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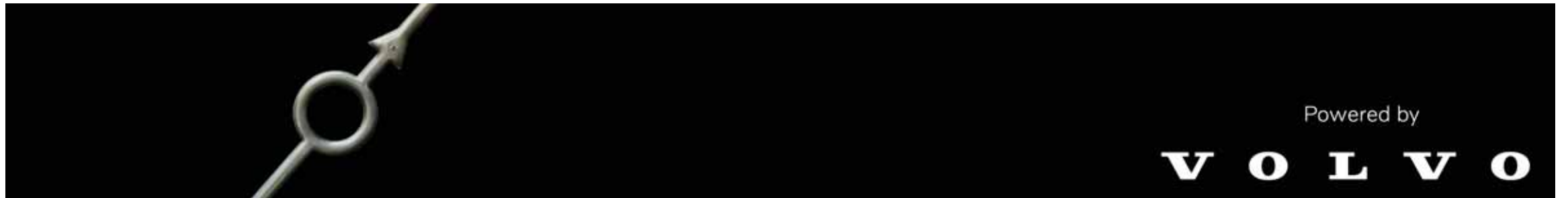
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COVID vaccine results fuel hopes for return to normal

Kuwait reports 903 new cases, 5 deaths • Infections, deaths rising worldwide

Volvo rolls out new S90 and V90 series in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Bader Al-Kharafi (left) and Cherif El Sayed unveil Volvo's S90 facelift series during a launch ceremony by BNK Automotive-Volvo Car Kuwait at Khalijia Studio in Sharq yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Volvo yesterday unveiled the facelift of its S90 and V90 series at Khalijia Studio in Sharq. The new S90 series (2021 model facelift) is Volvo's premium 4-door, 5-seat flagship, built on the Scalable Product Architecture (SPA), Volvo's advanced modular vehicle platform that underpins all Volvo cars in the 90 and 60 Series launched in recent years.

"We are proud to unveil our new facelift in Kuwait. Even though we all have had a challenging

year with the global pandemic, we have decided that it is crucial to go ahead with the launch that coincides with BNK Automotive's first anniversary in Kuwait as the official Volvo partner in Kuwait," said Cherif El Sayed, General Manager, BNK Automotive-Volvo Car Kuwait.

"In just a year and despite the pandemic, the team has worked hard to reposition the Volvo Car brand in the Kuwaiti market. Today we are proud to announce that we have increased sales by 250 percent YTD, a fantastic milestone to celebrate," he added. (See Page 8)

WASHINGTON: Hugely promising results from a coronavirus vaccine trial fuelled optimism around the world yesterday, even as tighter restrictions were imposed in Europe and the Middle East to try and stem the worst pandemic in a century. The vaccine news brought some relief from an otherwise grim picture worldwide, which included the death of veteran Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat from coronavirus complications at the age of 65.

Stocks in some of the industries hit hardest by travel curbs, social distancing and lockdowns rebounded on hopes that the world may return to normal, after pharma giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech announced Monday that their vaccine candidate was 90 percent effective in preventing COVID-19.

A vaccine is seen as the best hope to break the cycle of deadly virus surges and severe restrictions across much of the world since COVID-19 first

emerged in China late last year and unleashed devastation on the global economy. "Investors have every right to be more bullish," said Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, an online stockbroker.

Pfizer and BioNTech said they could supply up to 50 million doses of the vaccine globally this year and up to 1.3 billion next year if it receives approval. The scientific community reacted positively overall - although the trial is still ongoing and the vaccine candidate would need to be stored in specialist deep freezers, creating potential supply chain complications.

The vaccine candidate is one of more than 40, but no other developer has yet made similar claims about effectiveness. There was also promising news from Brussels, where the EU parliament and member states struck a deal to pass the bloc's multi-annual budget, unblocking €750 billion (\$886 billion) in

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All iqama holders can return; absence permits extended

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: All expats holding a valid residency permit and passport can enter the country after following health protocols, while those holding absence permits who have valid residency can remain abroad as long as their residency is valid without being obliged to return to Kuwait before the end of December. The absence permits are renewed auto-

matically without the need to refer to residency departments.

This was confirmed to Kuwait Times by Brig Gen Tawheed Al-Kandari, head of the interior ministry's general administration of public relations and security media. Kandari added all those who entered Kuwait before the pandemic on any kind of visa, and those whose residencies expired during the pandemic and who didn't amend their status should leave the country by Nov 30, 2020.

"They received several extensions for their visas and residencies, which reached a year or more, so now they have to leave, especially since the airport is open. Those who don't leave or amend their status will face financial penalties, in addition to deportation," stressed Kandari.

Continued on Page 2

Palestinian negotiator Erekat dies; Amir sends condolences

JERUSALEM: Palestinian veteran negotiator Saeb Erekat died yesterday of coronavirus complications at age 65, in a death mourned as a "great loss" for his people and sparking tributes from around the world. Erekat was a long-time architect of plans to end the conflict with Israel through the creation of an independent Palestinian state, a goal he would not live to see achieved.



Saeb Erekat

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas called the passing of "a brother and friend... a great loss for Palestine and our people" and declared three days of

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'Lockdown' is Collins Dictionary Word of the Year

LONDON: Collins Dictionary said yesterday that "lockdown" is its Word of The Year in 2020 following a dramatic increase in usage during the spread of COVID-19. Lexicographers said they picked the word because it had become synonymous with the experience of populations across the world as governments look to curb the coronavirus pandemic. "It is a unifying experience for billions of people across the world, who have had

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Local

Amir, Crown Prince meet Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have separately received His Highness Sheikh

Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Professor



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

Alpha Conde following his re-election as President of Guinea, wishing him good health and for bilateral ties to further development. 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 cables of congratulations to Professor Conde on his re-election, and wished him best of luck. — KUNA

US, Kuwait convene education, scientific working group

KUWAIT: Senior US and Kuwaiti officials convened the Education and Scientific Cooperation Working Group of the fourth Strategic Dialogue yesterday, to discuss bilateral cooperation in the fields of higher education, professional development exchange programs, and scientific research.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Marie Royce and Undersecretary at Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education Dr Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem co-chaired the meeting with participation from Kuwait's Ministry of Education, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, and the Kuwait Institution for Scientific Research, among others.

Also present from the US side was Ambassador Alina L Romanowski, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Arabian Gulf Affairs Tim Lenderking, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy Chris Hodges, among other senior US officials.

"The Education and Scientific Working Group is a



Marie Royce



Alina Romanowski



Tim Lenderking



Chris Hodges

key opportunity for the US and Kuwait to review the progress we have made in academic and cultural exchanges, and propose new initiatives that will improve educational and professional development opportunities for Kuwaiti students and young professionals," Ambassador Romanowski said.

"With over one million international students, the United States offers an unmatched variety of colleges

and universities to select from. Kuwaiti students who choose to study there can learn in a truly international environment and come away with a world-class education," Romanowski added.

The discussion focused on how the US and Kuwait can work together to increase the number of Kuwaiti students at US education institutions, expand training programs for Kuwaiti English teachers, develop pro-

essional development exchanges for Kuwaiti youth and young professionals, and facilitate scientific cooperation between US and Kuwaiti institutions.

The US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, first launched four years ago, is an annual high-level series of meetings which frames the two countries' work on issues of shared concern. The next working group on security cooperation is scheduled for November 16.

Palestinian negotiator Erekat dies; Amir...

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mourning for Erekat, the Palestine Liberation Organization's secretary general. HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Abbas, expressing sorrow over the death of Erekat. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Erekat, a lung transplant recipient who suffered from pulmonary fibrosis, contracted coronavirus and was admitted last month to the intensive care unit of Israel's Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital in west Jerusalem. Given his prior respiratory conditions, his prognosis for recovery had been dim. "Unfortunately, his condition didn't improve and remained critical, and he passed away amidst multiple system failure," the hospital said. His body was later transported to Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank, where a memorial will be held at Abbas' presidential compound today.

Erekat was born in Jerusalem in 1955, but later lived in Jericho. He will be buried there following today's memorial. Erekat grew up in the shadow of Israel's crushing victory over its Arab neighbors in the Six-Day War of 1967, and dedicated much of his life to seeking a resolution to the conflict. But he was forced to watch as the prospects for the two-state solution he longed for grew increasingly remote, undermined by Israeli settlement expansion, sporadic violence and Palestinian divisions.

To the dismay of Palestinians, Washington under US President Donald Trump in 2017 recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. When Israel and the United Arab Emirates agreed to normalize ties in recent months, Erekat charged this would kill the two-state solution, strengthen "extremists" and

undermine the "possibility of peace".

Condolences poured in from Israel, abroad and Gaza, led by the Islamist group Hamas which is a rival of Erekat's Fatah movement. Hamas chief Ismail Haniya offered "condolences" to his "brothers" in Fatah. Former Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni, who represented the Jewish state in peace talks with the Palestinians and established a personal relationship with Erekat, said the Palestinian negotiator had "dedicated his life to his people". "Reaching Peace is my destiny, (Erekat) used to say," Livni wrote on Twitter.

The US State Department in a tweet offered "condolences" and said "our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time". UN Middle East envoy Nikolay Mladenov praised Erekat as "a steadfast fighter... who spent his life diligently pursuing the rights of the Palestinian people".

Arab-Israeli lawmaker Ayman Odeh, who heads the mainly Arab Joint List coalition, said: "Saeb won't get to see his people freed from the occupation. But generations of Palestinians will remember him as one of the giants who dedicated his life for their independence". EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described Erekat's death as a setback for the Middle East peace process, and praised his effort "to fulfill the legitimate aspirations of his people".

Erekat took part in the failed Camp David summit in July 2000, and the Sept 2010 talks in Washington, which stopped in a row over Israel's settlement building. He was also chief negotiator in 2014 when then US President Barack Obama tried to restart peace efforts. Israeli anti-occupation civil society organization Peace Now said "as long as people like Erekat reach out their hand to peace, it's our duty to negotiate".

A former journalist with the independent daily Al-Quds in east Jerusalem, Erekat held a BA and an MA in political science from the University of San Francisco. He also held a doctorate in peace studies from the University of Bradford in England, and taught at An-Najah University in the West Bank town of Nablus from 1979 to 1991. Erekat is survived by his wife and four children. — Agencies

dependencies of all types, especially article 22 (dependent) visas, can be renewed online, assuring parents of university students that there is no fear of their children's residencies being cancelled for being abroad for more than six months.

As for a timeframe of when issuance of visit visas will resume, the source said there have been no instructions so far from the Cabinet, pointing out that the only entity authorized to allow entry to those who do not have residency permits is the ministerial committee and not the interior ministry.

The source said residencies are being cancelled daily according to the law if they expire and are not renewed. Holders of expired residency permits should undergo new procedures when life returns to normal, which means a new entry visa must be obtained. The source added 186,176 visas were issued online from July 21, 2016 till March 10, 2020.

All iqama holders can return...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, an informed source at the general directorate of residency affairs told Al-Anbaa daily that all expats holding a valid residency permit can enter the country regardless of age, but health protocols must be followed, especially for those arriving from 34 designated countries who should quarantine in a third country.

He added there is no ban on elderly dependent visa holders from entering the country, but due to the current situation, it is preferable for the elderly not to travel for their safety. The source said resi-

'Lockdown' is Collins Dictionary...

Continued from Page 1

collectively to play their part in combating the spread of COVID-19," publishers Harper Collins said.

Collins registered more than a quarter of a million usages of "lockdown" during 2020, against only 4,000 the previous year. Because of the way the pandemic has affected the daily use of language, six of Collins' 10 words of the year in 2020 are related to the global health crisis. "Coronavirus", "social distancing", "self-isolate" and "furlough" as well as "lockdown" and "key worker" were included in the longer list of 10 words of the year.

"Key worker" alone has seen a 60-fold increase in usage reflecting the importance attributed this year to professions considered to be essential to society. "2020 has been dominated by the global pandemic," Helen Newstead, a language consultant at Collins, said. "Lockdown has affected the way we

work, study, shop, and socialize. With many countries entering a second lockdown, it is not a word of the year to celebrate but it is, perhaps, one that sums up the year for most of the world."

Collins defines "lockdown" as "the imposition of stringent restrictions on travel, social interaction, and access to public spaces". According to the dictionary, coronavirus is: "Any one of a group of RNA-containing viruses that can cause infectious illnesses of the respiratory tract, including COVID-19."

Significant social and political developments beyond the virus have also been reflected in the list, which has already made its way into online editions of the English dictionary. A wave of Black Lives Matter protests, sparked by the death in US police custody of unarmed black man George Floyd, spread around the world and brought a new awareness of the movement.

The abbreviation "BLM", often used as a hashtag on social media, was widely used in conversations and reporting following the protests, registering an increase in usage of 581 percent by Collins. Social media regularly throws up new words for the dictionary. — AFP

COVID vaccine results fuel...

Continued from Page 1

coronavirus recovery funds. Dacian Cioloș, head of the parliament's centrist Renew Europe Group, called the agreement "a game-changer" for Europeans facing adversity from the pandemic.

The novel coronavirus has infected close to 51 million people worldwide, with more than 1.2 million deaths. Yesterday, 6,867 new deaths were recorded worldwide, with the highest daily tolls in France, Spain and the United States. Kuwait registered 903 new COVID-19 infections in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 133,381 cases, the health ministry announced yesterday. Total deaths reached 821 with the addition of five more fatalities, it added.

The US remains the hardest-hit nation at more than 10 million cases and nearly 240,000 deaths, and the pandemic was one of the top issues for voters in this month's presidential election. Joe Biden, who had slammed President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis, spared no time in announcing a COVID-19 taskforce on Monday after being declared president-elect. "We're still facing a very dark winter," Biden said.

Trump had clashed repeatedly with his own government experts, often refusing to back restrictions or even wear a mask in public. After the Pfizer announcement, he claimed - without evidence - that the news was delayed until after the election to damage him.

There was a separate breakthrough when the US Food and Drug Administration on Monday granted

emergency approval to a synthetic antibody treatment developed by the pharma company Eli Lilly. Bamlanivimab, which was shown to reduce the risk of hospitalization and emergency room visits, is the first major drug to be approved that was designed specifically for the coronavirus.

Despite encouraging news on the medical front, rising infection and death rates have left many governments struggling to cope. In Italy, virus restrictions were increased in five of the country's 20 regions yesterday. Seven regions are now "orange" zones and four more are "red", meaning that most shops, bars and restaurants are shut and residents' movements are restricted.

Hungary, one of the hardest-hit countries in terms of deaths in proportion to the population, has also announced new measures to come into force today. As a result, students at Hungary's top arts university opposing a reform by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government said they were ending a blockade of the campus that has lasted more than two months.

Elswhere on the continent, Albania imposed a night-time curfew and Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid went into self-isolation after coming into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. In Greece, the government stopped supermarkets from selling "non-essential goods" in order to avoid unfair competition against smaller shops that have been forced to close, following a similar move in France.

In the Middle East, Lebanon yesterday announced a fresh two-week lockdown batted a grinding economic crisis that has already battered businesses. "We've reached a stage of critical danger as private and public hospitals don't have the capacity to receive severe cases," the country's caretaker prime minister, Hassan Diab, said in a televised address. — AFP

Local

Kuwait oil sheds 16 cents, global prices soar following anti-COVID vaccine reports

Oil stakeholders pin hope on new US administration

KUWAIT: Kuwait's oil price dropped 16 cents during Monday's transactions to stand at \$40 per barrel compared with \$40.16 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Benchmark Brent jumped \$2.95 to \$42.40 pb and the West Texas Intermediate surged \$3.15 to stand at \$40.29 pb.

Global oil prices had moved up by 10 percent immediately after reported discovery of an effective vaccine against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The crude price improvement has resonated with the markets that have been largely bearish and lackluster since the outbreak of the pandemic months ago. The positive ripples reached the markets after Pfizer announced Monday that its coronavirus vaccine has shown to be "more than 90 percent effective in preventing COVID-19." The pandemic has negatively affected key energy consuming sectors throughout the globe, thus drastically pushing down oil prices.

Against backdrop of Monday's promising announcement, experts are looking forward to see

how the US president-elect Joe Biden will deal with the energy market after settling in the office following the January oath taking. Biden has already signaled a new approach with his recurrent emphasis on necessity to shift to clean energy and intention to rejoin the Paris climatic treaty from which the outgoing president Donald Trump had opted to withdraw from.

The world's top oil entity, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), is destined to coordinate with the new US administration and close the chapter of tensions, fuelled when Trump had increased output of shale oil in a bid to push down prices of the conventional crude. The experts believe that Biden's preference for clean energy may also turn out to be a major snag in the

forecast coordination between the two sides.

Moreover, oil stakeholders are hoping that the new US administration will take a more diplomatic approach toward Venezuela and Iran, OPEC member states. Based on his rhetoric, Biden is expected to take a multi-lateral and largely diplomatic approach toward such states, instead of the unilateral and uncompromising stances of the outgoing president.

Oil ministers are scheduled to debate, during the OPEC and OPEC+ conference, due later this month, means of preventing oil prices' collapse and experts are concerned that comeback to the markets by the oil producers Iran, Venezuela and Libya will result in increasing the output, recreating a glut and subsequently pushing the prices lower. OPEC+ had



slashed oil supplies by large quantities, thus keeping the rates in the \$40 bpd range. The OPEC and non-OPEC producers had, since May, withdrawn nine million barrels per day, 10 percent of the global crude output, in a bid to shore up the prices that were badly hit with the crippling anti-COVID measures throughout the globe. — KUNA



Global prices up by 10%



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presides over the Cabinet's meeting. — KUNA

Cabinet honors officers for major drug bust

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh briefed the Cabinet on the latest anti-narcotics operation carried out by the Interior Ministry, which led to the confiscation of 270 kilos of shabu (methampheta-

mine) at Shuwaikh Port, the largest attempt to smuggle the drug in the history of the country. The Cabinet ministers commended the operation and the cabinet called for honoring of members of the security forces and customs for their vigilance. This came during the Cabinet's weekly meeting Monday, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet was briefed on the fourth annual report regarding the number of laborers in the workforce according to citizenship, educational level, and sector. Furthermore, the gatherers were informed about environmental violations and hazards

facing firefighters and government workers assigned in South Khaitan and Sulaibiya agricultural areas as well as other locations such as the Al-Na'em scrapyard. A government committee consisting of several entities was formed to look into the matter, taking necessary measures to provide safety for firefighters and government employees as well as preventing violations and holding people accountable for them. The meeting also touched on the issue of water surfaces and seepage in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area, forming a committee to tackle the problem.

