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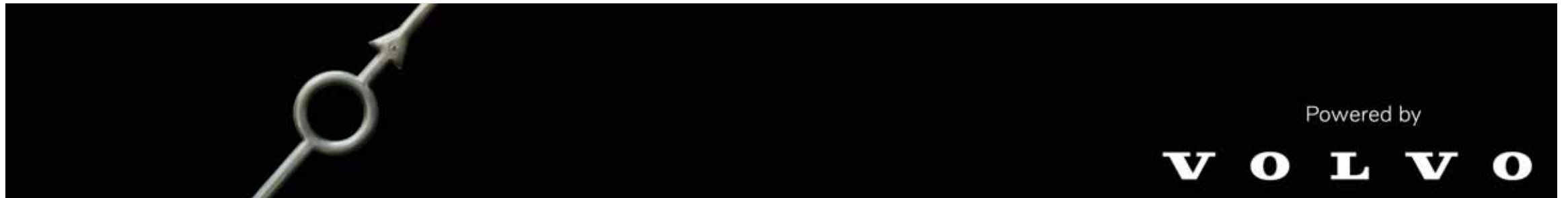
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V O L V O

Clashes in Western Sahara despite calls for restraint

Kuwait supports Morocco measures • Polisario says ceasefire over



GUERGUERAT: A handout picture published by the Royal Moroccan Army Facebook page on Friday shows tents used by the Polisario Front ablaze near the Mauritanian border in Western Sahara after the intervention of the Moroccan armed forces. — AFP

RABAT: The pro-independence Polisario Front yesterday reported clashes in the Western Sahara after Morocco launched an operation in the buffer zone in the disputed territory, as the UN led calls for restraint. Tensions in the former Spanish colony have sparked concern around the globe, with the United Nations, the African Union, Algeria and Mauritania urging both sides to respect a 1991 ceasefire.

But senior Polisario official Mohamed Salem Ould Salek said yesterday that the ceasefire supervised by the United Nations is a "thing of the past". "Fighting is continuing...in Guerguerat," Ould Salek, a foreign minister of the Polisario-declared Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), told AFP. SADR President and Polisario Secretary-General Brahim Ghali said he had "declared war" on Friday and announced "the resumption of armed actions in order to protect the inalienable rights of our people".

On Friday, Morocco announced that its troops launched a military operation in the buffer zone of Guerguerat in order to reopen the highway to Mauritania, accusing the Polisario of blocking the road. Dozens of truck drivers have been stranded for days at Guerguerat, the last Moroccan-held stop before the road enters the buffer zone along the border where the Polisario has kept a periodic presence. The road is key for trade with the rest of Africa.

Kuwait supports measures taken by Morocco to ensure the smooth flow of goods and individuals in a normal and unimpeded manner in the Guerguerat buffer zone between Morocco and Mauritania, the Kuwaiti foreign ministry said yesterday. In a press statement, the ministry renewed Kuwait's firm and principled position in support of Morocco's sovereignty and territorial integrity, expressing its rejection of any actions or practices that may affect traffic in this area. It called for restraint and a commitment to dialogue and a peaceful solution, in accordance with international law.

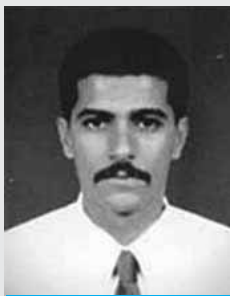
Late Friday the SADR defense ministry said Sahrawi forces had carried out "massive attacks" during the afternoon at multiple points along Morocco's 2,700 km long defensive wall. It said they had inflicted "human and material damage on the enemy". The claim was denied in Rabat by a "well informed source" which said that Morocco's army chief of staff and the UN's MINURSO mission did not report any attacks.

Morocco's military, later Friday, said it had secured the Guerguerat crossing between Morocco and Mauritania by installing "a security cordon" along its desert wall. The unrest in Western Sahara has sparked concern around the world.

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Israelis killed Qaeda no. 2 in Iran: NYT

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday dismissed a US newspaper report that Al-Qaeda's second-in-command was killed in Tehran by Israeli agents as "made-up information" and denied the presence of any of the militant group's members in the Islamic republic. The New York Times said Abdullah Ahmad Abdullah, indicted in the United States for 1998 bombings of its embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, was secretly shot and killed in Tehran by Israeli operatives on a motorcycle at Washington's behest.



Abdullah Abdullah

The senior Al-Qaeda leader, whose nom de guerre was Abu Muhammad Al-Masri, was killed along with his daughter, Miriam, the widow of Osama bin Laden's son Hamza, the Times reported Friday, citing intelligence sources. The attack took place on Aug 7 on the anniversary of the Africa bombings, according to the paper. Al-Qaeda has not announced his death, Iranian officials have covered it up and no government has publicly claimed responsibility, the Times said.

Iran's foes, the United States and Israel, "try to shift the responsibility for the criminal acts of (Al-Qaeda) and other terrorist groups in the region and link Iran to such groups with lies and by leaking made-up information to the media", Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement. Khatibzadeh accused the US itself and "its allies in the region" of having created Al-Qaeda through their "wrong policies" and advised US media to "not fall into the trap of American and Zionist officials' Hollywood scenarios".

American intelligence officials told the Times that Abdullah had been in Iran's "custody" since 2003, but he had been living freely in the Pasharan district of Tehran, an upscale suburb, since at least 2015. On Aug 7, he was driving a white Renault L90 sedan with his daughter near his home when two gunmen on a motorbike

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Egypt finds over 100 sarcophagi

SAQQARA, Egypt: Egypt announced yesterday the discovery of an ancient treasure trove of more than 100 intact sarcophagi, dating back more than 2,500 years ago, the largest such find this year. The sealed wooden coffins, unveiled on site amid much fanfare, belonged to top officials of the Late Period and the Ptolemaic period of ancient Egypt. They were found in three burial shafts at depths of 12 m in the sweeping Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo.

Archaeologists opened one coffin to reveal a mummy wrapped in a burial shroud adorned

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SAQQARA: Statues and funerary masks are on display during the unveiling of an ancient treasure trove of more than 100 intact sarcophagi at the Saqqara necropolis yesterday. — AFP

Vietnam braces as typhoon kills 53 in Philippines

HANOI/MANILA: Vietnam was bracing for Typhoon Vamco to make landfall in the country's central coast early today, as the death toll in the Philippines rose to 53 from that country's deadliest storm this year. Packing winds of up to 165 kph, Vamco is forecast to hit a swathe of Vietnam's coast

from Ha Tinh to Quang Ngai province, the government's weather agency said yesterday.

"This is a very strong typhoon," Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said, warning provinces in Vamco's projected path to prepare for its impact. The provinces planned to evacuate 468,000 people by the end of yesterday, state media cited the government's disaster management authority as saying.

Vietnam is prone to destructive storms and flooding due to its long coastline. Vamco will be the 13th storm that affects the Southeast Asian country this year, where more than 160 people have been killed in natural disasters triggered by a series of storms since early October. "There has been no

respite for more than eight million people living in central Vietnam," said Nguyen Thi Xuan Thu, Vietnam Red Cross Society President. "Each time they start rebuilding their lives and livelihoods, they are pummeled by yet another storm."

In the Philippines, coastguard and disaster agencies scrambled yesterday to rescue thousands in a northern province after the 21st cyclone to hit the Philippines this year tore through the main island of Luzon late on Wednesday and early Thursday. Vamco has killed at least 53 people, injured 52 and left 22 missing in the Philippines, according to the Philippines police and army. — Reuters

Trump loyalists gather claiming election fraud

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump supporters rallied in Washington yesterday to push the discredited theory that fraud denied him rightful victory in the election, as further results cemented the president's defeat. Trump expressed his thanks and added he might "stop by and say hello" at rallies held under the banners of "Stop The Steal", "Million MAGA March" and "Women for America First".

Rightwing militia groups such as the Proud Boys also planned to hold rallies, prompting a large security presence in the capital to prevent clashes with separate anti-Trump events that were scheduled outside the Supreme Court.

"The whole system's rigged... in the way that the information is getting to the people, it's filtered through these channels that makes it so that the truth never actually gets out," said marcher Darion Schaublin, 26, who drove to Washington from Columbus, Ohio. "There is a good chance... he is not going to have a second term - and I'm not sure of the legitimacy of that."

The final two undeclared states were called on Friday by US television

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WASHINGTON: The motorcade of US President Donald Trump drives past supporters holding a rally yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amiri envoy offers condolences on late Bahraini prime minister

Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain mourns late official



MANAMA: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah conveys condolences to the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. — KUNA

MANAMA: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah conveyed yesterday his condolences to the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa on the passing of the late Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah on Friday mourned the passing of the Gulf state's Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin

Salman Al Khalifa. Speaking to reporters, the Kuwaiti envoy extended his deepest condolences to the Bahraini people over this immense loss, saying the late official, who was the world's longest-serving prime minister, has always been fond of

Kuwait. The late Bahraini prime minister's legacy and accomplishments "will forever live in our hearts," added the diplomat. Prince Khalifa passed away early on Wednesday at Mayo Clinic hospital in the United States. — KUNA

Kuwait hails winner of Sheikh Sabah prize

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said Friday His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion aims to encourage scientific research and innovation. "The prize, named after His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, materializes the noble commitment to ensuring a better and healthy life for the elderly people; it is a token of our appreciation of their contributions and dedication along their lifetime," he said. The minister made the comments in an address to the ceremony held via videoconference by the World Health Organization (WHO) to deliver the 2020 prize to Prof Gunhild

Waldemar of Denmark. Appreciating the achievements made by the Danish laureate, Dr Sheikh Basel said, "Prof Waldemar was able to make outstanding contribution to research into the health problems of the elderly."

"She devised a new technique for early diagnosing and treating Alzheimer," he said, wishing Prof Waldemar more success. Sheikh Dr Basel paid homage to the sponsor of the prize, His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying this initiative signals the strength of the relationship between the State of Kuwait and the WHO, which dates from the country's joining of organization in May 1960. He also thanked the WHO leadership under Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for their efforts to select the successful candidates for the prize. During World Health Assembly, held in May 2019, the WHO Executive Board named Prof Waldemar as winner of the \$20,000-worth prize, based on recommendations of the selection panels and in collaboration with the foundation of the prize. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah attends the videoconference. — KUNA

Kuwait: G-77, China strive to achieve sustainable development

NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations said the Group of 77 and China are making great efforts to find suitable solutions to the challenges in the quest for sustainable development while taking stock of the evolving changes worldwide. The ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 and China takes place at a critical time when the world is battling against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic,

Bader Abdullah Al-Munayekh said in an address on behalf of Kuwait to the virtual meeting on Friday.

The battle against the pandemic added strains on the countries of the world, particularly the Group of 77 and China, in their efforts to curb the negative impacts of the climate change and other disasters, he pointed out. "These challenges made international cooperation and solidarity more significant than ever and highlight the need of finding innova-

tive partnerships in the areas of development and financing to address the current and future shocks," Munayekh stressed.

"The ongoing dialogue is a step in the right direction and expresses the extent of our realization and understanding of the new changes, and their causes and impacts, as well as how to address them effectively. These changes brought about both challenges and opportunities," he noted. The Kuwaiti representative underscored the need to change the approach to achieving sustainable development and tackling climate change in a way that could address the shortcomings revealed recently amid the COVID-19 outbreak. He called on development partners to honor aid pledges and the commitments they made in binding treaties, notably those related to climate and biodiversity.

"Only a few states met their aid pledges," he regretted, noting that this assistance is crucial for achieving equitable economic recovery and realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "The State of Kuwait has always been one of the biggest supporters of the joint action against poverty that spearheaded the relief efforts aiming to alleviate debts and mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural and man-made disasters," he said, citing Kuwait's role in providing assistance to the conflict-hit countries. Realizing the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 on poor communities, the State of Kuwait provided nearly \$290 million to the efforts meant to tackle the various dimensions of the pandemic, Al-Munayekh went on.

The Kuwaiti funding went to various

aid initiatives and mechanisms in countries hard-hit by the pandemic and UN agencies such as the World Health Organization, as well as the COVAX Facility effort to develop an anti-COVID-19 vaccine, he revealed. Commending the role played by the Group of 77 over the last 56 years in creating a joint negotiating capacity under the UN umbrella, Munayekh highlighted the significance of continuing this role and strengthening the south-south cooperation. He called for greater collaboration with the advanced countries with a view to better utilizing the available chances in high-tech and scientific advancement and empowering the countries of the south to overcome the challenges on the way to SDGs through the perspective of collective responsibility. — KUNA

Israelis killed Qaeda no. 2...

Continued from Page 1

shot five times at them with a pistol fitted with a silencer, it said.

Iran's state news IRNA and Mehr news agency at the time reported a similar incident and identified the victims as Habib Dawoud, a 58-year-old Lebanese history teacher, and his daughter Maryam, 27, without giving further details. They said the "individual on the motorbike shot from the sidewalk and fled" the scene and that police investigations were ongoing. There have since been no updates.

US federal authorities have offered a \$10-million reward for information leading to Abdullah's capture. He was the "most experienced and capable operational planner not in US or allied custody", according to a highly classified document provided by the

US National Counterterrorism Center in 2008, the Times said. The bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 left 224 people dead and more than 5,000 injured. Abdullah was indicted by a US federal grand jury later that year for his role.

Washington accused Iran of harboring Al-Qaeda members and allowing them to pass through its territory in 2016, an accusation denied by Tehran officials at the time. Tehran, which has been subject to several attacks by extremists, considers Al-Qaeda a "terrorist group" and has taken part in the fight against it, mainly in Syria and Iraq.

"Even though America has not shied away from making any false accusation against Iran in the past, this approach has become routine in the current US administration," Khatibzadeh said. He accused President Donald Trump's administration of pursuing an "Iranophobic" agenda as part of its "all-out economic, intelligence and psychological" war against Tehran. "The media should not be a loudspeaker for the publication of the White House's purposeful lies against Iran," he said. — Agencies

They were echoed by the African Union, France, Russia and Spain.

Western Sahara, a vast swathe of desert on Africa's Atlantic coast, is a disputed former Spanish colony. Rabat controls 80 percent of the territory, including its phosphate deposits and its lucrative ocean fisheries. Morocco, which maintains that Western Sahara is an integral part of the kingdom, has offered autonomy for the territory but insists it will retain sovereignty. The Polisario demands a referendum on self-determination as set out in the 1991 ceasefire. The vote has been repeatedly postponed due to disputes between Rabat and the Polisario over voter rolls and the question to be asked. — Agencies

Egypt finds over 100...

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with brightly colored hieroglyphic pictorials. Saqqara, home to more than a dozen pyramids, ancient monasteries, and animals burial sites, is a vast necropolis of the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. "Saqqara has yet to reveal all of its contents. It is a treasure," Antiquities and Tourism Minister Khaled Al-Anani said at the unveiling ceremony. "Excavations are still underway. Whenever we empty a burial shaft of sarcophagi, we find an entrance to another."

The latest find came just over a month after archaeologists in the area found 59 other well-preserved and sealed wooden coffins, also dating back more than 2,500 years ago. More than 40 statues of ancient deities and funerary masks were also discovered, the minister said. Another two wooden statues were found in the tomb belonging to an ancient judge of the 6th dynasty, according to Mostafa Waziri, secretary gener-

al of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

It was not immediately clear if the statues depicted any of the judge's family members but one statue is believed to depict an individual, by the name Heteb Ka, who was "venerated by the king", Waziri said. "The beauty of the statue ... is seen in the intricacy of its eyebrows, moustache, and eyelashes. It is absolutely beautiful and wonderful," he added.

The sarcophagi will be distributed among several museums in Egypt including the yet-to-open Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) at the Giza plateau. Situated near the famed Giza pyramids, GEM is planned to be inaugurated in 2021 after multiple delays. Anani attributed the flurry of discoveries in Saqqara to extensive excavation works in recent years. Another discovery in the vast Saqqara necropolis is expected to be announced in December or early 2021.

Archaeologists also hope to find an ancient workshop for manufacturing wooden coffins for mummies. Waziri explained that ancient Egyptians used to buy their coffins at this workshop. "We expect it to be somewhere close to the coffin's burial shafts," Waziri said. Egypt hopes archaeological discoveries will spur tourism, a sector which has suffered multiple shocks ever since a 2011 uprising up until today's coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Clashes in Western Sahara despite...

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed "grave concern regarding the consequences of the latest developments" that erupted despite UN efforts to avoid an escalation. Algeria, which backs the Polisario, and Mauritania have called for restraint and respect of the 1991 ceasefire.

Trump loyalists gather claiming...

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networks - with Democrat challenger Joe Biden winning the former Republican stronghold of Georgia in an extremely close race, and Trump getting North Carolina. The latest tallies gave Biden a solid overall final win in the state-by-state Electoral College that

decides the presidency, with 306 votes against Trump's 232. Two hundred seventy votes are required for election.

Trump continues to impede Biden's ability to prepare for his transition ahead of inauguration on January 20 and has filed numerous lawsuits - so far unsuccessfully - to challenge vote counts around the country. On Friday, a judge in Michigan issued another rejection of Republican claims of fraud.

Trump said Friday that "time will tell" if he remains president, in a momentary slip of his unprecedented refusal to concede his election defeat and help Biden prepare to take power. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's new bankruptcy law gives hope to struggling businesses

Focusing on economic implications to help businesses emerge from failure

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait's new bankruptcy law organizes the issue of bankruptcy and corporate debt alongside globally competitive economies. The aim is to provide a legal foundation for modernizing the economy, attracting more foreign investment and growing the private sector. But what does the new law say exactly? To answer this question, Kuwait Times spoke with lawyers and attended seminars to learn the specific implications of the new law.

No jail time for debtors

Firstly, the new bankruptcy law no. 71/2020 does away with jail sentences for debtors. This has long been a contentious issue in Kuwait and the region. Small and medium business owners often face failure and jail time if their business collapses. This has arguably been a key factor in limiting the growth of Kuwait's private sector.

The new bankruptcy law has removed arrest or imprisonment as penalties for debtors and those filing for bankruptcy. In an official statement, the ministry of commerce in October noted that the abolition of imprisonment for civil debts came after extensive studies. The ministry explained the harm of imprisonment was much greater than its use as punishment, especially since sentences were typically for short periods and that imprisonment of the debtor disrupts

their ability to repay the debt.

Helping businesses manage and emerge from failure is a modern approach that focuses on the economic implications of the business.

