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Coronavirus crisis dominates Saudi-hosted G20 summit

Virtual gathering to discuss impact of pandemic, debt relief, climate change



DIRIYAH, Saudi Arabia: A family photo of G20 leaders is projected on the historic site of Al-Tarif on the outskirts of the Saudi capital Riyadh on Friday, ahead of a G20 virtual summit. — AFP

RIYADH: Saudi King Salman opened the G20 summit yesterday in a first for an Arab nation, with the virtual forum dominated by efforts to tackle the coronavirus crisis and the worst global recession in decades. G20 leaders, including US President Donald Trump who is refusing to concede a bitter election, popped up in multiple windows across a flickering screen, in a high-stakes webinar held amid the raging pandemic.

The leaders are huddling online for the two-day "gathering" as international efforts intensify for a large-scale rollout of coronavirus vaccines after a breakthrough in trials, and as calls grow for G20 nations to plug a \$4.5-billion funding shortfall.

"Although we are optimistic about the progress made in developing vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics tools for COVID-19, we must work to create the conditions for affordable and equitable access to these tools for all people," said King Salman, the summit's host. "We have a duty to rise to the challenge together during this summit and give a strong message of hope and reassurance to our people by adopting policies to mitigate this crisis," he told world leaders in open-

ing remarks.

With Saudi hopes for a grand coming-out parade dashed due to the pandemic, the event is reduced to brief online sessions of what observers call "digital diplomacy". Despite having to abandon much of the usual summit pageantry, Saudi Arabia launched the meeting with an aerial acrobatics display over Riyadh. And denied the opportunity to take the traditional "family photo", a montage of G20 leaders was projected onto the ruins of the historical town of Diriyah during a gala event Friday.

Along with Chinese President Xi Jinping, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Vladimir Putin are among leaders expected to speak at the summit, with climate change among the issues topping the agenda, sources close to the organizers said. Trump is also taking part but it is unclear whether the US president, who continues to reject his election defeat, will make an address. Many G20 leaders have already congratulated his rival, President-elect Joe Biden. G20 nations have contributed more than \$21 billion to combat the pandemic, which has

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News in brief

Turkey, Saudi to boost ties

CAIRO: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz agreed in a phone call to improve bilateral ties and solve outstanding disputes through dialogue, the Turkish presidency said early yesterday. Saudi state news agency SPA reported late on Friday that the king called Erdogan to coordinate efforts exerted within the work of the G20 summit. — Reuters

Dozens at large after jailbreak

BEIRUT: Police in Lebanon yesterday hunted for 44 fugitive prisoners out of 69 who escaped from a detention center on the outskirts of Beirut, calling on local residents to be on alert. Five inmates were killed in a car accident, while one other person was taken to hospital. By early afternoon, 15 had been recaptured, and another four had handed themselves back in, leaving 44 on the run. — AFP

Biden celebrates 78th birthday

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden turned 78 on Friday, exactly two months before he is to succeed Donald Trump in the White House as the oldest president in US history. Biden's schedule for the day included a meeting in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware with House speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Chuck Schumer, the top Democrat in the Senate. — AFP

Don Jr COVID positive

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's eldest son Donald Trump Jr has tested positive for COVID-19 and is quarantining at his cabin without symptoms, the latest in a long list of infections among those with links to the White House. Earlier Friday, Andrew Giuliani, a White House aide and son of the president's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, announced he had tested positive. — AFP

Numbers don't lie: Walls close in on Trump

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden yesterday reached the two-week mark since becoming president-elect, with US President Donald Trump stinging from back-to-back setbacks in his desperate, unprecedented bid to undo his election defeat. Biden, a Democrat, is preparing to take office on Jan 20, but Trump, a Republican, has refused to concede and is seeking to invalidate or overturn the results through law-

suits and recounts in a number of states, claiming - without proof - widespread voter fraud.

That effort, which critics call an unparalleled push by a sitting president to subvert the will of voters, has met with little success. Trump's campaign has suffered a string of legal defeats and appears to have failed to convince key fellow Republicans in states that he lost, such as Michigan, to buy into his unfounded conspiracy theories.

Trump's bid to cling to power appeared ever more tenuous on Friday after Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger announced a manual recount and audit of all ballots cast in the southern state had

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UAE modernizes laws to burnish progressive brand

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates, a Gulf powerhouse home to millions of foreign residents, has revamped an array of laws in a social liberalization drive designed to burnish its progressive brand. The oil-rich Emirates has pushed hard in recent years to boost its soft power, hosting global sports events, launching a successful home-grown space program and opening a nuclear power plant.

It even took the historic leap of normalizing ties with long-time Arab foe Israel, after years of signaling the importance of religious coexistence. Now it has turned its attention to conservative local laws, rarely enforced but much discussed among expatriates wary of falling foul of authorities and jeopardizing their jobs and residency.

As it takes on a more prominent role in global diplomacy, the UAE is seeking to bolster its image as a safe hub in a region often plagued by extremism. Earlier this month it announced the scrapping of reduced sentences for so-called "honor" killings, most victims of which are women seen as having brought shame on their families. Other sweeping changes flagged in the media include the lifting of a ban on unmarried couples living together, eased

restrictions on alcohol consumption, and the decriminalization of suicide. "It's a very smart PR step," said James Dorsey from the Middle East Institute.

The reforms appear designed to attract more talent and reinforce the country's position amid slumping oil prices and the coronavirus downturn. The overhaul is part of efforts to highlight "tolerance... and strengthen the country's position" as a desirable place to live and work, according to the official WAM news agency.

"This is the best news this year since the deal with Israel," said one Emirati political expert close to government circles. "It plays well into our image, but the main idea is to make people's lives easier. This is the main goal," he told AFP, on condition of anonymity as the laws have yet to be published in detail. — AFP

Pompeo meets Taliban, govt negotiators

DOHA: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met negotiators from the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha yesterday, amid signs of progress in their talks as Washington speeds up its withdrawal. Pompeo's visit comes in the wake of a rocket

attack which struck densely populated areas of Kabul, killing at least eight people in the latest outbreak of violence in the Afghan capital. The Taliban denied responsibility and the Islamic State group claimed the deadly strike.

Pompeo met separately with the Afghan government and Taliban negotiation teams in a luxury hotel in the Qatari capital. "I would be most interested in getting your thoughts on how we can increase the probability of a successful outcome", Pompeo

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks on lowering prescription drug prices on Friday in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House. — AFP