In the meantime, the Cabinet discussed the national diwan of human rights' first annual

report for 2019, commending the committee assigned to review the document. The Cabinet affirmed that the document contributes to the betterment of the humanitarian situation in the country. The Cabinet also touched on the report connected with the government educational system in preparation for the 2020-2021 school year. The report included a proposal to form a high committee tasked with steering the educational process during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The win by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the US election was discussed during the meeting with the Cabinet congratulating the two officials. — KUNA

News in brief

Kuwait, Sweden discuss COVID-19 cooperation

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday a phone call from Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde on boosting cooperation against coronavirus pandemic, the foreign ministry said. The two senior officials also discussed regional and international developments, issues of mutual interest and bilateral relations, a ministry statement said. — KUNA

Kuwait, Sudan PMs talk ties

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call yesterday from his Sudanese counterpart Dr Abdulla Hamdok, during which they discussed ways to develop relations between the two countries and enhance cooperation in various fields. Latest developments on the regional and international levels were also discussed. During the call, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled praised the 'strong and historic relations' the two countries share, stressing Kuwait's keenness to develop them and bring them to a level that achieves the interests of the two brotherly peoples. — KUNA

Kuwait condemns Baghdad attack

KUWAIT: Kuwait on Monday expressed its extreme condemnation and denunciation of a terrorist attack in Baghdad, which left several people killed and wounded. Kuwait stands in solidarity with Iraq, supporting the measures it takes to preserve security and stability, a Kuwait Foreign Ministry said. The ministry source went on to extend sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery for the injured. — KUNA

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A photo showing a jam-packed parking lot of the Farwaniya Hospital earlier this week. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

China praises 'fruitful outcomes' of ties with GCC

KUWAIT: China commended its long-standing "solidarity and cooperation" with Gulf Arab states, saying this has achieved "fruitful outcomes," particularly on trade and energy. "China has long maintained friendly relations with the GCC and its members," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a press conference on the sidelines of the China-GCC ministerial meeting on Monday. "We understand and support each other on matters concerning each other's core interests and major concerns and have achieved fruitful outcomes in energy, economic, trade, people-to-people and cultural cooperation." The talks, held via videoconference, were chaired by the UAE in the attendance of China, GCC member states and the regional bloc's Secretary General. "In the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, we stood together with mutual assistance and conducted effective cooperation, writing a new chapter of friendship with solidarity and cooperation," said Wenbin. "We believe this meeting will bring new progress to China-GCC relations," added the Chinese official. — KUNA

Kuwait reports 903 new COVID cases, five deaths

China vaccine trial with UAE, Bahrain administered on 44,000 people

KUWAIT: Kuwait registered 903 new coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 133,381, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday. Deaths reached 821 with the addition of five fatalities, it added. The ministry had announced earlier that 842 patients have recovered within the same period, raising total recoveries to 124,156. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that there were 115 patients receiving treatment at intensive care units, while those still receiving treatment amounted to 8,404. Health workers conducted 7,847 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising the whole count to 979,336. Minister of Health Dr Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah had briefed the Cabinet during its weekly meeting Monday on the latest developments concerning the novel coronavirus in Kuwait.

China-GCC conference

In other news, China has affirmed its continuing support for the GCC states to safeguard their securi-

ty and stability and "rebuild" their economies post the coronavirus crisis. Cooperation in the vaccines' sector has become one of the most eminent cooperation realms between China and the GCC countries, said Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Minister Wang was addressing the 10 China-GCC ministerial conference, held virtually. First clinical tests of the third stage trial of the vaccines, conducted by China with the UAE and Bahrain, "are proceeding steadily and effectively" by administering them on 44,000 people, Wang revealed in his remarks, broadcast by the Chinese news agency (Xinhua). China desires to respond effectively to the needs of the GCC countries for vaccinations, he said. He called on the GCC countries, in the post-COVID stage, to resume negotiations with Beijing on the free trade zone, boost cooperation for the silk belt road ventures as well as enhance popular interactions. The venue of Kuwait delegation at the meeting was headed by Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Kuwait distributes winter clothes to Syrian refugees

BEIRUT: The winter clothing campaign, funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and donations from Kuwaiti people to the Syrian refugees families in various Lebanese regions, was launched yesterday for two months. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) began distributing blankets and winter clothing in northern Lebanon to hundreds of Syrian refugee families, which will continue for the next two months, Head of the Red Crescent Mission to Lebanon Dr Musaad Al-Enzi said. Additionally, KRCS will continue, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon, to distribute food, aid, cleaning materials and bread, he pointed

out. Enzi considered that the distribution of clothing at the start of the winter season contributes to helping refugee families in harsh climatic conditions that many Lebanese regions are witnessing, especially as economic and living conditions worsened from the spread of COVID-19.

Also, KRCS distributed medi-

cines to Syrian refugees at LRC centers in various Lebanese regions, funded by KFAED, he mentioned. With Al-Enzi, KRCS' delegation included Adnan Haider, Abdullah Al-Mutairi and Yousef Al-Enzi. KRCS has been providing aid to Syrian refugees in various Lebanese regions throughout the year since the start of the 2011 Syrian crisis, distributing humanitarian aid through its permanent projects such as the loaf of bread project, water distribution and kidney dialysis. — KUNA



KRCS honors AAW Chairman for support to local community

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer awarded Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Company (AAW) Chairman and CEO Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa with a trophy of recognition for his leading role in supporting the local community, especially during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in Kuwait.

Dr Sayer visited AAW's headquarters recently to award Faisal Al-Mutawa with a trophy in appreciation for his continuous support to the local community in Kuwait. Mutawa made several generous contributions to support KRCS' fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was attended by KRCS General Secretary Maha Al-Barjas, KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-

Hasawi, AAW First Deputy CEO Khaled Al-Mutawa, and AAW Deputy CEO Ali Al-Mutawa.

Chairman and CEO of AAW, Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa thanked KRCS for the integral role it plays in activities and projects both inside and outside Kuwait and said: "We, at AAW, will continue our unwavering support to our local initiatives and charity organizations that are at the frontlines during this difficult time of the pandemic. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to KRCS for this initiative that brings together institutions and individuals to support our local community during this precarious period in history."

Since the beginning of the crisis and as part of AAW's on-going commitment to corporate social responsibility, the company has waived all commercial tenant rent due for two months, supported residential tenants who were terminated or did not receive their salaries, and donated \$1.2 million worth of medicine to support Kuwait's health-focused charities.

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Jordan votes in election clouded by pandemic

'Unfair surveillance'? Online exam software sparks global revolt



(Left) A woman holds the national flag and a portrait of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev as people celebrate in the streets of the capital Baku yesterday after Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed a ceasefire over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. (Right) Armenians react as they protest against the country's agreement to end fighting with Azerbaijan outside the government headquarters in Yerevan yesterday. — AFP

Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to peace deal

Russian peacekeepers head to Nagorno-Karabakh after ceasefire

YEREVAN: Hundreds of Russian peacekeepers were deploying to Nagorno-Karabakh yesterday after Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a peace deal to end weeks of fierce fighting over the disputed region. The Moscow-brokered agreement, which saw a ceasefire take effect at 1:00 am local time (2100 GMT), came after a string of Azerbaijani victories in its fight to retake the ethnic Armenian enclave.

It sparked celebrations in Azerbaijan but fury in Armenia, where protesters took to the streets to denounce the country's leadership for losses in the territory, which broke from Azerbaijan's control during a war in the early 1990s. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the deal in the early hours of yesterday.

Pashinyan described the agreement as "unspeakably painful for me and for our people", while Aliyev said it amounted to a "capitulation". The full text of the deal was released several hours later and showed clear gains for Azerbaijan. Its forces will retain control over areas seized in the fighting, including the key town of Shusha, while Armenia agreed to a timetable to withdraw from large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Nearly 2,000 peacekeepers

A Russian force of 1,960 military personnel and 90 armored personnel carriers will deploy to the region as peacekeepers, for a renewable five-year mission. The Russian defense ministry said yesterday that 10 Il-76 aircraft carrying the first peacekeepers and their equipment had taken off from an airfield in Russia. Aliyev said that Turkey, a key ally, would also be involved in peacekeeping efforts but there was no mention of it in the agreement.

Armenian defense ministry spokeswoman Shushan

Stepanyan said on Twitter that the situation was calm in the region at 6:00 am local time and that "combat operations on the whole frontline are suspended". The conflict over the territory - which has simmered for decades despite international efforts to reach an accord - erupted into fresh fighting in late September.

More than 1,400 people have been confirmed killed, including dozens of civilians, but the actual death toll is believed to be significantly higher. Azerbaijani forces made steady gains over the weeks of fighting, sweeping across the southern flank of the region and eventually into its heartland. A turning point came on Sunday when Aliyev announced that his forces had captured Shusha, the region's strategically vital second-largest town.

Anger in Armenia

Shusha sits on cliffs overlooking Nagorno-Karabakh's main city Stepanakert and on the main road to Armenia, which backs the separatists. Armenian officials had initially denied the town had been taken and the announcement of the deal caused outrage, with angry protesters storming the government headquarters in the capital Yerevan where they ransacked offices and broke windows. Crowds also entered parliament and demanded Pashinyan's resignation. Police had retaken control of both buildings yesterday but there were calls for demonstrations against Pashinyan, who came to power leading a wave of peaceful protests in 2018.

In the Azerbaijani capital Baku joyful residents took to the streets chanting "Karabakh! Karabakh!" and waving Azerbaijani and Turkish flags. "I am very happy, congratulations to the motherland, I hope these lands will be ours forever," said Elnar Hajiyev, waving an Azerbaijani flag as passing cars honked in celebration.

Karabakh declared independence nearly 30 years ago but the declaration has not been recognised internationally, even by Armenia, and it remains a part of Azerbaijan under international law.

Attempts at ceasefires brokered by France, Russia and the United States - who together lead the "Minsk Group" that sought for years to end the conflict - repeatedly failed over recent weeks. The agreement announced Tuesday made no mention of the status of the Armenian-populated areas of Nagorno-Karabakh or of the format of future negotiations to settle the conflict.

Turkey hails 'significant gains'

Azerbaijan has been pushing for Turkey's involvement in a settlement and the new deal came after Putin spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday. "Our dear Azerbaijan achieved significant gains in the field and at the (negotiating) table. I wholeheartedly congratulate this blessed success," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted yesterday.

The agreement also provides for Armenia to agree to a transport corridor linking Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan exclave on the border with Turkey. The ceasefire deal came just hours after Azerbaijan admitted to accidentally shooting down a Russian military helicopter flying in Armenia near Nakhchivan.

Moscow's defense ministry said two crew members were killed when the Mi-24 helicopter was hit close to the border with Azerbaijan. Baku quickly apologized and blamed the incident on the "tense situation in the region and increased combat readiness" of its forces. Russia has a military pact with Armenia but also good ties with oil-rich Azerbaijan, both ex-Soviet countries that gained their independence with the 1991 collapse of the USSR. — AFP



Christopher Miller

Trump fires defense chief

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Monday, further unsettling a government facing uncertainty over the US president's refusal to concede election defeat to Democrat Joe Biden. Coming with just 10 weeks left in his White House tenure, the move heightened concerns that Trump might take aim at other national security officials with whom he has expressed disappointment.

According to multiple reports, he is also believed to be considering dismissing FBI Director Chris Wray and CIA Director Gina Haspel, angered that they did not support his battle for reelection. The Washington Post reported that Trump had already removed the official in charge of the program that produces the government's climate change reports, a move that would allow him to be replaced by someone with views closer to Trump's skepticism about global warming. Esper's firing drew warnings from senior politicians and former officials to not further destabilize the government. Senator Mark Warner, the senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he was "deeply troubled" by Esper's removal. "The last thing that our country needs is additional upheaval in the institutions designed to protect our national security," Warner said in a statement.

"President Trump must not invite further volatility by removing any Senate-confirmed intelligence or national security officials during his time left in office," he said. Retired admiral James Stavridis, the former NATO supreme allied commander, said that Trump is "playing with fire with our nation's security". "If Trump moves on to fire the head of the CIA and the head of the FBI, both true professionals and patriots, we are going to be in uncharted waters for the next 90 days," Stavridis wrote on Twitter.

Below the radar

Esper was Trump's fourth defense chief in four years, and his removal capped a stormy relationship between the Pentagon and the president. Like his predecessors, Esper, 56, sought to fly below the political radar to avoid Trump's ire. But they ultimately collided over White House pressure to deploy federal troops to quash civil unrest, and Trump's desire for a rapid withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan before the defense establishment felt it was safe. "Mark Esper has been terminated," Trump declared abruptly on Twitter Monday. "I would like to thank him for his service."

A West Point classmate of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Esper worked for years in the defense industry before joining the Pentagon as army secretary in 2017. He became defense secretary in July 2019, and pursued fundamental reforms to the massive Pentagon bureaucracy and sought to reshape the US global defense posture to focus on China.

Esper accommodated some of Trump's wishes, launching a separate Space Command and, when Congress would not fund it, moving billions of dollars from weapons and base maintenance programs for construction of a wall on the US-Mexico border to block illegal immigrants. He also sharply cut US forces in Syria as Trump sought to live up to his 2016 election pledge to bring back troops from overseas. But even as he skirted controversy, Esper could not avoid colliding with the commander in chief. After sometimes violent anti-racism protests spread across the country following the May police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Trump sought support from the Pentagon for deploying regular troops. —AFP



MANAMA: Ebrahim Nonoo, head of Bahrain's Jewish community, stands at the entrance of the only synagogue in the kingdom on Monday. — AFP

Jews in Bahrain mark Kristallnacht

MANAMA: Bahraini Jews marked on Monday the 82nd anniversary of Kristallnacht, also known as the Night of Broken Glass, for the first time since the Arab nation normalized ties with Israel last month. The disused synagogue in Manama - the only one in the kingdom, which is home to some 50 Bahraini Jews - was illuminated at night "to shine light over the darkness of hate", organizers said.

It is the first commemoration of its kind in Muslim-majority Bahrain, since it followed the United Arab Emirates' example earlier this year and agreed to normalize ties with Israel in a US-brokered deal. Kristallnacht marks the 1938 torching and ransacking of synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses across Germany by Nazi mobs.

It is held this year under the "Let There Be Light" hashtag, a global virtual campaign against anti-semitism, racism, intolerance and hatred, organizers International March of the Living said. Ebrahim Nonoo, head of Bahrain's Jewish community, said the synagogue in Manama has not been functional since 1948 but plans are underway to renovate it and re-open it to worshippers next year. "We have had a long history of connection with Jewish people, but we are Bahraini first," he told AFP. Nonoo, a former member of the consultative Shura Council, said it was a "great honor" for his community to take part in Monday's event. The UAE and Bahrain became the third and fourth Arab states to establish relations with Israel, following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Sudan has also followed suit. —AFP

Myanmar Muslim MP-elect vows to be rights champion

YANGON: After five years without a single Muslim MP, Myanmar is in need of someone to help fight for the rights of oppressed minorities, says Sithu Maung as he celebrates his election to parliament. The 33-year-old was one of just two Muslims out of more than 1,100 candidates for Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party - up from zero in the last election in 2015. Muslims number about four percent of the national population and suffer particularly high levels of discrimination.

Sithu Maung sensed victory was on the cards after seeing voters' reactions to him at the polling station, but was overwhelmed to scoop up a decisive 80 percent of the vote in his downtown Yangon constituency. "People applauded me, shouting my name from their apartments when I passed," the 33-year-old told AFP at his modest studio flat in a crumbling colonial-era building.

Official overall results are not expected until later in the week, but the NLD is confident it has won by a landslide, prompting street celebrations from thousands of supporters despite coronavirus fears. Sithu Maung's constituency is one of the most ethnically diverse in the country with around 30,000 residents almost evenly divided between Buddhists and Muslims as well as Rakhine, Chinese and Indian-origin minorities. "I'll work for people of all religions, particularly those who are discriminated against and oppressed or deprived of human rights," he promised.

'Mixed blood'

But Sithu Maung refused to be drawn publicly on the issue of the stateless Rohingya, whose persecution in Myanmar has cast a pall over his party leader Suu Kyi in the international community's eyes. Military operations forced out hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in 2017 in violence that now sees the country facing genocide charges; 600,000 more remain inside Myanmar living in what rights groups brand as apartheid conditions.

But Muslims of other ethnic heritage, officially accepted as citizens, also commonly face discrimination. Like many, Sithu Maung had to wait years to

obtain an ID card that labeled him as "mixed blood" ethnicity, demoting him to different queues in government offices that make people particularly vulnerable to corruption. "People who haven't experienced it just can't understand what it's like," he said. With hardline Buddhist nationalist sentiment running high, he was then passed over as a potential NLD candidate for the 2015 election. No Muslims at all were elected to parliament then.

Thick skin

Even in this year's election, 23 percent of Muslim candidates were rejected, compared with just 0.3 percent for other religious groups, according to International Crisis Group watchdog. Sithu Maung described how he was attacked from all sides when his nomination was announced. "People spread disinformation, calling me a terrorist and saying I wanted Arabic to be taught in schools," the MP-elect added. "Even some Muslims criticized me, accusing me of not praying enough and of being atheist, or non-conformist."

He said years of building up thick skin has prepared him well for his time as an MP - and he will not be the only Muslim in parliament. NLD party stalwart Win Mya Mya, 71, comfortably won her seat in Mandalay too. Yangon-based analyst David Mathieson said he was encouraged to see the pair's victory but said the NLD needed to address "deeply rooted discrimination against Muslims and other scapegoated minorities". He predicted, however, that the party's fear this would "dilute the NLD's support" would likely deter any attempts. Sithu Maung is determined not just to be seen to be representing Muslims. "If any of my constituents are ever degraded or face injustice, I'll defend them." — AFP



Sithu Maung

International

'Kamala represents the future': US women, minorities celebrate

First female vice president - a symbol of American diversity

NEW YORK: The first female vice president, and a symbol of American diversity—Kamala Harris has electrified many women and minority voters on the US left, who view her as the future more than Joe Biden. As celebrations rolled on in major cities, excitement for some has shifted from Biden's election victory to his running mate. "She's a wonderful role model for young girls," said Theodora Egbuchulam, a New York attorney. The 55-year-old Black woman had gone to Times Square to celebrate the news.

