1985	2) 3158 - Dec. 1985
3) 485 - March 1985	
Semester IV	Semester V
1) 5023 - Oct. 1985	1) 4155 - Nov. 1986
2) 3163 - Oct. 1986 (Imp.)	2) 923 - Apr. 1986
Semester VI	Semester VII
1) 6973 - Nov. 1986	1) 1642 - May 1987
2) 467 - July 1987 (Imp.)	

If anybody has objection to this, please intimate the same to the undersigned as well as the University.  
**KURIAN T. MATHEW (Sd/-) (C5810)**

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Javid Khan, Passport No. N5299475 have changed my name from Sadam Hussain to Javid Khan, hereafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name Javid Khan. (C5810)**

**I, Shaik Ghouse Mohiddin s/o Shaik M. Mohammed, holder of Indian passport no. U0467072 issued on 12/03/2020 hereby change my name to M. Mohammed Ghouse. (C5762) 9-11-2020**

**Airlines**

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555

## Word Search

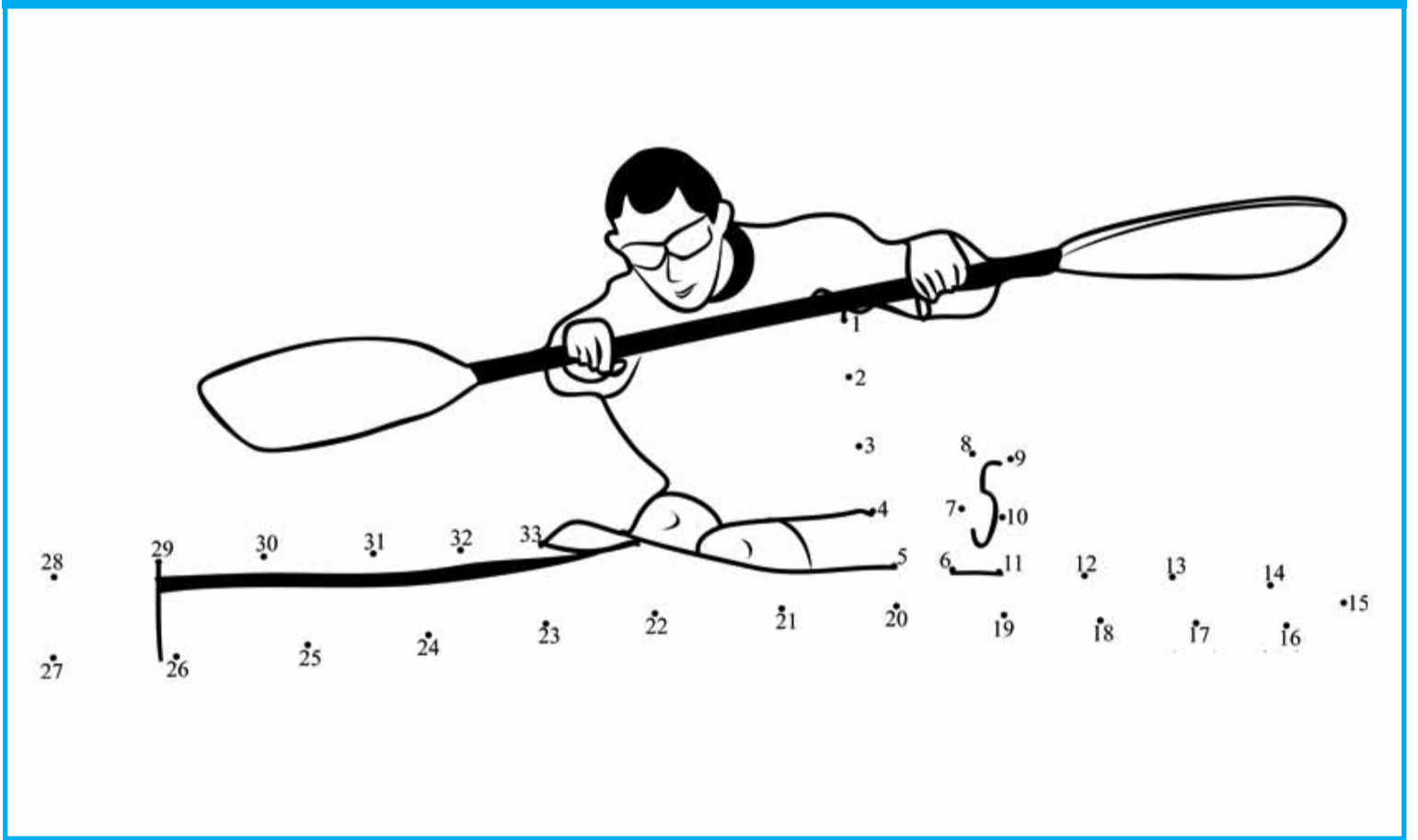
### GONE with the WIND



Ashley	Margaret	Scarlett
Atlanta	Marriage	Slaves
Belle	Mitchel	South
Bonnie Blue	Ohara	Tara
Butler	Olivia de Havilland	Union
Civil War	Plantation	Vivien Leigh
Clark Gable	Prissy	Wilkes
Cotton	Reconstruction	
Georgia	Rhett	
Leslie Howard	Romance	
Mammy	Scalawag	



## Join the Dots



## STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**  
 Obviously, you have an important role to play, Aries. The mood today may be somewhat frustrating, but the way you handle it will earn you rewards and recognition in your workplace or at school. Your strength, self-control, and stability made the difference between success and failure. You can and should be proud of yourself.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**  
 You're wasting your energy, Cancer, and you know it. You try your best to go about your everyday routine, but you're never really present. You listen to people but what they're saying doesn't interest you in any fundamental way. Yes, you're bored, and you're afraid to admit it to yourself. The depth of your inner search requires that you use a lot of energy to reexamine your life.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**  
 You may be worn out, Libra, but you will have to push forward anyway. You're entering a long period of work and perseverance. This definitely isn't the moment to be late or balk. If you're still in your pajamas at noon, you should be ashamed! Do what you can to wake yourself from your recent daze. It's time to get up and get moving!

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**  
 Do you feel as though your self-expression is being stifled, Capricorn? Perhaps you need more time to choose a direction in life. Today, you can expect to feel a lot of pressure from someone close to you. You will feel forced to satisfy this person's demands. Annoying as this may be, you can take comfort in the knowledge that he or she has your best interests at heart.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
 You will feel as though your back is against the wall, Taurus. And this particular wall is impeding your progress. Others will ask you questions and ask for your opinion. You may want to tell them the "truth" as you understand it, and you could be tempted to do so humorously. Humor isn't your forte right now. You can always try, but for now a sensible approach is the best one.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**  
 It isn't always easy to think about how your life is going, Leo. Imagine if you were alone in the world, with nothing to hold you back or force you to do anything. At least once a month dedicate an hour to visualizing what your life would be like under these conditions. This will help you figure out what's impeding you today.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**  
 In a series of days that have tested your patience to the limit, here comes the moment of truth that could make or break you. You can expect a high-pressure day when you will be induced to express your deepest motivations. A confrontation with an authority figure could trigger an outburst. Do your best to remain levelheaded, Scorpio.