Specific mechanisms

The new law calls for the establishment of a specialized bankruptcy court, a mechanism for preventive settlement and financial restructuring to help busi-

nesses avoid insolvency, and working with creditors to establish arrangements satisfying all parties. The new law establishes guidelines for the implementation of bankruptcy trustees who can oversee a bankruptcy filing, specialized bankruptcy investigators who will work with the bankruptcy court and trustees to ensure the rights of all parties involved and prevent abuse of the system. A separate bankruptcy commission established under the ministry of commerce and industry will also be set up to over-

see bankruptcy filings of state-owned entities. "The law streamlines and modernizes bankruptcy provisions," noted Philip Kotsis, Partner & Co-Head of the Kuwait Office at Al Tamimi & Co, who was speaking during a seminar on the new law organized by the American Business Council-AmCham Kuwait in collaboration with the German Business Council Kuwait and Al Tamimi & Company.

"There is a clear desire to see companies attempt to emerge from these distressed situations, and there is an attempt to de-stigmatize business failure. This will hopefully have a positive impact on various aspects of business culture in Kuwait, and will help investors outside Kuwait to see that a structure has been put in place, which may attract more foreign investors," Kotsis said.

Enforceability of court judgments and actions to be taken - including commencing liquidation procedures, notifying concerned parties, disclosing decisions on the Kuwait stock exchange (if the company is listed) and instructing the debtor to disclose the bankruptcy publicly - are all governed by the new law.

Attorney Meshari Al-Ayada noted that the new bankruptcy law filled in important gaps in the old commercial law, especially with regards to fraud, embezzlement and other financial misdeeds. Penalties, including sentences of up to five years imprisonment, remain for



those convicted of financial fraud or other financial crimes.

At the same time, the law provides a way forward for debtors seeking to get back on their feet financially. The law allows debtors to launch new projects, obtain financing, continue with employment, serve in public life and even run for elections. "Establishing a special bankruptcy court will add expertise regarding bankruptcy disputes in favor of those working with this law. In addition, the law made the process of restructuring shorter and faster," Ayada told Kuwait Times.

Wrinkles remain

However, some wrinkles remain that may take time to iron out. "The new law

limits supervision of bankruptcy to account auditors registered with the Capital Markets Authority only. I consider this a prejudice against small companies, as [most of] the account auditors registered with the Capital Markets Authority deal with big companies for large sums that small companies can't afford. This will be clear after the law is applied," Ayada explained.

Published in the official gazette - Kuwait Al Youm - on October 25, the new bankruptcy law is now active, and the court that will begin examining bankruptcy proceedings is in the early stages of establishment. The 308-article law will place Kuwait among leading countries economically in the upcoming period, said the ministry.



An attempt to de-stigmatize business failure

nesses avoid insolvency, and working with creditors to establish arrangements satisfying all parties. The new law establishes guidelines for the implementation of bankruptcy trustees who can oversee a bankruptcy filing, specialized bankruptcy investigators who will work with the bankruptcy court and trustees to ensure the rights of all parties involved and prevent abuse of the system. A separate bankruptcy commission established under the ministry of commerce and industry will also be set up to over-

One dead, nine injured in Hawally crash



KUWAIT: A woman died and nine others were injured in a horrific accident reported Friday in Hawally. The accident happened between a sports-utility-vehicle and a public transportation bus

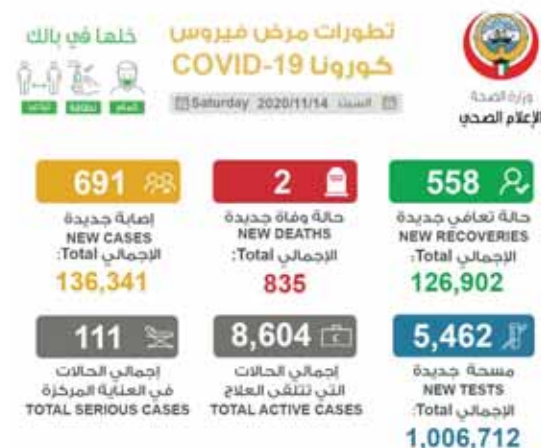
on the intersection between the Mousa bin Nassir and Ibn Khaldoun streets, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said. The Asian woman was pronounced dead on the scene, while the nine

injured people were sent to Mubarak and Amiri hospitals, KFF added. An investigation was opened to reveal the circumstances behind the accident.

Kuwait reports 691 new COVID cases, two deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait tallied 691 new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours to up the total to 136,341, while two fatalities pushed its death toll from the outbreak to 835, the health ministry said yesterday. The number of people hospitalized with the virus currently stands at 8,604, with 111 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad. The official added that some 5,462 swab tests were conducted over the past 24 hours out of a total of 1,006,712 so far. The ministry had earlier reported that 558 people had recovered from the virus over the same period, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 126,902. The spokesman went on to urge the public to abide by health precautions, mainly following social distancing rules, as the only way to halt the spread of the virus. — KUNA

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.



THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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News in brief

Kuwait condemns shooting

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Ministry on Thursday expressed its strong condemnation of the shooting that targeted the Saudi embassy in the Dutch city of The Hague. In a press statement, the ministry stressed that the "sinful and cowardly attack" is a violation of all international norms and laws. It pointed to Kuwait's support and solidarity with the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in all measures taken to maintain its security and the safety of its citizens.

Oil price down

KUWAIT: Kuwait's crude oil price went down by 80 cents to \$42.73 per barrel Friday as oppose to \$43.53 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Across the global markets, the price of Brent crude decreased 75 cents to \$42.78 per barrel as with the West Texas Intermediate also down by 99 cents to close at \$40.13 pb.

Helpers stuck abroad

KUWAIT: The general secretariat of the council of ministers has asked the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to come up with a plan for a potential return of domestic helpers stuck abroad. Al-Qabas reported quoting sources. A decision on that regard still requires the health ministry's approval, however.

Midterms postponed?

KUWAIT: Kuwait's education ministry is considering shifting the public high school midterms to be taken with the finals in June 2021, after the health ministry refused a request to allow in-class exams. Al-Qabas reported, quoting sources.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Traditional teapots displayed at a store in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait remains committed to help Yemen

BRUSSELS: Kuwait has reaffirmed its strong commitment to help Yemen on all humanitarian, development, political levels and stressed the importance of finding a political solution to the crisis. This was expressed by Kuwait's ambassador to the EU, NATO and Belgium, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, at the second Yemen Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting hosted virtually by the European Commission Thursday evening. "My country will always remain faithful to its commitment, until our brothers in Yemen can overcome the suffering and enjoy security and stability," he told the meeting speaking via videoconference. Budaiwi noted that during ministerial meeting on Yemen which Kuwait co-chaired along with the UK, Sweden, and Germany in September, Kuwait pledged \$20 million in humanitarian aid. Since the conflict escalation in March 2015, Yemen is facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world as described by the UN. Now, with COVID-19 spreading, Yemen is facing an emer-

gency within an emergency, he stated.

Kuwait has welcomed all efforts led by Saudi Arabia to bring all parties in Yemen together to restore unity in Yemen. Implementation of the Riyadh agreement will represent a major step toward lasting peace not only for the people of Yemen, but also for regional stability, he said. He reiterated Kuwait's continued support for the United Nation led efforts to advance the political process. "I would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our strong condemnation of the attacks and violations, as well as our strong support to Saudi Arabia and its right to defend its people and territories," he said. He recalled that Kuwait has repeatedly stressed the importance of finding a political solution as it is the only solution to the Yemeni crisis. He underlined the importance of the following pillars for achieving a political solution in Yemen, the GCC Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue, Security Council Resolution 2216 and the Stockholm Agreement. Budaiwi thanked the European Union and the government of Sweden for "giving the opportunity to participate in this important humanitarian meeting."

Rehabilitation

In other news, the Humanitarian Relief Society (HRS) concluded a vocational training program that helped build the technical capacities of 300 Yemeni

youths, males and females, in five areas. The program, part of the 'Kuwait by your side' relief campaign, was meant to meet the needs of the local labor market. Undersecretary of the Yemeni Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training Moal Al-Sha'bi said at the graduation ceremony in southern city of Aden. He thanked Kuwait and the HRS for their direct contributions to the economic development of Yemen through and building the Yemeni workforce and reducing the unemployment rate. He affirmed the Ministry's keenness on promoting private investment and encouraging the donor agencies to contribute to the youth empowerment initiatives.

Meanwhile, Aden Governor Mohammad Al-Meflahi said Kuwait's supportive role in Yemen is held in high esteem by the local authorities of Yemen as it helps alleviate the suffering of the citizens and improve their living conditions. HRS Deputy Director in Yemen Adel Ba'ishen said in the meantime that the HRS-funded projects focus on areas that have long-term impact on sustainable development. The just-ended training project, sponsored by the Yemeni Altwasul for Human Development, benefited the trainees in the areas of computer and mobile phone hardware and software maintenance; electrical wiring; air conditioning and cooling systems; sewer connections; and entrepreneurship. — KUNA

Kuwaiti official takes part in women's rights webinar

BRUSSELS: Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, a prominent and renowned Kuwaiti campaigner for rights of women in the Gulf, participated in a webinar in Brussels on how women empowerment has made big strides in Kuwait in education, politics and economy. During the webinar entitled "women empowerment in the Gulf," organized by the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP) Thursday evening, Sheikha Intisar said, "There is a big shift in female empowerment in Kuwait, the freedom of speech in Kuwait makes it so progressive." Schools for girls and boys were established way back in 1911 and the first group of girls to be sent abroad for study was in 1966, she referred.

In a videoconference, the Kuwaiti campaigner told the MEPs that she runs three non-governmental organizations: one in Kuwait and two others in Jordan and Lebanon to work on the mental health of women affected by war and violence. In Kuwait, they teach positive psychology to students to spread positive thinking through various activities, and in Lebanon and Jordan they use drama therapy for women affected by war and female victims of violence, she explained. "We cannot get to women empowerment if women don't realize their value, no matter how much legislation we put," Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah stressed.

Meanwhile, Hannah Neumann, chair of European Parliament's Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP), in her introductory remarks said that women empowerment is an issue "where we can learn from each other." She noted that during her visit to some Gulf countries, she saw a very big step forward in women's rights. "Hopefully this will be a start of an engagement leading to a conference with a physical presence," she said. Naumann, a German MEP, announced that DARP is planning a visit to Kuwait in February next year if the situation permits related with the coronavirus crisis. Eva Kaili, a Greek MEP, told the webinar that Kuwait is "very progressive and it also has participation of women in its political life." "I think we see a model for all Gulf countries," she added. Campaigners for women empowerment from Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE also spoke at the webinar about the developments in their countries on women's rights.

In the meantime, Kuwait's ambassador to the EU, Belgium and NATO Jassem Al-Budaiwi expressed his happiness that the Kuwait embassy also participated in the webinar. "We all feel proud in Kuwait what women have achieved so far and how women have become an important example for others in the region," said Budaiwi. He expressed happiness to note such interest by the European Parliament in this important issues for the GCC countries and for the efforts by DARP, appreciated in this regard, their efforts to inform the members of the European Parliament of this important movement in the Gulf region," he noted. DARP covers inter-parliamentary relations with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen as well as the Contact Group of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). — KUNA

Kuwait briefed on latest regarding missing citizen in Romania

BUCHAREST: Inspector General of the Romanian Police Major General Eduard Miritescu affirmed yesterday the keenness of his country to follow up on the case of the missing Kuwaiti citizen Mohammad Al-Baghli since 2015. This came during a meeting with the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri at the headquarter of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police in the capital, Bucharest. In a statement to the press, Ambassador Hajri said that they discussed the latest developments regarding the case of the Kuwaiti citizen who has been missing in Romania since August 2015. He called for more efforts since the case is very sensitive on both official and popular levels in Kuwait. Ambassador Hajri assured that the Romanian officials are keen to



BUCHAREST: Inspector General of the Romanian Police Major General Eduard Miritescu meets Kuwaiti Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri. — KUNA

follow up on this humanitarian issue and uncover its circumstances. Kuwaiti businessman Muhammad Al-Baghli disappeared in mysterious circumstances in Kiya village in Brahova district, north of the capital Bucharest, in 2015. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior previously sent security delegations to Romania to follow up on the issue with the Romanian police and the competent authorities. — KUNA

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'Captain Chloroquine' seeks superhero win in Brazil vote

BioNTech founders: Scientist couple in global spotlight

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GADAREF, Sudan: Ethiopians fleeing intense fighting in their homeland of Tigray gather with their belongings near this border Sudanese town on Friday. — AFP

Tigray forces strike Amhara airports

Thousands of Ethiopians continue to cross border into Sudan

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia: Ethiopia said yesterday that forces loyal to the ruling party in the northern Tigray region had fired into neighboring Amhara region, raising fears that ongoing fighting could draw in other parts of the country. A doctor said two military personnel were killed and up to 15 injured in Gondar, one of the targeted cities.

The allegation came as thousands of Ethiopians continued to cross the border into Sudan and aid workers pleaded for access to Tigray, where intense fighting has sparked fears of a devastating conflict in Africa's second most populous country. "In the late hours of Nov. 13, 2020, a rocket was fired towards Bahir Dar and Gondar cities. As a result, the airport areas have sustained damages," an Ethiopian government statement said.

"The TPLF junta is utilizing the last of the weaponry within its arsenals," the statement said, referring to the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the Tigray ruling party. TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael told AFP yesterday he did not have information about the reported attacks but noted that TPLF leaders have said "any airport used to attack Tigray will be a legitimate target".

The airports in Bahir Dar, the regional capital, and in Gondar are used by both military and civilian aircraft. Residents reported hearing gunfire in both cities Friday night, though an Amhara regional government statement said "the situation was controlled within a few minutes" and "our cities are in peace".

"There were at least two dead" and "10 or 15 injured", said a doctor at a hospital in Gondar who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said the casualties appeared to have resulted from an explosion, not from bullets. "I have seen abdominal, chest and leg injuries," he said, adding there were "no civilians at all" among the dead or injured.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed last week launched military operations in Tigray, saying the move was provoked by TPLF attacks on federal military camps in the region - a claim the TPLF denies. Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed, some in a gruesome massacre documented by Amnesty International, and thousands have fled fighting and air strikes in Tigray, whose leaders Abiy accuses of seeking to destabilize the country.

Tigray has been under a communications blackout since the operation began, making it difficult to verify claims from both camps about the situation on the ground. Military officials have vowed to keep the conflict contained in Tigray, and Abiy has repeatedly promised a quick, decisive victory. But Amhara and Tigray are embroiled in long-running disputes over land along their shared border that analysts worry could draw Amhara into the conflict.

Thousands of Amhara militiamen have already headed towards Tigray to fight alongside federal forces, according to Amhara security officials. Both Bahir Dar

and Gondar were calm yesterday morning, residents said. One resident of Bahir Dar told AFP there were "two heavy explosions around 10:50 pm". "After that there was gunfire for 15 minutes, and then it went quiet," the resident said.

'Extreme urgency'

As of Friday evening, at least 21,000 Ethiopians had fled across the border into Sudan, according to Sudan's refugee agency. They have described walking many kilometers in baking heat to flee intense bombardments they say have been carried out by the Ethiopian army. Meanwhile Tigray leader Debretsion has said hundreds of thousands of people are displaced within the region, where the United Nations is lobbying for full humanitarian access.

Catherine Sozi, the UN's resident and humanitarian coordinator in Ethiopia, made her plea directly during a reception Friday evening for Demeke Mekonnen, Ethiopia's new foreign minister. "Things are getting rather hard," Sozi said during a question-and-answer session, citing the communications blackout, road closures, and shortages of water, fuel and cash. She later told AFP there was "extreme urgency" for aid workers to get full access. "We can't reach the people we need to provide services to," she said. "We're concerned that every hour, every day that the conflict continues, the most vulnerable people become even more vulnerable."

yesterday morning with thick plumes of gray smoke rising over the valley, an AFP journalist saw.

"This is my house, I can't leave it to the Turks," as Azerbaijanis are often called by Armenians, said one resident as he threw burning wooden planks and rags soaked in gasoline into a completely empty house. "Everybody is going to burn down their house today... We were given until midnight to leave," he said. On Friday at least 10 houses were burned in and around Charektar.

The ex-Soviet rivals agreed to end hostilities earlier this week after previous efforts by Russia, France and the United States to get a ceasefire fell through. A key part of the peace deal includes Armenia's return of Kalbajar, as well as the Aghdam district by Nov 20 and the Lachin district by Dec 1, which have been held by Armenians since a devastating war in the 1990s.

Russian peacekeepers began deploying to Nagorno-Karabakh on Wednesday as part of the terms of the accord and took control of a key transport artery connecting Armenia to the disputed province. Russian military officials said the mission consisting of nearly 2,000 troops would put in place 16 observation posts in mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor. — AFP

Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, on Friday declared the TPLF was in the "throes of death", but Debretsion dismissed this as a "daydream". The TPLF dominated Ethiopian politics for nearly three decades before Abiy took office in 2018 on the back of several years of anti-government protests. Since then, the TPLF has complained of being sidelined and scapegoated for the country's woes. The feud grew more bitter after Tigray went ahead with its own elections in September - defying a nationwide ban on all polls imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic - and tried to brand Abiy an illegitimate ruler. — AFP



NEELUM VALLEY: A man holds kitchen utensils while standing next to the remains of his destroyed house following cross-border shelling between Pakistani and Indian forces in Tehjain village in Kashmir yesterday. — AFP

15 killed as tensions flare in Kashmir

SRINAGAR/MUZAFFARABAD: At least 10 civilians and five security personnel were killed in cross-border shelling between India and Pakistan on Friday, in one of this year's deadliest days along the heavily militarized frontier separating the nuclear-armed rivals, officials said. Indian officials said the barrage of mortars and other weapons along several parts of the Line of Control - the de-facto border - began after Indian troops foiled an infiltration attempt from Pakistan in northern Kashmir.

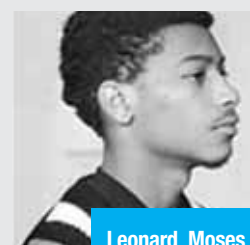
Pakistan's military said in a statement it had responded to unprovoked and indiscriminate firing by the Indian army. Indian officials said six civilians, three soldiers and a border guard were killed on their side. The Pakistan military said four civilians and one soldier were killed on the Pakistani side. Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir in full. Each rules part of the region, with New Delhi long accusing its neighbour of fuelling an insurgency, which Pakistan denies.