"Kamala represents the future, and it makes me so proud that after everything that was done and said, we have an African-American woman in the White House," Egbuchulam said. "It tells young girls and boys that America looks more like us than just a typical white male." At 56, Harris brings new energy to the future administration of Biden, who at 77 is the oldest elected president. But her victory is even sweeter for the women who watched four years ago as Hillary Clinton suffered a shocking defeat to Donald Trump.

"We never had a woman in power like this. It's amazing," said Devi Kowlessar, a New York real estate agent who is Indian-American, like Harris. "Hopefully she'll reunite Americans, and she'll make these past four years disappear." Kowlessar added, referring to Trump's time in office. "We want her to unite people, to bring love."

From fiction to reality
"Madame Vice President" is no longer a fictional character," tweeted actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus, who played the role in the acclaimed comedy series "Veep." For her victory speech on Saturday night, Harris wore a white suit in tribute to the suffragettes who fought 100



WILMINGTON: Vice President-elect Kamala Harris arrives to deliver remarks on Nov 7, 2020 after she and Joe Biden were declared winners of the presidential election. — AFP

years ago to win American women the right to vote. The California native invoked the memory of her Indian mother, who died of cancer in 2009, and hailed "the generations of women, Black women, Asian, white, Latina, Native American women who throughout our nation's history have paved the way for this moment tonight."

"I still can't believe it, that we'll have somebody in the White House that looks like me," said Robin Brown, the head of a New York NGO that helps pro-choice

Democratic female candidates get elected. But Harris was a polarizing figure on the campaign trail: branded a "monster" by Trump, many voices on the left also criticized Biden's vice presidential pick. Some people, such as the former spokeswoman for Senator Bernie Sanders's campaign, Briahna Joy Gray, saw Harris as a "cop"—guilty, according to them, of having made oppressive political choices when she was district attorney of San Francisco (2004-2011) that hit minority communities particularly hard.—AFP

Why can't Trump accept his defeat?

WASHINGTON: With his defeat in the US presidential election, Donald Trump finds himself fighting against being tagged with a label he frequently applies to rivals but which runs completely counter to his own brand: "loser." The Republican is pursuing legal action in several battleground states, though his lawyers have so far failed to substantiate claims of fraud and observers see the possibility of the courts overturning the result of the vote as vanishingly small.

Yet according to scholars and mental health professionals, the same authoritarian qualities that defined Trump's rise to power and his presidency make it almost impossible for him to digest a graceful concession to Democratic President-elect Joe Biden. This, they warn, could make the post-election, pre-inauguration period a particularly unstable time for the country.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a professor of history at New York University, told AFP that Trump had tried to establish an "authoritarian model of the presidency" based on "arrogance, brutality, and the idea that he must be defended from his enemies." "It's easier to claim the whole election was a fraud than admit that his policies turned his people against him in numbers sufficient to ensure his defeat" added the author of the forthcoming book: "Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present."

Having claimed victimhood at the hands of ignoble forces that coalesced against him, "we can expect him to continue in this vein and delay the public humiliation of a concession speech," she said. "We should be watchful of what he might do over the next months in a vindictive spirit," she argued. That conclusion was shared by John Gartner, a Baltimore-based psychologist who is among a growing number of mental health professionals who have publicly warned that Trump is a "malignant narcissist."—AFP

US Attorney General authorizes probes into vote fraud claims

WASHINGTON: US Attorney General William Barr gave federal prosecutors blanket authorization Monday to open investigations into voting irregularities, as President Donald Trump repeated unfounded claims he lost the presidential election due to fraud. Barr, long a close defender of Trump, stressed that his letter to US attorneys around the country was not an indication that the Justice Department had evidence yet of genuine cases of fraud in the election won by Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

But he unleashed the prosecutors from former restrictions on such probes, just as Republicans leveled claims of illegal voting and vote counting in several states, claims that still await solid evidence. "Given that voting in our current elections has now concluded, I authorize you to pursue substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities prior to the certification of elections in your jurisdictions in certain cases," Barr said in the letter.

"Such inquiries and reviews may be conducted if there are clear and apparently-credible allegations of irregularities that, if true, could potentially impact the outcome of a federal election in an individual state." Voting fraud investigations are normally the purview of individual states, which establish and police their own election rules. Justice Department policy has been to hold back any federal involvement until vote tallies are certified, recounts completed and races concluded.

But Barr told the attorneys that "practice has never been a hard and fast rule," and stressed that, if they see anything that could reverse the results of last Tuesday's election, they should pursue it. "While serious allegations should be handled with great care, specious, speculative, fanciful or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries," he wrote. US media reported that the head of the Justice

Suicides rise in Malawi as virus compound misery

LILONGWE: Loud sobs echoed through a suburb of Malawi's capital Lilongwe in the middle of the night, jolting resident Paul Kaonga from his sleep. The cries came from a nearby house. Kaonga hastily pulled on some clothes and rushed over. Distraught family members informed him that Kondwani Botha, a neighbor, had killed himself. The 31-year-old father had struggled to keep his construction business afloat when coronavirus hit and he sunk into debt. "He was really knee-deep in financial trouble," Kaonga told AFP after the funeral.

It was the third suicide Kaonga had heard of in his neighborhood in the space of two weeks. A few days later, another man who was also struggling financially took his own life. Kaonga, who works as a pastor, blamed economic hardship brought on the pandemic. "People have resorted to lending money from loan sharks just so that they can get by (and) pay their workers," Kaonga explained. "Before you know it, you owe so much that you cannot pay back."

Dwindling incomes

Malawi was already one of the world's poorest countries when the pandemic arrived, further dampening the economy. Around half of Malawi's 18.6 million inhabitants live below the poverty line, and an additional 1.1 million fell into that category this year, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute. Most people in the landlocked southern African country rely on day-to-day street trade and odd jobs stilled by movement restrictions.

Coronavirus hindered "the normal ways of business" in Malawi, said economist Betchani Tchereni, estimating that around 2.7 million people lost income this year. Police spokesman Peter Kalaya suspects sui-

cides have increased as a result. Deaths by suicide recorded between January and August 2020 were more than 50 percent higher than over the same period last year, Kalaya said. The most common reasons were family disputes, chronic illness and inability to pay back debt. "We are greatly troubled," Kalaya said. "We have taken a proactive approach by raising awareness on how citizens can deal with stress," he said, adding that staff had been trained to respond to depressive behavior.

Coronavirus anxiety

Mental health experts have also raised alarm bells over higher suicide risks. Psychologist Beatrice Chiphwanya, who runs a private practice in the city of Blantyre, said she has helped an unusually high number of clients overcome suicidal thoughts this year. "People are dealing with a lot of anxiety (and) uncertainty concerning education, health, finances," Chiphwanya explained. "It is sad that therapy is not a service that has been fully normalised in this country," she added. "It is not affordable, hence a lot of Malawians are still going through with the act of suicide."

Most public facilities in Malawi are too short-staffed and underfunded to provide adequate mental healthcare, particularly during a global health crisis. To date the country has recorded more than 5,950 coronavirus cases, including 185 deaths. Health ministry official Immaculate Chamangwana said psychiatric practitioners in public hospitals were often asked to help out in overwhelmed maternity and paediatric wards even before the pandemic.

"These people are not only concentrating on mental health," Chamangwana told AFP, adding that all hospital workers were given basic mental healthcare training to compensate. Malawian expert Gerald Namwaza, a researcher for the UK-based MentalCare charity, said coronavirus had aggravated the suffering of patients who already faced discrimination and stigma. "In Malawi... people with mental health issues are oftentimes ridiculed and side-lined," Namwaza said. "They are vulnerable and at high risk of committing suicide when sent in isolation due to coronavirus," he added. "It becomes a double jeopardy for them." — AFP



In this file photo taken on Sept 1, 2020, US President Donald Trump and US Attorney General William Barr step off Air Force One upon arrival at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. — AFP

Department's Election Crimes Branch, which oversees investigations into voter fraud, resigned following Barr's order.

The branch director, Richard Pilger, reportedly handed in his resignation within hours of Barr's authorization. In an email to colleagues about Barr's order, Pilger said, "Having familiarized myself with the new policy and its ramifications... I must regretfully resign from my role." The New York Times reported, Barr's order came as Trump battles to reverse Biden's narrow wins in several key states - Pennsylvania, Nevada, Georgia and Arizona - that gave Barack Obama's former vice president enough electoral votes to win the overall presidential election.

The Trump campaign and the Republican party have filed or threatened lawsuits in several of the states, hoping to change the outcome with ballot disqualifications and recounts. But so far, their actions have gone nowhere, and state officials have challenged them to provide proof of allegations. Trump had reportedly pressured Barr to get involved on his behalf even weeks before the election. But the attorney general had disappeared from public view for several weeks, until Monday when he was seen meeting with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.—AFP

'Unfair surveillance'? Online exam software sparks global revolt

NEW YORK: When US law student Areeb Khan tried to sign into the online portal to take his practice bar exam, he was met with a strange message: "Due to poor lighting we are unable to identify your face." Additional lighting did not solve the issue. The 27-year-old even tried to sign in from the brightest room in his New York apartment - the bathroom. Khan began to suspect that it was his dark skin tone that rattled Examplify, a test proctoring platform adopted by New York state's law exams board during the COVID-19 pandemic. It took days of back and forth with customer service before he could sign in. "There are so many systematic barriers preventing people like me from obtaining these degrees - and this is just another example of that," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

As COVID-19 restrictions force students to take remote exams, universities around the world are relying on proctoring software like Examplify. But many students are wary of the technology, including mass data collection and bias in facial recognition. "Students are already under tremendous pressure because of the global pandemic," said Hye Jung Han, a researcher at advocacy group Human Rights Watch who specializes in technology and education.

"And now we have this invasive and unfair surveillance pushing the envelope, invading their private lives." Industry leaders maintain their platforms are a critical part of the infrastructure that allows students to continue learning. "We believe that many lives have been positively impacted by being able to continue their education and careers," said Nici Sandberg, spokeswoman for ExamSoft, which makes the Examplify platform. "ExamSoft maintains a non-biased identification and exam delivery process to ensure that individuals of color are not disproportionately affected."—Reuters

News in brief

Donated heart survives crash

LOS ANGELES: Talk about a brave heart - a donated heart was alive and pumping Monday after surviving the crash of the helicopter transporting the organ to a California hospital and then falling out of the hands of a medical worker who retrieved it. Footage of the incident on Friday showed the aircraft lying on its side on the roof of the University of Southern California's Keck Hospital in east Los Angeles. The aircraft had flown from a hospital in southern California with the donor heart for a transplant and crashed for unknown reasons on the USC hospital helipad. Video footage showed fire crews retrieving the organ and handing it over to a medical worker in hospital scrubs.—AFP

Facebook pulls 'Bannon pages'

SAN FRANCISCO: Following the lead of Twitter and YouTube, Facebook on Monday removed several pages linked to former Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon, whose content pushed unsubstantiated claims of election fraud. According to the human rights group Avaaz, the social media giant took down seven pages directly linked to Bannon that had 2.45 million followers and that the group flagged to Facebook content monitors on Friday. "Our team had identified some of these pages earlier this year for repeatedly sharing misinformation on false 'voter fraud' claims potentially reaching 10 million views in the last week alone," an Avaaz spokesman said.—AFP

Trio on trial over attacks

SAN FERNANDO DE HENARES: The trial opened yesterday of three men accused of helping the jihadists behind the 2017 attacks in Barcelona and a nearby town that killed 16 people. Held under tight security, the trial began shortly after 0900 GMT at a branch of Spain's National Court in San Fernando de Henares near Madrid. A total of 235 witnesses will be called during the trial which is expected to run until December 16. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the double attack which also wounded 140 people on August 17 and 18 in Barcelona and Cambrils, a resort 100 kilometers to the south. While none have been charged with direct responsibility for the bloodshed, the trio are in the dock for helping the attackers, one of whom rammed a van into pedestrians on Barcelona's Las Ramblas boulevard, killing 14, among them two children aged three and seven.—AFP

End of Ethiopia conflict?

ADDIS ABABA: The end of military operations in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray is "coming within reach", Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said yesterday, as the African Union called for an immediate halt to the fighting. The prime minister sent troops and air force jets into Tigray last week in a campaign against the regional ruling party, which has been at odds with Abiy's government for months. Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace laureate, said the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had attacked two federal military bases, something the regional party has denied. Tigray has been under a communications blackout ever since, making it difficult to weigh competing claims about casualties and who holds what territory.—AFP

Mali ex-president Toure dies

BAMAKO: Mali's former president, Amadou Toumani Toure, who steered the Sahel nation to democracy and led it for a decade before being ousted in a coup, has died in Turkey aged 72, a family member and a doctor said yesterday. Toure "died during the night of Monday to Tuesday in Turkey," where he had been taken for health reasons, his nephew Oumar Toure said. A doctor in Bamako said the former leader had recently undergone heart surgery in the city's Luxembourg Hospital, which he had helped to found. Although "everything seemed to be going well," Toure was later transferred to Turkey for medical reasons, the doctor said. "He took a regular flight to Turkey very recently. Unfortunately, he died overnight," the source said. Toure, a former soldier, first took charge of the country for a year in 1991, helping to overthrow the unpopular regime of Moussa Traore, who had been in power since 1968.—AFP

Falkland cleared of mines

LONDON: The Falkland Islands have been cleared of landmines, 38 years after the end of the conflict between Britain and Argentina, the UK government announced yesterday. Thousands of landmines were laid during the 1982 war for control of the remote archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean, and warning signs and fences have been a feature ever since. But the government said the islands - in British hands since 1833 - were now "finally free" of the ordnance after a demining program finished three years ahead of schedule. The UK-funded program was launched in 2009 and carried out by a team of mostly Zimbabwean deminers. Residents will celebrate by playing cricket and football on a beach previously left inaccessible by the lethal unexploded ordnance.—AFP

International

Trackers to mask detectors:
India bets on COVID-19 tech

Tracker can tell where someone sleeps at night

NEW DELHI: From a tracker that can tell where someone sleeps at night to a device detecting whether they have a mask on or not, India's government is betting on hi-tech solutions to fight COVID-19, despite growing privacy concerns. Officials have called on local firms to develop technology powered by artificial intelligence (AI) to help stem the spread of the novel coronavirus. More than 8.5 million people in India have been infected by the virus, according to the Johns Hopkins University's tracker, making it the worst-affected country after the United States.

With nationwide lockdown restrictions lifted, people are starting to go back to work and travel again, prompting public and private players to turn to data-driven tech to track their movements, check temperatures and enforce social distancing. "The world is getting back on its feet and a new sense of normal is coming back. Now is the time to put these solutions in place so people feel safe," said Akshata Kari, co-founder of Pixuate, an AI-based video analytics firm in tech hub Bengaluru.

Pixuate was one of six companies selected in May by the government's Technology Development Board (TDB) to develop "a low-cost solution to identify persons with abnormal body temperature in a crowd" and alert authorities. Pixuate's product, which uses thermal cameras, has features such as facial recognition, and the ability to track a person - even if they are wearing a mask - and predict their age, gender and race, the TDB said in a statement.

Such data-driven technologies are gaining momentum across the world as countries look for ways to slow the virus' spread, but their merit and effectiveness are debatable, warn privacy rights advocates. Urvashi Aneja, founding director of policy and advocacy collective Tandem Research, which has been reviewing tech tools being used during the

pandemic, described some as "alarming". "When you create a society where you have extensive monitoring of citizens all the time, you also create a situation where people start self-sanctioning or self-censoring. And that is fundamentally not good for a democracy," said Aneja.

Pixuate is set to install its new product by the end of the year in "some very large businesses and also government entities", Kari said, without naming them. Last week, authorities fitted the device at a popular shopping hub in southern Bengaluru city as part of a clean air project aimed at making the area pedestrian-only on weekends, Kari added. "There are behavioral changes that are happening, and the checks, like temperature, wearing masks, social distance protocols or the way we greet each other ... have changed for good," she said. "In the post-COVID world, this will be the new normal, especially if we want to prevent another contagion."

'Problematic'

At least 88 tech tools have been rolled out to support India's public health response to the pandemic, said Aneja, a speaker

Data-driven tech gaining momentum

at the Thomson Reuters Foundation's annual Trust Conference today. In April, the federal government launched the contact-tracing mobile app Aarogya Setu, or "Health Bridge", which gathers users' GPS location data via Bluetooth to build a centralized database. While use of the app is generally voluntary, it has been made mandatory for food delivery workers, government and some private sector employees.

Also earlier this year, municipal workers in northern Chandigarh city were told they had to wear GPS watches that tracked their efficiency, triggering backlash from employees, campaigners and tech experts over privacy concerns. Authorities say certain measures are needed to keep people safe. "Technology should be used for improving access to

the largest opposition faction, the Islamic Action Front, political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, is fielding candidates in some seats despite the banning of its parent organization in a Saudi-backed move earlier this year. In 2016, the IAF won 16 seats in the 130-seat parliament. In 2010 and 2013, it boycotted polls.

Tribal allegiances

Leftist and Arab nationalist groups are also fielding candidates, alongside a much larger number of independents, many of them representatives of powerful tribes considered loyal to the monarchy. "This vote is different, with people in greater distress because of the epidemic," said Oraib Rintawi of the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies. "People will vote based on tribal allegiances, for a candidate from their own clan or for one who offers to provide them services." Resource-poor and dependent on foreign aid, Jordan has built up a public debt that exceeds 100 percent of GDP.

Unemployment stood at 23 percent in the first quarter, before the pandemic had even fully hit. "Let's hope the winners heed our demands," Jazi Mutlaq told AFP after casting her vote in the Baqa'a refugee camp, north of Amman. "We have many young people out of work, people's financial

mercurial White House chief enjoyed with a small group of other strong-willed world leaders-helped mitigate much of the damage.

Now, with Trump on the way out, "Erdogan has a reason to be anxious," Middle East Institute analyst Gonul Tol wrote in a research note. "I don't think the Biden administration will be as indulgent of Turkey, in Syria and elsewhere," added Sam Heller, an independent analyst on Syria.

'Tension and apprehension'

More than two days after Biden's victory was called by US media, Turkish officials remained conspicuously silent, saying they would only comment once the results were "official". "Under a Biden administration, relations between Washington and Ankara will undoubtedly kick off with tension and apprehension on both sides," Asli Aydintasbas of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) wrote. Setting the new tone, Turkish officials underscored a little-noticed interview that Biden gave to The New York Times last December.

A bit where he called Erdogan an "autocrat" went viral in August, drawing vocal condemnation

ities blame the attack on Taliban militants - who deny involvement - and say the assailants acted on a tip-off from her father who vehemently opposed her working outside the home.