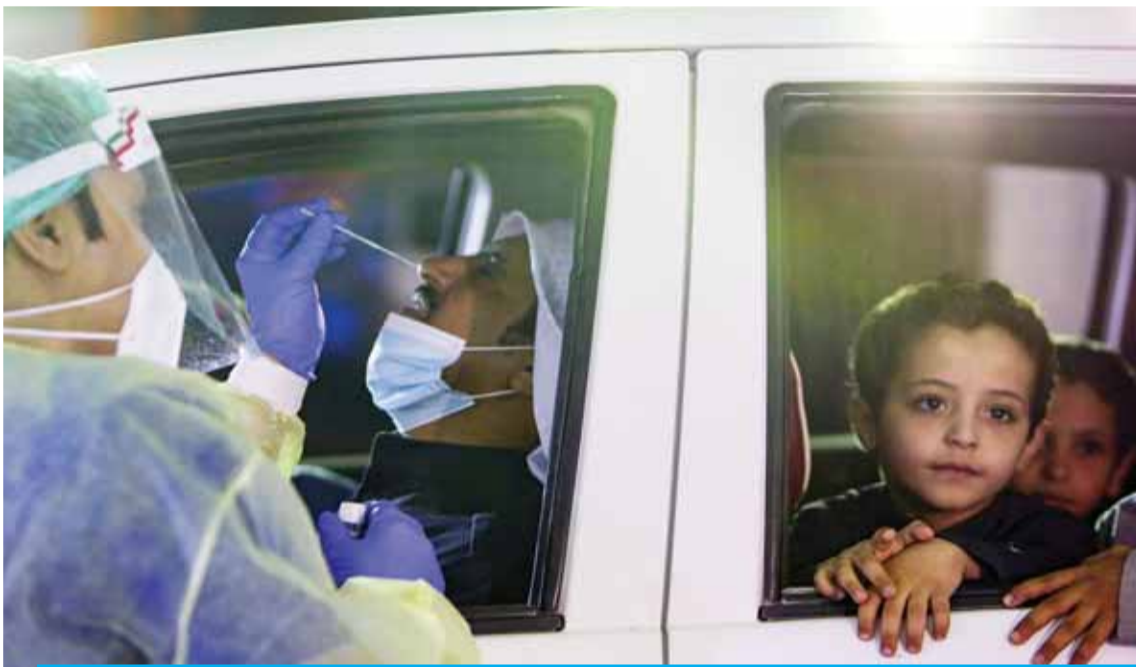


DOHA: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meets Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in the Qatari capital yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait reports 912 COVID cases, four deaths over the weekend

Health workers conduct 11,917 swab tests in two days



KUWAIT: Health workers conduct PCR tests at a COVID-19 drive-thru testing center near Kuwait International Airport on November 18, 2020. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Kuwait reported 912 new COVID-19 cases and four deaths over the weekend, raising total cases to 139,734 and deaths to 863 respectively. The health ministry announced yesterday that Kuwait has logged 426 new infections over the previous 24 hours, in addition to a pair of fatalities. Kuwait had also reported two deaths on Friday, in addition to 486 new cases. The ministry reported yesterday that 511 people had recovered from the virus over the past 24 hours, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 131,560.

Kuwait reported 623 recoveries on Friday. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stands at 7,311, with 84 of them in intensive care units, the health ministry said yesterday, adding that some 5,667 swab tests were conducted over the past 24 hours out of a total of 1,047,902 so far. Kuwait announced Friday that 6,250 swab tests were made the previous day. The ministry 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

KUWAIT: Aseel Al-Mazyad, Head of Public Relations and Media Department at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) denied social media rumors about alleged violation of privacy of some authority employees. The rumor, which reportedly started by a news service account on Twitter before spreading on the platform, claimed that the Information Technology Center of PAM has violated the privacy of employees through applications downloaded on staff members' smartphones. "Some applications are not available for download at the Apple store, as this store offers applications that are only available for the public," Mazyad said. "In this case, public institutions provide links to download unavailable applications, and sends them to employees' personal phones, which prompt the user with a notification that they need to confirm the download after verifying the source's trustworthiness." "This doesn't mean that there is a possibility of reaching the personal data of employees in any way," Mazyad concluded.

Such an event would be unprecedented in modern US history. Pressure for Trump to start the formal transition process has mounted, with a few more Republicans voicing doubts over his unsubstantiated claims of fraudulent voting. There is a "right way and a wrong way" for Trump to contest what he sees as election irregularities, Susan Collins, the Maine Senator, said in a statement. "The right way is to compile the evidence and mount legal challenges in our courts. The wrong way is to attempt to pressure state election officials." The General Services Administration, run by a Trump appointee, still has not recognized Biden's victory, preventing his team from gaining access to government office space and funding normally provided to an incoming administration. Critics say Trump's refusal to concede has serious implications for national security and the fight against the coronavirus, which has killed more than 250,000 Americans. Shut off from government funds, Biden's team on Friday ramped up their fundraising for the transition. Having taken in more than an initial \$7 million target largely from wealthy donors, they turned to their campaign's vast mailing list of small donors, asking - according to a fundraising note - for contributions as small as \$25. Even as the Biden team remains unable to access resources and government experts to help assume management of the \$4 trillion US government on Inauguration Day, Trump officials have been making unexpected changes to programs, policies and agencies that could affect the incoming administration. The Treasury Department's surprise demand that the Federal Reserve return hundreds of billions of dollars in credit designed to back loans to businesses drew a sharp response from Biden's team on Friday, who called it "deeply irresponsible", given the country's accelerating COVID cases and new lockdowns. — Agencies

Kuwait pension fund sees digital adoption spurt

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Institution For Social Security (PIFSS) has turned to digital workflows after the coronavirus pandemic rendered paper-based processes obsolete, with 90 percent of the pension fund's services now available online. The move towards online channels is attributed to a digital adoption strategy the pension fund has formed. PIFSS chief Mishal Al-Othman said in a statement, adding that "upskilling staff" is one of many initiatives that will help prepare the institution for a digital transformation. The array of digital services allows applicants the convenience of completing all their transactions online, according to Iman Al-Ahmad, PIFSS' assistant director general for tech affairs, who highlighted a "digitalization drive" on the part of many state bodies. She expected the push for digitalization across different sectors to continue for the foreseeable future, saying that digital technologies will remain a force to be reckoned within the business world. — KUNA

Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the global economy faces a hard road back from the COVID-19 downturn even as vaccines are now in sight. G20 nations must help plug the \$4.5-billion funding gap in the so-called ACT-Accelerator, Norway's prime minister, South Africa's president, the heads of the European Union and the World Health Organization demanded in a joint letter to the group. The program promotes an equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to rein in the pandemic. Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih was asked at a news conference if Saudi Arabia needs to try a different approach to overcome negative headlines, including over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the imprisonment of critics in an ongoing crackdown. In a country where it is rare for leaders to field this sort of question, the moderator asked the journalist to take the query elsewhere, but Falih insisted on answering. "Investors are not journalists, investors are looking for countries where they can place their trust in an effective government that has proper economic decision-making," he said. — Agencies

Manpower authority denies breaching staff privacy

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Aseel Al-Mazyad, Head of Public Relations and Media Department at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) denied social media rumors about alleged violation of privacy of some authority employees. The rumor, which reportedly started by a news service account on Twitter before spreading on the platform, claimed that the Information Technology Center of PAM has violated the privacy of employees through applications downloaded on staff members' smartphones. "Some applications are not available for download at the Apple store, as this store offers applications that are only available for the public," Mazyad said. "In this case, public institutions provide links to download unavailable applications, and sends them to employees' personal phones, which prompt the user with a notification that they need to confirm the download after verifying the source's trustworthiness." "This doesn't mean that there is a possibility of reaching the personal data of employees in any way," Mazyad concluded.

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Coronavirus crisis dominates...

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infected 56 million people globally and left 1.3 million dead, and injected \$11 trillion to "safeguard" the virus-battered world economy, organizers said. But the group's leaders face mounting pressure to help stave off possible credit defaults across developing nations. Last week, its finance ministers declared a "common framework" for an extended debt restructuring plan for virus-ravaged countries, but campaigners say the measure is insufficient. The ministers had extended a debt suspension initiative for developing countries until June next year but UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has pushed for a commitment to extend it until the end of 2021. International Monetary Fund managing director

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Numbers don't lie: Walls close...