**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**  
 Is there someone persecuting you, Aquarius? Is there a situation that feels unbearably oppressive? Today you won't have any trouble identifying the source of your problems. And the great news is that is the first step toward obtaining release from them. But you can't expect it to be easy. The day ahead may feel somewhat overwhelming.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**  
 Today is likely to be a bit gray, Gemini. You won't be able to see how you can get out of your current situation. You may have some financial or physical problems at the moment. If this is the case, it's because you don't rely enough on your abilities and good sense to pull you through. It's possible that you don't take care of your body as well as you should. That's easily remedied.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**  
 Now is the time to be thinking about your professional orientation, Virgo. You may need to get some more fun in your life and experience pleasures that you've never had before. You have a certain tendency to separate the two worlds of work and play, but there's no need. In fact, your work will prosper once you discover ways to make it more playful.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**  
 Are you hankering for a little fun and longing for a little experimentation and perhaps even childish play? Tempting as these prospects are, you will have to ignore them. Sagittarius, you simply don't have the time, at least not today. You will be too busy coping with numerous little emergencies that crop up and having to justify your decisions throughout the day.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**  
 Although your current mood is somewhat reserved and modest, you probably feel tempted to strut your stuff every once in a while. However, if you try to show off today, Pisces, you may not be very pleased with your reception. It's natural for you to want to impress people, but you must try to do it with genuine qualities and simplicity. That's true good taste!

# Gritty Lebanese film challenges marital rape impunity in Arab world

In a short film set in Lebanon, where marital rape is not a crime, filmmaker Farah Shaer tackles one of Arab society's biggest taboos and highlights the difficulties women face when reporting domestic and sexual violence. "Shakwa" (meaning Complaint), which debuted at Egypt's Gouna Film Festival on Oct 25, tells the story of Hoda, a young woman who tries to file a rape accusation against her abusive husband - only to be told he has not broken the law. Shaer, whose last film "Soukoon" (2019) addressed abortion within marriage, said her fictional protagonist's struggles were based on the real experiences of women in her homeland.

"There are so many stories behind closed doors in Lebanon related to women and their control over their bodies and one of them is marital rape," Shaer said. "Who controls a woman's body in the Arab world? It's her parents, her family, her husband, her society, her whole country, and the religious figures," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Set in a police station where Hoda's credibility is repeatedly challenged, the film focuses on her growing desperation as she seeks safety before her husband finds out where she is. Lebanon passed legislation in 2014 establishing protections for domestic violence victims for the first time, but women's rights advocates expressed outrage that the law stopped short of



Lebanese filmmaker Farah Shaer

specifically criminalizing marital rape.

An initial draft included a provision outlawing rape within marriage, but it was removed from the version passed by parliament following pressure from religious authorities. Shaer's stark film depicts a web of legislative and bureaucratic obstacles that discriminate against women, embodied in the character of the callous police officer who takes Hoda's statement. "He represents the whole patriarchy," she said. "That's why you see (Hoda) surrounded by men and you barely see their faces but you hear their voices and



A scene from the movie "Shakwa" done by Lebanese filmmaker Farah Shaer.

you see their attitude." She said criticism of her film on social media reflected the persistent belief that it is a husband's right to have sex with his wife with or without her consent.

## 'Their rights are stolen'

In almost all Arab countries, laws either do not contemplate marital rape or explicitly exclude it as a criminal offence, with the exception of Tunisia which outlawed spousal rape in 2017. In Lebanon, the law

criminalizes a spouse's use of threats or violence to claim a "marital right to intercourse" but does not outlaw the rape itself.

While the 2014 law marked important progress in the nation, gender-based violence remains common with about one in two people saying they personally know a domestic abuse victim, according to a 2017 report by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Shaer said reporting abuse can be a complicated and costly process that requires medical proof, something particularly difficult for less-educated or poorer women to access. "Their rights are stolen inside their homes, in their own state. How can they afford to pay for their medical exams?" "Shakwa" won praise following its screening at the Egyptian film festival last month, including from male audience members, several of whom expressed sympathy with Hoda's plight.

But Shaer cautioned that the views of a "progressive" minority did not necessarily reflect those of decision-makers and the wider public in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Arab world. In the meantime, she said she would keep working to challenge patriarchal attitudes through her films. "Cinema is my only tool... for cultural resistance," she said. "Through these films and through shedding light on these stories, (my aim) is one day that those in power will listen to us." —AFP

# Gambian survivors to speak out in film about rape under ex-president Jammeh

A former beauty queen who testified she was raped by Gambia's ex-president Yahya Jammeh is making a documentary to tell the stories of other women sexually abused under the former regime. Fatou Jallow, known as Toufah, said the film will feature up to ten women, most of whom testified alongside her at Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), often being shamed and rejected as liars after speaking out publicly. The 24-year-old captured the tiny West African nation's attention last year when she told a live-broadcast hearing that she was locked in a room and violently assaulted by Jammeh, whose 22-year-rule ended when he fled into exile in 2017.

Other women said they were raped by security officers and by the former interior minister in public statements to the TRRC, which was set up by current President Adama Barrow to address human rights violations under the previous regime. The Thomson Reuters Foundation was unable to verify Jallow's account or that of the other women. TRRC hearings on different types of crimes are ongoing. "It's the perfect time to come back and on our own terms," said Jallow in an interview in Senegal's capital Dakar before travelling to Gambia this week to start filming. "The idea is to present victims in their everyday lives ... what are they interested in, what do they bring to their communities, and for women that testified at the TRRC, what was it like coming back into those communities?" she said.

Jallow was granted asylum in Canada in 2015 after fleeing home and now lives there full-time, while other women returned to their families and villages after testifying about abuse. "I'm curious to know what that dynamic was like when they came back home," she said.

Rape is taboo in Gambia, and some have described Jallow's testimony as a breakthrough similar to the women who accused US producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault, sparking the #MeToo movement of women speaking out against sexual abuse. The documentary is being produced with a 60,000 Canadian dollar (\$45,000) grant from the Canadian government. "We are hopeful that this will serve as a catalyst not only for truth and dialogue but also to sort of destigmatise and break the taboos around sexual and gender-based violence," said the Canadian Ambassador for Gambia Sebastien Beaulieu.

Jallow said she wants to challenge the idea many Gambians have of what a rape victim looks like. "There is some kind of shattered state you have to be in to garner sympathy for your story to even be considered," she said. "I think that is unfair to a lot of survivors." As for those who still doubt her story, she said she has made peace with the fact that they may never believe her. "I am done trying to bring them along with me in that journey. I just want to focus on survivors and represent them in the best way that I can, and use my platform to create platforms for them," she said. —Reuters



A combination picture shows Fatou Jallow, known as Toufah (right) and Gambia's ex-president Yahya Jammeh (left).



## Britain's most fashionable man? Vogue hails Prince Charles

His daughters-in-law Kate and Meghan are regularly lauded for their fashion sense, but 71-year-old Prince Charles, well-known for patching-up and mending his clothes, has probably been considered a less likely British style icon - until now. "I've always admired the way you dress," Edward Enninful, editor-in-chief of British Vogue, told Charles in an interview for the fashion magazine's latest edition. The praise for his timeless dress sense seemed to take the heir-to-the throne, who usually favors double-breasted suits accompanied with a tie and matching handkerchief, by surprise.

"I thought I was like a stopped clock ... people come round after 25 years to dressing like I do," he said with a laugh. "I'm very glad you think it has style. I mind about detail and color and things like that." The male members of Britain's royal family have usually taken a back seat to the females when it comes to fashion coverage. Kate, wife of Charles's elder son Prince William, has previously featured on the cover of Vogue while Meghan, wife of William's younger brother Harry, has guest-edited the magazine. Charles, who has long campaigned on environmental issues, was interviewed



for Vogue about his commitment to sustainable fashion, something he said he had always taken to heart.