For Khatera, the attack caused not just the loss of her sight but the loss of a dream she had battled to achieve - to have an independent career. She joined the Ghazni police as an officer in its crime branch a few months ago. "I wish I had served in police at least a year. If this had happened to me after that, it would have been less painful. It happened too soon ... I only got to work and live my dream for three months," she told Reuters.

The attack on Khatera, who only uses one name, is indicative of a growing trend, human rights activists say, of an intense and often violent backlash against women taking jobs, especially in public roles. In Khatera's case, being a police officer could have also



NEW DELHI: A medical worker collects a swab sample for a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) for the COVID-19 coronavirus at a dispensary yesterday. —AFP

and quality of healthcare," said Praveen Gedam, deputy CEO of the National Health Authority, in emailed comments. "Advances in digital health must be accompanied by necessary safeguards and protections of the privacy of individuals, and due process must be followed."

In April, government tenders seeking a "personnel tracking GPS solution" and a "COVID-19 patient tracking tool" raised red flags among digital rights groups, who warned they went beyond healthcare and ventured into mass surveillance. Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL), under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said it wanted the first device to be wearable, like a

wristwatch, so it can track the locations of medical workers during work hours.

The patient tracking tool, BECIL said, should detect "where the suspect has spent most of his or her time and who all he or she has met" as well as where they order food from, go for walks and sleep at night. This prompted the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), a New Delhi-based digital rights group, to file a legal notice to BECIL to stop the procurement process. Devdutta Mukhopadhyay, a lawyer with the IFF, said BECIL has not yet responded to the organization's legal notice and it was unclear whether the government enterprise had acquired the devices. —Reuters

Jordan votes in election clouded by pandemic

AMMAN: Jordanians voted yesterday in a parliamentary election overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic which has dealt a heavy blow to the Arab country's already debt-ridden economy. More than 50,000 security force personnel were on hand to ensure masks were worn inside polling stations and social distancing maintained. Authorities ruled that the four-yearly election should go ahead but voters who have tested positive for the novel coronavirus face up to a year in prison if they ignore instructions to stay home. On the eve of polling day, the kingdom had confirmed around 115,000 infections and 1,295 deaths in its population of about 10 million, more than half of them Palestinian.

Parliament has limited authority in Jordan, where the king has wide powers to rule by decree. But it has provided a platform for the opposition when it has not boycotted the elections. This year,

With Erdogan's phone pal Trump out, Turkey worries about Biden

ANKARA: With Joe Biden, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will probably be unable to influence US policy with a simple phone call, as he had occasionally done with Donald Trump. But that does not mean the US president-elect will push Turkey away, instead hoping to re-engage the geographically strategic and militarily powerful NATO ally on tougher terms, analysts say. Once smooth, US-Turkish relations suffered from the failed overthrow of Erdogan in 2016, blamed on a US-based Muslim preacher that Turkey has unsuccessfully sought to have extradited.

The two countries are also at loggerheads over the US support of a Kurdish militia in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria. Ankara views US-backed Syrian Kurds as terrorists who threaten Turkey's security. Yet the personal bond between Trump and Erdogan-similar to one the

Afghan woman shot, blinded, for getting a job

KABUL: The last thing 33-year-old Khatera saw were the three men on a motorcycle who attacked her just after she left her job at a police station in Afghanistan's central Ghazni province, shooting at her and stabbing her with a knife in the eyes. Waking up in hospital, everything was dark. "I asked the doctors, why I can't see anything? They told me that my eyes are still bandaged because of the wounds. But at that moment, I knew my eyes had been taken from me," she said. She and local author-



AMMAN: A voter casts her ballot at a polling station yesterday. —AFP

situation is bad," the 70-year-old said. Acil al-Lawzi, 35, said she was worried about the impact of distance learning on children's education. Schools have been closed since March and many Jordanian children do not have access to the internet for online lessons. Some 4.5 million Jordanians are eligible to vote. Polls close at 7 pm (1700 GMT), with results expected in the coming days. —AFP

from Ankara. Biden also suggested the US "embolden" opposition figures to allow them "to take on and defeat Erdogan". Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said the remarks showed "pure ignorance, arrogance and hypocrisy". Turkish officials nonetheless insist they will work with any US administration. "We put our relations above party politics," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Friday. Turkish media have also speculated that, sensing his victory, Ankara contacted Biden's team before the vote. "Turkey is preparing for Biden," journalist Murat Yetkin said in a webinar last week.

Even under Trump, the relationship was strained over the eastern Mediterranean, where Ankara is hunting for natural gas in waters claimed by Cyprus and Greece. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Greece in September to show support for Athens. "Ankara fears Biden might cultivate even closer ties to Greece and get even tougher on Turkey," Tol said. And when Ankara kept a US pastor accused of espionage under arrest, Trump struck back at the Turkish economy, plunging the country into a currency crisis that wiped out people's savings in 2018. —AFP

angered the Taliban. The rights activists believe a mix of Afghanistan's conservative social norms and an emboldened Taliban gaining influence while the United States withdraws its troops from the country is driving the escalation.

The Taliban are currently negotiating in Doha, Qatar, with the Afghan government to broker a peace deal in which many expect them to formally return to power, but progress is slow and there has been an uptick in fighting and attacks on officials and prominent women around the country. In recent months, the Taliban have said they will respect women's rights under Sharia law but many educated women say they have doubts. The insurgent group has opposed a reform to add mother's names to identity cards, one of the first concrete stances they have revealed on women's rights as they engage in the peace process. —Reuters

News in brief

Lebanon back in lockdown

BEIRUT: Lebanon's caretaker prime minister yesterday announced a fresh two-week lockdown to stem the spread of coronavirus despite a grinding economic crisis that has already battered businesses. "We've reached a stage of critical danger as private and public hospitals don't have the capacity to receive severe cases," Hassan Diab said in a televised address. He said the lockdown, with limited exemptions, would go into force from Saturday until November 30. The outgoing premier, who stepped down in the wake of a devastating August 4 explosion at Beirut's port, said some industries will be excluded from restrictions. The health sector and other vital industries would also be allowed to operate, he said, without providing details. The airport too will remain open, Lebanese media cited the Higher Defence Council as saying. —AFP

Cambodia razes US facility

PHNOM PENH: The United States expressed disappointment yesterday that Cambodia had demolished a second American-funded military facility without warning, as the kingdom turns to China to expand a naval base. Cambodian authorities this month finished dismantling a maintenance facility at Ream base - built in 2017 with US money - after razing a tactical naval headquarters there in September. Cambodia's Defense Minister Tea Banh confirmed the demolition to AFP on Tuesday, drawing a rebuke from the US embassy. "We are disappointed that Cambodian military authorities have demolished another maritime security facility funded by the United States, without notification or explanation," embassy spokesman Chad Roedemeier said. The Ream base is strategically located in the Gulf of Thailand, giving access to the fiercely contested South China Sea - a key global shipping route. —AFP

Philippine journalist killed

MANILA: A Philippine journalist who survived a previous attempt on his life by pretending to be dead was killed outside his home yesterday, authorities said, in the latest such murder. Virgilio Maganes, 62, who was a commentator for radio station DWPR in the northern province of Pangasinan, was shot six times by motorcycle-riding gunmen, police Major Christian Alucod told AFP. He died instantly. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) condemned the murder, which it said was the 18th such killing since President Rodrigo Duterte took power in 2016. "His death is an indictment on this government's empty boast that press freedom is alive and well in the country," the group said. Police said the motive for the killing was not clear. The NUJP said Maganes survived a 2016 shooting by "playing dead" after being hit. —AFP

Journalist murdered in Mexico

CELAYA: A journalist was killed by gunmen in central Mexico on Monday, authorities said - the seventh such murder this year in one of the world's most dangerous countries for reporters. Israel Vazquez Rangel, who worked for the online newspaper El Salmantino in violence-plagued Guanajuato state, was shot while out reporting and later died in hospital, prosecutors said in a statement. His newspaper said the 31-year-old was covering the discovery of human remains in the city of Salamanca when he was attacked by two men. "We vigorously condemn the cowardly and atrocious attack against our dear colleague Israel Vazquez while he was carrying out his honorable journalistic work," the daily said in a statement. —AFP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020

Volvo rolls out new S90 and V90 series in Kuwait

BNK Automotive marks a milestone, sales of Volvo cars jump 250%



KUWAIT: BNK Automotive-Volvo Car Kuwait unveiled Volvo's S90 and V90 facelift series at Khalijia Studio in Sharq yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Bader Al-Kharafi (right) and Cherif El Sayed during the launch ceremony.



The new V90 after its facelift.

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Volvo yesterday unveiled the facelift of its S90 and V90 series at Khalijia Studio in Sharq. The new S90 series (2021 model facelift) is Volvo's premium 4-door, 5-seat flagship, built on the Scalable Product Architecture (SPA), Volvo's advanced modular vehicle platform that underpins all Volvo cars in the 90 and 60 Series launched in recent years.

"We are proud to unveil our new facelift in Kuwait. Even though we all have had a challenging year with the global pandemic, we have decided that it is crucial to go ahead with the launch that coincides with BNK Automotive's first anniversary in Kuwait as the official Volvo partner in Kuwait. In just a year and despite the pandemic, the team has worked hard to reposition the Volvo Car brand in the Kuwaiti market. Today we are proud to announce that we have increased sales by 250 percent YTD, a fantastic milestone to celebrate," Cherif El Sayed, General Manager, BNK Automotive-Volvo Car Kuwait said.

"We continue to grow month by month and are on our way to build a robust organization ready to excel and embark on a continued growth journey starting from 2021. We are also extremely thankful to our clients for helping us regain the unprecedented trust and confidence in Volvo as a brand. BNK Automotive treasures this trust and we promise to continue shaping the future of the automotive industry to enhance customer service and the consumer journey in Kuwait during the years to come," Sayed added.

With the S90 and V90 series MY21, customers can

enjoy additional safety features, wireless charging technology, added sensors and robotic features. "The iPad like screen in the center console of the car helps you control all the features of our cars. The main differences in our MY21 are the elegant facelifts notable in both the front and back of the car, hidden exhaust pipes in preparation for the electrification strategy, a wireless charging pad, a highly sensitive air filter with particle sensor so that people can enjoy the finest cabin air quality," Sayed said.

Volvo's electrification strategy is that by 2025, all cars will be electrified - meaning all cars will be offered in both hybrid and fully electric, he said. "In Kuwait, we are proud to be the only brand that has sold 30+ hybrids in the market. The T8 engine combines a premium electric driving experience while giving you the power you need on the road with an output of 410 HP," he noted.

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, Volvo's strategy is clear, according to Sayed. "With or without the pandemic, we are going digital to enhance the customer experience and address the pain points of our clients. Soon, Volvo owners will be able to buy, sell, test-drive, speak to a sales consultant and service their cars from the comfort of their homes. The buying experience is slowly moving online in this industry, and we are happy to serve our clients in the most modern and efficient way possible," Sayed said.

Sayed said technology in Volvo cars will be continuously evolving, "where we anticipate Google Assist and machine learning in the new platforms, starting with the XC40 fully electric next year". "The car will



be able to interact with the driver. The car will be able to detect and learn the way you talk and the way you pronounce words. It will be learned by the car and it will give you honest feedback when you are driving. We will have technology in the car that will protect drivers - the car will know through the pattern of your eyelids if you are intoxicated. The car will automatically stop and will not move at all if you are intoxicated.

The car will reduce speed while on roads and highways based on the speed limit set by the government," he said.

"We are competing with premium brands like BMW, Audi and Mercedes," Sayed mentioned. After repositioning the Volvo brand in Kuwait, Volvo's market share increased from a mere 2 percent to 5 percent, and it is very optimistic for a larger share in the coming years.



Business

Qualitynet is now 'solutions by stc'

Merging business solutions and services under one roof



KUWAIT: (From left) stc CEO Eng Maziad Bin Nasser Al-Harbi and CEO of solutions by stc Mohammed Nizar Al-Nusif during the ceremony.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of the new brand for its subsidiary, Qualitynet, to become solutions by stc, to serve as the Company's specialized business arm offering one-stop business solutions for the first time ever in Kuwait.

stc released a statement expressing that one of the main pillars in its current strategy, "AHEAD", is to enhance and widen the offerings available to its business customers. The Company aims to achieve this objective by introducing innovative solutions in cooperation with its strategic partners, associates, and subsidiaries, who hold extensive experience and a strong track record within the B2B market.

Commenting on the official launch, engineer Maziad Bin Nasser Al-Harbi, CEO of stc said, "This comes as an additional step in our journey to elevate and strengthen the quality of the solutions offered by stc. In 2019, we witnessed a historic transaction taking place when stc fully acquired Qualitynet. This milestone successfully combined the strengths of two powerful companies, setting the stage for a transformative and empowering future to achieve the desired goals of both individual and corporate customers. Established in 1998, Qualitynet, now called solutions by stc, was Kuwait's top ranked internet, data services, enterprise, and ICT solutions provider, and held a vision

- Al-Harbi: We stand by our commitment to effectively contribute to the telecom world, in line with Kuwait's 2035 vision
- Al-Nusif: Our aim is to redefine the business sector with limitless possibilities and customized solutions

focused on empowering customers, applying futuristic methods, and enabling a world of capabilities."

Al-Harbi indicated that the steps taken by stc to enable the digital transformation and build on its strategic position to support businesses come hand in hand with Kuwait's 2035 vision, which aims to transform Kuwait into a global financial and trading hub. Al-Harbi expressed that stc is fully aware of its potentials and capabilities in contributing towards the desired transformation and therefore, looks towards exploring all the possible opportunities to help in achieving the ambitious vision.

Al-Harbi added, "Looking ahead, we strive to maintain our position as a leading telecommunications and information technology solutions provider that applies the highest international standards and best practices. Delivering solutions to real world business opportunities has always been the key strength of our business model. By combining our strengths, time efficient implementation and cus-

tomized solutions, our clients are able to quickly realize their return on investment."

Redefining the communication experience and business sector solutions

In his role, Mohammed Nizar Al-Nusif, CEO of solutions by stc, said, "Everything is set to redefine the communications experience with limitless possibilities and customized services. An in-depth understanding of customer needs has well positioned us as a regional leader in providing exceptional communication fixed and mobile services and information technology solutions that meet the needs of our diverse customer base."

Al-Nusif added, "We are proud to exercise our unique and pioneering concepts to support business owners on both local and regional levels. Having said that, we will spare no effort in developing effective solutions that support most business segments, while leveraging the strength of our par-

ent company and the stc group companies in the region to achieve this goal. We have combined the best people, systems and connection to foster an unmatched experience to our customers, aiding our rapid progression from an internet service provider to a leader in ICT and IoT domains."

This initiative falls within solution by stc's strategic plan to provide world-class connectivity and IT solutions under one roof, paving the way for digital transformation in businesses. The offerings range from connectivity solutions, fixed, mobile or 5G wireless services, 5G technology, ICT, IoT and the IT products and services.

With stc's extensive experience combined with its subsidiaries and associates, the Company has been spearheading the market with a focus on continuous innovation, quality and a strong emphasis on HR trainings and development programs. The dynamic business model has enabled stc to provide pioneering solutions that impacted markets, upset status quo, and initiated new trends.

The solutions provided by solutions by stc have expanded its geographical wholesale footprint in Kuwait and Iraq, emerging as a regional hub for businesses. Through this acquisition, solutions by stc - formerly known as "Qualitynet" has now become a critical component of stc Kuwait, serving the B2B market across various sectors, which has strengthened stc's position as the first choice in providing integrated solutions to businesses.

Big Tech welcomes Biden presidency, but battles loom

WASHINGTON: Silicon Valley is welcoming the election of Joe Biden as US president even as it girds for a series of battles over tech policy in Washington. The transition comes amid a growing "techlash" as lawmakers and policymakers struggle over antitrust enforcement, social media regulation, immigration and other contentious issues. "Tech companies are happy with the outcome but there is some trepidation as well," said Bob O'Donnell, analyst at Technalysis Research.

O'Donnell said scrutiny of tech giants will likely continue or even intensify in Washington regardless of which party is in power.

Darrell West of the Brookings Institution's Center for Technology Innovation said "both Republicans and Democrats have complaints about how the sector is operating and there is going to be more oversight and regulation." Nonetheless, praise poured in for Biden after his victory from key tech leaders including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Microsoft president Brad Smith and Facebook's number two Sheryl Sandberg.

Many progressives have pushed for an aggressive stand over concerns that Silicon Valley firms have grown too powerful, leading to greater economic inequality.

At the same time, the Biden campaign has cultivated ties with current and former tech personalities; and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has ties to the sector, including her friend Sandberg of Facebook and her brother-in-law Tony West, Uber's chief legal officer. Here are tech issues likely to confront the Biden administration:

Antitrust

Potentially the biggest threat to the sector is on antitrust-specifically the idea voiced by some Democrats of breaking up the largest technology firms. "Companies like Apple, Google and Facebook are going to have a rougher time," said Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights & Strategy.

While it would take a lengthy effort to break up major firms, the administration could take aim at Google's control of digital advertising with a view to make that market more competitive, Moorhead said, or target Apple's 30 percent commission for its online App Store. Robert Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, said he expects "enormous pressure" in this area because "the left wing of the Democratic Party has made antitrust a central pillar of their agenda," but that breakups are unlikely unless Congress revises pertinent laws.

Internet regulation

The transition comes amid intense debate in Washington over internet regulations including social media liability and online privacy. Most contentious appears to be the so-called Section 230 law which protects online services from liability



from content posted by others. This has been a target from both the left and right, even as digital rights activists warn it is the cornerstone of online free speech.

Biden has said Section 230 should be "revoked" but has offered no details of any plan to reform the law. Atkinson said Biden's comments are "more campaign talk than anything else" and does not expect an aggressive push to repeal the law given its critical importance to the internet.

Biden is widely expected to reverse the Trump administration's course by supporting net neutrality, which would require internet providers to allow access to all services without discrimination or unfair fees. His administration will also confront choices on online privacy and law enforcement's access to encrypted content, major points of contention between Washington and Silicon Valley. — AFP

UK redundancies hit record high as job market slumps

LONDON: British employers laid off a record number of staff in the third quarter and the jobless rate jumped as the labor market weakened before finance minister Rishi Sunak made a U-turn on COVID support measures. A record 314,000 British workers were made redundant in the three months to September, 181,000 more than in the second quarter, the Office for National Statistics said yesterday. The unemployment rate rose to 4.8 percent, the highest rate since the three months to November 2016, from 4.5 percent in the three months to August, as expected in a Reuters poll of economists.