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confirmed Biden as the winner there. "Numbers don't lie," said Raffensperger, a Republican. "The numbers reflect the verdict of the people." A pair of Michigan Republican leaders delivered another blow when they declared on Friday night after a White House meeting with Trump: "We have not yet been made aware of any information that would change the outcome of the election in Michigan."

Trump, in his first public comments in days about the election outcome, again asserted "I won" during a White House event on lowering drug prices earlier on Friday. "Big pharma ran millions of dollars of negative advertisements against me during the campaign - which I won, by the way, but you know, we'll find that out," Trump said. He exited the briefing room without taking questions. The president spent most of the day hunkered down in the White House, fuming about the "Rigged Election" and retweeting conservative personalities - including a QAnon conspiracy supporter - arguing that his rival's victory was fraudulent.

After a series of court defeats, the Trump team is resting its hopes on getting Republican-controlled legislatures in battleground states won by Biden to set aside the results and declare Trump the winner, according to three people familiar with the plan. It is a long-shot effort focusing on Michigan and Pennsylvania for now, but even if both those states flipped to the president he would need to overturn the vote in another state to vault ahead of Biden in the Electoral College.

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Pompeo meets Taliban, govt...

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Local

Kuwait laws' updates discussed in recent business webinar

Bankruptcy law 'welcome introduction for businesses, debtors and creditors'

By Nawara Fattahwa

KUWAIT: The American Business Council-AmCham Kuwait (ABCK-AmCham Kuwait), in collaboration with German Business Council Kuwait and Al-Tamimi and Company, hosted an informative webinar recently on the most recent updates of Kuwaiti laws and regulations. This webinar included useful legal information on recently issued laws and regulations, with the bankruptcy law and the new competition law being the main topics.

Philip Kotsis, Partner and Co-Head of the Kuwait Office at Al-Tamimi and Company, started the discussion with a general overview of various laws that have been in focus since the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, starting with the labor law, rent/lease law, force majeure issues and the issuance of visas/work permits.

Kotsis mentioned that both legal practitioners and businesses were anticipating significant changes this summer to various laws due to the pandemic; however, there has not been as much movement as expected. Despite much discussion and rumors over the course of the summer, wholesale changes to the labor law (such as relief for employers regarding salary reduction and leave time) were not introduced. "However, we did see efforts to assist companies by providing aid to cover Kuwaiti employees' salaries during the pandemic," he said.

Kotsis spoke about the ban on transferring work permits from the government to the private sector, and the halt on the issuance of new visas for incoming employees. He briefly touched upon the recent amendments to the rent/lease law,

including providing relief to tenants with regards to the payment of rent during the periods of time that the government ceases business in Kuwait, and that the courts would have discretion in determining the method and timing of such payments in an effort to strike an equitable balance, given the effects of the pandemic.

In terms of force majeure, the law was not affected; however, legal practitioners are starting to see claims being brought before the courts involving force majeure and exceptional circumstances. "But it will likely be some time before we see how these laws will be applied in connection

most of these situations were resolved through consensual discussions between debtors and creditors.

The new law is a major step forward as it streamlines and modernizes bankruptcy provisions. 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 specified that the law calls for the establishment of a specialized bankruptcy court, which is a major step, as there will be a specialized court for the first time in Kuwait. The new law also 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 oversee bankruptcy filings of state-owned entities.

Competition law

Kotsis concluded his presentation with a discussion of the new competition law, which was recently published. This law regulates new areas of competition practices that were not regulated previously. In addition to revising provisions under the old law, one major change codified under the new law is the introduction of vertical and horizontal competition practices.



"The new law applies to any practice that takes place inside or outside Kuwait that may restrict, harm or negatively affect freedom of competition in Kuwait. The new law clearly defines the areas of activities that are not subject to the law - government-owned companies for example - that may be decided by the Council of Ministries," he added.

Horizontal and vertical relationships and their effects on competition are now clearer. "For example, under horizontal relationships, activities such as price fixing, fixing the volume of production and sale of goods, manipulating bids and tender prices through agreement or through price fixing, and restricting technical development or investment in producing, selling, buying or distributing goods and services will be targeted for strict regulation and oversight by the new law through the Competition Protection

Authority. In terms of vertical relationships, the law prohibits agreements between principals and agents that may restrict or apply unfair competition practices in the market," explained Kotsis.

Finally, he indicated that the Competition Protection Authority will now have broader discretion and authority to decide whether certain activities fall within the scope of the law. With regards to mergers and acquisitions, the 35 percent control threshold has been removed, with a focus on the effect of the merger/acquisition on the market on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to a general threshold standard. During the question and answer session, Kotsis restated that the competition law applied to most sectors except for those sectors specifically exempt in the law, such as public utilities, and state-owned entities regulated by the Council of Ministries.



In focus since pandemic's start

with the pandemic as the cases work their way through the court system," he said.

Bankruptcy law

Kotsis then spoke about the new bankruptcy law, which was recently published. Due to the fact that there was no prior independent and specialized bankruptcy law, this legislation has become a crucial and welcome introduction for businesses, debtors and creditors. Despite the issuance of the financial stability law, and the bankruptcy provisions set forth in Kuwait's commercial law, Kuwait did not witness a significant use of the bankruptcy system, as historically

UN, Kuwait partner to protect children's rights

KUWAIT: The Representative of UN Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator in the State of Kuwait Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh stressed Friday on "everlasting commitment" to work with partners in the country to protect achievements made in the field of children's rights. In a press release on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of World Children's Day, Sheikh said that his office seizes this opportunity to renew its commitment to work with partners in government institutions, civil society and other sectors to protect the achievements in this field from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and to rebuild upon such progress. He explained that this year celebration is of great importance because it comes in the midst of a global health crisis. "Regardless of where we live, this pandemic affects us all and children in particular, just as it left an economic crisis that affected the

budgets of governments and institutions. The private sector and thus on the living budgets of families," Sheikh added.

Meanwhile, the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the GCC region Adam Al-Tayib said that the repercussions of Coronavirus affected the field of childhood globally, so we must all work to "give them a better and more sustainable environment where they can grow and prosper." Tayib stated that the global health crisis "has formed a crisis regarding children's rights around the world, and its effects may be immediate and may last for life if not addressed," adding that "it is time for generations to unite together to re-imagine the world they want." Children's Day is a commemorative date celebrated annually in honor of children, whose date of observance varies by country. In 1925, International Children's Day was first proclaimed in Geneva during the World Conference on Child Welfare. — KUNA



Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh

Governor receives Iraqi ambassador



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Iraq's Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Manhal Al-Safi.

KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Iraq's Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Manhal Al-Safi in his office at the governorate's head office. The two sides discussed bilateral relations between the two countries, and ways to improve them in various fields, according to a press statements released by the governor's office.