"I'm one of those people who hate throwing anything away. Hence, I'd rather have them maintained, even patched if necessary, than to abandon them," he said, calling on manufacturers and consumers to be less wasteful. He added: "But it seems to me there are huge opportunities, particularly now, within the whole sustainable fashion sector, to counter this extraordinary trend of throwaway clothing - or throwaway everything, frankly." —AFP

# Bedouins go back to their roots in Egypt as COVID-19 hits tourism

For years, Um Saad has been urging fellow Bedouins to tend their orchards and vegetable patches in the mountains of Egypt's South Sinai. It took a pandemic for them to listen to her. Tourism, her community's main source of income, has been wobbly for years - rattled by militant attacks and political unrest. But COVID-19 has decimated the sector, encouraging many Bedouins to go back to the livelihoods of their ancestors. "This is one good thing about the coronavirus," said Um Saad, 75, sitting outside the house where she has lived for decades near the town of Saint Catherine, occasionally hosting foreign visitors hiking in the mountainous region. "For me, agriculture and tourism have always been in parallel. But agriculture is the major source of sustaining life here," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Since the pandemic brought tourism to a virtual standstill in March, hundreds of Bedouins have returned to their plots in the mountains of Saint Catherine, which have often served as a haven in times of political upheaval and war. "We experienced that also during the January 25 Revolution in 2011 and the Iraqi-Kuwaiti war in 1992," said Ahmed Farhan, a Bedouin in his late 30s, who arrived back in the region in May after losing his job as a tour guide. The revolution that toppled late President Hosni Mubarak nine years ago, and the 2015 bombing of a Russian passenger jet, dealt sharp blows to Egyptian tourism from which it had only just recovered when the coronavirus outbreak hit.

Gathering crops from the newly replanted garden tended by his father before him, Farhan said he produces enough to feed himself and sell the surplus. He no longer wants to return to his former work taking tourists to Mount Sinai. "This life is the best. I'm eating healthy food, drinking clean water from the wells here and also making money out of the crops that I grow. What more could I need?" said Farhan, who grows grapes, honey, almonds and vegetables.

## Survival strategy

Tourism accounts for up to 15% of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP) and officials have said the country was losing about \$1 billion each month since COVID-19 shut borders and airports. One of Egypt's biggest tourism draws, alongside historic sites such as



Egyptian Bedouin Sheikh Ahmed checks his crops in his garden in Al-Zawateen valley in Saint Catherine. —Reuters photos

Luxor and the Pyramids of Giza, are the sandy beaches of the South Sinai - home to the Sharm Al-Sheikh resort. But visitor numbers in the city have been just 10% of last year's levels in recent months, officials said in September, and thousands of staff have been laid off due to lockdown closures and subsequent social distancing measures.

The bustle of Sharm Al-Sheikh and other coastal resorts is a sharp contrast to life in and around Saint Catherine, which lies 1,600 meters (5,200 feet) above sea-level. In the highlands around the town, Bedouin tribes have a long history of small-scale farming and goat herding before a boom in package tourism in the 1980s led many to abandon their ancestral land and farming traditions.

Different Bedouin tribes live across the Sinai, with traditional livelihoods tied to the region's diverse climate and landscape, whether raising camels in the desert to fishing along the coast. They are known for being expert at adapting to the region's harsh conditions and other challenges, said Ben Hoffer, co-founder of the Sinai Trail, a hiking tourism project. "The Bedouin economy is a diverse one. It's part of their economic survival strategy. If one sector of the economy goes down they revive other sectors until things improve," he said. "This is exactly what the Bedouin are doing now."

## Sustainable

Before the 2011 revolution scared visitors away,



A photo of Sheikh Ahmed's garden in the mountains of Saint Catherine.

tourism revenues were at record highs in Egypt, bringing in \$13 billion per year. The industry had started to rebound in the last two years. Many Bedouins will likely return to tourism when the pandemic passes, Hoffer said. But at the same time, the crisis has reminded many younger Bedouins of the need to keep their options open. "The capacity to live from the land is something that sets the Bedouin apart and its economic advantages - and the extra safety it gives - is more clear than ever in a pandemic," he added. South Sinai's governorate launched a series of agricultural projects in August in Saint Catherine to support Bedouin communities, including plans to build greenhouses, training

programs and the distribution of olive seedlings.

In Cairo, the national government has earmarked billions of dollars for developmental projects in the Sinai to expand agricultural lands and make better use of water. But Sheikh Saad, 52, who has come back to his orchard after working for 30 years as a tour guide in Mount Sinai, said many Bedouins would not need much persuasion to continue looking after their fruit trees and vegetable gardens. "More and more Bedouins will start to look for resources in the mountains," he said. "They have realized that taking care of these resources is sustainable unlike tourism which can dwindle at any time." —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

# Festive Filipinos trying to save Christmas from coronavirus



This photo shows shoppers watching the lighting ceremony of a 60-foot (18.29 meter) tall Christmas tree at the Mall of Asia in Manila.



This photo shows lanterns and lit ornaments for sale during the festive season at a shop in San Fernando town in Pampanga province.



This photo shows a worker standing beside lanterns and lit ornaments, including several shaped in the likeness of the Eiffel Tower, for sale during the festive season at a shop in San Fernando town in Pampanga province.



This photo shows customers walking away with newly-purchased lanterns for the festive season in San Fernando town in Pampanga province.



This photo shows a woman wearing a mask to protect herself from the COVID-19, stands next to giant lanterns for sale for the festive season at a roadside shop in Manila.



This photo shows a worker making lanterns to be sold for the festive season at a shop in San Fernando town in Pampanga province.

The Philippines boasts one of the world's longest Christmas seasons, kicking off in September with fairy lights and artificial trees decorating malls, festive tunes on the radio and party-packed calendars. But the coronavirus pandemic looks set to be the grinch that spoils the four-month-long celebration this year. Gatherings are banned, night-time curfews are in force, church attendance is limited, and many are broke after measures to contain the virus devastated the economy and left millions jobless. Philippine crooner Jose Mari Chan, whose song "Christmas In Our Hearts" heralds the start of the festivities when it hits the airwaves on September 1, summed it up: "Sadness surrounds us."

Family get-togethers, karaoke parties and lavish spending on gifts, which usually mark the countdown to Christmas, have been upended. But despite the bleak conditions, fiesta-loving Filipinos say they are determined to stop the virus from stealing all their Christmas cheer. "With or without Covid we have to celebrate Christmas whatever it takes, this is a Filipino tradition," said Cecilia Moore, wearing a mandatory mask as she paid 2,500 pesos (\$52) for festive lights to decorate her home. Her husband temporarily lost his job on an oil tanker when the country went into lockdown in March, hurting the family's finances. But Moore said she needed something colorful to dispel the gloom hanging over her family. "Even though times are hard, we

still buy lanterns to make us happy," the 32-year-old said. It is not clear why Filipinos start celebrating Christmas in September—months before most other countries—but sociologist Yellowbelle Duaqui said it could be cultural: they love to party. "Filipino hospitality is known to be the best in the world... we love to entertain," she said. Jeffrey Lopez, who makes festive lights in San Fernando near Manila, said he has been flat out since reopening in August after a two-month shutdown. Sales reach 40,000 pesos a day and more than twice that on weekends—similar to pre-pandemic levels. "It feels as though Covid has not hit us," Lopez told AFP at his workshop, where colorful lights in the shape of reindeer, Santa Claus and his sleigh, and even the Eiffel Tower are lined up outside. "Nothing, not even the pandemic, can stop the coming of Christmas."

#### 'Generosity and kindness'

But many retailers are suffering this season. Normally packed shopping malls—the center of community life—are quieter than usual as people stay home for fear of catching a virus that has infected nearly 400,000 in the country. Some shops are boarded up and many of those that are open offer steep discounts of 50-70 percent. "A lot of people lost a lot of money and it's not that easy to recover that," said Roehlano Briones, a senior research fellow at the state-run



This photo shows shoppers sitting with physical distancing near a 60-foot (18.29 meter) tall Christmas tree (background) at the Mall of Asia in Manila.

Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

Christmas festivities during the so-called "Ber months"—which refers to the September-December months ending in -ber—normally drive up consumer spending by about 12-18 percent in the fourth quarter compared with other quarters, Briones said. The trend will continue this year "but it will be subdued", he added. Many household budgets have also been drained by the loss of monthly remittances from rela-



This photo shows a shopper watching the lighting ceremony of a 60-foot (18.29 meter) tall Christmas tree at the Mall of Asia in Manila.

tives working abroad after they lost their jobs due to the global health crisis. The crooner Chan, describing himself as a "little drummer boy who heralds the advent of the Christmas season", said the pandemic served as a reminder to Filipinos of "what really matters". "There are a lot of our brothers who are out of work, who are hungry," he told AFP. "These Ber months should awaken in us that sense of generosity and kindness towards them." —AFP



## Star Wars toys discovered in bin bags net £400,000 for UK couple

A British couple have thanked their lucky stars after a garage full of bin bags they inherited from a dead neighbor yielded a trove of Star Wars toys worth £400,000 (\$525,000). The couple, from Stourbridge in central England, were initially unsure what to make of the jumble of dolls and spacecraft their neighbor had spent decades collecting. The Times newspaper reported Thursday. Their son called in an auctioneer, who found a treasure trove of Star Wars memorabilia including action figures still pristine in their sealed packaging.

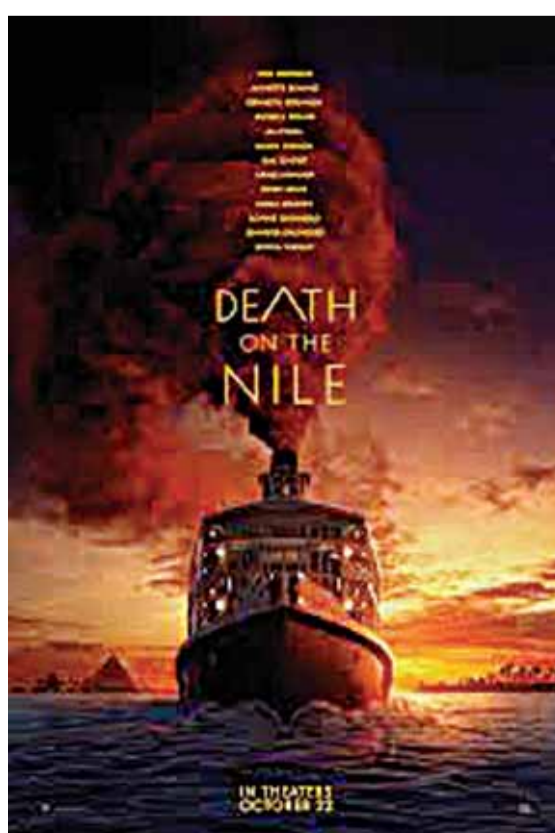
"A lot of them were a bit damp because of

how they've been stored but generally it's the best Star Wars collection I've ever seen," Chris Aston of Aston's Auctioneers, told The Times. "We had a huge amount of interest from all over the world and were always expecting the sale to do very well," Aston said of the auction. Going under the hammer was a Star Destroyer Commander, one of only two known examples still to be in its original packaging, which sold for £32,500 (\$42,000) including fees, the Times said. A Palitoy Jawa still in its packaging—and believed to be one of only 10 in existence—fetched £27,280 with fees. A set of eight figures from "Return of the Jedi" that cost only

£1.59 each when they were bought new in the 1980s, went for £1,400.

From Storm Trooper helmets to R2D2's eye, memorabilia from one of the world's biggest movie franchises can fetch eye-watering sums at auctions. In 2015, a Luke Skywalker doll, which hit the market in 1978 as a children's toy, sold for \$25,000 at an auction organized by Sotheby's and eBay. Aston said the Stourbridge couple would be "thrilled" with the unexpected windfall. "I don't know if they have any specific plans but it must feel like they've won the lottery," he said. —AFP

## Disney pulls 'Death on the Nile' movie off holiday calendar



Adventure movie "Death on the Nile" was taken off the holiday movie calendar on Thursday, further jeopardizing the chances for a revival this year of the industry. Walt Disney Co said the release of the mystery adventure, based on an Agatha Christie novel and with a star cast that includes Gal Gadot and Kenneth Branagh, had been delayed indefinitely. It had been due to open in North America and much of the world on Dec. 18 and was the latest film to be pushed back as the industry struggles to get back to business amid the coronavirus pandemic. "Wonder Woman 1984," from Warner Bros., is now the last potential Hollywood blockbuster still on the calendar for 2020, with a Dec. 25 release date.

The only remaining Disney-owned movie to be released this year is the independent Oscar hopeful "Nomadland," starring Frances McDormand as woman who loses everything in a recession. Hollywood studios have pushed a string of movies, including the new James Bond film "No Time To Die" and action movie "Black Widow," into 2021. Thursday's move comes after several European countries, including the U.K., Italy and France, reimposed tough lockdowns to combat a surge in coronavirus cases. Movie theaters in the biggest U.S. markets - New York City and Los Angeles - remain shut. Efforts to get Americans back into theaters after the pandemic shuttered cinemas worldwide in March have proved disappointing given the dearth of new films to attract audiences. —AFP



## Fortnite could soon return to Apple iPhones

The popular Fortnite videogame could be restored to Apple mobile devices through a gaming program that runs on a browser, allowing it to evade a ban by Apple amid a dispute over fees, the BBC reported. Apple pulled Fortnite from its App Store on August 13 after Fortnite developer Epic Games released an update that dodges revenue sharing with the iPhone maker, and the companies are now locked in a legal battle. Now Silicon Valley tech firm Nvidia has developed a version of its GeForce Now cloud gaming service that runs on Apple's Safari browser, which could offer Fortnite to Apple users, the BBC said.

Nvidia could announce the Fortnite offering on the platform before the winter holidays, the report said, adding that it was possible the game could still be

excluded from Apple devices. Epic and Apple are fighting over whether Apple's tight control of the App Store, and its 30 percent cut of revenue, counts as monopolistic behavior. A trial to resolve the dispute is not expected until next year. Nvidia declined to confirm whether Fortnite would soon be available on Apple mobile devices. The game already is available on Apple laptops through Nvidia's system. "Nvidia is not commenting on any new clients coming to the service, or on the availability of any game on unannounced or unreleased platforms," a spokesperson said. "Fortnite is not confirmed for GeForce NOW on platforms beyond PC, Mac and Android." Epic Games also declined comment, while Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment. —AFP

## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Richard Murray is seen during training for a triathlon in Cape Town, South Africa. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## US sports stars celebrate Biden

LOS ANGELES: American sport stars celebrated Joe Biden's victory on Saturday, saying the election of the 46th president of the US has restored their faith in democracy after four tumultuous years under Donald Trump. Athletes such as LeBron James, Magic Johnson and Megan Rapinoe took to social media to share their feelings after the US media monitoring the electoral vote count in key states like Pennsylvania declared Biden the winner. "My Philly fam! FOE and more THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!! Let's celebrate! Respectably still," James posted on his Twitter page. Trump has sparred numerous times with US athletes over the past four years, especially James, who called on Black Americans to get out and vote.

Trump also criticized athletes for kneeling during the US anthem to protest racial injustice and police brutality. Philadelphia 76ers forward Joe Embiid used capital letters to express his faith in American democracy. "Well America TRUSTED THE PROCESS and it paid off," Embiid wrote on Twitter. Basketball hall of famer Magic Johnson, who has been part owner of a number of Los Angeles sports franchises including the Los Angeles Dodgers and Los Angeles Lakers, said he was celebrating for the third time in the past few weeks.