While the public and investors were cheered on Monday by news that an experimental COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90 percent effective in trials, the ONS data showed hard months lie ahead for many Britons. Last week, Sunak was forced to extend his costly coronavirus furlough scheme, which provides 80 percent of the pay of temporarily laid-off workers, until the end of March, and he outlined billions of pounds in other forms of help.

"Unfortunately the extension of the furlough scheme didn't come soon enough for some workers but it should help stem the rise in unemployment over the winter," said Jon Hudson, a fund manager at Premier Miton. The BoE expects around 5.5 million employees will need furlough support during an England-wide lockdown this month, up from just over 2 million in October.

The end to the Brexit transition period in seven



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak as he gives an update of the economy in the House of Commons in London in this file photo. — AFP

weeks' time has also weighed on employers' confidence, with no trade deal struck yet between Britain and the European Union. Sunak said after the data was published that the ONS figures "underline the scale of the challenge we're facing".

Sunak's critics have said his previous reluctance to extend the program led to unnecessary redundancies. "The government's failure to face up to the scale of this jobs crisis in time has cost people their livelihoods," said Jonathan Reynolds, the jobs spokesman for the opposition Labor Party.

Employment fell by 164,000 during the quarter, a sharper drop than expected. Tax data also released on Tuesday showed a 33,000 decline in the number of employees in October, and almost 800,000 job losses since March. The number of job vacancies showed signs of recovery, rising by 146,000 in the three months to October to 525,000, still well below levels above 800,000 seen before the pandemic. — Reuters

With Joe Biden, Europe hopes for friendlier trade

PARIS: The final votes have yet to be tallied in the United States but European exporters are already excited about the prospect that Joe Biden may put an end to a trade war and lift US tariffs on their products. While a presidency under Biden, who was given as winner of the US election on Saturday, will certainly differ in style from Donald Trump, experts warn that European manufacturers shouldn't get too ahead of themselves.

The Democrat will also be tough on the issue of defending US trade interests, they say.

"We hope that the United States changes direction on trade... by renouncing... the autarkist policy of the Trump presidency," said Nicola Bertinelli, head of the consortium of parmesan producers which send more than 10 tons of the hard Italian cheese to the US every year.

Italy's main farmers union, Coldiretti, called for the lifting of the 500 million euros in trade sanctions imposed by the Trump administration on products such as salami, mortadella, Gorgonzola cheese, fruits and vegetables. Over in France, Jerome Despey, head of the FNSEA farmers' union, said he hoped "that one of the first topics (of discussion between the new US administration and Europe) will be on dropping" the 25 percent tariffs on French wine. And Dcoop, one of the main cooperatives of Spanish olive farmers, also said it hoped the Biden administration would abandon the 25 percent tariff on their products. — AFP

News in brief

Adidas reports Q3 rebound

FRANKFURT: German sports manufacturer Adidas said yesterday that sales and profitability recovered in the third quarter as shops reopened, alongside booming e-commerce sales, with a modest profit expected in the final quarter. Adidas reported net profit of 546 million euros (\$646 million) for the three months to September, down 15.5 percent from 646 million euros in the same period of the previous year. Third-quarter revenues fell 7.0 percent year-on-year to 6.0 billion euros, but beat expectations according to a survey by financial services provider FactSet, with e-commerce sales up 51 percent. — AFP

Air Shuttle's cash dwindling

OSLO, Norway: Beleaguered low-cost carrier Norwegian Air Shuttle has only 318 million euros to see it through the winter, its quarterly report showed yesterday, a day after Oslo refused to mount another bailout. "This crisis is far from over and as we enter the traditionally more difficult winter trading environment it is crucial that the Norwegian aviation industry receive further support if we are going to survive," chief executive Jacob Schram said in a statement. Like its rivals, Norwegian has been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic which has paralyzed the aviation sector since March. — AFP

French Q3 jobless rate rises

PARIS: France's unemployment rate rose to 9.0 percent in the third quarter from 7.1 percent in the second quarter, the INSEE national statistics office said yesterday, as the eurozone's second-biggest economy grapples with the hit caused by the COVID-19 crisis. INSEE had already warned earlier this year that France's unemployment data for the first two quarters of 2020 was skewed because of the mid-March to mid-May lockdown, which reduced the number of those technically classified as unemployed since it had been impossible for them to look for jobs. — Reuters

German investors glum

FARNKFURT: German investor confidence fell again in November as Europe's largest economy toughened restrictions to curb a second coronavirus wave, a key survey showed yesterday. The ZEW institute's monthly barometer measuring economic expectations fell to 39.0 points, from 56.1 points in October, reaching its lowest level since April. The figure, based on a survey of 183 financial market experts, came in slightly below analyst expectations and marked the second monthly decline in morale. — AFP

Business

KEO International Consultants partners with Microsoft to reimagine workplace

Microsoft Cloud delivers digital transformation for regional design, planning

KUWAIT: KEO International Consultants, the region's renowned creative enterprise of planning, design, engineering and project management, has partnered with Microsoft to reimagine its workplace by adopting its cloud and productivity solutions. The move will empower KEO to foster productivity and collaboration among its workforce, while achieving operational excellence to better deliver services to its clients.

"At KEO we are committed to resolving complexity and realizing opportunity in the way our clients and partners develop the world. Technology plays a crucial role in delivering upon this mission and our partnership with Microsoft will enable us to achieve these goals," said Damir Jaksic, Chief Information Officer, at KEO. "The global pandemic

provided us with a fresh challenge, as our newly commissioned office soon became unreachable during the lockdown. Yet thanks to Azure, Teams, and Microsoft 365, the full gamut of our operations was active for all new team members, to work remotely and ensure full business continuity. The Microsoft Cloud and its suite of innovations are enabling us to reinvent our workplace as we navigate the new normal," Damir added.

Taking advantage of Microsoft 365, Azure, and Power Apps, KEO International Consultants is now delivering enhanced value to employees and customers in myriad ways. Microsoft Power Apps has significantly strengthened corporate governance and improve operating agility. Microsoft Teams facilitates large remote meetings with sharing and

collaboration achieved with ease, and Azure is continually improving the company's cloud journey delivering a more secure and resilient workplace.

"KEO International Consultants has taken strides in its digital transformation by adopting Microsoft innovations that completely reimagine the workplace and adapt to the new normal. We are excited to support their journey and empowering them to achieve more," said Alaeddine Karim, Country Manager, Microsoft Kuwait. "As we move forward through this pandemic from a responding phase to a recovering phase - to a reimagining phase, we are transforming Kuwaiti organizations with the power of technology, thereby delivering on the key aspects of Kuwait Vision 2035," Karim concluded.



Damir Jaksic



Alaeddine Karim

Gulf Bank winner Al-Salem claims cash prize worth 12 times her salary

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the winner of its tenth monthly Kuwaiti Salary Account draw of the year. This month's lucky winner, Aisha Khaled Mubarak Al-Salem, will take home a cash prize worth 12 times her salary. The Kuwaiti Salary Account draw took place at Gulf Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

With the 2020 Kuwaiti Salary Offer, new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary. Customers are also enrolled in a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize, a cash prize of up to 100 times the winner's salary.

Gulf Bank's Salary Account also gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank, or an interest-free loan of up to KD 15,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year. They can also apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000 with a repayment period of 15 years, or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's Salary Account, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's branches or log on to www.e-gulfbank.com. Customers can also use the WhatsApp service on 1805805 for round-the-clock assistance from Gulf Bank representatives, or call the Customer Contact Center on the same number.

EU to slap US with Boeing tariffs, but lauds Biden

BRUSSELS: The EU pushed ahead on Monday with tariffs against several US imports as part of the long-running Boeing-Airbus row, despite hope for a trade truce following Joe Biden's election. The decision is the latest twist in the 16-year trade battle over aircraft subsidies that turned increasingly sour under the protectionist instincts of US President Donald Trump.

Some had suggested Europe might delay the tit-for-tat levies after the victory of Biden, who is to replace Trump in January and is seen as more sympathetic to Europe and more of a multilateralist on trade. "The US has imposed tariffs following the WTO ruling in the Airbus case," said the EU's top trade official, Valdis Dombrovskis ahead of a virtual EU trade ministers meeting.

"Now, we have a WTO ruling also in our Boeing case, allowing us to impose our tariffs and that's what we are doing," EU executive vice president Dombrovskis said. Instead of hitting the pause button, Dombrovskis urged Washington to pursue a comprehensive deal on aviation subsidies worldwide to end the row. "As it has been stated on numbers of occasions from the EU side, we're ready to suspend or withdraw our tariffs anytime when the US suspends or withdraws their tariffs," Dombrovskis said.

The decision merely "mirrored" the US decision to implement tariffs over Airbus a year ago, he added.

According to a list of targets seen by AFP, the EU is expected to impose tariffs on aircraft made in the United States, along with tractors, sweet potatoes, peanuts, frozen orange juice, tobacco, ketchup and Pacific salmon.

Dombrovskis, the former Latvian prime minister, spoke before the EU trade ministers discussed how Europeans can face up to challenges from both the US and China. Reactions in Europe "have shown that there are great expectations after the election victory of Joe Biden," said German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier, an ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel. —AFP

Airlines take off but glovemakers blow out on vaccine news

SINGAPORE: Airlines have taken off in Asia and casino operators are enjoying a massive winning streak as news of a vaccine breakthrough fuelled hopes yesterday that the world can finally begin returning to normal.

Japan Airlines soared by a fifth, gaming giant Wynn Macau rallied 10 percent and the owner of Singapore's Universal Studios piled on seven percent with traders betting on a recovery in the shattered tourism sector. But it wasn't all sunshine and light on trading floors as surgical glovemakers, tech giants and others that have benefited from the Covid-19 impact this year were tossed away.

Global markets have soared after US giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech announced Monday that a Phase 3 trial showed their vaccine candidate was 90 percent effective in preventing coronavirus infections. Investors have been rushing back into embattled companies that have been ravaged by lockdowns imposed around the world to contain the disease, which has killed more than 1.2 million people. "Bombed-out sectors such as aviation, travel, leisure, big oil and yes, our beloved banks, time-warped back to 2019 with giant rallies," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst from OANDA.

Airlines, suffering their worst-ever crisis, led the way, with Japan Airlines cruising up 20 percent, Singapore Airlines flying 14 percent and Cathay Pacific rocketing more than 11 percent on hopes people will be able to get back in the air.

Bets on a rebound in the gambling sector ramped up as Hong Kong-listed Macau casino operators piled on the cash-as well as Wynn's rally, Sands China put on nearly seven percent and Galaxy Entertainment surged five percent.

Genting Singapore, which operates a casino and a Universal Studios theme park in the city-state, chalked up more than seven percent. Expectations that demand will pick up as people travel more pushed energy firms higher, with Hong Kong-listed

impose a tax on companies relocating jobs overseas, to help boost US manufacturing jobs.

Corporate taxes

Many companies benefited from President Donald Trump's 2017 tax overhaul, which lowered the corporate tax rate to 21 percent from 35 percent. Biden has proposed raising the corporate rate to 28 percent. The plan also calls for a minimum tax on corporations making \$100 million or more, while Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have expressed support for a financial transaction tax, a small fee on equity and debt trading. The new administration is also expected to restore power to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), an independent agency created after the 2008 global financial crisis to defend consumers against predatory loans and credit card policies, after Trump defanged the agency.

Clean energy

The new president has pledged to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and reach net zero emissions by 2050, including carbon-free electricity production by 2035, phasing out coal. He has said he would not issue new permits to drill for oil and gas on state-owned land and offshore. But he would not ban the controversial technique of hydraulic



SINGAPORE: Airlines have taken off in Asia and casino operators are enjoying a massive winning streak as news of a vaccine breakthrough fuelled hopes yesterday that the world can finally begin returning to normal.

CNOOC up more than 12 percent and Papua New Guinea-focused Oil Search putting on 16 percent in Sydney.

Property developers were also winners with Singapore-traded CapitaLand putting on about four percent while Hong Kong's New World Development moved up more than five percent.

However, there were also big losers-firms that have enjoyed large gains for most of the year thanks to the surge in demand for medical equipment to treat the virus and technology from people stuck at home in lockdowns. Malaysia's Top Glove, the world's biggest maker of surgical gloves, fell more than eight percent in Kuala Lumpur-though that was a small bite out of the more than 400 percent rise it has enjoyed since the start of the year. Another glove manufacturer, Supermax, cratered more than eight percent in Malaysia, having racked up gains of more than 1,100 percent in the past 10 months.

Meanwhile, gaming giants were deep in the red, just as the sector prepares for the holiday season and the next era of computer consoles with Microsoft putting its new Xbox on sale.

Sony, which puts its PlayStation 5 on shelves tomorrow, shed three percent in Tokyo while rival Nintendo dropped more than two percent. Nintendo has climbed around 25 percent this year while Sony was up about 20 percent. And China's Tencent, one of the world's largest computer game makers, slipped more than three percent in Hong Kong-a fraction of the 60 percent gain it has enjoyed in 2020. OANDA's Halley said more positive news on vaccines may come in the following weeks, but also sounded a note of caution.

"Of course, this won't magically reset the clock to November 2019," he said. "The logistical challenges in production and distribution are immense." —AFP

How will Biden change life for US businesses?

NEW YORK: President-elect Joe Biden, a champion of green energy and a higher minimum wage, could prove to be a game-changer for some US businesses.

How far-reaching the new administration's reforms can be, however, will depend largely on who controls the Senate, and that outcome will not be decided until January 5 after two run-off elections in Georgia.

Trade

President Donald Trump has shaken up US trade relations, imposing steep tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods, sparking retaliation from trading partners and pushing prices higher. While he is likely to be more predictable than the current occupant of the White House who changes policy by tweet, Biden's trade policy stance will not necessarily change much.

He has said some tariffs are justified, like those on Chinese steel, but any easing of tensions with China, a key market for many sectors, could be favorable to companies like Boeing. Biden wants to

Philippine economy shrinks 11.5% in third quarter

MANILA: The Philippine economy shrank for the third straight quarter in July-September, official data showed yesterday, but there were signs activity was slowly picking up as coronavirus restrictions eased and more businesses reopened. President Rodrigo Duterte's government has been gradually loosening measures introduced in March to contain the virus after they sent the country plunging into its first

recession in three decades and pushed many families deeper into poverty.

Gross domestic product fell 11.5 percent on-year in the latest quarter, the Philippine Statistics Authority said. That was worse than the 9.6 percent contraction forecast by economists in a Bloomberg survey.

But it was smaller than the downwardly revised 16.9 percent fall in the April-June and 0.7 drop in the first three months of the year. Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua said the narrower contraction in the latest period indicated the economy was on the mend.

"The path is clearer for a stronger bounce back in 2021," Chua said. Consumer spending fell 9.3 percent as many people fearful of catching the virus that has infected around 400,000 in the



NEW YORK: People watch a speech by Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden after media announced he won the 2020 US presidential election, on Times Square in New York City. —Reuters

fracturing or "fracking" to produce of shale oil and gas, only blocking new permits on state-owned land.

Biden wants to invest \$2 trillion over four years for renewable energy, clean transportation, construction and infrastructure, which also will spur green industry jobs. His plan also calls for new emissions standards for fuel-powered vehicles, which still constitute the vast majority

of cars sold in the United States.

Economic stimulus

Job one is getting the Covid-19 pandemic under control. That goal got a boost Monday with good news on a vaccine from Pfizer and BioNTech. But Biden also will have to take steps to shore up the American economy, as businesses continue to struggle and millions are jobless. —AFP

country avoided shopping malls and restaurants. But it was better than the 15.5 percent plunge seen in the second quarter as the government extended operating hours and allowed more types of businesses to reopen.

Chua said the recovery in Metro Manila, which accounts for a third of the country's output, was constricted by limited public transport. Trains, buses and the popular jeepneys have been operating at reduced capacity because of social distancing rules.

The country's economic woes have been exacerbated by a drop in the amount of money sent home by the legion of Filipinos working abroad that sustains many families. Remittances fell 2.6 percent in the first eight months as thousands of workers lost their jobs and came home. —AFP

Classifieds

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

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www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times with a chance for rising

BY NIGHT: Unstable with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind with speed of 12 - 45 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for thunder rain.

WEATHER WARNING			Thunder Rain	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 10/11/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	33 °C	24 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	23 °C		
ABDALY	32 °C	19 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	34 °C	23 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	30 °C	25 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWAISIB	33 °C	23 °C		
WAFRA	34 °C	22 °C		
SALMY	33 °C	19 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	11/11	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times with a chance for rising	30 °C	23 °C	SE	12 - 45 km/h
Thursday	11/12	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	29 °C	21 °C	NE-E	15 - 45 km/h
Friday	11/13	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	27 °C	19 °C	NE-NW	12 - 40 km/h
Saturday	11/14	Fair and some high clouds will appear	28 °C	17 °C	NW	10 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:47
Sunrise	06:08
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:35
Sunset	16:56
Isha	18:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	33 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	89 %
MIN. RH	34 %
MAX. Wind	SE 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP.0 2020/11/10 08:13 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1 ق.ت.خ.ع

CHANGE OF NAME

Under the instruction of my client Sunkesula Ramu, son of Dastagiri aged about 43 years at present residing at Kuwait, Permanent Address is 8/470-B Sreeramulapeta Proddatur - 516360 Kadapa Dt. A.P, India is hereby declaring that, my client's original name is Sunkesula Ramu son of Dastagiri. In his education certificate i.e. S.S.C. Certificate, Election Commission Voter Card and in Ration Card the original name in entered but in the year 2001 while going due to wrong advice of the agent he changed his name orally and obtained Indian Passport No. E0499125 on the name of Shaik Mahaboob Basha. With that name he worked at Kuwait till year. In fact the name said Shaik Mahaboob Basha is not his original name. At present my client wants to renew the said Passport on his original name i.e. Sunkesula Ramu and declared as follows. I, Shaik Mahaboob Basha holder of Indian Passport No. E0499125 having permanent address at Proddatur - 516360 Y.S.R Kadapa Dt., Andhra Pradesh, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that hence forth my name will be read as Given name: Ramu Surname: Sunkesula Therefore it is hereby requested all the Public and Authorities in Kuwait kindly consider the same and henceforth treat my client name as Sunkesula Ramu. (P.Subramanyam, B.Com., B.L) Advocate Proddatur - 516360, Kadapa Dt., A.P. India.) **(C 5814)**

I, Husein Akber Sajjad Husen Kothambawala, Passport No. N7016963 hereby change my name to Hussain Akbar Kothambawala in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by my correct spelling Hussain Akbar Kothambawala. **(C 5815) 11-11-2020**

I, George Mathew Kizhavamannil with permanent address Kizhavamannil, Thottapuzhassery, presently residing at Kuwait holding Indian passport no. L5937644 to be split my current name as Given name: George Mathew, Surname: Kizhavamannil for all purpose vide affidavit no. 736/2020 dated 02/11/2020 sworn before K.T. Thomas notary Pathanmthitta, Kerala, India. **(C 5813)**

I, Shaik Nizam s/o Shaik Yakub Sab, R/o: Door no. 15/413, Habibullah street, Kadapa city & dist., A.P, 516001, hereby state that my name and date of birth in my passport no. L3856619, were recorded as Shaik Nizamulla & 10-12-1960. My actual & correct name & D.o.B. as per my Pan card are Shaik Nizam & 03-08-1973. **(C 5812) 10-11-2020**

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**

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,



NOTICE
 November 3, 2020
Mr. Ronald Roshan Saldanha son of Mr. Kashmir Saldanha, resident of C-Twenty, Anand Nagar, Barkha CHS, Village road, Bhandup, West Mumbai, Pin: 400078, Maharashtra and **Ms. Sweemal Malan DSilva** daughter of Mr. Aravind Mohan Menon, resident of 2-62, Guthar Mane, Amlady Bantwal TQ, Dakshina Kannada, Pin: 574211, Karnataka, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965-22533315, 00965-22533125).