Young Writers

Perfection

By Layan Abdullah Al-Qenaei

In our generation; the 20th century teenagers and adults tend to receive questions related to themselves that get them questioning their selves. Having a perfect face, perfect face features, a perfect body, a perfect school, a perfect education, a perfect university or college, a perfect final grade, a perfect well paid job, a perfect house, a perfect wife or husband, perfect children, perfect siblings, perfect parents, or even a perfect life. All these perfections together are impossible. Allah gives you perfections and takes away other ones, giving it to another individual. That is why you should always thank Allah for every grace and ask Allah for the best. The friendships you have are the opportunities to fulfill your imperfections by learning different ways to encourage yourself in rebuilding your life, mind, and self. Taking notes off the advantages and positive traits of the person you are friends with and blending it in yourself to become a better individual. On the other hand, your friend does the same in order to blend in together for a better friendship. Having a perfect face and body is not in our dictionary. We are not born with a perfect body; you must work on yourself in order to achieve your body goals. It is a man-made decision to have a perfect face and body, which most of the universe have participated in. You do not have to participate in it; you have to accept the way Allah has created it, and you are perfect just the way you are. Perfection is the act of accepting the insecurities, blending yourself in the universe, and living the life you would love to live.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Dr Hassan's film 'The Battles of Sky and Earth' reviewed

As part of the cultural collaboration between Kuwait and US

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A documentary film produced by renowned Kuwaiti Director Dr Ali Hassan was showcased by the US Embassy in Kuwait via Google Meet. 'The Battles of Sky and Earth' was presented and reviewed by US Ambassador Alina L Romanowski and Kamel Al-Abdul Jalil, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). Romanowski thanked Abdul Jalil and Senior US Defense Official for Kuwait Brig Gen Darren Slaten for attending the preview.

"We are grateful for the support for cultural and artistic collaboration between our countries. Bonds between the US and Kuwait have existed for over 100 years, and in the next few months, the US Embassy in Kuwait will have events to commemorate the 30th anniversary of one of the proudest moments in the history of our partnership - the liberation of Kuwait, to coincide with the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic ties," she said.

According to Romanowski, the US and Kuwait have several things to be proud of, including a number of works they collaborated on, especially in the area of arts and culture. "We have more interesting projects and events underway to commemorate the anniversary," she revealed. Romanowski pointed out that Hassan has produced a well-researched film with detailed accounts on the invasion and information about the international coalition formed to liberate Kuwait.

'Most amazing coalition'

"It was probably the most amazing coalition that was put together very quickly with the clear and common purpose to liberate Kuwait. The film illustrates very clearly on what the people of the US and Kuwait can achieve when they come together when there are existential crises," she added.

Romanowski said 30 years ago, the people of



Dr. Ali Hassan
Director and Screenwriter

Mr. Kamel Al-Abdul Jalil
Secretary General
of the NCCAL

Alina L. Romanowski
U.S. Ambassador

Darren E. Slaten
Brigadier General
U.S. Air Force

Kuwait woke up on the morning of Aug 2, 1990 facing an entirely different scenario - Iraqi military forces had invaded the country. "I too can remember that day clearly - I was a junior officer at the department of defense in Washington DC. Kuwaitis still have a painful memory of that day - things that took place on Gulf Road, the burning of the Kuwait Towers. So the US, led then by President George Bush, reacted swiftly to build an international coalition at the United Nations to condemn this aggression and demand Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait. On August 7, the US launched Operation Desert Shield in defense of Kuwait and its Gulf neighbors. In January, the US led Operation Desert Storm that succeeded in expelling the Iraqi forces and liberate Kuwait in February 1991," she noted.

"Kuwaitis worked hard to restore Kuwait's sovereignty - the struggle and sacrifices of Kuwaitis for their country during the invasion were not in vain and the people of Kuwait should be proud of the country that they have built since the liberation. We should also be proud of the relationship that we have built between our two countries since the liberation. Kuwait is one of America's most important strategic partners in the Middle East with deep and historic bonds, and these ties were made closer by the late Amir when he

served as Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and finally the Amir of Kuwait," Romanowski said.

Peace and stability

"The US and Kuwait continue to work to maintain peace and stability in the region. In the past two weeks, we have been engaged in a virtual working group that supports our strategic dialogue and the wide range of issues - political, human rights, culture, education, trade, defense and security - and this group will conclude meetings this week in Washington. This film reminds us of our brave leadership and sacrifices that our people made 30 years ago. Whatever challenges may come, Kuwait can always rely on the US as partners and ally," she affirmed.

Hassan thanked everyone for reviewing his film on the 1990-1991 events. "There is no film like this so far to showcase what really happened, including testimonies from eyewitnesses. Thanks to all the people that helped us make this film possible and to the coalition of nations and the role they played, the Arab League, Desert Storm and the ground battle which led to our liberation," he said. Hassan is a film director who has worked for Kuwait TV and Al-Rai TV, and Al-Qabas and Al-Jarida newspapers as a journalist.

News in brief

GCC Awqaf ministers meet

KUWAIT: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi participated in the sixth meeting of GCC Ministers of Awqaf Affairs via videoconference recently. The multiple issues on various levels and fields that were raised in the meeting is another indication to the challenges facing our intellectual security, Afasi said in a statement, adding which requiring us to be vigilant and highly focused in diagnosing them and developing scientific and practical solutions to them. The minister added that these challenges require an important role that the ministries of religious affairs must play and work towards achieving by filling the cultural void and rooting knowledge life through the esteemed methodology of Islam drawn from original sources and inherited throughout the nation's history. He added that Kuwait submitted a proposed paper and was approved regarding bolstering faith in God and three other proposed papers presented by Saudi Arabia. Afasi praised the role of the GCC general secretariat for the well preparedness of the meeting. The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Farid Asad Emadi and the Secretary-General of Endowments, Mansour Al-Saqubi. — KUNA

G20 Summit

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf praised Saudi Arabia on Friday for hosting the G20 Summit, namely King Salman Bin Abdul-Aziz. Hajraf asserted his appreciation for the efforts put forth by Saudi Arabia during their period in which they led the G20 Summit presidency despite unfortunate global circumstances. Saudi Arabia proved their leadership and dialog negating skills in the preparation and administrative process of putting together the summit's procedures, Hajraf said, adding which reflects optimistically towards strengthening international cooperation especially in facing such unfortunate calamities. He also assured this role is well deserved by the Saudi leadership. — KUNA

Kuwait, Jordan tackle current developments

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met on Thursday with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Al-Safadi on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait. Discussions revolved around bilateral relations, the accord consigned by both sides and ways of strengthening and developing them in all fields, in addition to covering recent regional and international developments. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Al-Safadi. — KUNA

EU: Gulf countries have crucial role to play in Afghanistan

BRUSSELS: European Union officials Friday stressed that the role of neighboring countries of Afghanistan, including the Arab Gulf states is very important for advancing the peace process in Afghanistan. "The Gulf countries play a very important role and some of them play important financial roles and security roles which are not so publicly known," one EU official told an online press conference in Brussels ahead of next week's, 23-24 November, major online pledging conference of donor states and Afghan officials hosted by Geneva.

"The currently most important contribution is of course done by the Amir of Qatar by hosting the peace talks in Doha. That is a very important contribution for many months already even though they are in preliminary talks but the intra-Afghan talks then can hopefully take off," said the official speaking on condition of anonymity. "Hosting talks between the US and the Taliban was a key contribution. We know that several other Gulf countries are lending their support to different countries in the region to bring peace in Afghanistan," he noted. The official appealed "not only to India, China, Russia but also to partners in the Gulf to be part of the international financial efforts in support of stability and development in Afghanistan."