Indian and Pakistani troops regularly exchange fire across the mountainous border, but the shelling on Friday was particularly intense, according to Indian officials. Both sides also accused the other of firing at civilian areas. "As usual they targeted civilian populations without any remorse," said Syed Shahid Qadri, a government official in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, where a woman was among the dead and 27 others were injured.

Across the border in Indian-ruled Kashmir, officials said an 8-year-old child was among those killed in the shelling that started in the morning and continued late into the evening. Mukhtar Ahmad, a resident of Uri in Indian Kashmir said there was panic in the hillside town after loud explosions were heard from areas closer to the de facto border. "Several families have fled the area and taken shelter in Uri town," he said. More than 40 civilians have been killed in firing between Indian and Pakistani troops this year, according to official data, with both sides suffering similar fatalities. — Reuters

FBI get their man, after almost 50 years on the run

WASHINGTON: A man who had been on the run from the FBI for almost 50 years after escaping police during his grandmother's funeral has been re-arrested, authorities said Friday. Leonard Moses had been jailed for life for throwing Molotov cocktails together with a group of others during riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr in 1968. The petrol bombs set fire to the Pittsburgh house of Mary Ample, who was severely burned and later died as a result of her injuries.



Leonard Moses

In 1971, Moses was granted a furlough to attend the funeral of his grandmother and used the occasion to give police the slip, changing his name to Paul Dickson and working, at least since 1999, as a traveling pharmacist in the state

of Michigan, police said. The FBI renewed their search in 2016, questioning his family once again and offering a reward for his arrest, as well as setting up a dedicated tip hotline. Despite more than 2,000 tip-offs, the FBI were "still unable to locate and apprehend Leonard Moses," said FBI agent Michael Christman, an FBI official at a press conference in Pittsburgh. But at the beginning of this year, he was detained and questioned in the course of a separate investigation, whose nature the FBI did not disclose. Legal records show that a Paul Dickson, born in 1949, was arrested in the state in April for fraud and writing illegal prescriptions for controlled substances. In the course of the investigation, the suspect's fingerprints were taken and fed into a law enforcement database, eventually proving a match for the federal records the FBI held on Moses. — AFP

Villagers burn houses ahead of takeover

CHAREKTAR, Azerbaijan: Villagers in Nagorno-Karabakh set their houses on fire yesterday before fleeing to Armenia ahead of a weekend deadline that will see parts of the territory handed over to Azerbaijan as part of a peace agreement. Residents of the Kalbajar district in Azerbaijan that was controlled by Armenian separatists for decades began a mass exodus this week after it was announced Azerbaijan would regain control today.

Fighting between the separatists backed by Armenian troops and the Azerbaijan army erupted in late September and raged for six weeks, leaving more than 1,400 dead and forcing thousands to flee their homes. In the village of Charektar, on the border with the neighboring district of Martakert which is to remain under Armenian control, at least six houses were on fire



CHAREKTAR: A house burns in this village outside the town of Kalbajar yesterday. — AFP

International

Biden's possible India links spark genealogical frenzy

Bidens in Maharashtra overwhelmed by media attention

CHENNAI: Already bursting with pride at Kamala Harris's ancestry, India has now started digging up potential local roots for US President-elect Joe Biden. The next leader of the United States has speculated that he might have had relatives in colonial India. While there is no proof, the Biden name has become a genealogical target of investigation across the country.

first letters I received and I regret I never followed up on it," he said.

Mumbai Bidens lie low

The letter said their "mutual, great, great, great, something or other worked for the East India Trading Company back in the 1700s". It sparked excitement in Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu state, which is also home to Harris' Indian relatives. A plaque at St George's Cathedral in Chennai that celebrates Christopher Biden, born in 1789, has suddenly become a local tourist draw. "We've come to know the records of two Bidens - William Biden and Christopher Biden - who were brothers and became captains of the East India Company on merchant ships in the 19th century," the Bishop of Madras, Reverend J George Stephen, told AFP. "While William Biden died at an early age, Christopher Biden went on to captain several ships, and eventually settled down in Madras," which is now known as Chennai.

Despite the speculation, there has been no confirmation that the Biden brothers are related to the 77-year-old American. If the president-elect does have an Indian ancestor, Christopher is considered the most likely candidate, according to experts who have studied family records. There are also Bidens in Mumbai and Nagpur in Maharashtra state who could be descendants of Christopher, one of eight children of a John Biden who could be the common link.

The media attention has been overwhelming, according to the Maharashtra Bidens. Indian media has speculated that their late grandfather Leslie wrote to the US politician. Rowena Biden, a family member in Mumbai, insisted that they were not trying to establish any relationship. "We wish Mr Joe Biden all the best for his new role as president of the USA but we are



CHENNAI: In this picture taken on Nov 10, 2020, a pastor shows a memorial tablet of Christopher Biden at St George's Cathedral. — AFP

not trying to establish any connections or linkages," she told AFP.

"We share a last name and that's about it," she said. "All of us are well-to-do financially and have well-settled lives so we don't need any gains - monetary or non-monetary." Rowena Biden said that after the first reports came out about the possible links, "people started tracking us to our house and everyone in the family had to bear the brunt of it". The "undue limelight" had cast a shadow over "the primacy of Mr Biden's win and our privacy as well", she said. — AFP

region that has seen centuries of shifting frontiers and power centers. Newer surges of nationalism have helped fan the flames. Much of the trouble lies in the fact that the country is part of a broader geographical region known as Macedonia that historically spanned parts of present-day Bulgaria and Greece.

Sofia considers Macedonians to be Bulgarians who were merely persuaded to believe in a separate identity under an "ethnic engineering project" that took place in the mid-20th Century when the territory was a republic in communist Yugoslavia. The Macedonian language is a similarly false construct, argues Sofia, which is demanding EU documents refer to the "official language of the Republic of North Macedonia". Travelling down the annals of history, the disputes get even thornier. A commission of experts from both countries has been trying to work out various debates and harmonize school textbooks. They had some successes, agreeing on recommendations that covered history books until the 6th grade. But the meetings broke down last year when they reached the 7th grade and the Ottoman-era hero Goce Delchev appeared, according to Petar Todorov, a history professor in North Macedonia on the commission.

Contested hero

Born in present-day Greece while the region was under Ottoman rule, Delchev taught at a Bulgarian school in what today is North Macedonia. He made his name as a revolutionary leader struggling against the Ottomans at the turn of the 20th century. Both Bulgaria and North Macedonia now claim him as their own, with cities, statues, schools and universities named in his honor. In Bulgaria's southwest city of Gotse Delchev, which uses a different English spelling, nobody doubts his origins. "The people here are adamant: Gotse Delchev is a Bulgarian historical personality," high school director Elka Bojkova told AFP. Across the border at the Skopje church where Delchev's remains lie, the view is reversed. "I can say what every Macedonian would say. Of course Goce Delchev is ours," said a Skopje resident who declined to give his name. — AFP

Changing frontiers

While the disagreements may be baffling to outsiders, notions of nationality are heavily fraught in a



SKOPJE: This photograph taken on Sept 15, 2020, shows a protestor wearing a T-shirt with an image of the former Macedonian flag, holding a photograph of revolutionary figure Goce Delchev and a placard that reads 'Get up Goce, they sold you' as he takes part in an anti-government protest. — AFP

ters, especially as there is little sign of progress in talks between the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said he would raise concerns about the precipitated US withdrawal from both Afghanistan and Iraq when he meets Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tomorrow in Paris.

"We don't think that should happen," Le Drian, whose country is especially concerned about terrorism, said in a television interview. Trump on Monday sacked Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who was known for his caution and had also opposed Trump's use of troops at home against anti-racism protesters.

Pessimism on Afghanistan

The acting defense secretary until Biden's January 20 inauguration is Christopher Miller, a former special forces lieutenant who had taken the reins at the National Counterterrorism Center just three months ago. Quickly afterward, retired Army colonel Douglas

Macgregor, an outspoken advocate of withdrawing from Afghanistan, was appointed senior advisor to the new acting defense secretary.

Macgregor - whom Trump nominated in July to be ambassador to Germany, although he is virtually certain not to be confirmed in time - had earlier voiced disappointment that Trump had not completed the pullout. "It doesn't make any difference when we leave. It's all going to fall apart," Macgregor said of Afghanistan earlier this year in an interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson, whose show Trump avidly watches.

"But the good news is that once we're out, at least we will no longer be subsidizing the corruption and we will no longer subsidize Afghanistan as the global engine of heroin production, which it has become under our watch." Trump has not given reasons for the shakeup at the Pentagon, with some suggesting that his administration may simply want to pad the resumes of loyal aides in the final months. — AFP



British captain most likely ancestor

A plaque commemorating 19th-century British ship captain Christopher Biden has been a popular selfie spot in the eastern city of Chennai since the US election. And a Biden family in western India says it has become "exhausted" by calls since their namesake staked his claim to the White House. The American vote has been under the spotlight in India because Biden's running mate is the daughter of a migrant from Tamil Nadu state.

The 56-year-old Harris has made much of her Indian connections and how she likes to eat "idli with a really good sambar" - typical food from the south. Less attention has been paid to Biden, who has established Irish links. But he spoke of possible Indian connections on a trip to Mumbai in 2013 when he was vice president. Biden said in a speech that he had received a letter from an Indian Biden after becoming a senator in 1972, suggesting they could be related. "One of the



RIO DE JANEIRO: Regina Bento Sequeira, a 59-year-old lawyer and candidate for the municipal elections in Brazil, poses for a picture on Nov 11, 2020. — AFP

'Captain Chloroquine' seeks superhero win in Brazil vote

SAO PAULO: After losing eight elections, Regina Bento Sequeira came up with a plan to win a city council seat in Brazil: She reinvented herself as a superhero, "Captain Chloroquine." The name - which will actually appear on the ballot for the country's local elections today - is a nod to her political idol, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who hails chloroquine as a wonder drug against Covid-19 despite a slate of studies finding it is ineffective.

Almost as controversial as the hotly debated malaria drug is Brazil's peculiar practice of allowing candidates to run under pseudonyms like Sequeira's, a phenomenon that has exploded despite complaints from critics that it detracts from serious politics. To Sequeira, it is the only way candidates like her - regular Brazilians without deep pockets - can hope to get voters' attention.

She has been crisscrossing Rio de Janeiro in a metallic yellow convertible emblazoned with the nickname and handing out flyers with a picture of herself decked out in a Captain Marvel outfit, asking voters to choose her for city council to fight both COVID-19 and corruption. "It's the only way to make my mark. I don't work in politics, I don't have support, I don't have money. That's why I chose this path," says Sequeira, 59, who is a lawyer in her day job.

But she says she has no illusions about her chances. "Are you joking?" she says when asked who she thinks will win. "The same ones as always!" Sunday's ballots will also feature Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Bin Laden, Trump and Obama among the 576,000 candidates vying for some 64,000 posts nationwide. "Because there are a lot of candidates, people try to use names that stand out," says Natalia Aguiar, a political scientist at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. "The phenomenon of irreverent names could be seen as a symptom of a deeper problem: We overvalue individual candidates at the expense of party politics," she told AFP. — AFP

Trump looks set to hasten Afghan pullout

WASHINGTON: With little more than two months left in office, US President Donald Trump appears to be pushing ahead with plans to pull out of Afghanistan as he stacks the Pentagon with loyalists. Trump, who refuses to acknowledge defeat to President-elect Joe Biden, in his campaign declared that he was winding down "endless wars" and his new picks are enthusiastic supporters of his position.

Biden broadly shares Trump's desire to end America's longest war, if not the same political calendar. But the timeline has caused alarm in some quar-

BioNTech founders: Scientist couple in global spotlight

FRANKFURT: Progress on a COVID-19 vaccine has propelled the modest husband-and-wife team behind German firm BioNTech into the global limelight, with attention inevitably focusing on their background as the children of Turkish immigrants. Ugur Sahin and his wife Ozlem Tureci founded BioNTech in the western German city of Mainz in 2008, and together with US giant Pfizer are developing the leading candidate in the worldwide chase for a vaccine.

The announcement on Monday that their vaccine was more than 90 percent effective in trials led news bulletins around the world and sent stock markets and hopes soaring. BioNTech is now worth \$25.8 billion, more than Germany's largest lender Deutsche Bank. Sahin, the chief executive, came to the country when he was four years old and his father got a job at a Ford plant in Cologne as a member of the "Gastarbeiter" (guest worker) generation of migrant workers, many of whom ended up staying in Germany. Tureci, BioNTech's chief medical officer, is the daughter of a Turkish doctor who emigrated from Istanbul. Described as hard-working and passionate, the pair appear to be wary of superlatives or the temptation to set up their journey as a model of successful integration. "I am not sure I really want that," Sahin told British newspaper The Guardian. "As a society we have to ask ourselves how we can give everyone a chance to contribute to society. I am an accidental example of someone with a migration background. I could have equally been German or Spanish."

'Simply authentic'

Although the general public has only now discovered them, the two have long been known in the scientific community as leading figures in cancer research, with the self-declared goal of "revolutionizing" cancer medicine. Specializing in molecular medicine and immunology, Sahin, 55, first trained at the University of Cologne and then at Saarland University Hospital, where he crossed paths with medical student Tureci. They married in 2002, even returning to the lab on the day of their wedding, and have a daughter. Tureci has described her childhood as closely linked to medicine. "My father's practice was in the family home," she once told a German science website, adding that she "could not imagine" any other job than that of a doctor.

Neither saw themselves managing a company, but their lines of research seemed "too daring" for the pharmaceutical industry to take notice, she told the Tagesspiegel daily. They founded their first biotechnology company, Ganymed, in 2001, selling it in 2016, while their second, BioNTech, developed a new generation of individual therapies for cancer patients - based on the same technology now used in their coronavirus vaccine. With some 1,500 employees today, it is supported by major private investors. Two of them, Thomas Struengmann and Michael Motschmann, described the couple this week as "simply authentic people, with great integrity, hardworking and exceptionally intelligent". At BioNTech's headquarters in Mainz, on a street with the auspicious name "An der Goldgrube" (At the Goldmine), scientists work on a novel technology known as messenger RNA, which involves injecting strands of genes into the body that dictate to cells the defense mechanism to be manufactured against a disease. — AFP

Family of Ugandan activist killed in US files \$270m claim

LOS ANGELES: The family of a Ugandan activist killed in an accident over the summer at one of America's top national parks has filed a \$270 million wrongful death claim. Esther Nakajjigo, 25, was visiting Arches National Park in Utah with her French husband Ludovic Michaud in mid-June when an unsecured gate swung into the road, decapitating her as she sat in the passenger seat of their car. The newlywed couple had travelled to the park to celebrate the one-year anniversary of their first date.

Michaud is seeking \$240 million in damages from the National Park Service, while Nakajjigo's family is seeking \$30 million, US media reported Friday. "For want of an \$8.00 basic padlock, our world lost an extraordinary warrior for good; a young woman influencer who was destined to become our society's future Princess Diana, philanthropist Melinda Gates or Oprah Winfrey," the claim, which is a precursor to a lawsuit, stated. In an interview carried by CBS4 television station in Denver this week, Michaud, who lives in Colorado, said he still has flashbacks of the accident and is "trying to figure out how to move forward, how to wake up in the morning". "What he saw and experienced that day, I cannot even imagine," Deborah Chang, an attorney representing Michaud and the Nakajjigo family, told local media. "The end of the gate impaled the car like a lance, and literally beheaded his newlywed bride right in front of him." — AFP

15th
of
November

BELGIUM KING'S DAY



A small country with big ambitions!

Covering some 30,000 km², Belgium is not a big country but through its history and its geographic location it has always held an important place in the world, aware that without bridges to others, it would be unrealistic to want to build a fairer and more prosperous world.

For Belgium, effective action on crucial issues such as peace and security, human rights and the promotion of the rule of law, can only be carried out in a multilateral context. Belgium is therefore a founding Member State of many of the great international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe.

Belgium makes a significant contribution to the work of these institutions, while Brussels is home to the headquarters of several of them and many Belgian politicians have assumed important responsibilities while heading up such organizations.

Based on the open and pragmatic Belgian character, Belgian foreign policy covers universal values, focused on democracy, dialogue and regional integration between countries that may have been in conflict. So as human rights improve and poverty declines and a country opens up to a democratic process, if the economy picks up, development cooperation and economic action can be complementary!

BELGIAN KING'S DAY IN COVID-19 TIMES



Every year Belgium honours its King on the 15th of November. Last year the Belgian embassy hosted a delightful reception at the ambassador's residence with the corps diplomatique, Kuwaiti officials and entrepreneurs. Together we raised the glass to King Philippe, the seventh King of the Belgians. In addition, we reflected on the excellent diplomatic relations between Belgium and Kuwait but also looked forward to different fruitful commercial collaborations between our countries, notably in the food, medical and entertainment sector.

This year's edition will be a little bit different. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately no official reception can be held. However, those who desire to discover a 'taste of Belgium' can easily do so in safe conditions at home. Belgium is known for its many culinary traditions. One of them are fries, that are considered to be originated in Belgium. For those who have a sweet tooth, our Belgian speculoos biscuits and fine chocolates are widely available in Kuwait (see picture). It may not come as a surprise that this year the Brussels chocolatier Pierre Marcolini was elected as the world's best pastry chef. The chocolate stores of Pierre Marcolini can be found around the world and maybe Kuwait might host one in the future. Apart from the guilty pleasures, Belgium is also a large producer of healthy vegetables, fruits and herbs. These products can easily be found in the Kuwaiti supermarkets and gourmet stores.

COVID-19 has also emphasised the primordial role of ICT and the medical sector to connect and protect our beloved ones. The Belgian embassy is actively supporting those two sectors in Kuwait with the aim to establish suitable collaborations between Belgian and Kuwaiti entities at mutual benefit. For example, a Belgian company will soon finalise the ICT integration in a Kuwaiti hospital. Also, in the medical sector our companies have a lot to offer. Belgium is an international hub for the biomedical industry. As we speak, clinical trials on a new corona vaccine are carried out in Belgium. Possibly Belgium will play a key role in the combat against the novel corona virus.

Finally, let's look forward to some entertainment prospects with a Belgian twist for post COVID-19 times. Once the opening is allowed again, fun-loving families and children can visit TEKZONE, a futuristic and Belgian-designed family entertainment park in The Avenues mall. This concept is currently being franchised in the GCC region and can therefore be considered as a success story of Kuwaiti-Belgian cooperation. In addition, 2021 will present a new sport opportunity for Kuwait. The UCI Mountain Bike Eliminator World Cup is a new race discipline, developed in Belgium (see picture). Currently it has become an internationally accredited bike race with professional athletes from all over the world. Moreover, Kuwait became the main sponsor of this spectacular international event and will even host its own race in Kuwait City early 2021. As a main sponsor and organiser Kuwait will therefore enjoy a lot of visibility and credibility on the international sport scene.