"Today I completed my trifecta: the Lakers, the Dodgers, and now #BidenHarris!! It's been a fantastic 30 days!" Johnson wrote. American Kyle Lowry, who plays in Canada for the NBA's Toronto Raptors, is glad his vote helped make a difference. —AFP

# Authentic wins Breeders' Cup Classic; European raiders dominate on turf

## Authentic grabs \$6 million Cup Classic

LOS ANGELES: Authentic won the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic as Bob Baffert capped a troubled 2020 with two victories at Keeneland, where European raiders won all four turf races on Saturday in sometimes sensational style. Baffert's Kentucky Derby winner Authentic was a wire-to-wire winner in the Classic under John Velazquez, cruising to his third Grade One victory over elder stablemate Improbable in the marquee event of the 14-race, \$30 million Breeders' Cup slate at the Keeneland track in Lexington, Kentucky. There were no fans in attendance, but the coronavirus pandemic didn't stop a determined contingent of more than two dozen runners from Europe, who came up big on Saturday after being shut out in Friday's five races.

Order of Australia, a 73-1 longshot who was in the \$2 million Mile only after One Master was scratched because of injury, led a sweep of the board for Irish trainer Aidan O'Brien under jockey Pierre-Charles Boudot — who was only aboard because Christophe Soumillon tested positive for Covid-19 this week. Boudot made the most of his chance, grabbing his second win of the day after piloting Audarya to victory in the Filly & Mare Turf — a mount he inherited after Ioritz Mendizabal was unable to make the trip from Europe because of a positive coronavirus test.

"It's just unbelievable," Boudot said. "It's a dream come true for me. It is my first win during the Breeders' Cup week with Audarya. I had an opportunity because Ioritz had a positive test of COVID and his trainer give me this fabulous mare and today

she makes her perfect job. "A chance again because One Master is non-runner and Christophe had a positive COVID test again and I pick up this ride." Order of Australia broke from the outside post and was running second entering the final straight, where he overtook Halladay and held off the late-charging Circus Maximus. Lope Y Fernandez finished third to complete the sweep for O'Brien.

O'Brien wasn't in attendance in Lexington, but his 13th Breeders' Cup win, and his first in the Mile, was a welcome reversal of fortune after his English Derby winner Anthony Van Dyck was euthanized on Tuesday after breaking down in the Melbourne Cup. That followed disappointment in October when O'Brien withdrew four runners from the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe after contaminated feed put them afoul of anti-doping regulations. Dermot Weld likewise wasn't on hand to see Tarnawa — with replacement rider Colin Keane aboard in place of Soumillon — win the \$4 million 1 1/2-mile Turf.

It was a first Breeders' Cup victory for Weld in his 17th attempt. "It doesn't get any bigger than this," said Weld's son, Mark. "I'm sad that my dad's not here, but this COVID situation is what it is." Glass Slippers had got the ball rolling for the European raiders with a victory in the Turf Sprint with Tom Eaves in the irons. It was a monster meeting for Kentucky trainer Brad Cox, who saddled Dirt Mile winner Knicks Go and Distaff winner Monomoy Girl to take his tally for the 2020 Breeders' Cup to four.

It was an especially sweet victory for Monomoy Girl, who won the 2018 Distaff as a three-year-old



LEXINGTON: Authentic with John Velazquez aboard runs to victory in the Breeders' Cup Classic during 2020 Breeders' Cup at Keeneland on November 07, 2020. —AFP

but was sidelined for more than a year after colic surgery. "I'm very proud of her. I thought she was better than ever coming into this, I really, really did and I think she proved that," Cox said. The 1 1/8-mile race for fillies and mares was billed as a show-

down between Monomoy Girl and rising star Swiss Skydiver, who this year became just the sixth filly to win the Preakness Stakes ahead of Authentic. But Swiss Skydiver stumbled out of the gate and was never a factor. — AFP

## New Shooting Sport season set to kick off

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Preparations for the new Shooting Sport Season (2020-2021) is in earnest at the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Annual Tournament will be held November 26-28 at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex - featuring the skeet, trap, 10 meter air pistol and rifle, 25 m pistol, 50 meter rifle and Olympic archery. Shooters from the club, National Guard, Military Sports Association and Police Sports Association will participate.

President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations lauded the major role HH the Crown Prince had in supporting the sport — particularly when he was the deputy chief of the



Engr Duajj Al-Otaibi

National Guard. He said HH the Crown Prince's interest in the sport is a strong motive to develop the sport further. He said the board of directors approved the tournaments' agenda for the new season with HH the Crown Prince Tournament as the opener. Al-Otaibi said the organizing committee will make all preparations to protect the participants against the coronavirus as instructed by health authorities. He said that all those involved in the tournament must produce a certificate from the health ministry indicating they are coronavirus free.

## Four-nation gymnastics hints at how pandemic Olympics might work

TOKYO: Japan provided a glimpse yesterday of what the delayed Tokyo Olympics may look like next summer as fans attended the country's first international sporting competition since the pandemic shutdown. The gymnastics "Friendship and Solidarity Competition" gathered around 30 athletes from Japan, China, Russia and the US to compete in tightly controlled bio-secure conditions. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Japanese government previously agreed to a one-year delay of the Tokyo Olympics to next summer because of the pandemic.

About 2,000 fans in face masks sanitized their hands regularly, checked their body temperature and remained socially distanced at the 8,700-capacity Yoyogi No.1 Gymnasium, while being encouraged not to shout to avoid spreading droplets. Athletes and journalists were subject to similarly strict hygiene measures and were also sprayed with a sanitizing mist. The spectators resorted to polite applause and occasional murmurs as gymnasts pulled off gravity-defying routines and feats of strength.

IOC President Thomas Bach said he hoped the event could demonstrate how Tokyo 2020 organizers could next year hold an Olympics that is safe for athletes, officials and fans. "With this competition, you are also setting an example that sports can be organized safely even under the ongoing health restrictions," Bach said in a video message at the opening ceremony. Some medical experts have voiced skepticism about whether the massive international gathering can be held safely in a pandemic, without a vaccine.

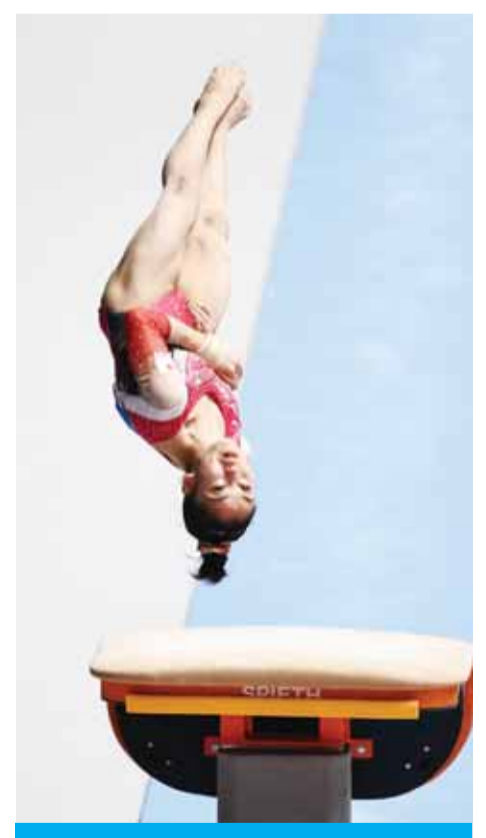
### 'It was extremely fun'

For the Tokyo gymnastics event, the athletes had gone through strict sanitation rules to shield themselves from the coronavirus with at least two weeks of isolation before flying to Japan. Once in Tokyo, they were immediately placed under strict bio-secure protocols, restricted to designated floors of their hotel, and could only leave to take assigned buses to practice and competition venues. After the competition, many athletes admitted that they could not perform at their highest level but they understood the restrictions were necessary.

Three-time Olympic gold medalist and local star Kohei Uchimura took part, after his positive coronavirus test turned out to be false. "You must have been able to see it on our faces. It was extremely fun," he told spectators at the closing ceremony. He made a passionate plea to his compatriots to look for ways to hold the Olympics, as opinion polls indicate most Japanese believe the global sporting event should either be delayed further or cancelled.