(Ranveer Bharti) Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer. Embassy of India, Kuwait. Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

3rd to 7th semester mark lists with the following Reg. Nos. of Calicut University have been irrecoverably lost while I was traveling 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) 9-11-2020

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

EMERGENCY ☎ 112

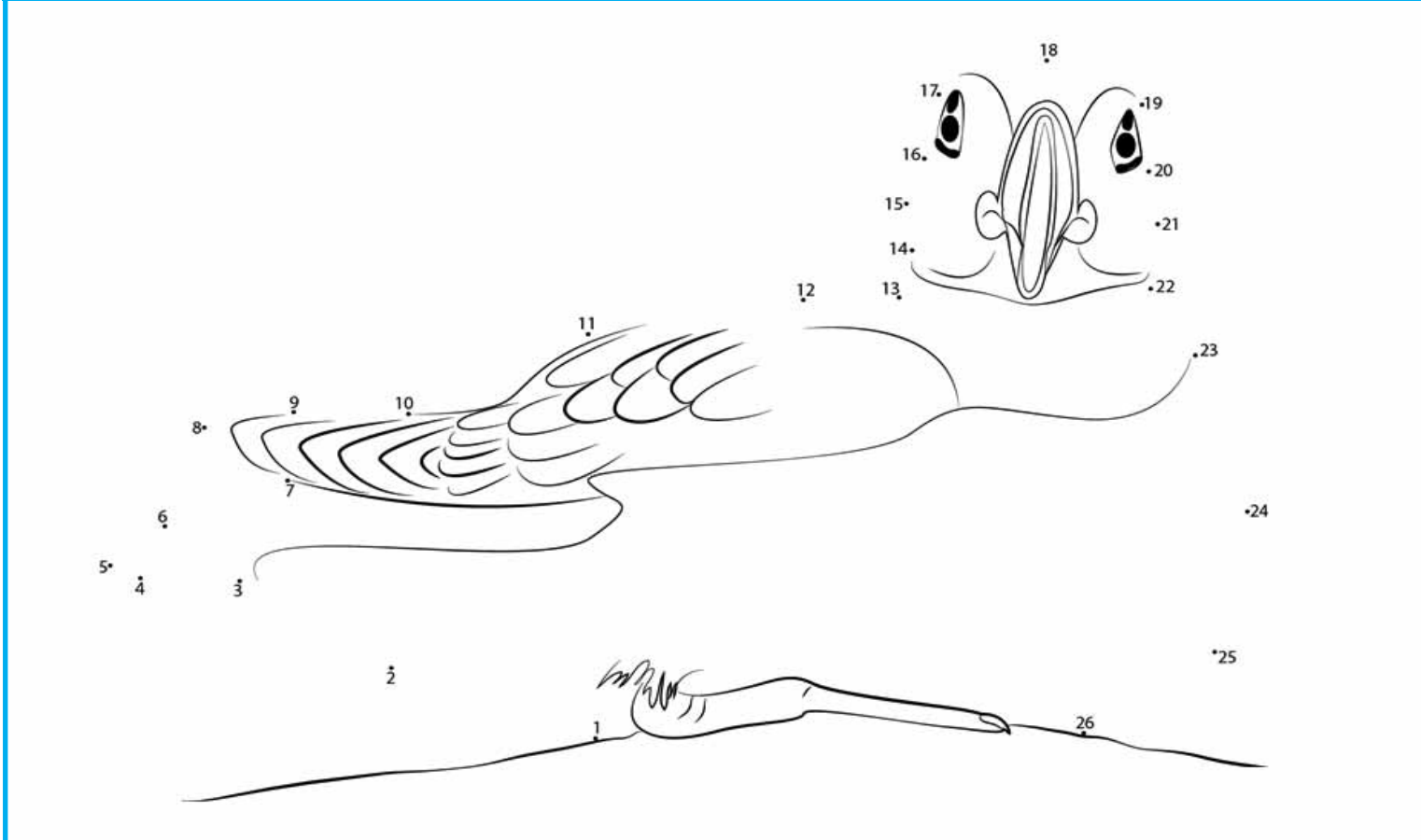
Word Search

Social Media Word Search



- Baidu Tieba
- ClassMates
- Facebook
- Flickr
- Foursquare
- Google Plus
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Meetime
- Meetup
- Myspace
- Pinterest
- Quora
- QZone
- Reddit
- Skype
- Snapchat
- StumbleUpon
- Tagged
- Tencent QQ
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- WeChat
- WhatsApp
- YouTube

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

<p>Aries (March 21-April 19) Have fun with loved ones, Aries. Put your worries aside. Don't think of the possible negative consequences of having a good time. Focus on the fun and excitement of the moment. You have the ability to create fantastically strong bonds between you and your romantic partner. Love is in your favor, so act with confidence. There is no reason to feel bad or insecure in any way.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) Your spirit sparkles, Cancer. You may feel filled with tremendous energy as you go about your day. Your sense of adventure is high, and there's very little that gets you down. One area that might be difficult to deal with right now is love and romance. You may feel like this is the one domain in which things aren't going the way you'd like them to. Patience is the secret.</p>	<p>Libra (September 23-October 22) Sensual, passionate lovemaking is definitely on the agenda of activities for tonight, Libra. Fun, excitement, romance, and love are all key themes likely to take precedence if you have anything to say about it - and you do. Don't let someone else dictate your path for you. You know what you want, so don't say you don't care when you do. Love is coming your way. Learn how to grab it.</p>	<p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Your sensitive, sensual side is being drawn out, Capricorn. You may feel like your romantic side is on display. You're like a dancer onstage, and you accept this role with pleasure! There's a great combination of energies at work letting you become more realistic about love and approach it with dramatic flair and courage. Be more expressive when it comes to your needs and desires.</p>
<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) You're the secret jewel, Taurus. You're apt to be extremely loving and devoted to those who recognize this in you. There is no reason to shrink back and hide. Put on your royal air and flaunt your stuff. Your peaceful, charming nature shines through, and you radiate the god-like qualities you have within. Whoever shares your company tonight is extremely lucky. Make sure this person is worthy of you.</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22) You may feel yourself slipping into a deeper understanding with a close friend or loved one, Leo. Romantic situations are heating up, and you're slowly letting your inhibitions fade away so they're completely absent. You realize the exuberance and excitement that come when you come out of hiding and let your playful spirit charm the world. Put serious subjects aside and make time to have fun and be more social.</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) You may feel like the brakes have been slammed in the romance department, Scorpio. Realize that this doesn't mean you have to stop having fun. Laughter and good times are in store for you today as long as you don't get hung up on the slow pace of your love life. You can have a good time while taking things one step at a time. Savor each moment. Don't try to rush to the next.</p>	<p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Come out of your shell and be proud of your sensitive side, Aquarius. Although you may feel vulnerable when it comes to love and romance, this doesn't mean that you have to hide it. You may think that everyone else has it together in this department, but don't be fooled. They're just as insecure as you are! Go ahead and let this side of your personality shine. Admitting your vulnerability is wonderfully attractive.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) You may feel locked in a bind of deep emotion and stubborn attitudes with close friends or lovers, Gemini. Perhaps it's hard for you to say what you really feel. You may be under the impression that you're being tested and judged by everyone else. Try not to let your ego get in the way of a good time. Say what you feel without getting worried about how others will react.</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) Most of the time it's good to have strong opinions and be independent and willful, Virgo. But there are other times when this attitude turns people away you're hoping to draw closer. There's a stubborn yet sensitive attitude in your world of romance that may be difficult for you to deal with. Perhaps you're taking a more rational approach to things while your loved one is taking a more emotional one.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) The stars indicate that love and romance are in your favor, Sagittarius. You will find that this area of your life is going well. Shower your partner with affection. You honey's ego needs to be stroked. However, don't spoil him or her to the point that your mate becomes self-centered and ends up disregarding all of your wants and needs.</p>	<p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) You shouldn't have any problem getting your way in most areas of life, Pisces. The time is ripe for you to take the lead. Unfortunately, there may be one important part of your life that isn't going exactly to plan, and this is love and romance. It's likely that you will run into a tremendously stubborn attitude that you can't seem to break through. It could be your own.</p>

Lifestyle | Features

Connery's original James Bond handgun set for \$200,000 auction



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

The late Sean Connery's Walther PP pistol used in the first-ever James Bond movie will go up for auction next month in Los Angeles and is estimated to fetch \$150,000 to \$200,000. Scottish acting great Connery, who passed away last month at the age of 90 at his home in the Bahamas, wielded the gun in 1962's "Dr. No." "The silhouette of 007 holding this gun would go on to become the James Bond franchise's most iconic image and one of the most recognizable pop culture references of all time," said Martin Nolan, executive director of Julien's Auctions. In "Dr. No," Bond is ordered by his British Secret Service bosses to reluctantly trade in his old, misfiring Beretta gun for the Walther, which has "a delivery like a

brick through a plate glass window."

"The American CIA swear by them," Bond is informed. Versions of the Walther remain 007's signature firearm, some 25 films later. The deactivated handgun prop, one of two used in Connery's debut film, was owned by the original movie's armorer until it was sold off in a 2006 auction. It will be one of more than 500 items in the "Icons & Idols TRILOGY: Hollywood" auction held in Beverly Hills and online on December 3.

Other notable memorabilia will include a pilot's helmet worn by Tom Cruise in "Top Gun" and Arnold Schwarzenegger's leather motorcycle jacket from "Terminator 2: Judgment Day." Bond's next cinematic outing-believed to be the final movie for

current 007 Daniel Craig-has been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "No Time To Die" is currently scheduled for an April release. Connery earned lasting worldwide fame and adoration for his smooth, Scottish-accented portrayal of the suave licensed-to-kill spy over several films. The first actor to utter the unforgettable "Bond, James Bond," Connery is seen by many fans as giving the definitive portrayal of novelist Ian Fleming's creation. Connery suffered from dementia in his final years, according to his widow Micheline Roquebrune. — AFP

Uprooted by war, Syrians settle on ruins of Roman temple

Abdelaziz Al-Hassan did not want to live in an overcrowded camp after fleeing war in northwestern Syria, so instead his family pitched a tent in the ruins of a Roman temple. He, his wife and three children are among almost one million Syrians who fled their homes last winter during a Russia-backed offensive on Syria's last rebel stronghold of Idlib. In the UNESCO-listed site of Baqirha, near the Turkish border, they are now among dozens of Syrians uprooted by war who have settled among centuries-old Roman and Byzantine ruins.



Syrian children play amid ruins.

Hassan and his family have set up a tunnel-shaped tent between the three surviving walls of a second-century temple to the Greek god Zeus, on a site strewn with broken columns and a plinth. Behind their tent, laundry hung on a rope strung between the ancient walls. Propped up over the centuries-old stones, solar panels soaked in the sun near a blackened pot on a small wood-burning stove. Hassan says the site is a far better option than living in one of the numerous informal displacement camps that have sprouted up along the frontier, especially amid the coronavirus pandemic. "I chose this place because it provides peace of mind, far from overcrowded places and those riddled with disease," said the middle-aged man with a salt-and-pepper beard.

Snakes and scorpions

Syria is filled with archeological sites, from Roman temples and Crusader castles to Ottoman-era caravanserais. Many have been damaged, bombarded or plundered throughout a nine-year-old conflict that has killed more than 380,000 people and displaced millions. Northwest Syria is home to 40 UNESCO-listed villages from the first to the seventh centuries that, the UN cultural body

says, provide insight into "rural life in late Antiquity and during the Byzantine period".

Dotted with the remains of temples and churches, the sites illustrate "the transition from the ancient pagan world of the Roman Empire to Byzantine Christianity," it says. In Baqirha, Zeus Bomos, or Zeus of the Altar, was built almost two millennia ago, historians say, in a wider area that later prospered from olive oil production. Maamoun Abdel Karim, the head of Syria's antiquities authority, said Baqirha was exceptional for its well-preserved buildings, also including two churches from the sixth century. But for all the grand architecture, Hassan admitted there were a few inconveniences to living where he does, including a long walk for his children to the village school.

He also said the area is crawling with poisonous snakes and insects. "Two days ago, near the tent's opening, I killed a viper," he told AFP. And "every other day, we have to kill a scorpion." "But we haven't found anywhere better than here yet."

'Where else can we go?'

Hassan's brother-in-law, Saleh Jaour, and his dozen children have also made the ancient ruins of Baqirha their new home, after fleeing bombardment last winter that killed his wife and a son. "I chose this region because it's close to the Turkish border. If anything happens, we can flee to Turkey on foot," said the portly 64-year-old wearing a long dark robe. As the crow flies, the Turkish border lies just four kilometers (2.5 miles) away. "This place is far from the crowds and the noise," he added, saying he too was taken aback by how many people were living at close proximity in the camps.

Both Hassan and Jaour's families escaped their homes further south during a government-led offensive between December last year and March on the jihadist-dominated stronghold of Idlib. A ceasefire deal reached by rebel backer Turkey and regime ally Russia has since largely stemmed the fighting, but less than a quarter have returned. Local officials have asked families living on the archeological site in Baqirha to leave, but they have refused until they are provided with alternative shelter. "We've gotten used to this place," said Jaour, reluctant to uproot the family again at the start of the rainy winter season. "Where else can we go?" — AFP



Syrian children walk past ruins at the UNESCO-listed site of Baqirha not far from the Turkish border.



An aerial view shows a makeshift camp of displaced Syrians at Byzantine ruins in the area of Baqirha not far from the Turkish border.—AFP photos



Microsoft's Xbox Series X (black) and series S (white) gaming consoles are displayed at a flagship store of SK Telecom in Seoul.



A staff member plays a game using Microsoft's Xbox controller at a flagship store of SK Telecom in Seoul.

New Xbox hits stores, launching holiday season console war

Microsoft's new Xbox console hit stores worldwide yesterday, kicking off a holiday season battle with Sony's latest PlayStation model, as the coronavirus pandemic creates unprecedented gaming demand around the world. The Xbox Series X launches just two days before Sony's next generation PlayStation 5, in a head-to-head likely to dominate the gaming sector this shopping season. The launches are well-placed to capitalize on a massive spike in demand for gaming. Rising numbers of people around the world are seeking distraction during a pandemic that has killed 1.25 million people and left at least 3 billion more in some form of lockdown since the virus appeared in late December.



This combination of file photos created shows the PlayStation logo (top) on display on the final day of the E3 Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, and the Xbox logo displayed at the Microsoft Xbox E3 2012 media briefing in Los Angeles. — AFP

But while lockdowns and restrictions may have boosted sales, they have also forced companies to move their launch events online. Xbox, famous for games such as Halo, Gears of War and Forza Horizon, held an online countdown to midnight for Australia and New Zealand. Phil Spencer, executive vice-president of gaming at Microsoft, told gamers on a Facebook live event that they were taking "the first step into the next generation of gaming." "And you will be the first in the world to experience it." The pandemic also means no long lines of customers camped outside stores, with the pre-orders snapped up online instead more likely to be delivered to gamers' homes.

But demand has been brisk, and is expected to stay that way, Morris Garrard, analyst at specialist financial consultancy FutureSource, told AFP ahead of the launch. "As soon as any stock is available, it is going to be bought out, within a few minutes even," he said. He said some of that activity would be people attempting to buy up stock for resale, but that he expects "a high level of excess demand for these consoles, at least in the short term." "So talking sort of three to six months, I think we'll see that a lot of people who want to get a console are unable to get a console."

Swan song for physical consoles?

Microsoft is hoping its next-generation offering will help close the gap with Sony, whose PlayStation 4 sold twice as well as the Xbox One since they both were released in 2013. Unlike the PlayStation 5, whose release will be staggered in different countries from Thursday, the Xbox Series X hit the shelves worldwide yesterday. Both Sony and Microsoft have lined up a roster of eagerly awaited games-headlined by the latest edition of Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed, an open-world Viking epic-to launch with the consoles, which will offer much more powerful central and graphics processors than their predecessors. In a competitive industry where focus is shifting to online play, this could be a swan song for physical consoles, with both firms betting on cloud servers to do the heavy processing lifting in the future. But for now, the Xbox design team boasts that their product, which looks much like a PC, is "the fastest most powerful ever" console. The kit, which has potential 8K video capabilities, has a faster graphics processor than the PS5, and superior data-crunching power.—AFP

A video games timeline: From Pong to the console wars

Video games have come a long way since the first rudimentary arcade machines emerged in the 1970s with offerings such as "Pong", "Pacman" and "Space Invaders". Each generation since then has enjoyed rapid technological advancement, and the industry is now worth billions. With the release of Microsoft's Xbox X and Sony's PlayStation 5 yesterday and Thursday, here follows a look at the journey of video games.