Be safe and keep care of each other in these exceptional times. The future in Kuwait looks bright and the embassy of Belgium takes pride in contributing to it.

LOCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND A QUALITY WORKFORCE

Belgium occupies an important position on the eco-

nomics chessboard. It is ranked 12th country in the world for the export of merchandise (WTO-2014 Report) and is a favourite destination for investors. Every year, billions of euros of foreign direct investment are made in Belgium.

Belgium offers the opportunity to reach 200 million consumers in a radius of 500 kilometres thanks to its central geographic position and its quality logistics infrastructures. Sea ports, inland ports, canals, airports, rail, road and motorway networks: the various communication channels in Belgium are constantly being adapted to the needs of the economy. For example, the port of Antwerp is the 2nd busiest European port and has the largest petrochemical complex in Europe. The city of Antwerp is the diamond capital with 80% of the market in rough diamonds and 50% in polished diamonds.

There are many other reasons to explain Belgium's economic success including a highly-qualified, multi-lingual and flexible workforce, proximity with the international decision-making sphere based in Brussels, many financial and tax incentives, affordable property prices, legendary hospitality, excellent social security and more.

IN BELGIUM, SPORTING PASSION IS BLACK-YELLOW-RED



Who could forget the performances of our champions? Eddy Merckx, nicknamed The Cannibal with his extraordinary record, Stefan Everts and his ten motocross world championship titles and Jacky Ickx, six-time winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. These are just some of our sporting legends like Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin, former tennis number ones with no less than 11 Grand Slam titles between them.

Today, those who make us dream include Nafissatou Thiam on the athletics track and Remco Evenepoel in cycling, not forgetting our formidable Red Devils and their international stars such as Kevin De Bruyne or Eden Hazard.



Alongside the achievements of our sporting ambassadors above, Belgium can also pride itself on organizing major sporting events. The Spa-Francorchamps Grand Prix in Formula 1, the great cycling classics such as the Tour of Flanders and Liege-Bastogne-Liege and the Memorial Van Damme in athletics, are all examples of unmissable annual meetings...

SCIENCE IS IN OUR DNA

A true Belgian tradition, scientific and technical research has always been promoted throughout the country, with many researchers involved in a wide range of international scientific programmes. Medicine, chemistry, statistics and astronomy can be counted among Belgium's strengths, fields where Belgian researchers have received prestigious scientific awards.

Today, Belgian proficiency can be seen in many other fields such as nanotechnology, biotechnology and even vaccinations. The universities are the primary pool for this Belgian scientific expertise and, through the creation of spin-offs, have taken the important step of enhancing invaluable skills. The treatment of cancer by proton therapy is probably one of the best economic and scientific successes worldwide.

Belgium is also actively involved in space research, research in the North Sea and climate research in Antarctica with the Princess Elisabeth station. Currently, ambitious research projects focused on sustainable development are also being funded.

To date, many Belgian scientists have been received into prestigious universities abroad; just like Belgium itself welcomes various foreign students and researchers attracted by the high scientific level of its universities together with the quality of life in Belgium.

Foundation Boghossian - Villa Empain



Created in 1992 by Robert and his two sons Jean and Albert Boghossian, Lebanese jewelers of Armenian origin, The Boghossian Foundation aims to contribute to development and education.

In its first fifteen years, the Boghossian Foundation devoted itself mainly to the task of helping improve the living conditions of young people both in Armenia and Lebanon in order to encourage a better future for them.

After completely renovating the Villa Empain, the Boghossian Foundation established its headquarters there in 2010. A jewel of Brussels' Art Deco architectural heritage, the Villa Empain is now a Centre of art and dialogue between cultures of the East and the



UCI Mountain Bike Eliminator World Cup powered by Kuwait



Godiva, Belgian chocolates boutique, The Avenues mall



West, of encounters and discoveries, of shared emotions and wonderment open to all.

The Boghossian Foundation hosts a rich artistic program and unique activities all year round: exhibitions, concerts, conferences, dance performances, workshops for kids, artist encounters, guided tours, meetings, film screenings, performances, yoga classes...

The Boghossian Foundation continues to finance social, educational and artistic projects in Belgium, Lebanon and Armenia.

Moussem Nomadic Arts Centre

Moussem provides support to artists and creates programs that help shape the global contemporary art



scene and engage in the creation of a new common cultural heritage. It speaks directly to a varied urban audience. It plays a unique, intercultural part in the art world by integrating the work it offers into established arts institutions on the basis of long-term reciprocal partnerships.

In 2021, Moussem will be celebrating its 20th anniversary; since its inception it has navigated an exceptional course. It started in 2001 as a small-scale festival in Antwerp set up on the initiative of citizens who believed in the power of culture to bring together people of different backgrounds and wished to tackle the absence of diversity in the cultural sector of that city. Moussem was a project for cultural participation that arose out of the Moroccan community in Antwerp, but from the very beginning it was open to other groups and initiatives in that city. The focus soon turned to the introduction of artists and content linked to North Africa and the Middle East.

On its recognition as a (Nomadic) Arts Centre in 2008, the local focus shifted and Moussem expanded into an international platform at work in the Flemish and European arts scenes.

In its multidisciplinary Moussem Cities festival, the organization latches onto a metropolitan context in which to cast light on a particular artistic scene together with both permanent and temporary partners from Brussels. Previous festivals have turned the spotlight on Tunis, Beirut, Casablanca, Damascus and Algiers. In the field of music, there are the annual Sufi Nights and Moussem Sounds events and such thematic series as Tarab and Qanun Dialogues. Moussem introduces into the music scenes in Flanders and Brussels new artists and musical styles that operate outside the closed 'world music circuit' but which better represent

the variety of non-Western musical expression, and which also connect better with the various diasporas.

In Moussem Repertoire, the organization introduces plays in Arabic to the Dutch-language performing arts world by translating and publishing them in Dutch, also organizing public events that focus on them.

For this multifaceted and successful performing arts work, in 2018 Moussem was awarded the Flemish Culture Prize for the Performing Arts.

It is noteworthy that Kuwaiti playwright and director Sulayman Al Bassam collaborated with Moussem in 2017, in the framework of Moussem Repertoire, and has presented his play called In the Eruptive Mode on the stage of the well-known Toneelhuis Theatre in Antwerp.

Nedda El-Asmar

Nedda El-Asmar, Belgian designer of Lebanese-Palestinian origins, studied Jewellery Design, Gold & Silversmithing at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, and she completed her education at the Royal College of Art in London. It is impossible to sum up her various activities over the last twenty years in one word. Openness, flexibility and diversity are key concepts in her thinking and design approach. She is quick to see possibilities, even if a commission comes from an unexpected source. As a result she has evolved into an acclaimed designer with a broad field of activities.

Nedda develops a world of seemingly simple shapes, ideally refined or oddly baroque, mixing classical elegance and a modern approach in a well-balanced, creative manner. Craftsmanship and originality, tradition and innovation, functionality and aesthetics and a passion for re-envisioning traditional objects are all central to Nedda's work.

Her designs have earned numerous awards and prizes.

She works for renowned names such as Hermes, Puiforcat, Eternum, Gense, Villeroy & Boch, Robbe & Berking, Obumex, Demeyere, Carl Mertens, Serax, Maison Vervloet, ...etc. Furthermore, she designs diplomatic gifts on behalf of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also collaborates with a Kuwaiti company of crafts heritage.

From 2008-2017, Erik Indekeu, trained as a Product Designer, was Nedda's business and design partner. This partnership and her nomination as Designer of the Year in 2007 meant that the diversification of their projects gained momentum.

From 2007-2019 she was head and senior lecturer of the Jewellery Design, Gold & Silversmithing department at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp.

Currently she is coordinator and senior lecturer at the Jewellery Design, Gold & Silversmithing department at PXL-MAD Hasselt.



Business

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2020

G20 strikes pact to help poorer states Group declares 'common framework' for an extended debt restructuring plan

RIYADH: G20 nations declared Friday a "common framework" for an extended debt restructuring plan for coronavirus-ravaged developing countries, but campaigners cautioned that more was needed to alleviate a "wave of debt crises".

G20 nations last month agreed a six-month extension to a debt suspension initiative until June next year, falling short of calls by the World Bank and campaigners for a full-year renewal.

The framework, also agreed by the Paris Club of creditor countries, goes beyond that initiative to reschedule or reduce debts of vulnerable nations on a "case-by-case approach", G20 finance ministers and central bankers said. "In principle, debt treatments will not be conducted in the form of debt write-off or cancellation," they said in a statement following a virtual meeting hosted by the current G20 president Saudi Arabia.

"If, in the most difficult cases, debt write-off or cancellation is necessary... specific consideration will be given to the fact that each participating creditor shall fulfill its domestic approval procedures in a timely manner," French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire hailed the agreement on the framework as "historic".

"For the first time, all the main bilateral creditors, members or non-members of the Paris Club, will coordinate the debt treatment of the low income countries," Le Maire said. "It will bring more transparency in the debt relief process and involve private creditors, who will need to commit to at least comparable terms."

A senior US Treasury official said "the scale of the pandemic crisis" and the "deteriorating outlook" in many low-income countries had warranted the need for extended debt relief. Seventy-three countries are eligible to have their debt

restructured, including 38 in sub-Saharan Africa.

'Breathing space'

The agreement marks a major step for China, a top creditor to poor countries that officials say has resisted attempts to write off debts. Over the past two decades, China has financed projects in developing nations, including as part of its Belt and Road Initiative to build infrastructure to further expand trade. The Treasury official blamed Chinese creditors for "a lack of full participation" and transparency.

"We have a political commitment to this common framework going forward," the official said.

"But we certainly will be monitoring closely exactly how it works in practice. And with a particular eye on Chinese participation." Warning of a looming debt crisis across poverty-wracked developing nations, campaigners said the framework was far from sufficient.

"This announcement falls far short of what is needed to tackle the wave of debt crises in poorer countries," said Tim Jones, head of policy at Jubilee Debt Campaign, a British charity.

"With many countries facing debt crises... the G20 need to stop kicking the can down the road and build a transparent and inclusive system for cancelling debts to a sustainable level across private, bilateral and multilateral lenders." Last month, the World Bank said the debt of the world's 73 poorest countries grew 9.5 percent last year to a record \$744 billion.

The countries' debt burden owed to government creditors, most of whom are G20 states, reached \$178 billion last year, and China is owed more than 63 percent of that. "The debt service suspension initiative has provided much needed 'breathing



LAHORE: Farmers work in a rice field after harvesting the crops in Lahore yesterday. G20 nations declared Friday a 'common framework' for an extended debt restructuring plan for coronavirus-ravaged developing countries, but campaigners cautioned that more was needed to alleviate a 'wave of debt crises'. —AFP

space' to countries," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

"But there are countries where debt levels are not sustainable. This is where the timely common framework comes into play—a coordinated approach to debt treatment, a standardized approach, but with case-by-case resolution." Georgieva said it

was "critically important" to bring the private sector on board. In a letter to G20 chair Saudi Arabia, the Washington-based Institute of International Finance said private creditors were ready to take part in the extended debt relief initiative, but so far they have received few requests from eligible countries. —AFP

US consumer sentiment ebbs

WASHINGTON: US consumer sentiment fell unexpectedly in early November as households worried about their finances, the resurgent COVID-19 pandemic and the depleted fiscal stimulus, dimming the economy's outlook as the curtain started to close on a challenging year.

The survey from the University of Michigan on Friday also showed Democrat Joe Biden's victory in the Nov 3 presidential election was weighing on expectations among Republicans, with a slight gain among Democrats. Daily new coronavirus cases have been exceeding 100,000, with hospitalizations and deaths surging, prompting some state and local governments to impose new restrictions on businesses. Restrictions and consumer avoidance of crowded places could trigger another wave of layoffs and further squeeze incomes following the loss of a government weekly unemployment subsidy.

"The drawdown in sentiment seems to reflect decreased perceptions of household finances, which may be a lagged effect of the dwindling fiscal stimulus," said Tim Quinlan, a senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities in Charlotte, North Carolina. "More consumers reported lower income than higher income for the first time since 2014." The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index dropped to 77 early this month from a final reading of 81.8 in October. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index little changed at 82. The survey's measure of current conditions was steady. Its gauge of expectations fell to 71.3 from 79.2.

A measure of expectations among Republicans declined to 76.4 from 96.4. It edged up to 69.3 from 68.6 among Democrats. A weekly unemployment supplement, which was part of more than \$3 trillion in government coronavirus relief, has lapsed for millions of unemployed and underemployed workers. A second rescue package is unlikely before President-elect Biden takes office in January.

Economists expect consumer sentiment will trend lower despite promising developments on experimental vaccines. "With more and more states starting to impose new restrictions on activity, this highlights the growing downside risks posed by the pandemic for the next few months," said Andrew Hunter, a senior economist at Capital Economics. —Reuters

Qualcomm receives US nod to sell 4G chips to Huawei

WASHINGTON: Qualcomm Inc on Friday received a license from the US government to sell 4G mobile phone chips to China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, an exemption to US trade restrictions imposed amid rising tensions with

US extends deadline for TikTok sale to Nov 27

WASHINGTON: US authorities have given the Chinese owner of TikTok two additional weeks to divest the social media sensation in order to resolve national security concerns voiced by President Donald Trump's administration. A notice filed by TikTok owner ByteDance in federal court showed that authorities had extended the deadline originally set for November 12 to November 27.

The Trump administration, which has claimed that the popular video-sharing app could be used for Chinese espionage, has threatened to ban TikTok unless it is sold to American investors. But the ban has been challenged in the courts. The latest filing said the deadline set by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which reviews corporate deals for national security implications, had been extended.

A statement from the US Treasury said

Rising COVID-19 cases jeopardize US GDP growth

WASHINGTON: COVID-19 has come roaring back and is likely to inflict further damage on the American economy, which will take years to recover to its robust pre-pandemic status. And even with promising news on a successful vaccine candidate, that is unlikely to be widely distributed for many months.

US coronavirus infections have hit new record levels of more than 150,000 a day, causing authorities in many areas to impose new restrictions. "COVID still determines the course of the economy," economist Diane Swonk of Grant Thornton, said in an analysis.

"The current surge in cases is much more worrisome... (and) it is expected to be more disruptive to economic activity,"

she said. Authorities say an increasing number of cases have been traced back to relatively small private gatherings. "Buy a small turkey," Swonk urged for the coming Thanksgiving holiday, when Americans traditionally gather with extended family. "Delay celebrations and demand our elected officials do more for those suffering through no fault of their own. Masks are disposable; people are not." Chicago, the nation's third most populous city, has called on its residents to stay at home, while in New York and Minnesota, establishments selling alcohol must close at 10:00 pm. The world's largest economy over the summer showed promising signs of recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression, but now risks another reversal especially in the absence of a new stimulus package from Congress.

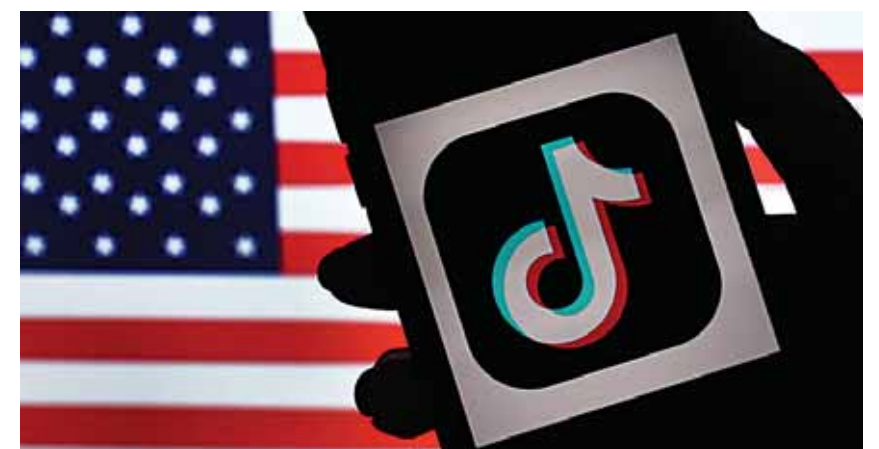
Court challenges

The Trump administration has been challenged over its decision in at least two US courts. TikTok and its parent firm have filed suit in the capital, while TikTok "creators" have a separate case pending in a Pennsylvania court, which blocked the ban on October 30. It was not until this week that US officials said they would not seek to enforce it, and the government at the same time said it was appealing the Pennsylvania order. Trump and his aides have claimed that TikTok — which has some 100 million US users — can be used to collect data on Americans for Chinese espionage, a claim denied by the company. The White House has said TikTok must become a US firm controlled by American investors to avert a ban. But any plan would likely need approval from Beijing, which has balked at giving up control of its social media star.

she said. Authorities say an increasing number of cases have been traced back to relatively small private gatherings.

"Buy a small turkey," Swonk urged for the coming Thanksgiving holiday, when Americans traditionally gather with extended family. "Delay celebrations and demand our elected officials do more for those suffering through no fault of their own. Masks are disposable; people are not." Chicago, the nation's third most populous city, has called on its residents to stay at home, while in New York and Minnesota, establishments selling alcohol must close at 10:00 pm. The world's largest economy over the summer showed promising signs of recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression, but now risks another reversal especially in the absence of a new stimulus package from Congress.

"We are starting to hear from economists that they are thinking about lowering their GDP projections because of Covid," said Maris Ogg of



ARLINGTON: The social media application logo, TikTok is displayed on the screen of an iPhone on an American flag background in Arlington, Virginia. US authorities have given the Chinese owner of TikTok two more weeks to sell the social media sensation in order to resolve national security concerns voiced by the Trump administration. —AFP

China's commerce ministry published new rules in August that added "civilian use" to a list of the types of technology that are restricted for export, which could make it more difficult for ByteDance to sell TikTok, which features clips of everything from dance routines to politics. A deal appeared to take shape earlier this year which would allow Silicon Valley giant Oracle to be the data partner for a newly incorporated TikTok Global, with

Walmart joining as a commercial partner. While Trump signaled his approval for the plan, it has not been finalized and the prospects remain unclear.