"It's not that we cannot hold it," he said. "I hope everyone will come to focus on what we can do so that we can hold it." Russia's world champion Nikita Nagornyy echoed his competitor's call and said: "For any athletes, next year's Olympics will be the most important competition of their lives." "Even if these (sanitation) conditions were to be imposed during the Olympics, we are ready to respect them," he said after the event.

Top Japanese government officials attended, including Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike, Olympic minister Seiko Hashimoto



TOKYO: Hitomi Hatakeda of Japan competes on the vault during the Friendship and Solidarity Competition gymnastics event in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

and sports minister Koichi Hagiuda. Yoshiro Mori, president of the Tokyo 2020 organizing committee, said Bach would visit Japan next week partly to review the gymnastics meet. "Unless this competition becomes a success, there was a view that it would be almost impossible to hold the Olympics next year," Mori said during the closing ceremony. Gymnastics and Tokyo 2020 officials were expected to meet within a week to discuss lessons learned from the competition. — AFP



## Sports

# Injury-ravaged PSG extend Ligue 1 lead, beat Rennes

## Di Maria brace in Rennes stroll keeps depleted PSG top

PARIS: Angel Di Maria scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain made short work of Rennes despite a raft of absences in a 3-0 win on Saturday that enables the champions to hold onto their lead at the top of Ligue 1. Di Maria struck in each half, with Moise Kean scoring the other, to move PSG up to 24 points, five ahead of second-placed Lille who took on Brest in yesterday's early fixture.

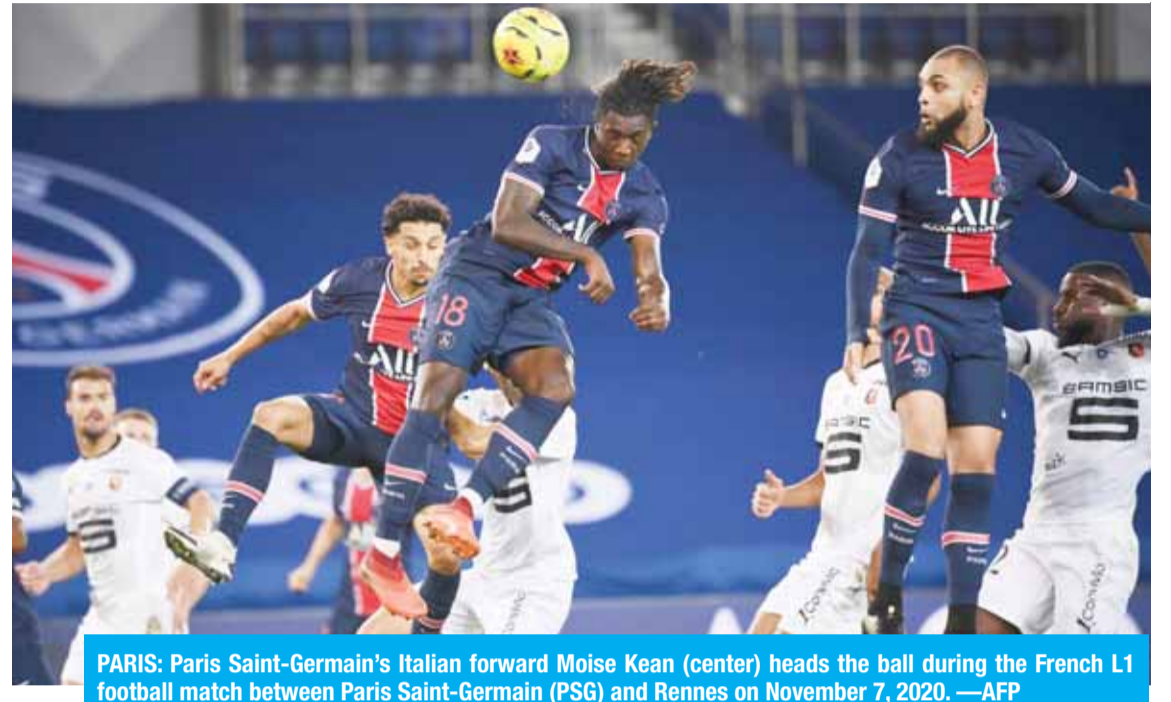
Rennes stay third on 18 points-but can be overtaken by Nice should they beat Monaco-while Montpellier are a further point back in sixth after their 2-0 win at Bordeaux. PSG's win was their eighth in a row in the French top flight and came as under-fire coach Thomas Tuchel battles with an injury crisis that has left him without the likes of Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Marco Verratti.

Striker Mauro Icardi was also out, Marquinhos was moved back into the defense following injury to centre-back Presnel Kimpembe, while Pablo Sarabia failed to overcome a muscle strain. "I'm very happy, very proud. It was difficult to work out a starting XI," said Tuchel. "We showed great mentality, collective effort and solidarity. It's a really good win." New arrival Kean put the hosts ahead after 10 minutes with his third Ligue 1 goal of the season when he collected Di Maria's pass following pres-

sure on the Rennes defence and lashed a low shot past Alfred Gomis.

Di Maria then added the second 10 minutes later when Ander Herrera picked him out with a fine through ball and he dinked his finish over Gomis. PSG suffered what looked to be more injury strife when Thilo Kehrer left the field 10 minutes before the end of the first half, before Kean then began limping on the hour mark before being substituted shortly afterwards. The result was never really in doubt however, and Di Maria made absolutely sure of the points in the 73rd minute when his low drive squirmed past the unfortunate Gomis.

A thumping win over Rennes is unlikely to improve Tuchel's precarious position at PSG though as last season's Champions League finalists struggle in this year's edition. The 47-year-old German, whose contract is up at the end of this campaign, is rumoured to be in his last season in the French capital after PSG lost 2-1 at RB Leipzig on Wednesday to leave them with two defeats out of three in the competition's group stage. It has become an open secret that Tuchel does not get on with Leonardo, PSG's powerful sporting director, who did not hire the German and wants to bring in his own man. — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Italian forward Moise Kean (center) heads the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Rennes on November 7, 2020. — AFP

## Soucek earns West Ham win as Fulham miss last-gasp penalty

LONDON: Tomas Soucek's stoppage-time goal earned West Ham United a 1-0 win over Fulham 1-0 in the Premier League but Ademola Lookman spurned a glorious chance to earn a point for the visitors with a botched last-gasp penalty. Big Czech Soucek had been largely anonymous in the London derby but he showed his knack for scoring important goals when he steered a shot past Fulham keeper Alphonse Areola.

There was a twist to come though as Fulham were awarded a penalty via a lengthy VAR check in the fifth minute of stoppage time only for Lookman to try an audacious 'Panenka' and chip the ball tamely straight into the hands of Lukasz Fabianski. A point would have been thoroughly deserved for Fulham who were bright in attack and solid in defense, even if hosts West Ham were twice denied by the woodwork.

It was tough on Lookman, on loan from RB Leipzig, who had been excellent for his side who remain one place above the relegation zone after a sixth defeat in eight games. "Ademola Lookman is devastated, apologetic. He's a young man who has had a good start here and is a big player for us,"



LONDON: West Ham United's Czech midfielder Tomas Soucek (center) shoots to score the opening goal during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Fulham on November 7, 2020. — AFP

Fulham midfielder Tom Cairney, who was adjudged to have been fouled for the penalty, told BT Sport. "We'll get round him and pick him up, he knows he could have got us a point."