"The regional role of the neighbors, the Gulf countries, India, Iran, Pakistan China, is very important and we hope to have a constructive role of these countries," said the EU official. "The time when Europeans and Americans and Japanese and few other partners have to take care of everything in Afghanistan will definitely be over. But this does not mean that we go. We will stay but work with other partners for peace and stability in Afghanistan," he said. Another EU official told the same press conference that the Gulf countries "do have a very important role indeed but perhaps they can do more to look at Afghanistan as a way of cooperating together."

"I think Afghanistan is an opportunity for the Gulf countries to cooperate together," he added. The role of neighbors is key, he said remarking that the visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan to Afghanistan this week "is very important and it shows a sign of dialogue or rapprochement." The EU officials declined to comment on the recent announcement by the US to further reduce its troops from Afghanistan noting that the EU as such has no troops in Afghanistan.

But of course some EU member states that are NATO members do have troops in the country, he said, and quoted comments made by German foreign minister Heiko Mass who yesterday said that an hasty reduction of troops in Afghanistan could have negative effect for peace and jeopardize peace talks. Ahead of next week's Conference, the EU published a document titled "Key Elements for Sustained International Support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan," which outlines the political and governance conditions for future international political and financial support to the country. The EU's relationship with Afghanistan is guided by the 2017 EU Strategy for Afghanistan, aimed at strengthening the country's institutions and economy. — KUNA



KHOST, Afghanistan: Internally displaced children sit outside a tent at a refugee camp in Afghanistan's Khost province on November 17, 2020. — AFP

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Huge crowd gathers for firebrand cleric's funeral

Pfizer/BioNTech seek first vaccine approval in US

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PORTO ALEGRE: People protest against the death of a black man in front of a Carrefour supermarket, where his beating took place, on Black Consciousness Day on Friday. — AFP

Protests in Brazil after black man killed

Death sparks outrage, overshadows Black Consciousness Day

Pompeo's strange farewell tour, full of symbolism, silence

ABU DHABI: What's Donald Trump's top diplomat to do when allies have turned the page and are waiting for Joe Biden but the president refuses to concede? Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is addressing the complex predicament with a most unusual 10-day trip - a farewell tour in everything but name in which he has dodged the press but forged ahead with Trump's norm-shattering foreign policy.

The trip opened with 54 hours in Paris in which he appeared for a total of one minute in public, when he laid a wreath in memory of victims of recent attacks in France. Pompeo spent the full weekend in Paris accompanied by his wife, Susan, staying at the US ambassador's residence on what was nonetheless described as private time, with a series of meetings that were not listed on his public schedule.

When Pompeo resurfaced on Monday, he paid the quick visit to the memorial before meetings with France's President Emmanuel Macron and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian that were closed to the press. It was Pompeo's first bilateral visit to America's oldest ally during his tenure. France described Pompeo's trip as a courtesy visit and said it was fully transparent with the team of Biden, whose victory has been hailed in European capitals after four years of tensions with the unilateral-minded Trump.

Diplomacy of a different sort

Pompeo headed from Paris to Istanbul at a time of high tension between France and Turkey, and agreed, in statement to the French newspaper Le Figaro, that recent actions by Ankara have been "very aggressive". Not that he was going to mediate. Pompeo did not meet any officials on his visit to Turkey, with the State Department blaming incompatible schedules. Instead Pompeo, an evangelical Christian who has put a top priority on religious freedom, met with the leader of the Orthodox world, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, as well as the Vatican's American-born envoy.

Turkey complained about Pompeo's visit, saying the United States should address racism and other issues at home, and has already congratulated Biden, although President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is bracing for a tougher relationship with the Democrat who has vowed to empower Turkey's opposition. As Trump made baseless allegations of voting fraud in closely fought states including Georgia, Pompeo headed on to another Georgia - the nation in the Caucasus. —AFP



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks following a security briefing on Mount Bental in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights on the border with Syria, on Nov 19, 2020. — AFP

BRASILIA: The death of a black man beaten by white security guards at a supermarket sparked protests across Brazil Friday as the country celebrated Black Consciousness Day. A video of Thursday night's incident in the southern city of Porto Alegre captured on a witness's mobile phone was broadcast on social networks and Brazilian media. As the clip went viral, around 1,000 protesters in Sao Paulo marched to a branch of the French-owned Carrefour supermarket chain and stoned the glass storefront before storming the premises, trashing and burning goods, according to an AFP photographer on the scene.

"Carrefour's hands are dirty with black blood," read one banner held up by demonstrators. Police in Porto Alegre used tear gas and flash bang grenades to disperse a protest that had formed in front of the supermarket where the death occurred, according to local television. Protests also broke out in the capital Brasilia, Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro, where a crowd picketed a Carrefour supermarket to prevent customers from reaching the checkouts.

"Carrefour can close, it has killed our brother, it will not work!" chanted dozens of young people carrying banners and masks with the slogan "Black Lives Matter". The video on social media shows 40-year-old welder Joao Alberto Silveira Freitas repeatedly being punched in the face and head by a security guard while he is being restrained by another at the supermarket.

A woman stands beside them, filming with her mobile phone. The military police in Rio Grande do Sul

US allows spy Pollard to move to Israel

WASHINGTON: An American jailed in 1985 for spying for Israel was released from strict parole conditions Friday, allowing his move to Israel, the US Justice Department said. Jonathan Pollard served 30 years for giving away classified US documents and had been confined by parole terms to the United States since his release in 2015, despite Israeli pressure to allow him to leave. "After a review of Mr. Pollard's case, the US Parole Commission has found that there is no evidence to conclude that he is likely to violate the law," the Justice Department said.

Pollard, 66, was a US Navy intelligence analyst in the mid-1980s when he made contact with an Israeli colonel in New York and began sending US secrets to Israel in exchange for tens of thousands of dollars. Pollard, who is Jewish, passed thousands of crucial US documents to Israel, straining relations between the two close allies.

Israel's Oct 1985 raid on the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Tunis headquarters that killed around 60 people was planned with information from Pollard, according to CIA documents declassified in 2012. He was arrested in 1985 and was sentenced to life in prison two years later, despite pleading guilty in a deal his attorneys expected would result in a more lenient sentence.

After his release in 2015, he was kept in the United States by parole rules and not allowed to travel to Israel where his wife, whom he married after he was jailed, lived. He remained subject to a curfew, had to wear a wrist monitor, and was prohibited from working for any company that lacked US government monitoring software on its computer systems. In addition he was restricted from traveling abroad. The restrictions, his lawyers said, had been "insurmountable impediments on Mr Pollard's ability to earn a living." Israel, where he is regarded as a hero and which awarded him citizenship in 1995, repeatedly pressured Washington for the release of Pollard, making it one of the top issues of bilateral relations. But the US intelligence community was reportedly deeply opposed to giving him anything less than the sentence he received, which was similar to the sentences given in serious spying cases related to Russia. —AFP

state said the man had threatened a female worker at the supermarket, who called security. Silveira Freitas lost consciousness during the assault and died on the spot as medics tried to revive him.

'Could not breathe'

A friend of the victim who witnessed the beating told G1 news that as the security guards were hitting him, Silveira Freitas "screamed that he could not breathe," a scene reminiscent of the death of George Floyd, a black man who suffocated beneath the knee of a white US police in Minneapolis last May. That killing sparked massive protests across the United States.

Both the supermarket security guards were arrested. One of them was identified as a member of the military police who worked part-time at the supermarket.