The developments come amid heightened tensions between Washington and Beijing over trade and national security, with the US administration having also banned Chinese tech giant Huawei from obtaining US technology and from deals involving wireless networks. —AFP



WASHINGTON: COVID-19 has come roaring back and is likely to inflict further damage on the American economy, which will take years to recover to its robust pre-pandemic status. —AFP

Tower Bridge Advisors. While booming home and auto sales have been a bright spot in the economy, along with a rebound in manufacturing, consumers

are worried about the upsurge in cases. One measure of consumer sentiment plunged in November for the first time since July. —AFP

China. "We received a license for a number of products, which includes some 4G products," a Qualcomm spokeswoman told Reuters.

Qualcomm and all other American semiconductor companies were forced to stop selling to the Chinese technology firm in September after US trade restrictions took effect. The spokeswoman declined to comment on the specific 4G products Qualcomm can sell to Huawei but said they were related to mobile devices. Qualcomm has other license applications pending with the US government, she said.

In the past Huawei was a relatively small chip

customer for Qualcomm, which is the biggest supplier of mobile phone chips. Huawei used its own house-designed chips in its flagship handsets but used Qualcomm chips in lower-priced models. Huawei's potential to design its own chips was thwarted in September by US trade restrictions that blocked its access to chip design software and fabrication tools. Industry analysts believe Huawei's stockpile of chips purchased before the ban could run out early next year, crippling its smart phone business.

Bernstein analyst Stacy Rasgon said the Qualcomm license would have a "limited

impact" because it only covers 4G chips while consumers are shifting to newer 5G devices. Rasgon said it is still unclear whether US officials will grant Qualcomm licenses for 5G smart phone chips.

Representatives for Huawei and the US Department of Commerce, which grants the licenses, did not immediately return requests for comment. Other US companies such as Micron Technology Inc were also stopped from selling to Huawei and have said they have applied for licenses. Intel Corp has also said it has a license to sell to Huawei. —Reuters

Business

KFH wins World's Best Islamic Financial Institution award from Global Finance

Awards acknowledge KFH's efforts in Islamic finance industry

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has won World's Best Islamic Financial Institution 2020 Award from Global Finance magazine in its 13th annual awards for the World's Best Islamic Financial Institutions for this year. KFH-Turkey has also been named as World's Best Islamic Financial Institution 2020 in Turkey, KT Bank AG-Germany as World's Best Islamic Financial Institution 2020 in Europe, KFH Capital as World's Best Islamic Fund Manager and KFH Takaful as World's Best Islamic Takaful by Global Finance.

All selections were made by the highly professional team of Global Finance, after extensive consultations with bankers, corporate finance executives and analysts throughout the world. The stringent criteria of giving the awards included new business development and product innovation, meeting all customer's requirements, geographic reach and strategic relationships. Also, among the criteria considered were reputation, customer satisfaction and the adherence to ethical standards.

Acting Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) at KFH, Abdulwahab Al-Roshood, said that World's Best Islamic Financial Institution Award is a culmination of KFH's efforts in providing the highest standards of Islamic financial services, especially after the significant success achieved by KFH which contributed to the development of the banking industry. This is in line with the methodological and Sharia support that KFH is keen to provide to spread the Islamic finance industry.

Al-Roshood added in a press release that the awards KFH received were well-deserved in view of

the bank's contribution to the growth of the Islamic finance industry in the markets it operated in, its success in meeting the customers' needs of Sharia-compliant products and establishing sustainable future growth with high efficiency for the Islamic



Group wins 5 global awards

finance industry and keeping up with the latest financial and banking technology. He pointed out that the excellence of KFH Group is reflected in its keeping pace with the development of digital bank-

ing services, adoption of technology, commitment to the highest levels of professionalism, best standards of risk management, and prudent practices.

Al-Roshood emphasized the wide experience of KFH in Islamic finance industry, Sukuk issuance for many banks, corporates and governments and arranging major financing deals for mega infrastructure development projects including vital sectors as well as contributing to driving economic growth and developing many financial products and alternative funding options, which are currently used in international markets. He added that KFH has achieved qualitative success, based on the strategy of digital transformation, focusing on core business, developing employee's performance, promoting service quality and improving performance levels in line with international standards and Sharia principles.

Al-Roshood emphasized that the awards indicate the readiness and capability the Group subsidiaries enjoy and their consistent performance based on specific rules, clear systems and sound foundations. This reflects the efforts that began



Abdulwahab Al-Roshood

years ago to unify work systems, enhance transparency and the coordination and cooperation among the Group subsidiaries. Al-Roshood mentioned that KFH succeeded in strengthening its roles and expanding its activities locally and globally, represented by Kuwaiti market and Group's markets. Being the first Islamic bank in

Kuwait, KFH achieved many successes in several areas, including building solid economic basics depending on developing human resources, and offering products and services that meet the market's requirements. This made KFH deservedly a global model for Islamic banking industry. In its 29th annual awards, KFH topped Global Finance's list of the Safest Islamic Financial Institutions in the GCC 2020. It also ranked fifth among all Islamic and conventional banks in the Middle East, and ranked 14 among the 50 banks ranked by Global Finance as the world's safest bank in emerging markets.

Headquartered in New York, Global Finance, founded in 1987, has readers in more than 191 countries and 33 years of experience in international financial markets. The magazine is an international reference in the financial sector, covering topics of corporate finance, joint ventures, capital markets, currencies, banks and risk management.

- KFH-Turkey won Best Islamic Financial Institution in Turkey
- KFH-Germany won Best Islamic Financial Institution in Europe
- KFH- Capital won World's Best Islamic Fund Manager
- KFH-Takaful won World's Best Islamic Takaful

Experience Always ON, the new stc postpaid voice plans

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced Always ON the new postpaid voice plans which feature rich new benefits with the latest mobile devices. Customers subscribing to the postpaid plans will experience a unique range of roaming, internet, and entertainment services as well as special discounts on fiber internet subscriptions powered by solutions by stc.

stc Always ON postpaid voice plans will allow customers to stay connected locally and globally with continuous internet and unlimited calls. Upon subscribing, customers can take advantage of the

free unlimited WhatsApp calls and incoming calls service while roaming. International minutes are also part of the bouquet of offerings, allowing users to stay in touch with friends and family wherever they are.

stc Always ON also caters to all your entertainment needs, with a free subscription to the Jawwy TV app which boasts OSN, Starzplay, Wide Khaliji, FOX+ and more, all in one place. Subscribers will be able to upgrade from 4G to 5G services at any time and with ease to enjoy the network's top internet speeds and upgrade their experience. What's more, stc introduced attractive discounts to its subscribers, especially for home users on fiber subscriptions powered by solutions by stc, as well as the option to add four new lines at a discounted price which can be used for family members. All these benefits and more are part



Nasser Al-Saadoun

of the Always ON new stc postpaid voice plans, keeping customers connected anywhere, at any time.

Chief Consumer Officer (CCO) of stc, engineer Nasser Al-Saadoun, said, "At stc, we believe in making the right investments to improve the user experience and build long-lasting relationships with our customers. The multi-featured postpaid bundles will allow subscribers to explore a new range of digital solutions when it comes to quality entertainment and reliable connectivity. We have expanded the number of exceptional benefits within each plan to conveniently suit the needs of our customers, giving them more perks for the same monthly cost."

He added, "As pioneers in the telecom sector we will continue to explore digital solutions that blend innovation with the latest technology. The strong infrastructure of our 5G network, and wide range of resources, allows stc to offer an unrivaled and interactive experience through new-to-market offerings, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait." Al-Saadoun mentioned that Always ON the new postpaid plans offered at competitive prices, are available to customers at any of stc branches, the stc website (www.stc.com.kw), and mystc App.

News in brief

WU to shut Cuba offices

HAVANA: Western Union will close its Cuba operation on November 23, following new US sanctions that prevent it from working with Havana's military financial firm, Fincimex, the Cuban company announced Friday. "Fincimex and Western Union have decided to suspend from 23 November the transfer of money from abroad," as well as the US money transfer company's 407 agencies in Cuba, Fincimex said on its Facebook page. It follows new US sanctions targeting the involvement of the Cuban military in remittances-money sent from abroad to relatives back home, a valuable daily support for many Cubans.—AFP

China bans Australian timber

BEIJING: China said that it has suspended some timber imports from Australia, as tensions soar between the two countries on a range of issues including trade, human rights and the coronavirus. Beijing-Australia's biggest trade partner-has threatened economic blowback since Canberra called for an inquiry into the Covid-19 pandemic, and has already suspended beef imports and launched a probe into the alleged dumping of Australian wines. On Thursday, the foreign ministry confirmed customs officials had suspended imports of timber from the Australian state of Victoria from Wednesday "to prevent the risks of plant disease". —AFP

DoorDash IPO filing

WASHINGTON: DoorDash is on track to take in some \$2 billion in revenue this year on growing demand during the pandemic, the food delivery startup said in its public share offering filing Friday. The California-based startup reported losses totaling \$149 million in the first nine months of 2020 on revenues of \$1.9 billion as sales more than tripled from the prior year. DoorDash was able to generate a profit in the second quarter of \$23 million before slipping back to a loss of \$43 million in the July-September period as it invested for growth. "We have a history of net losses, we anticipate increasing expenses in the future," the company said in its filing. —AFP

Banco Santander to cut 4,000 jobs

MADRID: Spanish banking giant Banco Santander told unions Friday that it plans to slash 4,000 jobs in Spain, Spanish union CCOO said following talks with the lender. Another source close to the negotiations said the job cuts are mostly due to greater use of online banking, which has surged "by nearly 50 percent" this year amid the pandemic. Santander expects transactions at physical bank branches "will be reduced by half during the next two years," the source added. As a result around 1,000 jobs will also be "reorganized internally", the source said. —AFP

Indonesia to woo Tesla investment

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo said he will send a high-level team next week to meet with top executives of US automaker Tesla as the Southeast Asian country aims to become the world's biggest producer of electric vehicle batteries. The president, known by his popular name Jokowi, told Reuters in an interview on Friday the trip will be part of Indonesia's promotion of its new, so-called "Omnibus" Job Creation law, which simplifies doing business in Indonesia.

"Next week we will send a large team to America and Japan, to promote the Omnibus," Jokowi said.

The trip comes after Jokowi congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden on his win. The Indonesian leader said he hoped a Biden administration would promote "stability" and "world peace".

Led by Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Pandjaitan, the team is set to meet with Tesla executives, he said. "It's very important because we have a great plan to make Indonesia the biggest producer of lithium batteries and we have the biggest nickel (reserves)," Jokowi said. In a separate

interview, Luhut said he would also hold meetings with the World Bank and US fund managers to talk about the Omnibus law and Indonesia's environmental projects. Luhut declined to comment specifically on the planned meeting with Tesla, but said that "there is a really good chance" that companies will want to invest in Indonesian nickel processing to cut costs.

Tesla's chief executive Elon Musk has said he is planning to offer a "giant contract for a long period of time" so long as the nickel is mined "efficiently and in an environmentally sensitive way".

Indonesia's new Job Creation law, which harmonises 79 existing laws, has been met with criticism for relaxing environmental standards. Luhut said Indonesia could make the supply chain of batteries environmentally friendly in seven to eight years by powering smelters with renewable energy sources, so they could sell green batteries for cars in the European market by 2030. Jokowi has repeatedly said the Job Creation law is vital to cutting red tape, spurring investment and boosting labor market competitiveness. Despite protests to the law from unions, students and environmentalists, the legislation has been positively received by the market.

Indonesia has struggled to attract foreign investment at the same pace as some of its neighbors.

The president said the new law would be one of the main catalysts to boost economic growth next year.

VW boosts investments in future tech

FRANKFURT: German auto giant Volkswagen said Friday it would increase investment in smarter and greener technology as it ramps up efforts to capture a market rapidly shifting to electric vehicles. Europe's largest car manufacturer plans to spend 73 billion euros (\$85.1 billion) by 2025 on "electrification, hybrid powertrains and digital technology", around half its total expenditure for the period, as part of a "transformation into a digital mobility company", the company said in a statement.

It comes as part of a five-year funding allocation that the board of VW presents each year, and marks a rise in research and development from 60 billion euros committed for 2020-2024. VW, like other car makers, is racing to meet EU emissions targets, as it tries to

shake off the long-running "dieselgate" scandal involving cheating software it illegally installed in 11 million cars.

The company's investments in digitalization, which includes self-driving technology, apps and over-the-air software updates were significantly boosted, doubling to 27 billion euros by the middle of the decade. "Only as a digital mobility group can we meet people's needs for individual, sustainable and fully networked mobility in the future," chief executive Herbert Diess said, adding that it will be "crucial" for VW to reach a leading position in car software.

Around 35 billion euros will be spent on developing battery-electric cars and 11 billion earmarked for hybrid vehicles of existing models, VW said. "We will go fully on the offensive in the coming years", said Bernd Osterloh, chairman of the VW works council, who accused political officials of paralysis on "topics such as charging infrastructure and high-speed internet".

"Volkswagen is fully committed to climate-friendly, highly networked mobility," he said, "but for this, we and our customers need a reliable environ-



BEIJING: Volkswagen's investments in digitalization, which includes self-driving technology, apps and over-the-air software updates were significantly boosted, doubling to 27 billion euros by the middle of the decade. — AFP

ment." VW said it assumes "moderate growth" in the global economy over the next five years and anticipates a 30-percent improvement in productivity amid savings in administration. Last year, VW said it would slash 7,000 jobs by 2023.

The Wolfsburg-based company, whose brands include Audi, Porsche and Skoda, said it envisages the pro-

duction of 26 million electric cars by 2030, as it intends to launch 70 electric models by 2030, with 20 already in production. VW posted a net profit of 2.8 billion euros in the three months to the end of September, returning to the black after a dismal 1.5 billion euro loss in a second quarter heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

Business

Ooredoo and Tamdeen Group sign partnership agreement

To provide Al-Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall with latest digital solutions



KUWAIT: (From right), Thamer Al-Tahous, Fatima Dashti, Mijbil Alayoub, Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Sarawi, Muath Al-Roumi, Nabil Fares, Fadi Kawar and Shabnam Sharif.



KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and Ahmed Al-Sarawi during the signing of the partnership agreement.

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, announced its 5-year partnership agreement with Tamdeen Pearl, a subsidiary of Tamdeen Group, Kuwait's leading mixed-use property developer. As per this agreement, Ooredoo will provide innovative services and integrated digital communication solutions supported by the high-speed 5G technology for phase one of Al-Khiran project, the "Hybrid Outlet Mall", located in the heart of Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City, and the region's first hybrid outlet, leisure and lifestyle destination. Ooredoo will also support the project with state-of-the-art cyber security technical services with its highest international standards and specifications.

The signing ceremony took place last Thursday, at Ooredoo Kuwait's headquarters in Kuwait City, with the presence of Ooredoo Kuwait's top management which included Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain - Chief Executive Officer; Fadi Kawar - Chief Operating Officer; Mijbil Alayoub - Senior Director, Corporate Communications; and Thamer Al-Tahous - Head of Government Relations and Public Entities of Ooredoo Kuwait, Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Sarawi - Chief Executive Officer of Tamdeen Shopping Centers; Nabil Fares - General Manager of Information Technology; Muath Al Roumi - General Manager, Tamdeen Group Marketing; and Shabnam Sharif, Senior Project Manager.

Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Kuwait said: "Today, we take pride of this partnership between us and one of

- **Al-Babtain:** This partnership is yet another step we take towards supporting the establishment of smart shopping malls in the State of Kuwait through our best digital solutions and latest smart communication systems
- **Al-Sarawi:** Al-Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall will provide visitors a unique integrated shopping experience and will be one of the exceptional shopping destinations in the State of Kuwait

the largest real estate developer company in the country, Tamdeen Group, through one of its subsidiaries, Tamdeen Pearl, which is establishing and constructing the latest innovative shopping malls in the State of Kuwait that combine premium "outlet" shopping with various entertainment options for a modern lifestyle. In fact, this partnership is a reflection of Ooredoo's pioneering role as a major partner in supporting the construction of smart shopping malls with the highest international specifications and standards, through providing them with the best innovative digital solutions and the latest smart communication systems."

Al-Babtain added: "For the past few years, we have been evolving to achieve the company's strategic goals and vision which aim to enrich people's digital lives and support digital transformation for all sectors in the State of Kuwait. Indeed, we align our strategies and values with the "New

Kuwait 2035" vision, and this partnership is yet another step towards this path."

Al-Babtain concluded by saying: "Designing a full integrated 5G network infrastructure based on the best international standards, along with building a comprehensive cybersecurity system and the best and most advanced digital solutions, enabling Al Khiran Outlet Mall project to be a prominent mark in the real estate sector is our promise."

From his side, Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Sarawi, Chief Executive Officer, Tamdeen Shopping Centers Company said: "Al-Khiran will undoubtedly be one of the most favorable shopping and entertainment destinations in the State of Kuwait. The project affirms our definite commitment to continuously position the country at the frontline of pioneering and innovative regional destinations for visitors from around the world who strives to experience exceptional shopping, entertainment,

and conservative tourism."

"Through our partnership with Ooredoo Kuwait, we are confident that we will embody the ultimate meaning of digitalization, secured infrastructure, and artificial intelligence which will benefit all business sectors and individuals," Al-Sarawi added.

Located in the South Kuwait, in the heart of Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City, the Al-Khiran project spreads across 350,000 m2, phase 1 is underway of construction with at 70,000 m2 of GLA of retail space to include many unique features which will position the project as favorable shopping and entertainment destination. Visitors will enjoy spectacular sea views when visiting the Kuwait's largest marina with 1.25 km of beautifully landscaped park and boardwalk, and the Water Gardens with their captivating water features.

Al-Khiran project will strengthen Tamdeen Group's position in the retail, entertainment and leisure sector, and goes in line with the group's strategy that contributes to the economic development of the State of Kuwait. The project will meet the changing demands of today's customers with its premium outlet shopping, exceptional dining options, cutting-edge entertainment, large format events, exhibitions and recreational leisure experiences.

With the signing of this agreement, Ooredoo Kuwait and Tamdeen Group will be frontrunners in the race for digitalization among all other companies in the country.

Discount offer for ABK MasterCard holders

KUWAIT: ABK MasterCard cardholders can now redeem discounts up to 10 percent in more than 325,000 hotels across 19,000 locations listed on Hotels.com and a cashback on Booking.com. To be eligible to receive the 10 percent discount on hotels.com, cardholders are required to make reservations via the dedicated website - www.hotels.com/mastercardmea. This offer is valid from 9th November 2020.

When using Booking.com, ABK MasterCard cardholders will be able to avail up to 10 per cent cash back on room rates in over 2 million properties globally, which will be credited to the customer's account after completion of the stay. Effective from 9th November 2020, ABK MasterCard holders can make reservations on www.booking.com/mastercardmea to benefit from the cash back.