Victory for West Ham lifted them to 11th spot with 11 points. A frenetic start saw a flurry of chances for West Ham with Arthur Masuaku having an effort cleared off the line and Jarrod Bowen forcing a sharp save from Areola. Sebastian Haller rattled the bar with a header before Fulham began to settle and threaten on the counter-attack with Aleksandar Mitrovic failing to make the most of two chances. Fulham were arguably the better side after the break but they were stunned in the first minute

of stoppage time when West Ham substitute Said Benrahma teed up Soucek to slot home.

Benrahma blotted his copybook though when he dangled out a leg and tripped Cairney and referee Rob Jones eventually awarded a penalty after checking a pitch-side monitor. West Ham's players delayed the kick and when Lookman took a long run it looked as though he would go for power, but instead he stuttered his run and appeared to kick the ground before the ball as he attempted to outfox Fabianski. The attempt was so poor that Fabianski, who had begun to move one way, had time to re-shuffle his position and make the easiest of catches, the ball barely reaching him. — Reuters

## Pakistan rout Zimbabwe in first T20 international

RAWALPINDI: Skipper Babar Azam smashed a robust half-century to lead Pakistan's six-wicket rout of Zimbabwe in the first Twenty20 international in Rawalpindi on Saturday. Azam proved yet again why he is one of the top batsmen in white-ball cricket with an attractive 55-ball 82 to anchor Pakistan's chase of a modest 157-run target in 18.5 overs. The win gives Pakistan a 1-0 lead in the three-match series and a 12th straight win over Zimbabwe in all Twenty20 international cricket.

Wesley Madhevere struck a maiden half-century to lead Zimbabwe to 156-6 after they won the toss and batted. Azam, determined to regain his place as Twenty20's top batsman - which he lost to England's Dawid Malan two months ago - punched nine boundaries and a six during his 80-run stand for the third wicket with Mohammad Hafeez, who made 36. Azam was finally caught in the 17th over, as was Hafeez in the 19th, but the target was never beyond Pakistan.

Paceman Blessing Muzarabani finished with 2-26. Azam said his victorious side still had room for



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's Haider Ali (left) celebrates hitting a boundary with teammate Khushdil Shah during the second Twenty20 cricket match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday. — AFP

improvement. "Whatever is my game I try to execute that and enjoy my batting," said Azam, whose 50 was his 15th in T20Is. "We executed the plan in bowling but still need work on our fielding." Zimbabwe skipper Chamu Chibhabha admitted his team was short on runs. "We were 20 runs short," said Chibhabha, who was dismissed for a second-ball duck. "Madhevere batted very well but we lost our way in the middle overs which was disappointing, but we will try to improve in the next game."

Zimbabwe, who upset Pakistan in the third one-day international at the end of their 2-1 loss in the preceding series, were never able to stop Azam's free-flowing stroke play despite dismissing Fakhar Zaman (19) and Haider Ali (seven) by the eighth over. Earlier, Zimbabwe added 46 in the last five overs with Madhevere in the lead. Madhevere, the 20-year-old right-hander, struck a 48-ball 70 not out with nine boundaries and a six to help Zimbabwe post a respectable total. — AFP

## Red hot Joao Felix leads Atletico's rout of Cadiz

MADRID: Atletico Madrid forward Joao Felix played a starring role with two goals and an assist as they crushed visitors Cadiz 4-0 on Saturday to continue their rampant run of domestic form and go top of La Liga. Club record signing Felix put Atletico ahead in the eighth minute, heading a cross from Marcos Llorente into an unguarded net after Cadiz goalkeeper Jeremias Ledesma had fallen over as he tried to catch a long punt into the box.

Llorente doubled Atleti's advantage midway through the first half with a finish inside the near post to cap a week in which he was called up to the Spain squad for the first time. Luis Suarez then combined with Felix to put Atletico further on top early in the second half, his goal being initially ruled out for offside then awarded

following a VAR review. Felix completed the rout with a ruthless finish in added time after a quick break involving substitutes Lucas Torreira and Angel Correa, netting a double for the third time in four matches in all competitions.

A fourth straight league win sent Atletico to the summit on goal difference, level on 17 points with second-placed Real Sociedad, who have played a game more, and one point ahead of Real Madrid in third. Felix and Suarez, meanwhile, lead the scoring charts alongside Sociedad forward Mikel Oyarzabal with five goals each. Cadiz have the best away record in La Liga and before facing Atletico they had not even conceded a goal on their travels since returning to the top flight this season, even managing to beat champions Real



MADRID: Cadiz's Spanish defender Juan Cala (left) challenges Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez during the Spanish League football match between Atletico Madrid and Cadiz at the Wanda Metropolitan stadium in Madrid on November 7, 2020. — AFP

Madrid last month. But they were little match for Atletico, who dominated the play and were ruthless in taking their chances.

After going through what coach Diego Simeone described as a transitional season last year, they now look

like genuine title contenders. "We have taken a big step forward this season. All the new players that arrived last season have integrated into the team and started learning what the coach wants from us," said goalscorer Llorente. — Reuters

## Rennie realistic, but excited as Wallabies stun All Blacks

BRISBANE: Coach Dave Rennie insisted he wouldn't be getting carried away after the Wallabies stunned the All Blacks, but admitted to being excited by where he might take his new-look team. In a major shock, Australia edged New Zealand 24-22 Saturday in a breathless Tri Nations clash at Brisbane, just a week after an embarrassing 43-5 bloodbath in Sydney. It restored some credibility to a side widely played for their error-strewn Sydney performance, with Rennie's gamble on three debutants and moving Reece Hodge from his usual wing or fullback position to flyhalf playmaker paying off.

Australia had already lost the Bledisloe Cup for an 18th straight year before Saturday, but managed to emerge from the four-game series with a win, a draw and two losses. Rennie, who took over from Michael Cheika after last year's World Cup, said it was crushing to miss out again on the trans-Tasman trophy and they must build on Saturday's win. "What it tells us is that if we work hard enough for each other we can get results against anyone," he said. "But it doesn't count for much unless we back it up against Argentina in a couple of weeks."

While the win doesn't paper over the cracks exposed in the past two Tests, Rennie was encouraged by the debuts of winger Tom Wright, who scored a try with his first touch in international rugby, and Lachie Swinton, despite the hulking flanker being sent off for a high tackle. "We're trying to grow our game. There's a lot of stuff we haven't had time to do because of the (Covid) situation, so (I'm) excited about where we can take this team," said Rennie. "But we're not going to get carried away. It was a great performance, but we've got to keep building on that." Young prop Angus Bell also made an impact off the bench in his first game.

### 'Driving factor'

"It's a good start for them and we expect that, we want to make that the norm," skipper Michael Hooper said of the newcomers. "We make no bones about where we want to go as a team and those guys are going to be a big driving factor in that. "So bottling that feeling and pushing each other and demanding more out of each other, which the young guys have brought and vice-versa from the top-down, is going to be important to go where want to go."

Australian media were impressed, with the Sydney Morning Herald saying: "First win of new Wallabies era points to brighter future," while The Australian called the victory "one of the great turnarounds of Australian rugby". The Wallabies have a week's break before resuming Tri Nations action against Argentina while New Zealand must regroup to face the Pumas on Saturday in Sydney, their fifth Test since October 11. Coach Ian Foster called the Brisbane defeat "messy", with the All Blacks also reduced to 14 men in the first half after Ofa Tu'ungafasi was red-carded for the same offence as Swinton.