In a statement, Carrefour's Brazilian subsidiary deplored the "brutal death" of Silveira Freitas and promised to take "appropriate measures to hold accountable those involved in this criminal case". Carrefour said it would cut ties with the security company that employed the guards. In a series of tweets in Portuguese, the French head of Carrefour, Alexandre Bompard, expressed his condolences and said the images posted on social media were "unacceptable". —AFP

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International

Ethiopia claims advances, rejects talks in fight with dissident region

Conflict forces tens of thousands to flee, raises fears of a catastrophe

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's government claimed advances in its battle against the dissident Tigray region yesterday, while showing no signs of bowing to international pressure for a halt to the conflict that has caused tens of thousands to flee and raised fears of a humanitarian disaster.

"Our defense forces are currently marching on Mekele," the Ethiopia State of Emergency Fact Check, a government agency, said yesterday. The regional capital is the seat of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which the government is seeking to dislodge from power. The agency also said the national army had captured a string of towns in Tigray, including the ancient city of Aksum and Adigrat, 117 kilometers (73 miles) north of Mekele.

In a statement, the TPLF said there had been a "heavy bombardment" of Adigrat, but did not say who was now in control. A communications blackout in the region has made assertions from both sides in the conflict difficult to verify.

Military advances

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner-unleashed a military campaign against the TPLF on November 4, accusing its forces of attacking two federal military camps in the region and the party of defying his government and seeking to destabilize it. Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed in the conflict in Africa's second most populous country, while tens of thousands have fled the fighting, crossing to neighboring Sudan.

In a statement yesterday, Abiy praised his army's advance. "Our forces have now fully liberated Adigrat town from TPLF militia as of today," he said. "Together with the rest of Ethiopia, we will work to ensure that all humanitarian needs will be addressed," Abiy added.

"The overall safety and well-being of the people of Tigray is of paramount importance to the federal government and we will do all that is necessary to ensure



Ethiopian refugees who fled the fighting in Tigray Region gather at a border reception centre (Village 8) in Gedaref State, eastern Sudan, on Friday. The outbreak of conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region has left some 2.3 million children in urgent need of assistance and thousands more at risk in refugee camps, the UN children's agency said. — AFP

stability prevails in the Tigray region and that our citizens are free from harm and want," he said.

Mediation rejected

The TPLF led the overthrow of Mengistu Hailemariam, head of Ethiopia's military Derg regime, in 1991 and dominated the country's politics until Abiy became prime minister in 2018. The party continues to rule Tigray, one of 10 regional states under Ethiopia's system of ethnic federalism whereby by regions are delineated by ethnicity and language.

TPLF leaders have complained of being sidelined and blamed for the country's woes. The bitter feud with the central government led the TPLF to hold their own elections this year in defiance of a postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic. Abiy has so far spurned all calls for peace.

On Friday, the African Union appointed three former

national presidents as special envoys who will be dispatched "in the coming days": Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Kgalema Mollanthe of South Africa. "The Envoys will travel to Ethiopia with a view to helping to mediate between the parties to the conflict in the sister Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia," said South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, the current AU chairperson.

The Ethiopia State of Emergency Fact Check agency said Abiy would meet with the envoys. However it also contradicted Ramaphosa, saying, "News circulating that the envoys will be traveling to Ethiopia to mediate between the Federal Government and TPLF criminal element is fake." US officials said they, too, had urged de-escalation, but saw little prospect for negotiations. "Neither party, from everything we hear, is interested in mediation," said Tibor Nagy, the top US diplomat for Africa. — AFP

Azerbaijan troops enter first district ceded by Armenia

BAKU: Azerbaijan said Friday its troops had entered a district bordering Nagorno-Karabakh that was previously home to Armenian separatists, as part of a Russian-brokered deal to end weeks of fighting in the region. Troops moved into the district of Aghdam, one of three to be ceded, the Azerbaijan defence ministry said, a day after Armenian soldiers and tanks withdrew from the territory.

Azerbaijan is also to recover the Kalbajar district wedged between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia on November 25 and the Lachin district by December 1. Armenian residents of Aghdam hurriedly picked pomegranates from trees around their homes and packed vans with furniture before fleeing ahead of the deadline to cede the mountainous province. Ahead of the handover, residents set their homes on fire, leaving nothing behind for their bitter rivals.

Fierce clashes between Azerbaijan's forces and Armenian separatists broke out in late September in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The fighting lasted six weeks, leaving thousands dead and displacing many more. The ex-Soviet adversaries agreed to end hostilities last week within the framework of an accord brokered by Moscow that includes deployment of Russian peacekeepers and the cession by Armenia of swathes of territory. Turkey has said that some of its forces would also observe the ceasefire arrangements from a coordination center in Azerbaijan, but Putin has emphasized that Turkish troops would not be present in Nagorno-Karabakh.

'Wild enemy'

In a televised address, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev called Armenians who destroyed property as they fled a "wild enemy". "They are embarrassing themselves in front of the whole world," he said.

On Thursday, people celebrated in Baku, with cars parading through the city with flags of Azerbaijan ally Russia and Turkey. Separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh

Crunch time for Sarkozy as graft trial looms

PARIS: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy goes on trial tomorrow on charges of trying to bribe a judge, in what could be a humiliating postscript to a political career tainted by a litany of legal investigations. Though he is not the first modern head of state in the dock—his predecessor and political mentor Jacques Chirac was convicted of embezzlement—Sarkozy is the first to face corruption charges. He fought furiously over the past six years to have the case thrown out, and has denounced "a scandal that will go down in history." "I am not a crook," the 65-year-old, whose combative style has made him one of France's most popular rightwing politicians, told BFMTV this month.

Prosecutors say Sarkozy promised the judge a plush job in Monaco in exchange for inside information on an inquiry into claims that Sarkozy accepted illicit payments from L'Oréal heiress Liliane Bettencourt for his 2007 presidential campaign. Their case rests in large part on wiretaps of phone conversations between Sarkozy and his longtime lawyer Thierry Herzog, which judges authorized as prosecutors also looked into suspected Libyan financing of Sarkozy's 2007 campaign. That inquiry is still underway, though Sarkozy caught a break this month when his main accuser, the French-Lebanese businessman Ziad Takieddine, suddenly



This handout photograph taken and released by Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan on Friday shows military vehicles running along a road as Azerbaijan army units enter the Aghdam region of Nagorno-Karabakh. — AFP

and several surrounding districts had captured the territory and claimed independence following a post-Soviet 1990s war that left around 30,000 dead. Their claim was not recognized internationally, however, even by Armenia. As part of the peace accord, Armenia agreed to return 15 to 20 percent of Nagorno-Karabakh territory captured by Azerbaijan in recent fighting, including the historic town of Shusha.

Return of refugees

A Russian peacekeeping force totalling 1,960 troops has now deployed to the region, the defence ministry said Friday, and set up checkpoints and observation posts along the strategic Lachin corridor that connects Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. While Armenians in the provinces to be handed over to Azerbaijan have left in an exodus, the Russian mission on Thursday said it had bussed 3,000 residents back to the regional capital Stepanakert and other areas. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that providing humanitarian aid to residents of "severely hit" Nagorno-Karabakh was now a priority, and called on the UN and the World Health Organization to send delegations to the region.