King 'Pong'

Now widely regarded as the first video game to achieve serious commercial success, Atari's 1972 "Pong" allowed two people to play a basic game of table tennis on a black screen. The graphics were simple, but it was a hit-a version of the game designed to play at home sold more than 100,000 units and set the stage for the multibillion-dollar gaming industry we know today.

The first mega-hits

The success of "Pong" laid the groundwork for an explosion of arcade games in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the frenetic "Pacman" and alien shoot-em-up "Space Invaders" raking in billions from coin-rich youngsters desperate to post a high score. But it was the advent of home consoles such as the Atari 2600 and the Nintendo NES around the same time that took video games from arcades into living rooms. Games popularized in this period still resonate today. One early Nintendo game-the 1981 platformer "Donkey Kong"-featured a character known as Jumpman, later known as Mario, one of the best-known video game heroes of all time.

Console wars

As the market for games grew, so too did competition between hardware manufacturers, leading to the first of many "console wars" in the early 1990s between Sega and Nintendo. Sega ultimately emerged victorious in part due to the popularity of its "Sonic the Hedgehog" franchise-but its Genesis console never quite enjoyed the longevity of some of its competitors. The 1990s also brought massive innovation for video games-both in visual presentation and plot. First-person-shooters such as "Goldeneye" and action-adventure puzzler "Tomb Raider" revolutionized both graphics and storytelling, offering a more mature experience for an increasingly diverse audience.

Going global

By the turn of the century, the stage was set for a new generation of home systems-and an all-new round of console wars, this time between the PlayStation 2, Nintendo GameCube, and a new contender from Microsoft, the Xbox. The PlayStation 2 won that fight, becoming the best-selling console of all time with 155 million units moved, according to Forbes.

Multiplayer madness

The following decade saw games go online, allowing players to go from one-on-one matches in their living rooms to battles with scores of other players all over the world. From chaotic first-person shooter "Call of Duty" to the massive multiplayer role-playing game "World of Warcraft", online gaming became a billion-dollar industry in its own right-and laid the groundwork for the massive growth of competitive esports in the 2010s. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



A glassblower sculpts the vessels at a workshop near the 15th century Sultan Qaitbay mosque complex in the "Desert of the Mamluks" (City of the Dead) area of Egypt's capital Cairo.— AFP photos

CAIRO'S 'CITY OF THE DEAD' BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE

In Egypt's "City of the Dead", centuries-old monuments are being restored and artisanal heritage revived, turning a corner of the vast historical cemetery into a vibrant neighborhood full of life. Wood, leather and jewelry workshops have joined those of glassblowers and others near the 15th-Century mosque of Sultan Qaitbay, in the east of the capital Cairo. From the Mamluk period, the celebrated structure-featured on Egypt's one-pound notes-is surrounded by monumental tombs, dusty alleys and informal housing. Since

bish all over the streets," said 57-year-old Issem Abou Rami, who owns a small restaurant facing the mosque. "Now, a truck comes every day to collect it." Products made in the impoverished neighborhood are now sold in elegant booths under restored stone arches-and even online.

Social development

The renovation efforts started six years ago with the refurbishment of a drinking trough for animals, and then, the reception area of a residential

people who live and work in the area," added Dobrowolska, founder of Archinos Architecture, which has worked on numerous conservation projects in Cairo. Work in the ateliers was interrupted for several weeks due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but now the workshops are again up and running, with some 50 women making leather products and jewelry, all stamped with the local brand Mishka. Aida Hassan, 45, has worked in the leather workshop for three years, and said she is happy to be earning "1,500 pounds (\$96) per month-and sometimes more". "This project has helped improve my income," she added, saying she had gone on to train other women in leatherwork. Hundreds of women and children in the neighborhood have benefited from courses and workshops on subjects as diverse as science and technology, English language and sports.

Object of superstition

For the EU, the primary donor to the project-due to end in 2021 — the social elements of the program were key, said Christian Berger, head of the EU delegation in Egypt. "Our intention is to support this type of project that benefits immediately vulnerable groups and disadvantaged groups, projects that have a broader socio-economic impact," Berger said. The neighborhood has hosted concerts, from jazz to folk and traditional Egyptian music, and visual artists from Egypt and abroad have come to show their work.

The aim is to bring "contemporary art and culture here to enhance diversity of cultural expression (and) artistic expression, to build bridges between east and west," said Dobrowolska. Another hope of the project in transforming the neighborhood is to draw in tourists. The "City of the Dead" is sometimes an object of superstition due to its status as a necropolis, and is not a usual stop on mainstream Cairo tours. But it is the tourists who are looking for something out of the ordinary that Dobrowolska said the project is counting on. "We seek to attract tourists who are off-track from the mass tourism destinations-people who might appreciate and enjoy the unique urban character of the necropolis," she said. — AFP



Men sit at a cafe by the 15th century Sultan Qaitbay mosque complex in the "Desert of the Mamluks" (City of the Dead) area of Egypt's capital Cairo.

2014, a series of projects financed by the European Union has changed the face of this small section of the sprawling necropolis-home to many people who are unable to afford Cairo's prohibitively high rents.

Authorities began construction on a major road in July a short distance from the Qaitbay mosque, drawing strong criticism online for the resulting demolitions and evictions of residents of the "City of the Dead". A final resting place for illustrious figures, including singer Farid Al-Atrash and writer Ihsan Abdel Kouddous as well as ordinary Egyptians, the Islamic necropolis founded in the seventh century stretches over 6.5 kilometers (four miles). "Before the projects, there was rub-

complex of the sultan. The EU contributed nearly a million euros (\$1.1 million) toward the latest project, "The Heritage for the Living, in the 'City of the Dead'", which launched in 2018 and focuses on social development. The project coordinator, architect Agnieszka Dobrowolska, was a linchpin to the area's metamorphosis. She supervised the restorations of the monuments and the renovation of the workshop and their signage, as well as designed jewelry and leather products inspired by Mamluk motifs. "When we first came here, our main object was to conserve the monuments," she told AFP.

"And we quickly realized that we cannot simply conserve the monuments, in disrespect to the



A glassblower sculpts the vessels at a workshop near the 15th century Sultan Qaitbay mosque complex.

Churchill's painting of favorite whisky goes on sale

A painting by Winston Churchill featuring the famously bibulous British World War II leader's favorite brand of whisky is to go on sale at Sotheby's auction house. The oil painting of a bottle of Johnny Walker's Black label whisky and a bottle of brandy with a jug and glasses reflects Churchill's fondness for the blend, which he often drank first thing in the morning with soda water, the auction house said. Painted at Churchill's country house of Chartwell, in southeast England, the still life called "Jug with Bottles" is expected to sell for up to £250,000 (\$330,000, 280,000 euros). Bidding opened online yesterday. Churchill, who was a keen amateur artist, created the work in the 1930s and later gave it to the American businessman W. Averell Harriman, who acted as US special envoy to Europe in the 1940s.

Harriman was photographed sitting between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow in 1942, and the gift of the painting suggests he shared convivial drinks with Churchill. The politician would give paintings to "like-minded people," said Simon Hucker, co-head of modern and post-war British art at Sotheby's. It is unclear whether Churchill knew that the wife of his son Randolph, Pamela Churchill, was having an affair with Harriman during this period, The Times newspaper reported. Pamela Churchill married Harriman decades later in the 1970s and the painting was sold following her

death in 1997. It is going back on sale after the deaths of its current owners, the US collectors Barbara and Ira Lipman.

'Private meditation'

A similar work by Churchill, featuring a collection of bottles and called "Bottlescape" hangs at Chartwell. Churchill "was obviously an amateur painter but he got lessons off really great painters," said Hucker. "This particular still life is actually quite unusual because he usually did landscapes." While it seems unlikely that a modern politician would depict their favorite tittle in such a recognizable way, Churchill was probably more focused on capturing the reflection and transparency of glass, the art expert said. In any case, "he didn't do these for the public, he did them for himself". Some have disputed Churchill's artistic talents, with The New York Times once describing "Bottlescape" as "truly hideous." Yet his paintings have reached high prices at auction. "The Goldfish Pool at Chartwell", which came from the collection of his daughter Mary Soames, sold for a record £1.8 million at Sotheby's in 2014. —AFP



A member of staff poses with a painting by Britain's former prime minister Winston Churchill entitled "Jug with Bottles" at Sotheby's auction house in London.— AFP

S. Africa lauds 'Jeruselema' producer for MTV Best African Act

The South African DJ behind the global pop hit "Jeruselema" won Best African Act at this year's MTV European Music Awards, drawing praise from the country's ruling party and jubilant fans. The gospel-influenced song, recorded by producer Master KG with Zulu lyrics by Nomcebo, lifted global spirits darkened by the pandemic at the start of the year. It inspired the "Jeruselema dance challenge", which saw people across the world sharing clips of the same choreography in various settings. Master KG bagged the coveted award on Sunday night, beating Nigerian superstars Burna Boy and Rema among others. "I would love to thank each and every person out there, all over the world, for making this possible," Master KG said in a virtually recorded acceptance speech tweeted after receiving the award.

Tributes poured in on social media Monday as proud South Africans awoke to the news. "Sooooo happy Master KG beat Burna Boy in EMA category," posted one Twitter user. "It's such a big deal!!! Southy to the world," wrote another. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) party also congratulated Master KG, describing the DJ as a "musical maestro" and source of inspiration. "This

MCDONALD'S LAUNCHING MEATLESS 'MCPLANT' BURGER

Fast food giant McDonald's on Monday announced it was launching a new plant-based burger named the "McPlant" to cater to the growing number of people who do not eat meat. The brand had fallen behind in the market to rival Burger King, which was the first to launch a vegetarian version of its iconic "Whopper" burger in April 2019 in the United States. Other chains like Dunkin' or Starbucks have also dipped their toes in the plant-based market, as consumers become more aware their health, the impact of livestock farming on the environment and animal rights.

McDonald's had already tested out a plant-based burger in Canada in cooperation with the company Beyond Meat, which specializes in vegan meat substitutes. Such substitutes, like soya, have existed for a long time but new companies like Beyond Meat and Impossible Burger have developed products that closer resemble meat in taste, texture and color. The new line will be produced exclusively for McDonald's, and will be introduced in selected markets next year. The restaurant chain has not yet said if it will renew its collaboration with Beyond Meat, only saying it will reach out to third-party suppliers as with all its other products.

Beyond Meat shares plunged on Wall Street on the announcement, down 25 percent at 22:40 GMT in electronic exchanges following the close of the New York Stock Exchange. McDonald's told investors it was also considering plant-based substitutes for chicken products and for its egg and bacon breakfast sandwiches. "We are excited about the opportunity because we believe we have a proven, delicious-tasting product," said Ian Borden, who heads McDonald's international operations.

Classics still on menu

McDonald's still relies on its flagship products like the "Big Mac", "McNuggets" and French fries, which account for around 70 percent of its sales in its main markets. "As demand for the familiar in these uncertain times is more important than ever, the Company believes these core classics will continue to be significant drivers of growth thanks to both their popularity and profitability," McDonald's said in a statement. The company also aims to put a new emphasis on chicken-based products, which are growing faster than the market for beef products.

Following the success of its spicy nuggets in the United States, McDonald's plans to launch a crispy chicken sandwich there in 2021. To boost internet sales, which have already grown significantly since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the group will also test a new online platform and a new loyalty program. It will also build new drive-in only outlets and have lines dedicated to customers who pre-ordered their meals online.

The group saw its global turnover fall by two percent in the third quarter due to the coronavirus pandemic. That was nonetheless better than the 30 percent drop in sales in the second quarter, and the company managed to generate a net profit up 10 percent at \$1.76 billion. Almost all of the chain's restaurants remained open during the pandemic. — AFP



Master KG performing on stage. Text overlay: MASTER KG JERUSELEMA FEAT. BURNA BOY & NOMCEBO ZIKODE REMIX

further confirms our longstanding belief that African artists can compete at the global stage and break the barriers created by colonialism," the ANC said in a statement on Monday. "Jeruselema" has clocked more than 100 million hits on YouTube since its release in late 2019.

Its success inspired South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa to invite all citizens to take on the dance challenge as part of Heritage Day-a public holiday in September celebrating culture and diversity. "I know I am having the biggest song in the world but that doesn't change me," Master KG told AFP on the sidelines of a concert in Malawi last month. "It doesn't change how I look at things, how I look at people, because music is music." — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Sports climber Janja Gambret is seen at the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

NHL ex-star Howie Meeker dies at 97

LOS ANGELES: Four time NHL Stanley Cup champion Howie Meeker died Sunday, four days after his 97th birthday, the Toronto Maple Leafs confirmed. Meeker won four championships with the Maple Leafs before going on to a three decade career as a premier hockey broadcaster for Canadian television. He was known for his catch phrases such as "Golly gee willikers" and "Jimmy Crickets" while working on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Hockey Night In Canada episodes.

CBC reported Meeker passed away in hospital in Nanaimo, British Columbia. "Howie Meeker connected countless fans to hockey with his wisdom and infectious voice," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "The National Hockey League celebrates his life and mourns his passing." A spokesman for the Maple Leafs confirmed the death of the oldest living former Toronto player, without giving a specific cause of death. "The Maple Leafs organization is deeply saddened by the passing of Howie Meeker. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family," the club said in a statement.

Meeker also ran a series of successful youth hockey camps near his home in Parksville, on Vancouver Island. The first day of every Meeker hockey camp featured the sound of a chain saw echoing through the halls of the rink as he loathed people using long hockey sticks, arguing they limited a player's stick-handling skills. Meeker also liked to point out he rarely hired NHL stars to work his hockey schools, saying he preferred instructors who could teach basic skills over someone that played the game instinctively at a high level.

Meeker was a three-time all-star forward who finished his career with 83 goals and 185 points in 346 NHL games with the Maple Leafs from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s. He helped Toronto win the Stanley Cup in 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1951. After coaching the Maple Leafs for the 1956-57 season he switched to broadcasting. He was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1998, not for his skills as a player, but for his work in television. In 2010, Meeker was named a Member of the Order of Canada. —AFP

DeChambeau blasts away in Masters practice round

A notice to Augusta National

News in brief

MotoGP rider Iannone banned

LAUSANNE: Italian MotoGP rider Andrea Iannone was suspended four years for an anti-doping violation yesterday, after the Court of Arbitration for Sport extended his initial 18-month suspension following an appeal. Iannone, 31, was suspended in March after testing positive for an anabolic steroid in a urine sample collected at an in-competition test at the Malaysian MotoGP in Sepang last November. The Aprilia rider was also disqualified from the final two races of the 2019 season - in Malaysia and then Valencia - which he had not finished. In its ruling, CAS said the Italian's suspension would be backdated to December 17, 2019. Iannone had contested that the presence of drostanolone in his system was the result of eating contaminated meat in Malaysia. However, CAS rejected his argument and upheld a WADA appeal seeking a four-year ban. —AFP

Maradona progressing well

OLIVOS: Argentine football great Diego Maradona is progressing well after brain surgery on a blood clot and could be discharged this week, his doctor said Monday. Maradona, 60, underwent surgery last Tuesday to remove a clot lodged between his brain and skull. "Diego is in the mood to leave, and we are evaluating the discharge that could be tomorrow, we have to see the clinical parameters, but the progress is very good," Leopoldo Luque told reporters. Maradona, who went into isolation two weeks ago after one of his bodyguards displayed coronavirus symptoms, had looked unwell during a brief appearance on October 30 at his 60th birthday celebration at the stadium of Gimnasia y Esgrima, the Argentine Primera Division team he coaches. He seemed to have difficulty walking and did not hang around to watch his side's match. —AFP

NBA, players reach agreement

NEW YORK: The National Basketball Association (NBA) and the players' association (NBPA) have reached an agreement in principle on a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the 2020-21 season, which will begin on Dec. 22, they said. The NBPA last week approved the date for the opening of the new season that will have a reduced 72-game schedule. After a meeting on Monday, it and the NBA said in a joint statement - the salary cap would be \$109.140 million and tax level would be \$132.627 million. Both figures are unchanged from last season, U.S. media reported late on Monday. "In subsequent seasons of the CBA, the salary cap and tax level will increase by a minimum of 3% and a maximum of 10% over the prior season," the league and players' union added. "A new system will be used to ensure the parties' agreed-upon split of basketball-related income (BRI). —Reuters

Dream ticket: Fantasy games win big from cricket's IPL

MUMBAI: Unable to bet legally, tens of millions of Indian cricket fans have turned to fantasy games based on the Indian Premier League, which have exploited a loophole to create a billion-dollar industry. Bolstered by foreign investment, Indian firms have invested heavily in the cash-for-points online games, despite fears that gov-

ernment regulation could put the new industry at risk. Dream11 - now the main sponsor for the IPL, which had its final yesterday in Dubai - says it has more than 100 million users for its cricket, football and NBA platforms.

Users pay a fee, often less than 50 US cents, to join a contest that escapes India's ban on gambling because it's considered a game of "skill". They register a team of favorite players and win points for their performances in IPL games, which can be turned into cash. The number of fantasy games has mushroomed for this year's IPL, which is being held in the United Arab Emirates as India struggles with the world's second biggest coronavirus outbreak. Despite the possibility of new regulations, the cash is rolling in, and industry players say the sector

Golf talking points: Naked Faldo, old jackets, cold cuts

HONG KONG: The delayed US Masters, which will finally get under way tomorrow with Tiger Woods defending the title he won 19 months ago, dominates AFP Sport's golf talking points this week:

Hold back Bryson, please

If bulked-up US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau manages to batter Augusta National into submission this week, then it could unleash unintended consequences. Nick Faldo, the three-time Masters champion and now CBS TV analyst, was asked Monday if DeChambeau might become the first player in history to drive the green at the opening hole this week. Given that the par-four opening hole is 455 yards uphill, "not bloody likely" was Faldo's typically forthright response. "Bryson will not be driving the first at 445," Faldo declared confidently. "If he does, I will leap out my (commentary) tower and run around naked round Augusta National." So, Bryson, on behalf of TV viewers around the world, please use the three-wood.

Schwartzel's 4-minute warm-up

Charl Schwartzel's Masters warm-up didn't finish in the way the 2011 Augusta champion might have envisaged. Needing a par three on his 36th hole at the Houston Open to make the cut on Friday, Schwartzel's tee shot in the final group in fading light could only find the green apron 81 feet from the hole. By the time he reached his ball he reckoned it was too dark to carry on, and was the only player in the field who opted to wait until Saturday morning to complete his round.