The recent promotions have been initiated as a response to the influx in the ease of travel-restrictions and corresponding rise within the staycation market. ABK continuously aims to broaden its range of partnerships, by offering clients an array of ways to seamlessly and conveniently benefit from its various reward programs with the convenience of using online services. Through these strategic partnerships, ABK offers its customers flexible and affordable options to explore accommodation options across the globe, while safeguarding their wellness via contactless transactions.

Mezzan Holding celebrates 75th anniversary

KUWAIT: Mezzan Holding KSC, one of the Gulf region's largest manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage, healthcare, and consumer products is proud to celebrate its 75th Year Anniversary this year. "This anniversary marks a significant milestone for Mezzan Holding whose origins date back to the 1940s before Kuwait's 'golden era' and the end of the British protectorate. Starting out with a small shop and a single employee, today Mezzan is proud to be recognized as one of the largest companies in the GCC with over 8,500 employees across 7 countries," said Abdel Rahman Jassim Mohammad Al-Wazzan, Chairman at Mezzan Holding. "On this special occasion, we would like to thank our customers and shareholders for their loyalty and continued support, our partners for instilling their trust in us to ensure their brands have an extensive regional reach, and our employees for their hard work and unwavering commitment to bring Mezzan Holding to this important milestone."

"Over the last decades we've played a significant role in the

iPhone12 available for pre-orders at Ooredoo Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, is bringing the latest iPhone12 lineup: iPhone12 mini, iPhone12, iPhone12 Pro, and iPhone Pro max into your hands with amazing offers starting at KD25 through its eShop https://www.ooredoo.com.kw/portal/en/ip12_preorder.

With a beautiful all-new design, iPhone12 devices are 5G enabled, feature unparalleled new camera systems, edge-to-edge Super Retina XDR displays for a more immersive viewing experience, the biggest jump in durability with the Ceramic Shield front cover, and Apple-designed A14 Bionic chip, the fastest chip in a smartphone.

Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait, Mijbil Al-Ayoub highlighted the strategic and distinctive relationship with Apple and said, "Through our special relationship with Apple, we seek to provide the latest innovations in the world of communications and provide the best experience in the world of communications with the best

Nissan's \$95m suit against Ghosn begins in Japan

TOKYO: Proceedings in a \$95 million lawsuit brought by Japanese car giant Nissan against its former chairman Carlos Ghosn began Friday in a court near Tokyo. Nissan filed the suit against Ghosn in February and is seeking 10 billion yen over what it said were "years of his misconduct and fraudulent activity". Ghosn is an international fugitive after jumping bail last year and fleeing Japan, where he was awaiting trial on charges of financial misconduct, which he denies.

Nissan says the suit is aimed at "holding Ghosn accountable for the harm and financial losses incurred by the company due to the misconduct". In a statement, Ghosn said the civil lawsuit was an extension

of "the extremely unreasonable internal investigation with sinister intent by a portion of Nissan's senior management and the unreasonable arrests and indictments by the public prosecutors".

He said his Japanese defense team, which is representing him in his absence, "will show that the suspicions of wrongdoing and charges... have absolutely no foundation". Ghosn spent more than 100 days in detention in Japan after his sudden November 2018 arrest, but launched an audacious escape while out on bail in Tokyo, arriving in Lebanon apparently undetected.

He alleges Nissan turned on him over concerns he wanted to more closely integrate the automaker with French partner Renault. Renault has also filed a civil claim for damages against Ghosn over alleged financial misconduct. Ghosn's former aide Greg Kelly remains in Japan and pleaded not guilty to allegations of financial misconduct at his first court hearing in Tokyo in September. —AFP



offers in Kuwait at competitive prices."

Pre-orders of the all-new iPhone12 mini, iPhone12 Pro, and iPhone12 Pro max started from November 13, 2020. Tech-enthusiasts will be beyond excited to pre-order their preferred iPhone12 with the special deals Ooredoo is offering allowing them to pay on installments starting from KD 25.



Mijbil Alayoub

development of the food and beverage, consumer goods, and healthcare sectors in Kuwait. We are proud to distribute many of the world's most renowned brands such as Johnson & Johnson, Reckitt Benckiser, Medtronic and Hartmann, and manufacture products that are beloved staples in every household including Khazan, KITCO and Aqua Gulf. With the acquisition of a majority stake in KSPICO in 2019, we now manufacture pharmaceutical products to treat diabetes, cough and cold, allergy, and other medications that treat many more therapeutic areas," said Garry Walsh, CEO at Mezzan Holding. "At Mezzan, we are dedicated to the commitments we've made to our partners, families, and the environment in the last 75 years, and look forward to further strengthening our presence as one of the region's most reputable and trusted groups in the decades to come."

Mezzan Holding KSC's started in the 1940s when the late Jassim Mohammed Ali Al Wazzan, an ambitious Kuwaiti entrepreneur, opened the company's first retail store in Kuwait selling consumer-ready imported products such as rice, sugar and other food staples from neighboring Gulf countries, and later from Europe, the USA, and Asia. Today, the 8,500+ employee company distributes over 34,000 SKUs from over 1,200 local and international brands in the consumer goods, healthcare and services sectors, selling over 2.9 million items daily. Mezzan manufactures various products from food to pharmaceuticals in over 190,000m2 of manufacturing facility space.

Mezzan Holding KSC was listed in Boursa Kuwait in June 2015 and operates under strict corporate governance standards and regulations. The company is currently managed by an executive management team that works together hand-in-hand with the Al Wazzan family's second and third generation who are actively involved in the business. This systematic process has enabled Mezzan to adhere to its core values and principles and develop a long-term operating model and strategy that positions the company for future success.

Remaining true to the founder's vision and generationally instilled principles and values, Mezzan continues to evolve and contribute to the wellbeing and satisfaction of its consumers across the region through food and healthcare security. As a food and beverage manufacturer and distributor, Mezzan provides high-quality food to customers from popular brands such as General Mills, Red Bull, Rice Growers, Beyond Meat, Volvic, Acqua Panna, and San Pellegrino, and world-renowned consumer goods from brands such as Johnson & Johnson, Reckitt Benckiser, Kimberly Clark, and more. As a healthcare manufacturer and distributor, Mezzan has a majority stake in Kuwait Saudi Pharmaceutical Industries Company (KSPICO), Kuwait's only pharmaceutical manufacturing facility. The company's pharmaceutical business division, now a major pillar in the Mezzan strategy, provides medicinal, wellness, and healthcare products to local and regional customer homes and markets from popular brands such as Fludrex,

Pandrex, Dramylin, Medtronics, Chiesi, and many more.

Mezzan's significant role in the development of the local economy demonstrates the company's key influence in Kuwait's private sector over the decades. As an advocate for the diversification of sources of income that move away from an oil-based economy, the company supports the growth of small local businesses and contributes to the creation of job opportunities. Mezzan continues to strive towards achieving its goal for economic diversification and maintain its investments in strengthening its partnerships, distribution network, and storage, industrial, and production facilities.

With the capability to respond to a range of needs, keep up with the growing population, and ensure food and healthcare security in the Gulf, Mezzan continues to play a pivotal role in the development of the food and beverage, healthcare, and consumer goods industries across the region. Over the last 75 years the company has earned the trust of the people in the communities they serve as the Mezzan legacy lives on through every household with the presence of its products.



Mezzan Holding CEO Garry Walsh

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Spectators watch as young Palestinians ride jeeps and motorcycles along a sandy hill during a weekly show in the Al-Zahra area near Gaza City. — AFP photos

Hundreds of Palestinian youths gather every Friday to watch dirt bikers and 4x4 motorists test their courage and driving skills up a steep sandy hill on the outskirts of Gaza City. Kicking up bursts of sand against the rays of a setting sun, Sibaa Dormush, 37, clad in black jacket and blue jeans, revs up his white motocross bike and makes it triumphantly up to the top. He acknowledges the acclaim of spectators before tearing back down the hill.

"Going up is really hard, you have to know how to move the bike so you don't get stuck" in the dirt, he says. Jeeps also hazard their way up, but often end up stuck half-way and have to reverse back down as onlookers scatter. "The engine overheated," said the 35-year-old driver with dented teeth, also named Sibaa. The extreme sports enthusiasts, along with the spectators, many of them smoking narguileh water pipes, had to



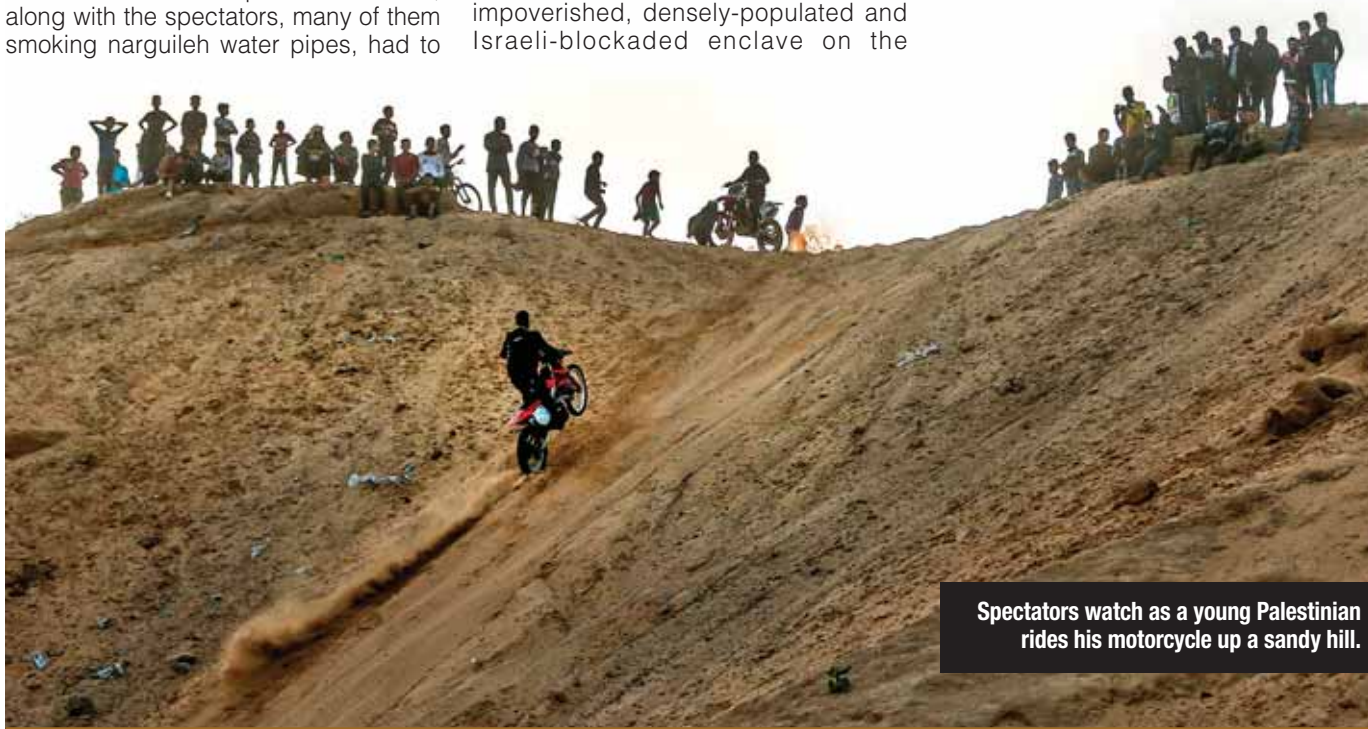
A young Palestinian rides his motorcycle up a sandy hill.

pack up as the sun set to go home before Gaza's nighttime curfew imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19. Infections have been spiking in the impoverished, densely-populated and Israeli-blockaded enclave on the

Mediterranean where the pandemic has recorded more than 9,500 infections and cost 45 lives. — AFP



A young Palestinian rides his motorcycle on a sandy hill.



Spectators watch as a young Palestinian rides his motorcycle up a sandy hill.



Spectators watch as a young Palestinian rides his jeep up a sandy hill.

Hope for Bollywood stars' dilapidated homes in Pakistan

Tucked away near the centuries-old Storytellers' Bazaar, the decaying Pakistani mansions once home to Bollywood superstars are being brought back to life as Peshawar emerges from years of Islamist militancy. The ancestral homes of Golden Age heroes Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar in the northwestern city are symbols of its link to the world's largest film industry, but have suffered from decades of neglect. The region's archaeology team says it is close to wresting the more than 100-year-old buildings, located in the heart of the historic walled city, from their private owners so they can be restored and turned into museums.

"I always feel sad and angry while looking at Kapoor's house, that it once was a beautiful mansion of top quality," said Samiuddin Khan, who remembers running through the 40-room abandoned house as a child and flying kites from the rooftop. "It was extremely beautiful

inside. The structure is still intact but some walls have collapsed and much of the wood has been damaged." Once an architectural wonder, the family home of Kapoor, who died aged 63 in 1988, is influenced by Mughal empire, Central Asian and British colonial design, featuring ornately carved doors and balconies and gothic-style windows. Kumar lived in a simpler home down a small lane in a busy market, its entrance faded and its roofless interior heavily damaged.

The actors grew up in a quarter that is home to the fabled Qissa Khwani ("Storytellers") Bazaar where travellers would share tales of their adventures. Kumar, who is now 97, has credited his successful career to his early life in the neighborhood, where he first learned to narrate. But like many emerging actors, the pair were enticed away from Peshawar to India's entertainment center Bombay, now Mumbai, in the years before the partition of British-ruled India. The pair even starred alongside each other at the beginning of their careers, in the 1949 hit "Andaz". "This is our cultural heritage and we take pride in preserving it. We are very proud that Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor were from Peshawar," said Abdul Samad, director of archaeology and museums in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of which Peshawar is the capital.—AFP



In this picture residents walk in front of the Kapoor mansion. — AFP

Bangladeshi teen wins children's prize for online fight

A Bangladeshi teenager made an impassioned plea Friday for stronger global action against cyberbullying and online crime involving children as he received a prestigious global children's award. Sadat Rahman, 17, won the 2020 KidsRights International Children's Peace Prize for developing a mobile app to help teenagers report cyberbullying and cyber crime in his western district of Narail in Bangladesh. Previous winners of the prize include Nobel laureate and Pakistani education campaigner Malala Yousafzai and environmental activist Greta Thunberg. "Serious action needs to be taken right now. Teenagers continue to remain vulnerable to online crime and cyberbullying, particularly in the times we live in," Rahman told AFP in a remote interview. Rahman was awarded the prize, which is run by the Netherlands-based KidsRights foundation, in a ceremony streamed online due to coronavirus restrictions.

He beat two other finalists - Mexican girl Ivanna Ortega Serret, 12, who fought water pollution, and Irish 18-year-old Siena Castellon, who created a website to help pupils with autism and severe learning disabilities Rahman's "Cyber Teens" mobile app puts children in touch with a team of youngsters including Rahman, who call themselves the Narail Volunteers. The Narail Volunteers then liaised with local police and social workers to help teens too scared or embarrassed to report acts of cyberbullying and cyber crime. The app also gives helpful hints and tips about online behaviour and how to avoid sexual predators.

'Teenagers needed help'

Downloaded around 1,800 times, the app has helped to resolve more than 60 complaints so far—and has led to the



In this handout picture released by the KidsRights Foundation Sadat Rahman holds his trophy after being awarded with the International Children's Peace Prize 2020, in the Hague. — AFP photos

arrest of eight suspected online criminals, including adults who have been sexually harassing children. "The idea started after a 15-year-old girl committed suicide because of online bullying," Rahman. "I decided that teenagers needed help and that we should take action to try to avoid other children facing the same tragedy." Rahman said in many cases teenagers

were being sexually harassed by adults, including being sent pornographic and sexually explicit images.

Rights groups and law enforcement agencies have been voicing increasing alarm over the rise in online sexual crimes involving minors since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Cyberbullying rose by some 70 percent across millions of internet sights around the world in April and May this year, said a recent study by the KidsRights Foundation. Children being targeted by sexual predators including using pornography was of "grave concern", Europol added in a report released on Wednesday. Rahman said he planned to use his prize, which includes a 100,000 euro (\$118,000) investment for projects, to further develop the app across Bangladesh "and hopefully to serve as a model for the rest of the world."—AFP



Sadat Rahman delivers a speech after being awarded with the International Children's Peace Prize 2020.

Lifestyle | Features



A woman walks past the "Corona Sandwich" restaurant in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem, owned by a former Palestinian tourist guide.— AFP photos



An employee of the "Corona Sandwich" restaurant in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem, owned by a former Palestinian tourist guide, prepares an order.



Raed Bannura, a former Palestinian tourist guide is pictured at his restaurant the "Corona Sandwich".

Bethlehem 'Corona Sandwich' eases bite of tourism loss

When the coronavirus pandemic left Bethlehem without its hordes of visitors, tour guide Raed Bannura needed a new source of income. His plan, a sandwich shop, was hardly revolutionary and the ingredients of his signature dish—meat with onions and spices wrapped in a tortilla—were certainly not groundbreaking. But, when it came to marketing, Bannura has grabbed attention. "I have a special sandwich," he told AFP. "I call it 'Corona sandwich.'" Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, hosts the majestic Church of the Nativity, built on the site where Christians believe Jesus was born. Before the pandemic, dozens of buses carrying pilgrims and other visitors would converge on the city each day from nearby Jerusalem through the towering Israeli-built grey concrete wall that encircles the West Bank. Now Bethlehem guides chase after the few remaining visitors, while craft stores and

hotels have mostly closed.

'Genius' vs 'stupidity'

While tourism revenue was evaporating, Bannura said he had a brain-flash one day at "six o'clock in the morning." "I woke up my wife; I told her listen, I know what I'm gonna call this restaurant... Corona." Her first response was to call him crazy. "I told her, 'this name will spread as fast as the virus,'" Bannura said. Located in the shadow of the basilica, the small cafeteria is easily spotted by its huge red and yellow "Corona Sandwich" sign.

Also on the menu is the "Covid-19 hot-dog", with a beef and lamb sausage. As to whether the name lacks sensitivity towards the devastation coronavirus has wrought, Bannura said: "I know that people die, that corona is a disease. "But there are people who also die from sugar or tobacco and we do not ban those words from our vocabu-



The "Corona Sandwich" restaurant in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem.

lary," he said. "A philosopher once said that there is a hair's breadth between genius and stupidity...I still don't know on which side I am."

Quiet Christmas?