He maintained that the peacekeepers had "helped end the bloodshed and prevent further casualties." Most of Azerbaijan's south-western district of Aghdam has been under the control of Armenian separatists since 1993. Before the post-Soviet war it was inhabited by 130,000 people—mostly ethnic Azerbaijanis who were expelled from their homes. — AFP

retracted his claim of delivering millions of euros in cash from former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. Sarkozy and Herzog have assailed the taps on their phones as a breach of client-attorney privilege, but in 2016 a top court upheld their use as evidence.

Charged with bribery and influence peddling, Sarkozy risks a prison sentence of up to 10 years and a maximum fine of one million euros (\$1.2 million).

Herzog, a leading member of the Paris bar, faces the same charges as well as violation of professional secrecy. The trial is expected to last three weeks.

'A boost'

Investigators discovered that Sarkozy used an alias—Paul Bismuth—to buy a private phone for conversing secretly with his lawyer. On around a dozen occasions, they discussed reaching out to a top French judge, Gilbert Azibert, a general counsel at the Cour de Cassation, France's top appeals court for criminal and civil cases. Prosecutors say Azibert, who is also on trial, was tasked with trying to obtain information from the Cour de Cassation lawyer in charge of the Bettencourt inquiry, and to induce him to seek a verdict in Sarkozy's favor. In exchange, Sarkozy would use his extensive contacts to give "a boost" to Azibert's efforts to secure the cushy Monaco post. "He's been working on it," Herzog tells Sarkozy in a call from early 2014.

Azibert was already considered a leading candidate for the job, but "if you give him a boost, it's always better," Herzog says in another. "I'll make him move up," Sarkozy tells Herzog, according to the indictment by prosecutors, who compared his actions to those of a "seasoned offender." — AFP

News in brief

Eight hurt in shooting at US mall

WASHINGTON: Eight people were injured in a shooting at a US mall in Wisconsin on Friday according to police, who said they were still hunting for the shooter. The FBI and the Milwaukee County Sheriff's office tweeted that their officers were on the scene at the Mayfair Mall in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, supporting the "active" response by local police. "When emergency personnel arrived, the shooter was no longer at the scene," the Wauwatosa Police Department said in a statement. It said the wounded included seven adults and one teenager who had been rushed to hospital. — AFP

Teen accused of killing two

WASHINGTON: The 17-year-old right-wing extremist charged with shooting two people dead at a Black Lives Matter protest in the Midwestern US state of Wisconsin earlier this year was released after posting \$2 million bail, one of his lawyers tweeted Friday. Kyle Rittenhouse "is out of jail," Lin Wood wrote, adding special thanks to actor Ricky Schroder and My Pillow chief executive Mike Lindell, an ally of US President Donald Trump, for contributions which put them "over the top." Video footage shows a white man alleged to be Rittenhouse shooting dead the two protesters, named by The New York Times as Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum in Kenosha, Wisconsin in August. — AFP

Armenia seeks stronger Russia links

YEREVAN: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called yesterday for greater military cooperation with Russia, a day after Azerbaijani troops began moving into territory in Nagorno-Karabakh previously held by Armenian separatist forces. "We hope we can reinforce cooperation with Russia not only in the security sector but also military and technical cooperation," he said, according to his press service. "Of course, there were hard times before the war, but the situation today is even more difficult." — AFP

Dutch man jailed in cold case murder

THE HAGUE: A Dutch court sentenced a man to 12 years in jail over the death of a boy who disappeared from a youth camp two decades ago in a cold case that shocked the Netherlands. Jos Brech, 58, was found guilty of kidnapping 11-year-old Nicky Verstappen "in an act that led to his death", sexual assault and being in possession of child pornography. But judges at the Limburg Regional Court cleared former scout worker Brech of manslaughter charges saying there was not enough evidence to convict him for the boy's death. — AFP



Ethiopian refugees who fled fighting in the Tigray Region receive snacks at the Village 8 border reception center in Sudan's eastern Gedaref State, on Friday. — AFP

Grim conditions await Ethiopian refugees in Sudan

GEDAREF, Sudan: At a sprawling refugee reception center in Sudan, Ethiopians who fled the deadly Tigray conflict queued haphazardly outside a school-turned-relief facility to receive handouts of food, water and clothing. "I escaped in these clothes and have been in them since I arrived," Babosh Alamshed told AFP on Friday, pointing to his stained red T-shirt and worn-out black trousers.

"The war did this to us. We are starving. The help we receive is close to nothing," said the 21-year-old, who arrived in Sudan's "Village 8" transit camp two weeks ago, after a three-day trek. Ethiopia's northern Tigray region has been rocked by bloody fighting since November 4, when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced the launch of military operations there.

The ongoing conflict is reported to have killed hundreds of people and forced thousands more to flee into neighboring Sudan. On Friday morning, Alamshed took his place in a long queue outside the aid facility to receive clothes, soap and other basic items. Ethiopians frustrated by the wait and the sweltering heat jostled to enter, as a couple of Sudanese security forces standing guard tried to shoo them away with sticks. Hours later, refugees broke through the metal gates and rushed to compete for handouts.

'Short on resources'

Neighboring Sudan, itself suffering from a severe economic crisis, was caught off-guard when the conflict broke out earlier this month. It now hosts some 36,000 Ethiopians, with many in transit camps near the border, according to Sudan's refugee commission.

Many at "Village 8" said they had left behind modest lives as farmers with just the clothes on their backs to escape intense bombings, shootings and knife attacks in Tigray.

Family members and relatives were left behind, their fate unknown, they said. "Village 8" alone is estimated to house around 14,000-15,000 refugees, said Fouad Tesfay of the Khartoum-based Tigray Development Association.

"But the numbers keep growing by the day," he added. That has prompted an aid drive from Khartoum and other parts of Sudan. Large bags of sorghum, salt and oil bottles have been brought to "Village 8" for distribution to the refugees, but the supplies are limited. "There are just enough for 2,000 or 3,000 people," said one aid worker as he unloaded the bags off the lorries. "We are very short on resources." — AFP



In this file photo, the logo of German company BioNTech is pictured at the company's headquarters in Mainz, Germany. — AFP

Pfizer/BioNTech seek first vaccine approval in US

WASHINGTON: US biotech giant Pfizer and German partner BioNTech sought approval Friday to roll out their coronavirus vaccine early, a first step towards relief as surging infections prompt a return to shutdowns that traumatized nations and the global economy earlier this year.

The world is looking to scientists for salvation from the global pandemic. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said its vaccines committee would meet on December 10 to discuss the request for emergency use authorization. "The FDA recognizes that transparency and dialogue are critical for the public to have confidence in COVID-19 vaccines," the organization's head Stephen Hahn said in a statement. "I want to assure the American people that the FDA's process and evaluation of the data for a potential Covid-19 vaccine will be as open and transparent as possible." He said he could not predict how long the review would take, but the federal government said earlier the final green light would probably come in December. Pfizer chief executive Albert Bourla called the filing "a critical milestone in our journey to deliver a COVID-19 vaccine to the world." The BioNTech/Pfizer shot and another one being developed by the US firm Moderna have taken the lead in the global chase for a vaccine. — AFP

International

Huge maskless crowd gathers for Pakistani firebrand cleric's funeral

Rizvi died Thursday after suffering a high fever and breathing difficulties

LAHORE: Massive crowds of maskless mourners gathered in Lahore yesterday for the funeral of hardline Pakistani cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, who for years terrorized the country's religious minorities, incited riots and advocated the destruction of European nations in the name of fighting blasphemy.