But resuming at 7.11 am, his tournament lasted just four minutes longer. One chip and two putts later he was done, cut missed, and in a car to the airport for a flight to Georgia. If the unexpected extra weekend of practice at Augusta National leads to a second green jacket, Schwartzel will be hoping the famous garment fits better than his first. "They gave me a 38 regular. The jacket is too short for my arms and it is slightly too big for me," he told Golfweek recently. "I kept the original that they gave me at the ceremony. I've

could grow to be worth billions of dollars.

When software engineer Amit Bhandari started playing Dream11's fantasy cricket two years ago, he never expected to get hooked on its promise of easy money. "I am still awaiting my big-money day," said the 38-year-old, who called the habit "harmless" even though he hides it from his family, fearing disapproval. The stigma is familiar to Vinit Godara, co-founder of MyTeam11, a fantasy platform launched in 2016. In its early years, the company could not get a digital payment platform or a corporate bank account, due to worries about even a hint of betting in India. Match-fixing scandals regularly hit cricket, and Godara has struggled to explain the difference between fantasy

rough for distance and position. With only minor rough at the Masters, the stage could be set for an epic overpowering of the course. "He's trying to just take everything out of play," said fellow ball-basher Matthew Wolff, the 21-year-old US Open runner-up. "The way that me, Bryson and other people are going with hitting it longer, my goal is to not overpower a golf course. It just so happens that sometimes I can do that because I do hit the ball far."

Covid-stricken Garcia out

While the approaches and putts must still be top grade, rivals like Patrick Cantlay appreciate the edge extra length gives DeChambeau. "It has been impressive," Cantlay said. "I think this place probably fits it about as good as any place. It doesn't surprise me he's hitting it much farther than other guys and having success."

DeChambeau and Woods, the 15-time major champion trying for his record 83rd US PGA victory and record-tying sixth Masters title, were joined on the back nine for the afternoon by 1992 Masters winner Fred Couples and 2017 PGA Championship winner Justin Thomas. DeChambeau's buzz mixed with the shock exit of 2017 winner Sergio Garcia after the 40-year-old Spaniard tested positive for COVID-19. Garcia, coming off his first US PGA win since the Masters last month, said Monday he tested positive after missing the cut in last week's Houston Open, the first US-based PGA event to have spectators with 2,000 allowed each day.



AUGUSTA: Tiger Woods of the United States and Bryson DeChambeau of the United States putt on the 16th green as Justin Thomas of the United States looks on during a practice round prior to the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on November 09, 2020. —AFP

"On Saturday night after driving back from the Houston Open, I started feeling a bit of a sore throat and a cough," Garcia tweeted. "The symptoms stayed with me on Sunday morning so I decided to get tested for COVID-19 and so did my wife Angela. Thankfully she tested negative, but I didn't." For the first time in history, the Masters is taking place in November rather than its traditional April slot following disruption to the season caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which also has forced a ban on spectators.

One worry for DeChambeau and other big-hitters was in the forecast, with rain

and thunderstorms in the projections until the weekend. Soggy conditions could deny extra roll to the ball off the tee but help approaches hold onto the notoriously treacherous greens. It became tougher to make the Masters cut Monday as Augusta National said it was ending an extension to its cut policy that allowed anyone within 10 strokes of the lead into the weekend as well as the top 50 and those level after 36 holes. Since 1962, anyone within 10 strokes of the lead had been allowed into the third and fourth Masters rounds no matter where they ranked in the overall scoring. —AFP

never changed it to the right size."

No fans, fewer players

Not only will there be no spectators, or patrons as Augusta National likes to call them, at this year's US Masters, there won't be as many players either. The news in the last 24 hours that 2017 champion Sergio Garcia has joined young Chilean world number 42 Joaquin Niemann in testing positive for Covid-19 has reduced the field to 92 because, unlike other majors, the policy at the Masters is not to replace withdrawn players. And the field could be whittled down to as few as 50 for the weekend. Previously anyone within 10 strokes of the leader was eligible to play at the weekend. Now that's been ditched and it will be just the top 50 and ties.

Last year, 65 players made it to rounds three and four, the most since the cut was introduced in 1957. There would have only been 56 without the 10-shot rule. With fewer hours of daylight in November, it makes sense for organizers to restrict who makes the weekend this year. But the club made it sound like the change is here to stay. "Beginning with the 2020 Masters Tournament," its official Twitter feed said, "the low 50 players and ties will qualify for the final 36 holes." —AFP

sports and illegal betting to customers.

But this year, Indian fans have seized on fantasy gaming, eager to escape the boredom of lockdown and encouraged by a marketing blitz featuring top stars such as Virat Kohli. "The IPL has come as a boon for the fantasy gaming industry and we have observed a significant jump in user engagement," Godara told AFP. Other platforms have also seen a surge in business. "We are looking at crossing 80 million users by the end of the IPL," Sai Srinivas, co-founder of the Mobile Premier League app, told AFP. The Games24x7 platform is predicting 900 percent growth in paid users from 2019 to 2020 because of "pent-up demand in the lockdown", co-founder Bhavin Pandya said. —AFP

Sports



KUWAIT: Salwa's Hessa Al-Essa (left) competes for the ball with Al-Qadeseyya's Shorouq Salem, during the 3rd women's futsal league, at the Kuwait Sports Club in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

F1 drops Vietnam from record 23-race 2021; Saudi to debut

Three triple headers, including long-haul stretch

LONDON: The Vietnamese Grand Prix was absent from a draft 2021 calendar published by Formula One yesterday that featured a record 23 rounds, with a debut in Saudi Arabia and Brazil returning despite fears for that race's future. Vietnam was due to host a street race in Hanoi for the first time last April, but that was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The absence of the grand prix on next year's calendar has been attributed to local issues, although Formula One did not give a reason or mention Vietnam in a statement setting out the planned season. The BBC reported the decision not to host the race followed the arrest in August of Hanoi People's Committee chairman Nguyen Duc Chung. The April 25 slot was left vacant, with various circuits in the frame. Formula One has never before had more than 21 races in a season.

The sport said it expected fans to be back at races after a 17-round 2020 season conducted either behind closed doors or with very limited attendances and mainly in Europe due to the new coronavirus. "We are planning for 2021 events with fans that provide an experience close to normal and expect our agreements to be honored," said

chairman and outgoing chief executive Chase Carey. "We have proven that we can safely travel and operate our races, and our promoters increasingly recognize the need to move forward and manage the virus."

"We are delighted to see Saudi Arabia become part of the schedule and are equally excited to return to the venues we hoped to race at in 2020." The season will start with the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on March 21, with Bahrain following a weekend later. It will end in Abu Dhabi on Dec 5. Saudi Arabia, with a Nov. 28 night race along the Red Sea corniche in Jeddah, will become the 33rd country to host a Formula One race. Brazil's race at Sao Paulo's Interlagos circuit on Nov. 14 was subject to a new contract being agreed, as was Spain's round in Barcelona on May 9.

Formula One had planned to move to a new circuit in Rio but that has proved controversial for environmental reasons and work has yet to start. The Dutch Grand Prix, at Zandvoort, returns for the first time since 1985 with a race on Sept. 5 and immediately after the Aug. 29 Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps. It forms part of a triple



ISTANBUL: Scuderia AlphaTauri Honda Formula One driver Pierre Gasly drives his car crossing the Galata Bridge during a Formula One promotional movie shooting in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday. The Formula One Grand Prix of Turkey will take place on 15 November, 2020 at Intercity Istanbul Park. — AFP

header with Italy on Sept. 12. Russia, Singapore and Japan will also form a first long-haul triple header on Sept. 26, Oct. 3 and Oct. 10. McLaren boss Zak Brown said the planned 23 races represented "extremely positive news" for the sport's teams and partners after a tough 2020. — Reuters

Ski industry faces steep slope with COVID, warming

PARIS: The Alps have long made Europe the world's top skiing destination but the industry finds itself having to duck and weave through the daunting obstacles of the coronavirus pandemic and climate change. The European ski industry generates 34 billion euros in revenue, half the world's total, according to Laurent Vanat, a Swiss expert who has for the past decade written an annual report that is the reference resource on the industry.

The Alps

The soaring mountain range which stretches from France, along Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and into Slovenia helps make Europe the leader in the ski industry. The Alps alone hold "more than a third of the ski areas" of the whole world, says Vanat, and attract 43 percent of the world's skiers, more than double the 21 percent of the United States. The European leaders are France and Austria which each boast more than 10 ski areas that attract more than a million visitors each per year, according to Vanat.

Big areas dominate

The industry is heavily concentrated in big ski areas. Resorts which receive more



ADELBODEN: In this file photo, France's Clement Noel clears a gate during the first run of the Men's slalom race at the FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup in Adelboden. Clement Noel has to wait until the end of December to compete in his favorite discipline again, more than two months after resuming alpine skiing in Sölden (Austria). —AFP

than 100,000 skiers per year represent "only 20 percent of ski areas but they account for 80 percent of skiers," said the Swiss expert. Skiing is the most popular recreation in Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Austria, where more than 30 percent of the population strap on skis. But by absolute numbers, it is the Germans.

Ski season

Skiing is a seasonal sport as few areas are high enough to boast summer snow, and few resorts have found the holy grail of year-round activities. That makes the industry heavily reliant on seasonal labour, both for the slopes themselves and for the other businesses such as hotels and

restaurants. The trade association for French ski areas, Domaines Skiabiles de France, estimates that more than 120,000 jobs in the country are dependent upon the slopes opening.

Heavy lockdown bill

The ski industry has not escaped the coronavirus pandemic—an Austrian resort was an early superspreader site—and restrictions meant to slow its spread. Vanat estimates that lockdowns that shut nearly all ski stations in mid-March resulted a drop of about 20 percent in terms of visitors on average. That meant between 1.5 and 2.0 billion euros in missed revenue for France and Austria. — AFP

Finland coach remains focused on Euro 2020 dream despite wait

HELSINKI: The postponement of Euro 2020 put Finland's major tournament debut on ice but, when the finals do come around, the Nordic nation have their sights set on emulating the remarkable recent achievements of Iceland. One of the enduring memories of the last European Championship in France in 2016 is that of Iceland - roared on by a huge support and their "Viking Thunder Clap" - knocking out England on their way to the quarter-finals.

Iceland reached the last World Cup too, and still hope to go to the next Euro along with Finland, who will be there when it finally goes ahead a year behind schedule. "In a way it's already a dream for us to play in the finals, but we are not going there just to participate, we want to achieve something more," Finland coach Markku Kanerva told AFP in an interview ahead of his team's latest get-together and a friendly against world champions France on Wednesday in Paris.

"It's the same with Sweden in the World Cup, they did very well," said Kanerva, with a nod to Finland's neighbors who reached the quarter-

finals in Russia in 2018. "I believe they are examples for us because they are from the Nordic countries as well and there are some strengths in all our Nordic countries, mentally and, as I mentioned, we are organized teams and we can also learn what have been the key factors behind their success."

In a nation of 5.5 million people where football plays a distant second fiddle to ice hockey, Finland had never really come close to reaching a major tournament before, even in the days of the great Jari Litmanen, a Champions League winner with Ajax in 1995. But Kanerva was appointed in 2016 and led them to Euro 2020 as they finished second in qualifying behind Italy. "We weren't the favorites in our group because Italy was the favorite, then Bosnia and Herzegovina and Greece as well, they were the main candidates to qualify. And we managed to surprise them," said Kanerva, whose side are 55th in the FIFA rankings.

He was grateful for the goals of Norwich City striker Teemu Pukki, a "huge figure in Finnish football" according to Kanerva, and who contributed 10 in the qualifying campaign as the team did their bit to raise the sport's profile at home. "People are talking more about football and congratulate us, me and all the players as well, and there are many people who said, 'I never believed the Finnish national team could qualify for a major international tournament,' and they're very proud of that, and we are as well. — AFP

14 DeChambeau blasts away in Masters practice round



15 F1 drops Vietnam from record 23-race 2021; Saudi to debut



15 Ski industry faces steep slope with COVID, climate change



Patriots down winless Jets

Folk the hero as Pats overpower Jets



EAST RUTHERFORD: Cam Newton #1 of the New England Patriots scores a game-tying touchdown during the second half against the New York Jets at MetLife Stadium on November 09, 2020. — AFP

NEW YORK: Nick Folk booted a 51-yard field goal with no time remaining as the New England Patriots rallied from a 10-point, fourth-quarter deficit to record a 30-27 victory over the winless New York Jets on Monday night at East Rutherford, NJ. Cam Newton rushed for two touchdowns and completed 27 of 35 passes for 274 yards as New England (3-5) snapped a four-game losing streak.

Folk kicked three field goals. Rex Burkhead rushed for a touchdown and Jakobi Meyers established career highs of 12 receptions for 169 yards. Newton's 20-yard pass to Meyers with three seconds left set up the winning kick. Joe Flacco passed for 262 yards, three touchdowns and one interception for the Jets (0-9), who have lost nine straight to the Patriots.

New York is the lone winless NFL team this season.

Flacco threw two touchdown passes to Breshad Perriman (five receptions, 101 yards) and one to Jamison Crowder. He completed 18 of 25 passes in his third start of the season and passed Hall of Famer Joe Montana for 20th place on the all-time yardage list. New York quarterback Sam Darnold (shoulder) missed the game after aggravating an injury he initially sustained on Oct 1. New England cornerback Stephon Gilmore (knee), the reigning NFL Defensive Player of the Year, missed his second consecutive game.

The Patriots controlled the clock for 36:58 and held a 433-322 edge in total yards. New York ran just one offensive play in the first 13:03 of the fourth quarter to aid New England in rallying from a 10-point deficit. The Patriots pulled within 27-20 on Folk's 29-yard field goal with 6:04 remaining, and J.C. Jackson followed with his league-high fifth interception on New York's next offensive play. Newton guided the Patriots on an 11-play, 72-yard drive and scored on a 1-yard sneak to tie the score with 1:57 left.

The Jets scored more points (20) in the first half than they did in seven of their first eight full games. Flacco tossed two touchdown passes to help New York take a 10-point halftime lead. Sergio Castillo's 35-yard field goal capped New York's opening drive before Newton scored on a 5-yard run to give the Patriots a 7-3 advantage with 3:34 left in the opening quarter. The Jets moved back ahead when

Flacco threw a 50-yard scoring pass to Perriman with 9:59 remaining in the half. The long play moved Flacco past Montana (40,551 passing yards). Flacco concluded the contest with 40,726.

Castillo kicked a 50-yarder to give New York a 13-7 lead with 4:33 left before Folk knocked a 45-yard through the uprights for New England with 1:03 left. But Flacco finished the half with a 20-yard touchdown pass to Crowder with 25 seconds left. The Patriots opened the third quarter with an impressive 13-play, 78-yard drive that ended with Burkhead scoring from the 1 with 7:27 left. But the Jets responded with an 11-play, 75-yard excursion that culminated in Flacco's 15-yard scoring pass to Perriman with 30 seconds remaining in the third period. — Reuters

Nerves and serves: International table tennis return's

SHANGHAI: Top players said they were nervous and rusty, but excited, as international table tennis returned this week in China after an enforced eight-month break because of the coronavirus. The Women's World Cup began on Sunday behind closed doors in the eastern coastal city of Weihai with 21 players from across the globe taking part over three days. It will be followed by two other International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) events in mainland China.

The prestigious tournaments have taken on extra significance because the pandemic has badly impacted all sport and China appears to be making a rare exception after saying in July that it would not host most international sports for the rest of the year. The events are also a crucial opportunity for top table tennis players to rebuild their competitive edge and win world-ranking points as they look towards next summer's delayed Tokyo Olympics.

"Even before the match we were joking that someone will miss their serve because everyone was so nervous," said 24-year-old Lily Zhang of the United States, beaten in her

opener by Ukraine's Margaryta Pesotska. "Obviously it doesn't feel great that I lost, (but) on the bright side it's just amazing that I get to be here and to participate in this tournament. "I think all of us has been out of match practice this year, (there) haven't been any international competitions since March, so we are a little nervous, a little rusty."

Like many other sports that have returned during the pandemic, players, coaches and officials are being kept in a bio-secure "bubble" to prevent infections. They also had to quarantine after landing in China. The ITTF, the sport's world governing body, said in September that players would be banned from breathing on balls and there would be no handshakes after matches. Puerto Rico's world number 19 Adriana Diaz said that she felt "very lucky to be here and just enjoying the moment".

"It is a little weird, having these nervous moments before the match starts, and I will need to learn how to get used to it again," said the 20-year-old. "It was difficult not playing table tennis for such a long time. It was sad that Tokyo was postponed. — AFP

Liverpool say farewell to Melwood ground

LONDON: Jurgen Klopp said an emotional farewell to Liverpool's historic Melwood training ground yesterday as the Premier League champions prepare to move into a new headquarters. Melwood has been the club's base for more than 70 years, with generations of Anfield players honing their craft on the training pitches. But, unable to develop the site any further, the Reds will move the first team into the new £50 million (\$66 million) AXA Training Centre in Kirby, on the outskirts of Liverpool, next week.

Their new 9,200-square-metre (99,000-square-foot) training base is a state-of-the-art facility including three pitches, an indoor sports hall, two gyms, a swimming pool, hydrotherapy and sports rehabilitation facilities. Melwood was sold last year to a company who will build homes on the site. Klopp and his coaching staff were on site to close the gates on one of football's most famous training grounds. "Mixed emotions, really mixed emotions. I am happy about going to Kirby and very sad about leaving Melwood, to be honest," Klopp told Liverpool's website.

"So, it's strange; I didn't think properly about it so far, but my PA is obviously already moving all my stuff out of my



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool players arrive to attend a training session at Melwood in Liverpool, north west England. — AFP

office so I realised step-by-step that the place already looks different. "I will miss it, but that's how it should be. Melwood was really good, it was important-an important place in my life, so I will miss it. But Kirby will be great." Liverpool had initially planned to move during pre-season, only for the switch to be delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Like Anfield's old "Boot Room", Melwood has been an iconic part of the Liverpool story since it was transformed in the 1950s by former boss Bill Shankly. Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson took to Twitter to post several black-and-white

pictures of himself on his last day at Melwood alongside the caption: "One last time..." Jamie Carragher, Liverpool's second-highest appearance maker, said on social media: "Melwood gone but not forgotten!", while 2005 Champions League winner Gerrard shared a one-word tribute on Instagram, as he posted a picture of the Melwood sign with the caption: "Memories". Former Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler posted a poem about Melwood, including the lines: "From Highway to Macca and Rush through to Yeats, so many legends have shone through those gates." — AFP