Christmas is typically peak season for Bethlehem businesses, but many have

lost hope of the traditional holiday boost. Ashraf Kawazba, frying falafel at the Abu Daoud restaurant, said that normally during Christmas holidays "everything is full and we work non-stop, but here it is dead." Bethlehem mayor Anton Salman told AFP he was "not expecting anything," this Christmas season. "We have

never known anything like this," he said, including the Palestinian uprisings, or intifadas, of 1987-93 and 2000-2005.

"During the First and the Second Intifada it was difficult, but there were still tourism opportunities," he added. "This year there is no tourism, no transportation, everything is frozen." Salman said that since the outbreak of coronavirus unemployment in his city of around 30,000 people had more than doubled-to 37 percent from around 15 percent. Bannura dreams of holding out until the tourists return, but does not intend to rename his restaurant even then. "I will keep the name," he said. "Because people will come here, they will say, 'I survived. I am proud, I am eating-and I am burying that 'corona'." — AFP



This handout picture shows a white shoe that once belonged to Queen Marie-Antoinette, made of silk and goatskin, that will be auctioned today on Versailles.— AFP

MARIE-ANTOINETTE'S SHOE TO GO ON THE BLOCK

An elegant white shoe made of silk and goat leather that belonged to Marie-Antoinette, France's last queen before the 1789 revolution, goes up for auction today, the auctioneers said. The 22.5 centimeter-long (8.8 inches) shoe, adorned with four ribbons near its tip, is in good condition apart from slight wear of the silk, the Osenat auction house said. The reserve price is 8,000 to 10,000 euros (\$9,450 to \$11,800). In the throes of the French Revolution the shoe ended up in the possession of Marie-Emilie Leschevin, a close friend of the queen's head chambermaid, and whose husband later died by the guillotine during the French Revolution.

Her family held on to it for generations before it came to auction 227 years after her death. Marie-Antoinette, who was born an Austrian archduchess, was the wife of Louis XVI, who was deposed by the French Revolution of 1789. "Let them eat cake," she is sometimes said to have responded when told that peasants were starving because there was no bread. The royal couple was executed by guillotine in 1793 but France continues to be fascinated by Marie-Antoinette.

Last year an exhibition at the Conciergerie, the former Paris prison where she was incarcerated before her execution, retraced changes in the representation of the last French queen through paintings, mangas, films and even Barbie dolls.—AFP

Princess Diana makes dramatic debut in 'The Crown'

More than two decades after her death, princess Diana's ill-fated entry into the British royal family is the main storyline in the long-awaited fourth season of the hit Netflix drama "The Crown". Emma Corrin, a 24-year-old actress little known until now, immerses herself in the role of the young Diana, capturing her soft voice and timid gaze from under a heavy fringe. But the actress admitted in an interview with The Sunday Times that she felt a "huge amount of pressure" to pull off the role in the new season, which starts today. Diana is shown as a naive teenager who quickly becomes lonely in the role of Prince Charles' fiancée and rollerskates around Buckingham Palace to pass the time.



In this file photo taken on January 27, 1988 Princess of Wales Diana waves to the crowd during her visit to the Footscray Park in suburb of Melbourne.— AFP

Even before their unhappy marriage, she begins cycles of bulimia: binge-eating and then purging herself of food. Diana Spencer had just turned 20 when the couple married in 1981, while Charles was 32. As heir to the throne, since reaching his 30s, he had faced pressure to marry to ensure succession. Despite having doubts, he agreed to propose to Diana but did not sever ties with his long-time lover, Camilla Parker-Bowles. Diana was killed in a car crash in

Paris in 1997 and Charles subsequently married Parker-Bowles in 2005. While previous series depicted Charles as a sensitive and misunderstood boy, as Diana's husband he is seen as cold and unfaithful, complaining to Camilla that she is "so weak, so fragile".

Feeling powerless to help Diana, Charles "probably became a bit callous," Penny Junor, a royal expert and biographer whose books include "Charles: Victim or Villain?", told AFP. "But I don't think that he has ever been arrogant or uncaring. And I think he genuinely tried to make his marriage work."

'Terrible mismatch'

Diana had been "damaged" by her childhood, as she was just six when her mother walked out on the family and "she grew up feeling unloved and unwanted," Junor said. Charles and Diana's marriage was a "terrible mismatch", she added. The breakup of their marriage due to infidelities and Diana's confessional television interview was scandalous at the time and is making headlines even today. The BBC has pledged to hold an independent investigation into how its journalist Martin Bashir persuaded Diana to take part in the sensational interview in 1995.

Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, claims Bashir showed faked documents to persuade Diana to take part in the interview, where she famously complained "there were three of us in this marriage so it was a bit crowded." "She wanted to hurt and damage Charles. But I think she was a very fragile woman, her mental health was very fragile," said Junor. "I think that a lot of people exploited her... for their own ends and the BBC was amongst them."

Strong female roles

The love triangle is one of the main storylines in the fourth season, which covers the late 1970s and the 1980s. The period was marked by deadly violence over British rule in Northern Ireland, which included the assassination of Charles' great-uncle and confidant, Louis Mountbatten, by the IRA in 1979. It also included the Falklands War with Argentina in 1982 during which Charles' younger brother, Andrew, served as a Royal Navy helicopter pilot. The scriptwriters also dramatize a notorious incident that year in which a 33-year-old man, Michael Hagan-frustrated at being unemployed and separated from his wife-broke into Buckingham Palace and entered the queen's bedroom.—AFP



In this file photo a sign warns of a road closure on the route to the prehistoric monument at Stonehenge in southern England.— AFP

Stonehenge road tunnel approved despite protests

Britain has approved a controversial plan to build a road tunnel close to the prehistoric site of Stonehenge to relieve congestion, despite strong opposition from archaeologists and druids. The 5,000-year-old ring of stones in Wiltshire in southwest England is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Britain's most popular tourist attractions, with 1.6 million visitors last year. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps on Thursday approved a plan to bore a tunnel to replace a busy road that passes within 165 meters of the stones, allowing drivers to see the site but making it a noisy experience for visitors.

Tom Holland, the head of the Stonehenge Alliance which includes archaeologists and non-governmental organizations, condemned what he called a "shocking and shameful decision". The writer said the tunnel would "inject a great gash of concrete and tarmac into Britain's most precious prehistoric landscape". Opponents criticize the fact that while the tunnel won't go directly under the stones, its entrances will be built within the broader World Heritage Site which could damage prehistoric areas. They say that if built, the tunnel should be much longer. Druids have held protests

against the tunnel at a site they consider sacred and where they celebrate the summer and winter solstice the longest and shortest days of the year.

But English Heritage, the charity that manages the Neolithic site, hailed a "landmark" decision, tweeting that "Stonehenge will finally be reconnected with the prehistoric landscape in which it sits" without a noisy road nearby. Officials say the existing road is too narrow for the current level of traffic, with the government roads agency, Highways England, calling it a "daily struggle for many." The tunnel will be around two miles (3.2 kilometers) long. At its closest point, it will be 200 meters from Stonehenge, slightly further than the current road, Highways England said.

The government first approved the plan in 2017. Its budget is now given as £1.7 billion (1.9 billion euros, \$2.2 billion). Stonehenge is currently closed to visitors due to coronavirus restrictions across England. Work is expected to start next year, Highways England said. It said it had appointed archaeology specialists to excavate the site and preserve any finds.— AFP

Prince Charles backs new sustainable fashion range

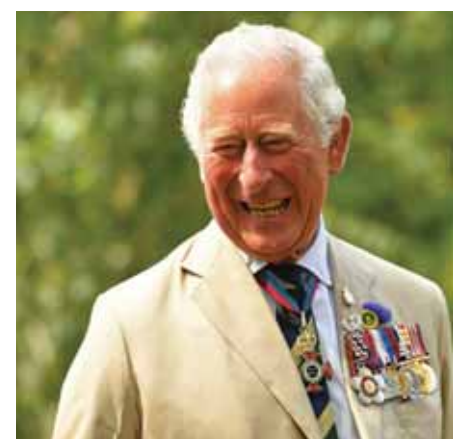
Global online fashion retailer Yoox Net-A-Porter on Thursday launched a new sustainable menswear and womenswear range, supported by Prince Charles' charitable foundation. Queen Elizabeth II's eldest son and heir, who has long been known for his strong views on the environment, said he was "extremely impressed" by the 18-piece ready-to-wear collection. The Yoox Net-A-Porter For The Prince's Foundation collaboration gave students from Britain and

Italy the chance to design and make the limited-edition line. The clothes-in natural fibres including cashmere, wool and organic silk-were inspired by the designs of Leonardo da Vinci and cost from £395 to £1,295 (\$520-\$1705, 440-1,444 euros).

They are designed to last a lifetime, with profits going to the foundation to support its training program and help preserve traditional skills. "The key it seems to me is to rediscover the importance that nature plays in all this and

where the natural materials come from," said Charles. "It seems utter madness to have this approach which takes, makes and throws away." Charles, 71, earlier this week said he believed that achieving a sustainable future was "the growth story of our time" and could help economies recover from the coronavirus pandemic. He has set up a Sustainable Markets Initiative with the World Economic Forum to help businesses to put green initiatives into practice.

The prince is well-known for wearing timeless double-breasted suits and was once voted GQ magazine's Best Dressed Man. He said in an interview in the December issue of British Vogue magazine: "I happen to be one of those people who'd get shoes-or any item of clothing-repaired if I can, rather than just throw it away." On his own sense of style, he said he was "like a stopped clock-I'm right twice every 24 hours". — AFP



Prince Charles

Sports

Photo of the day



Tom Vialle of Red Bull KTM Factory Racing during the FIM MXGP Motocross World Championship in Italy. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Swiss team Sauber joins the F1 elite teams club

ISTANBUL: Switzerland, the country that banned motor racing for 60 years, will today witness its only Formula One team joining an elite club of the sport's grandee outfits. The modest Swiss Sauber team will start its landmark 500th race at the Turkish Grand Prix - a feat achieved by only three other teams, led by Ferrari. The Hinwil-based team, founded by Peter Sauber as a sportscar outfit, entered F1 in 1993 and has raced since under various identities including BMW Sauber and, more recently, Alfa Romeo. This weekend at the Istanbul Park Circuit, Kimi Raikkonen, himself the individual record-holder for most F1 race entries - he starts his 326th on Sunday - will allow himself a smile of pleasure.

He is back racing with the team that gave him his debut in 2001, after spells with McLaren, Ferrari and Lotus, and fills with pride at the survival and achievements of the Swiss privateer team. "The team is quite a bit bigger than when I started in F1 with them," the 2007 world champion, now 41, recalled. "It's a proper team. We have all the tools, we have been building cars. The gearbox and engine come from Ferrari, but apart from that we do everything." In his first season, Sauber finished fourth in the constructors' championship, their best result. Since then, despite being sold to BMW and bought back, the Sauber brand has continued. "Money is always an issue with the small teams, but that's how it is," said Raikkonen. "It's a great number - 500 - that the team are achieving and I think only three others have done more Grands Prix. "So, I think for a private team they've been here a long time, surviving some really difficult times and, hopefully, we can make them go higher up in the coming years." Ferrari, McLaren and Williams are the trio of rival teams to have entered more races. They have also won the most teams' titles.

By contrast, Sauber have only one win to show for their longevity and that came with Robert Kubica at the 2008 Canadian Grand Prix when BMW were in control. Raikkonen's Italian team-mate Antonio Giovinazzi, a Ferrari protege in his third season, similarly oozes affection for the unsung Swiss team that has nurtured and developed many young drivers, including current Ferrari star Charles Leclerc. —AFP

Lost ball leaves DeChambeau in 'danger' of missing Masters cut

A test for Tiger, Rahm as 84th Masters resumes

AUGUSTA: US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau, whose ball-bashing feats had people fearing he would overwhelm Augusta National, is struggling just to make the cut at the Masters. The bulked-up American, a pre-Masters favorite who said the course played like a par-67 to him instead of a par-72, lost his ball on the third hole Friday on the way to a triple bogey that has him over the projected record-low 1-under cut line. "I'm a little off," DeChambeau told the Golf Channel.

DeChambeau opened with a two-under 70 despite hooking several tee shots to the left, thanks to back-to-back closing birdies, and reached 3-under overall with a birdie Friday at the par-5 second. Then it all fell apart. DeChambeau blasted his tee shot at the par-4 third into rain-soaked rough and no one could find it. "So you're saying if I can't find it, it's a lost ball?" DeChambeau asked a rules official as the search went on. He became a victim of the lost ball rule, went back to the tee and started over, ending up with a triple-bogey 7 on the hole. "Rules are rules," DeChambeau said.

The frustration appeared to linger, with DeChambeau making bogeys on the next two holes and following birdies at the par-3 sixth and par-5 eighth with bogeys at the seventh and 10th. He closed the day with a birdie at the par-3 12th, the 155-yard shortest hole on the course. DeChambeau drives often go twice as far as the total distance of that hole. But the birdie left him 1-over with six to play, including the par-5 13th and 15th, and with Augusta National surrendering a record number of sub-par scores. DeChambeau will need to take full advantage to play the final two rounds.

World number two Jon Rahm of Spain, a playing partner of DeChambeau, said he helped seek the lost ball but few saw hope of finding it. "When you have Bryson hitting it as hard as he hits it, it's kind of hooking with not much spin into a soft area, we were all confident it was pretty buried and it was going to be hard to find," Rahm said. "It's unfortunate that the rules of golf

don't let you figure out it's somewhere there and keep playing." He had to re-tee and I know that affected him a little bit because he didn't play his best golf after that. "But he's a fighter and he's showing it. It was just unfortunate."

A test for Tiger, Rahm

Defending champion Tiger Woods was set for a test at Amen Corner while second-ranked Jon Rahm chased the leaders as the darkness-halted second round of the Masters resumed yesterday. World number one Dustin Johnson, third-ranked Justin Thomas, Mexico's Abraham Ancer and Australia's Cameron Smith shared the clubhouse lead on nine-under par 135 with 47 players returning to the course to complete their second rounds.

Woods, a 15-time major winner seeking his sixth green jacket to match the record set by Jack Nicklaus, was five back on four-under for the tournament and level par in the round after 10 holes. The former world number one opened with a four-under 68, matching his best-ever Masters start as he chases an 83rd career PGA Tour victory to break the record he shares with Sam Snead. Woods, who turns 45 next month, restarts with a 200-yard approach shot at the par-4 11th as he faces Augusta National's formidable Amen Corner—the famed stretch of holes from 11 to 13 that often proves crucial to deciding champions.

Last year, Woods won a major for the first time when he was not leading entering the final round, capturing the Masters to complete an epic comeback from back surgery that threatened a pain-free life much less his golf career. Spain's Rahm and Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, both chasing a first major title, were on eight-under for the tournament—one off the lead—with holes to play. Rahm birdied the par-3 12th just before sunset Friday and had a bogey-free five-under round going as he returned to finish the last six holes. "Hopefully I can finish strong as I've been playing the



AUGUSTA: Bryson DeChambeau of the United States prepares to play a shot on the 17th hole during the continuation of the second round of the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on November 14, 2020. —AFP

last two days," Rahm said.

World number 18 Matsuyama, whose best Masters finish was fifth in 2015, birdied the par-5 15th just before his round was stopped and hopes to complete a bogey-free second round that stood on four-under. "Overall, I'm playing well," Matsuyama said. "All I can do is just

go out and do my best." In the clubhouse sharing fifth on eight-under 136 were South Korean Im Sung-jae and American Patrick Cantlay with the English trio of Tommy Fleetwood, 2016 Masters winner Danny Willett and 2016 Olympic champion Justin Rose another stroke adrift after 36 holes. —Agencies

Al-Nasr Sports Club opening ceremony



KUWAIT: Al-Nasr Sports Club will hold an opening ceremony of the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah halls complex tomorrow at 7.30 pm under the patronage and presence of Sheikh Mubarak Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah at the club's premises in Ardhya. A statement issued by the club said the complex was named after Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak due to his role in supporting the sport - and contribution to building youth sectors. The multi halls come as part of the

new design of the Nasr Sports Club to provide the most suitable and comfortable atmosphere for the youths. The complex covers 6,000 meters square. It also includes a hotel in addition to a restaurant and a dining hall.



Miller fastest in MotoGP practice as Mir crashes

MADRID: Australian Jack Miller delivered the best time in practice on Friday ahead of the Valencia MotoGP as Joan Mir crashed to fall outside the top 10, with the Spaniard's first world title in sight this weekend. Mir suffered a late blip at the Ricardo Tormo circuit when he came off at Turn 4 with 11 minutes to go, an error that saw him drop to 11th in the standings. But after clinching his maiden premier category victory on the same track in the European Grand Prix last weekend, Mir will become

world champion on Sunday if he finishes on the podium.

The Suzuki rider's main challengers are Alex Rins and Fabio Quartararo, but of the top three only Rins holds a provisional Q2 spot after he came eighth in the afternoon practice session, ahead of his Spanish compatriots Aleix Espargaro and Maverick Vinales. France's Quartararo came 16th, despite being only 0.704sec behind in an incredibly tight leaderboard. Miller's time of 1min 30.622sec was enough for the Pramac Ducati rider to claim the fastest lap of the day, which for a while belonged to Japan's Takaaki Nakagami, who had set the pace with 1min 30.713sec on his LCR Honda. Italian Francesco Bagnaia completed the top three, just ahead of KTM's Pol Espargaro. —AFP

Kuwait Women's Basketball event

By Abdellatif Shara

KUWAIT: The women's first Open basketball tournament for the current season 2020-2021 (3x3) was concluded yesterday following three days of strong competition between 16 teams representing local women clubs as well as individual participation. The teams of Fatat A and B, Arabi A, B and C, Al-Qurain D and Salwa Al-Abah quali-

fied for the quarter finals following strong and exciting matches played at the Basketball Federation Hall at Saad Al-Abdallah Complex in Sabah Al-Salem area.

KBF board member, head of the women's committee Fadhil Al-Dawood said all the necessary health precautions were taken according to the health protocol. "We were keen to apply all technical and administrative rules of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), because the tournament is recognized," he said. Al-Fadhil thanked Kuwait Olympic Committee and KBF Board as well as all committees involved for their cooperation. He also praised the outstanding efforts of women's committee Noura Al-Yaqoub, Hanan Al-Zayed, Alaa Dashti, Munira Al-Mane, and Bashaer Al-Salem.



Sports

Injury-hit Brazil and Argentina resume World Cup qualifying

Brazil beat Venezuela; Argentina held by Paraguay

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil must confront a growing injury list that includes star forward Neymar as they resume World Cup qualifying this week, while Argentina are out to extend their perfect start at home to neighbors Paraguay. Copa America champions Brazil host Venezuela in Sao Paulo on Friday chasing a third win in as many matches after launching their Qatar 2022 campaign with victories over Bolivia and Peru.