"It's not nice losing. It was a game we still had a chance in over the last part," he told reporters. "We just had to hold some composure, but we just gave up too many soft penalties really—one with a yellow card and another two or three to give kickable penalties. "We've got to learn from that." Captain Sam Cane credited Australia for showing more passion at a ground where they have traditionally done well. The Wallabies have now won their last seven Tests at Suncorp Stadium. "It's a bit of a reality check. We'll have a hard look at ourselves and have to get a lot better next week," he said. — AFP

**14** Authentic wins Breeders' Cup Classic; European raiders dominate on turf



**14** 4-nation gymnastics hints at how pandemic Olympics might work



**15** Injury-ravaged PSG extend Ligue 1 lead, beat Rennes



## City, Liverpool share spoils

Kane joins 150 club as Spurs, Leicester play Premier League leapfrog



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Brazilian striker Gabriel Jesus (center) scores the equalizing goal past Liverpool's Brazilian goalkeeper Alisson Becker (2nd right) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester yesterday. —AFP

LONDON: Kevin De Bruyne missed a penalty as Manchester City squandered the chance to close the gap on Liverpool yesterday while Tottenham's Harry Kane celebrated joining the Premier League's 150 club. A win at the Etihad would have taken the Reds to the summit but they were forced to settle for a 1-1 draw in a battle between the two dominant powers over the past two seasons.

That meant Leicester clung onto top spot after leapfrogging Spurs with a 1-0 win at home to Wolves. Jurgen Klopp's champions made an aggressive start against City, with Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Diogo Jota all in a fearsome-looking starting line-up. The visitors went ahead in the 13th minute when Salah converted a penalty after Kyle Walker clipped Mane in the box.

City drew level just after the half-hour mark when De Bruyne picked out Gabriel Jesus in the area with his back to goal. The City striker cleverly turned past Trent Alexander-Arnold and poked past

Alisson Becker. City were awarded a penalty themselves just before the interval after a VAR check when Joe Gomez was unable to get his arm out of the way of a De Bruyne cross but the Belgian skewed wide. The draw left Liverpool in third place on 17 points after eight games, one behind Leicester and five clear of City, who have a game in hand.

### Kane reaches 150 goals

Earlier, Kane headed in a late winner in a 1-0 victory against struggling West Brom to briefly lift Jose Mourinho's side to the top of the table after their fourth win in five league games. Only Alan Shearer and Sergio Aguero have scored 150 Premier League goals in fewer appearances than Kane, who reached the landmark in his 218th match.

Mourinho was effusive in his praise for his star striker, who also has 10 assists in all competitions this season. "Harry Kane, you have to say has this many goals, this many assists, this number of balls

recovered, this number of duels won, this number of balls that he saved his team in a defensive set-piece," he said. "This is Harry Kane. It's goals plus this and this and this and that."

The landmark effort for Kane, who scored his 200th Tottenham goal in all competitions against Ludogorets on Thursday, was perfectly timed after they had labored to break down stubborn Albion. Mourinho started with Kane, Gareth Bale and Son Heung-min in his front three for the first time, and while the latter two were quiet, Kane was on hand to clinch Tottenham's third successive league victory.

Spurs are now unbeaten in their past seven league games but were below their best for long periods against a West Brom team still without a league win this term. Son wasted an early chance but the home side had opportunities of their own through Karlan Grant, Kyle Bartley and Jake Livermore. Kane finally broke Albion's resistance in

the 88th minute when Matt Doherty's cross caused indecision on Johnstone and the England captain arrived to flick a header into the far corner. But Spurs' stay at the top of the Premier League table was short-lived as Jamie Vardy netted his eighth Premier League goal of the season for Leicester.

Vardy scored the decisive goal from the penalty spot in the 15th minute—following a VAR check—after Max Kilman handled Dennis Praet's cross in the area. But he blew a chance to make it 2-0 when he was denied by Rui Patricio late in the first half after James Justin was brought down in the box but Brendan Rodgers' team held on to win all three points. "I think we had a real challenge in this first part of the season with the players we had out... the team have been fantastic," Rodgers told Sky Sports. "We had to show different sides to our game today and thankfully we've come through." Arsenal hosted Aston Villa in the late kick-off. —AFP

## Real Sociedad go top after beating virus-hit Granada

MADRID: Real Sociedad regained top spot in La Liga yesterday after winning 2-0 against a depleted Granada, who could face punishment for fielding fewer than the required number of first-team players. Nacho Monreal scored in the 22nd minute and Mikel Oyarzabal converted a penalty in the 27th to send La Real back above Atletico Madrid, who had briefly taken first place after thrashing Cadiz on Saturday.

Atletico are three points behind but have two games in hand. Defeat means Granada drop to fifth, with the club currently hit by an outbreak of coronavirus. Granada had only seven first-team players available and finished with only four on the pitch, which is contrary to La Liga's minimum of five. The rest of the squad was made up of players from the youth team. It remains to be seen if La Liga take action, having already rejected Granada's request on Saturday for the game to be postponed. Unai Emery's Villarreal move up to second in the table after they won 3-1 against Getafe. —AFP

## Caicedo frustrates Juventus; Inter held 1-1; Roma win 3-1

MILAN: Ecuador's Felipe Caicedo again came off the bench to rescue Lazio as he claimed a late equalizer in yesterday's 1-1 draw with Juventus after Cristiano Ronaldo's early goal for the visitors in Rome. Ronaldo had opened the scoring after a quarter of an hour but the Serie A champions let the game slip when the Portugal star limped off with an ankle sprain and Caicedo fired in five minutes into injury time.

"I'm speechless, a goal like this leaves me speechless," said Caicedo, who also scored for in the midweek 1-1 Champions League draw at Zenit Saint-Petersburg and clinched the winner in last weekend's 4-3 victory at Torino. Juve missed the chance to move second behind Serie A leaders AC Milan. They trail their northern rivals, who hosted Hellas Verona later, by three points. Elsewhere, Roma moved into third place, one point ahead of fourth-placed Juventus, after a Henrikh Mkhitaryan hat-trick in a 3-1 win for the capital side at Genoa.

Inter Milan and Atalanta also dropped points with a 1-1 draw in Bergamo after Aleksey Miranchuk struck on his first Serie A start to cancel out Lautaro Martinez's header. "We had a good match, there were no signs of danger," said Juve

coach Andrea Pirlo. "But championships are won on details, too bad only for those last ten seconds." Simone Inzaghi's hosts, embroiled in coronavirus chaos, are ninth, five points off the leaders. The home side were without striker Ciro Immobile, midfielder Lucas Leiva and goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha, who remain in isolation.

The Roman club are being investigated by the Italian football federation for possible Covid violations after UEFA blocked some players from playing Champions League games at Club Brugge and Zenit after testing positive. However, the players including Immobile were included against Torino, following negative tests carried out in a lab used by the club. They were again left out again this weekend after a further round of tests. "This team has heart, difficulties are part of our DNA," said Inzaghi, adding he was "calm" despite the current crisis. "In such a moment, today's match against Juve is a great match."

### Ronaldo 'crucial'

Pirlo's men were again without captain Giorgio Chiellini with Leonardo Bonucci, making his 400th start for the club, producing an early block to thwart Vedat Muriqi. But it was again Ronaldo who proved decisive as he finished off a Juan Cuadrado cross after the Colombia attacker shook off defenders Luis Alberto and Mohamed Fares. The 35-year-old scored his sixth goal in four league games. Ronaldo had two further chances for a second in the first half, rattling the post before Pepe Reina tipped a free-kick over the bar. The Lazio keeper also



ROME: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo controls the ball during the Italian Serie A football match between Lazio (SSL) and Juventus (JFC), at the Olympic stadium in Rome yesterday. —AFP

denied Adrien Rabiot just before the hour mark. But with Pirlo's side looking in control, Ronaldo went off with 15 minutes to go after taking a knock to his right ankle, and his absence once again hit the champions. Caicedo, who came on early in the second half, once again had the final word. He picked up a Correa cross and swiveled to fire in the equalizer as Juventus drew for the fourth time in seven league games. "Ronaldo is a crucial player," said Pirlo. "They are the ones who make you win games. When you want to take it home you have to give something more, and today we couldn't do it." Inter and Atalanta settled for a point, days after Champions League defeats to Real Madrid and Liverpool respectively. —AFP