However, Brazil coach Tite will be without Neymar after the world's most expensive player injured his thigh while on Champions League duty with Paris Saint-Germain in Turkey last month. Neymar, 28, bagged a hat-trick in a 4-2 win in Lima last time out to surpass Ronaldo as Brazil's second leading scorer in history. His tally of 64 goals leaves him 13 shy of Pele's record.

Despite his latest setback Neymar will still travel with the squad amid hopes that he may recover in time for the trip to Uruguay on November 17. However, national team coordinator Juninho Paulista said Tite told PSG sporting director Leonardo that he "would never risk a player's health". Defender Thiago Silva has tightened up the Chelsea defence since his arrival in England, but the 36-year-old has warned the crowded global fixture list is taking its toll on players.

"You have to keep endlessly reinventing yourself. We're losing players infected by Covid-19, or others who get hurt because we're playing too many matches. We're not machines," he said. "We saw recent studies showing it's more than likely you get injured after four or five matches come one after another (every three days). It's very worrying for us." While goalkeeper Alisson Becker and forward Gabriel Jesus return after injury, Brazil will also be without Casemiro, Philippe Coutinho and Fabinho. Argentina, who began qualifying with narrow wins over Ecuador and Bolivia, are hoping Lionel Messi will be fit for both their games against Paraguay and Peru.



BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's Lionel Messi controls the ball during the closed-door 2022 FIFA World Cup South American qualifier football match against Paraguay at La Bombonera Stadium in Buenos Aires. —AFP photos

Messi dealing with ankle knock

The Barcelona forward is said to be nursing a sore ankle, leaving Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni considering his options if his captain is unavailable. Paulo Dybala is again missing from the squad along with Sergio Aguero, although Angel Di Maria has been recalled for the first time in over a year. Lautaro Martinez will likely start up front while super-sub Joaquin Correa could be rewarded for his winning goal in the altitude of La Paz. Lucas Alario has also forced his way into contention after scoring seven goals for Bayer Leverkusen in his past four Bundesliga appearances.

Uruguay meet Colombia in Barranquilla on

Friday attempting to bounce back from last month's 4-2 loss in Ecuador. Luis Suarez is the joint leading scorer in qualifying with three goals, all of them penalties, carrying over his form from club level with Atletico Madrid. Real Madrid midfielder Fede Valverde is out with a fractured shin and Maxi Gomez is absent due to a knee problem for Uruguay. Argentine coach Gustavo Alfaro has vowed to put his "heart and soul into getting Ecuador to Qatar" after they failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

"Right now, Ecuador is more a handful of very good intentions than a (finished) team," Alfaro told FIFA.com. "As I said before, the challenge is to con-



SAO PAULO: Brazil's Gabriel Jesus (left) and Renan Lodi (right) jump for the ball with Venezuela's Darwin Machis during their closed-door 2022 FIFA World Cup South American qualifier football match at Morumbi Stadium in Sao Paulo on November 13, 2020.

vert hope into reality. I'm not here to manage a team but rather to win." "I have to admit that it'll be a disappointment if we're not at the next World Cup," he added, with his team playing away to Bolivia on Thursday. Last year's Copa America runners-up Peru on Friday play Chile - the country that won the tournament in 2015 and 2016. Both nations are looking to breathe life into their qualifying bids in Santiago after collecting just a point from the opening two rounds. —AFP

Colts overtake Titans as the AFC South favorites

LOS ANGELES: Nyheim Hines scored two touchdowns as the Indianapolis Colts used an explosive second half to pull away and beat the Tennessee Titans in a clash between the two best teams in the AFC South Division. Hines rushed for one touchdown and caught a pass for another and quarterback Philip Rivers surpassed Dan Marino for fifth place on the all-time passing yards list as the Colts won 34-17 to vault into a tie for first place with the Titans.

"It was a huge win," said Rivers of the Colts, who outscored their opponent 21-0 in the second half. "We felt good at the half. They slowed us down in the first half. The defense came up with huge stops. We got a blocked punt for touchdown, and we were efficient on offense all night long." Rivers surpassed Marino on the passing list with his first completion of the contest, an 11-yard toss to Jonathan Taylor. Rivers, in his 17th NFL season, ended the game with 61,666 passing yards. Marino

compiled 61,361 passing yards in 17 seasons.

"I feel good physically. I can still make all the throws," said Rivers. "I have always thrown with anticipation. I never had a (Patrick) Mahomes or (Aaron) Rodgers arm. I just never had that arm, anyway. Anticipation and throwing with accuracy is my game." Hines finished with a combined 115 rushing and receiving yards for the Colts, while Rivers completed 29 of 39 passes for 308 yards and a touchdown.

"We are continuing to get better. We just have to continue to improve, but we need to win along the way. We got to regroup and get ready for Green Bay," Rivers said. This is the first of two meetings between the teams in 17 days, as they play again on November 29 in Indianapolis. Organizers allowed 14,000 spectators into the Nissan Stadium in Nashville on Thursday despite the pandemic which has killed 242,000 Americans and counting.



NASHVILLE: Mo Alie-Cox #81 of the Indianapolis Colts is brought down by Breon Borders #39 of the Tennessee Titans at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee. —AFP

Spectators were asked to wear a mask and adhere to strict distancing rules.

Derrick Henry gained 103 yards on 19 carries and quarterback Ryan Tannehill made 15 of 27 passes for 147 yards and a touchdown for the Titans, who lost for the third time in four contests. "I think we're going to

have to evaluate everything that we do. We have to be better in all areas," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said. "We'll continue to hold people accountable and continue to improve. We will just keep working and making sure that we start playing better and performing better." —AFP

Argentina thump All Blacks for first ever win over NZ

SYDNEY: A gutsy Argentina stunned the All Blacks 25-15 yesterday to pull off one of rugby's biggest upsets, consigning an embarrassed New Zealand to their first back-to-back defeats in almost a decade. Fly-half Nicolas Sanchez scored all the Pumas' points to hand their maiden victory over the rugby powerhouse in the 30 Tests they have played. Mario Ledesma's side were given virtually no chance ahead of the Tri Nations match in Sydney after the coronavirus hindered their preparations to just two low-key practice games. But in their first Test since the World Cup last year, they pulled off a miracle.

"It's surreal what happened, not just the result but playing, getting on the field after everything that has happened this year," said

Argentina coach Ledesma. "Some of the boys haven't seen their families for four months but they have all been positive... they have been awesome. "I think we will remember this for a long time, not only the game but because of the special situation," he added. It was a humiliating defeat for New Zealand who were shocked 24-22 by the Wallabies in Brisbane last week and have now lost back-to-back Tests for the first time since 2011 when they crashed to South Africa and Australia.

Coach Ian Foster axed 10 players and named what many regarded as the All Blacks' best run-on side after last week's game, but they were no match for a Pumas team helped by former Australian coach Michael Cheika. "Obviously from an All Black view we are bitterly disappointed with the result, with the way we played," said Foster. "But what I think we saw was a team that despite the disadvantage of not playing a lot of rugby ... they have come here with massive energy and a desire to prove something to their country which has gone through a heck of a hard time. "I want to congratulate them on the result, it is a bit of an historic day for them." —AFP



SYDNEY: New Zealand's Anton Lienert-Brown (center) and Tyrel Lomax (right) tackle Argentina's Santiago Carreras (left) during the 2020 Tri-Nations rugby match between the New Zealand and Argentina at Bankwest Stadium in Sydney on November 14, 2020. —AFP

Tunisian football fans stage mass exit to Italy over club row

CHEBBA: Around 300 Tunisian football fans, who have threatened for weeks to emigrate to Italy in protest over sanctions against their club, boarded fishing boats Thursday and headed out to sea. Brandishing Tunisian flags and those of their team, Croissant Sportif Chebbien (CSC), they chanted as they sailed out of Chebba port, accompanied by the coast guard, an AFP reporter said.

The Tunisian Football Federation (FTF) on October 17 slapped a one-year ban on CS Chebba, citing an incomplete and late application dossier. CSC chief Taoufik Mkacher has been in a months-long dispute with FTF chief Wadie Jary, publishing a series of Facebook posts criticizing a lack of financial transparency and calling for an audit at the federation. The dispute escalated when reports emerged that Jary, head of the FTF since 2012, would run for the presidency of the sport's Africa-wide governing body (CAF).

When the FTF announced on October 17 that CSC would not compete in the top league, Chebba residents staged demonstrations and a general strike, and some vowed to leave the country in protest. "Given the silence of the authorities, residents have decided to leave the country and head for Italy," said Mohamed Ali Abbas, member of a committee set up to organize the expedition. The committee had set up a tent at the city's port, where more than 2,000 people signed up for the voyage. "This is an unorganized migration bid... there is nothing symbolic about it," said Moncef Lahmar, a member of a CSC support team.

Five boats carrying the football fans were seen leaving Chebba port but as they reached international waters coast guards asked them to stay put or go back to the harbour, an AFP correspondent said. Two boats refused to heed the orders and continued to make their way towards international waters, the correspondent added. The protest had been put off several times but as the November 22 start of the season approaches, some Chebba residents decided to go ahead. The would-be migrants had "embarked on a deadly adventure to re-establish their rights," said sociologist Mahdi Mabrouk.

"Economic development indicators in the Chebba region are low and football is the only opportunity" for residents, he added. Tunisia, struck by an economic crisis and skyrocketing unemployment even before the coronavirus pandemic, has seen a spike in young people making risky attempts at reaching Europe. Between the start of 2020 and mid-September, more than 8,500 people had been intercepted trying to reach Europe by sea from Tunisia, including 2,104 non-Tunisians, the ministry said. —AFP

Sierra Leone stage 4-goal comeback to hold Nigeria

CAPE TOWN: Sierra Leone came from four goals down to hold Nigeria to a 4-4 draw in a dramatic Africa Cup of Nations qualifier in Benin City as the preliminaries for the 2022 finals continued on Friday. Tunisia kept their 100% record in the qualifiers with a 1-0 home victory over Tanzania, while Morocco's Hakim Ziyech scored twice as they beat Central African Republic 4-1 but South Africa struggled before winning 2-0 at home to Sao Tome e Principe. Nigeria raced into a 4-0 lead inside the first half-hour as Alex Iwobi scored twice, the first in the fourth minute, and Victor Osimhen and Samuel Chukwueze added two more.

But Kwame Quee pulled one back for Sierra Leone four minutes before the break after which the visitors staged a remarkable recovery with Alhaji Kamara scoring twice in between Mustapha Bundu's effort - all in the final 18 minutes - to draw. Angry fans demonstrated outside the stadium after the game forcing Nigeria's team to spend several hours in their changing room before being able to leave. Nigeria remain top of Group I with seven points from three games while Sierra Leone moved off the bottom on two.

Ziyech's double, including a penalty, plus goals from Achraf Hakimi and debutant Zakaria Aboukhlal allowed Morocco to enjoy a comfortable win over Central African Republic in Casablanca. Penalties proved decisive in Friday's other four qualifiers. Tunisia have nine points from three games in Group J after captain Youssef Msakni's first half spot kick saw them to a narrow win over Tanzania in Tunis. Mali joined Guinea at the top of Group A after their 1-0 home win over Namibia in Bamako, with teenager El Bilal Toure netting a 38th-minute penalty. South Africa also needed a spot kick to help them avoid embarrassment against Sao Tome, a country with a population of just 200,000 and ranked 182nd in world football. Percy Tau converted the penalty after 55 minutes in the Group C game, with Bongani Zungu adding a second with a header from a corner in the last minute to ensure victory in Durban. —Reuters

14 Lost ball leaves DeChambeau in 'danger' of missing Masters cut



15 Argentina thump All Blacks for first ever win over New Zealand



15 Injury-hit Brazil and Argentina resume World Cup qualifying



Lance Stroll ends Mercedes' streak

Stroll takes the maiden pole to upstage title-chasing Hamilton



ISTANBUL: Pole position winner Racing Point's Canadian driver Lance Stroll celebrates after the qualifying session at the Intecity Istanbul Park circuit in Istanbul yesterday ahead of the Turkish Formula One Grand Prix. — AFP

ISTANBUL: Lance Stroll upstaged Formula One's title-chasing Lewis Hamilton yesterday when he grabbed the first pole position of his career at the Turkish Grand Prix, the Canadian saying "it feels really good right now". The 22-year-old Racing Point driver made the most of drying conditions on a treacherous track to end Mercedes' 13 race domination of qualifying this year.

Stroll delivered a dazzling fastest lap in one minute and 47.765 seconds in the closing seconds to usurp his team-mate Sergio Perez and then resist a last surge from Red Bull's Max Verstappen. The disappointed Dutchman was second, three-tenths behind Stroll, but ahead of Mexican Perez who claimed his career-best starting position after finishing fourth nine times in the past. Stroll was the first Canadian to take pole since Jacques Villeneuve at the 1997 European Grand Prix at Jerez and it was the Silverstone-based Racing Point team's first pole since, racing as Jordan, they did so at the 2009

Belgian Grand Prix.

The outcome left Mercedes well-beaten on the weekend when Lewis Hamilton bids to seal a record-equalling seventh drivers' championship and draw level with seven-time champion Michael Schumacher. The six-time champion wound up sixth behind Alex Albon in the second Red Bull and Renault's Daniel Ricciardo whose team-mate Esteban Ocon qualified seventh. "Yes, Yes, Yes boys," Stroll screamed on the team radio. "I can't really put it into words," he added. "I'm shocked. I didn't expect to be up here after FP3."

'Feels good right now'

"There were a lot of things we weren't sure about coming into qualifying. We didn't look that competitive in Q3." His surprise qualifying performance comes after a difficult few weeks when he had to miss the Eifel Grand Prix, testing positive for coronavirus the next day. "It has been a pretty rough ride

for me so it feels good. Feels really good right now."

This is the first time this season that neither Hamilton (nine) nor Bottas (four) have topped qualifying. Hamilton can seal a record-equalling seventh drivers' world title on Sunday if he prevents Bottas from outscoring him by eight points. After Friday's ice rink conditions on the resurfaced circuit, heavy rain ushered in even more treacherous challenges in which most of the drivers slithered and spun.

The Q1 session was interrupted twice for red flags, when Race Control declared the track was unsafe - firstly due to the conditions and then, secondly, when Romain Grosjean spun into a gravel trap in his Haas. The interruptions added 50 minutes to the schedule as daylight receded in the appalling conditions, but the brilliant car control of Verstappen and his Red Bull team-mat Albon was on display as they topped the times, the Dutchman 1.9 seconds clear.

In the drama, Leclerc slithered through to Q2 while Hamilton, his best lap cancelled for exceeding

track limits, struggled through in 14th place. Grosjean was eliminated along with his Haas team-mate Kevin Magnussen, the two Williams of George Russell and Nicholas Latifi and Alpha Tauri's Daniil Kvyat. In the severe conditions, the teams were making extreme use of their tyre-warming facilities to ensure drivers could find at least some minimal grip before the rain relented, encouraging some to try intermediates.

In Q2, both Mercedes were clearly struggling to keep any heat in their tyres while Verstappen, oozing confidence, set the pace. At the flag, the Dutchman was two seconds clear of Albon with Hamilton 2.4 down in third and Bottas seventh while both Ferraris failed to make the cut to the top-ten shootout. In Q3 Verstappen went four seconds clear of nearest rival Bottas before Perez, on intermediates, re-set expectations by topping the Dutchman and prompting a switch of tyres for everyone else for the final surprising runs. — AFP

Saudi Arabia keen on hosting women racers along with F1 GP

LONDON: Saudi Arabia would welcome hosting the women-only W Series as a support race for the country's first Formula One grand prix next year, the head of the Saudi Arabian Motor Federation (SAMF) said on Friday. W Series announced on Thursday a deal for it to support Formula One at eight, as yet undecided, rounds on the 23-race 2021 F1 calendar.

Formula Two, the feeder series one rung below Formula One, has races scheduled already for the Saudi Arabian GP weekend in Jeddah on Nov 26-28. "Hopefully we will be one of the lucky countries to host them," Prince Khalid Bin Sultan Al Faisal, president of the SAMF, told reporters in a video briefing when asked about W Series. "We would like to inspire our locals and bring them these types of events. We would like to see more women racing in Saudi Arabia."

"Sport is for all and we are really

pushing women in motorsport in Saudi Arabia and we are really taking it seriously... so hopefully we can get an agreement and host it with Formula Two." Saudi Arabia's first female racer Reema al Juffali, who comes from Jeddah, has been competing in the British Formula Four championship. Women were not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia until a ban was lifted in 2018. At least a dozen prominent women's rights activists, who had campaigned for the right to drive, remain in jail.

"The bitter irony over a Saudi Grand Prix is that the very people who fought for the rights of Saudi women to be able to drive are now themselves languishing in jail," said Felix Jakens, Amnesty International UK's Head of Campaigns. W Series founder and chief executive Catherine Bond Muir said the 2021 season might not stretch as far as the November street race in Jeddah. — Reuters

Liverpool's Salah tests positive for COVID-19

CAIRO: Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah has tested positive for COVID-19 while on international duty for Egypt without showing any symptoms, the Egyptian Football Association announced Friday. Medical swabs on the national team "showed that our international player, Mohamed Salah, Liverpool star, was infected with the coronavirus", it said in a tweet, adding he was "not suffering from any symptoms".

The announcement comes as Egypt prepare to tackle Togo at home on Saturday in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier. The tweet said other members of the Egyptian national team tested negative. Salah was observing medical protocols agreed in consultations between doctors in Egypt and Liverpool, a coronavirus hotspot, and self isolating in a Cairo hotel room. The two-time African Footballer of the Year will undergo further tests in the coming hours, the federation said. Salah has scored eight



MANCHESTER: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (right) controls the ball in front of Manchester City's French defender Aymeric Laporte (left) during the English Premier League football match at the Etihad Stadium. — AFP

Premier League goals for Liverpool already this season.

If he is sidelined, it would be a blow for Premier League champions Liverpool, who were deprived of Senegal international forward Sadio Mane earlier in the season when he too tested positive for coronavirus, although he has since returned to the team. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has already

lost defender Joe Gomez to a knee tendon injury he suffered while on England duty this week. The club say Gomez is likely to be sidelined for months. And the Reds are counting the cost of being deprived of key central defender Virgil van Dijk for what is expected to be most of the season after he tore knee ligaments in a clash with Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford last month. — AFP