Vast throngs of men were seen packing the center of the eastern city ahead of Rizvi's funeral, chanting in unison and for the most part flouting mask-wearing rules even with the country on the cusp of a second wave of the coronavirus outbreak. Officials did not immediately provide a crowd size but local observers estimated several hundred thousand attendees. "Have you ever seen such a big funeral for any political or religious figure?" said attendee Farhad Abbasi. "Of course the movement will continue without him."

No cause of death has been announced for the 54-year-old Rizvi, who died Thursday after suffering a high fever and difficulties breathing, and no Covid-19 test or autopsy were conducted on the long-time wheelchair user. In life, Rizvi acted as a lightning rod for Pakistan's religious right, and was adept at stirring sectarian resentments and mobilizing thousands of fanatical anti-blasphemy supporters at a moment's notice.

His death came just days after he led a paralyzing anti-France rally in Islamabad, threatening to repeat a 2017 blockade that crippled the capital, and he has called for the nuclear destruction of some European countries.

Despite this, Pakistan's military hailed him as a "great scholar" and Prime Minister Imran Khan rushed to offer his heartfelt condolences—both likely wary of the power of his movement.

Rizvi had weaponized the ultra-sensitive issue of blasphemy in the Muslim-majority nation and radicalized large swathes of Punjab, opening a new chapter in Pakistan's violent confrontation with extremism. In just a few years, the cleric,

known for his profanity-laced speeches and theatrical gestures, gained mass support and rose to become one of the country's most feared figures.

"In some ways, he was even more dangerous than the Taliban, with his supporters not limited to remote tribal areas, but present in large numbers in the country's heartlands," said Omar Waraich from Amnesty International. "(Rizvi) figured out that in Pakistan, true power can be commanded in the streets, where you don't need the highest number of votes—just the highest number of armed supporters." His Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan party (TLP) held a three-day anti-France rally that ended after he claimed to have forced the government to agree to kick out the French ambassador. The protests came weeks after France's President Emmanuel Macron defended the country's freedom of speech laws. The Pakistani government and French embassy have refused to comment on the matter.

Violent history

Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam can face the death penalty and the whiff of even unproven allegations can lead to mob lynchings and vigilante murders. Since 2017, Rizvi and the TLP have succeeded in dictating terms to successive governments who fear sparking any backlash from religious groups.

The cleric forced the resignation of a federal minister and the firing of a leading economic adviser even as Pakistan's economy cratered. And in 2018, the TLP brought the country to a standstill with riots following the acquittal of Christian woman Asia Bibi.

The party has also called for the assassination of Pakistan's Supreme Court judges, pleaded for a mutiny in the armed forces and vowed to wipe out European nations such as France and the Netherlands with Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. The



LAHORE: Activists and supporters of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) gather around an ambulance (left) carrying the coffin of Khadim Hussain Rizvi, founder of TLP, during his funeral ceremony in Lahore yesterday. —AFP

group has also been linked with killings and an assassination attempt on Pakistan's interior minister in 2018, while rallying millions of supporters at the ballot box that gave them seats in a provincial government.

'Extensive support'

Whether the TLP can hold its momentum without the charismatic Rizvi is unclear. "The TLP already has an extensive support base. His lifeline was his narrative and his narrative was still intact,"

security analyst Amir Rana told AFP. "The TLP will remain on Pakistan's security and political landscape for a longer time and leadership may not be a big factor."

However, columnist Zahid Hussain chalked up the TLP's victories over the years to government weakness rather than its actual strength as a political force. "I don't think anybody could provide the type of a leadership he had," he said. "It was more of a personal following than an ideological movement." —AFP

News in brief

Guatemalan VP's call to quit

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala's vice president on Friday said he had asked President Alejandro Giamattei to resign with him "for the good of the country", following the passage of a budget that has sparked outrage in the impoverished Central American nation. "For the good of the country, I asked him that we present our resignations together," Guillermo Castillo said in a message posted on social media. He also reportedly told the president that "things are not right," and admitted to tensions between himself and the head of state. Giamattei, a 64-year-old doctor, swept to power in January promising to clean up corruption and fight organized crime. —AFP

Smuggled parrots in bottles

FAKFAK, Indonesia: Dozens of parrots stuffed into plastic water bottles have been discovered on a ship docked in Indonesia's Papua region, authorities said Friday. Police in the town of Fakfak said the vessel's crew reported hearing noises coming from a large box where 64 live black-capped lorries and another 10 dead birds were found Thursday morning. Black-capped lorries are a type of parrot native to New Guinea and nearby smaller islands. "The ship's crew told us that they suspected there were animals inside the box as they heard strange noises," said local police spokesman Dodik Junaidi. —AFP

Balloon messages for Hong Kongers

HONG KONG: Relatives of 12 Hong Kong democracy activists detained in mainland China released balloons carrying messages to their loved ones across the border yesterday, as they called for their return. It has been 90 days since the 12 were arrested by the Chinese coast guard in late August when fleeing their city for Taiwan by boat. Most of those aboard the vessel were being prosecuted in Hong Kong for crimes linked to last year's huge and often violent pro-democracy protests. —AFP

Georgia opposition boycott

TBILISI: Georgia held runoff elections in several constituencies yesterday, in a vote boycotted by the opposition, which has refused to enter the new parliament in the Caucasus nation. All the opposition parties have denounced as rigged the October 31 parliamentary elections and have staged mass protests, calling for snap polls—a demand the ruling Georgian Dream party has rejected. The ruling party, led by billionaire ex-prime minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, flatly denies accusations of electoral fraud. An opposition boycott could weigh heavily on Georgian Dream's political legitimacy. —AFP

India virus cases pass 9 million

NEW DELHI: India's coronavirus caseload passed nine million on Friday, as hospitals in the capital New Delhi came under increasing pressure. The country has now also registered more than 132,000 deaths from COVID-19, according to the latest official figures. India has seen a drop in daily cases over the past month but it is still registering about 45,000 new infections on average every day. On Thursday, Delhi's government quadrupled fines for not wearing a mask in an effort to get a grip on the outbreak. —AFP

Rocket attack on Kabul kills eight

KABUL: At least eight people were killed yesterday when a barrage of rockets struck densely populated parts of Kabul, the latest big attack in a wave of violence sweeping the Afghan capital. The salvo slammed into various parts of central and north Kabul—including in and around the heavily fortified Green Zone that houses embassies and international firms—just before 9 am (0430 GMT).

The Iranian embassy said on Twitter that its main building had been hit by rocket fragments after one landed on the premises. No one in the compound, located just outside the Green Zone, was wounded. Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian blamed the Taliban, saying "terrorists" had fired a total of 23 rockets. "Based on initial information, eight people were martyred, and 31 others were wounded," Arian said, noting the final toll would change. Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz confirmed the same tolls and details. The Taliban denied responsibility, saying they "do not blindly fire on public places."

At least one rocket landed in an office inside the Green Zone, but did not explode.

Several buildings sustained damage to walls and windows, including at the large Sana Medical Complex. Mariam Rahimi, 26, a nurse at the facility,

said she had been thrown off her feet when a rocket struck the hospital.

"The impact broke windows and tables and damaged some parts of a wall. I screamed for help and called other staff members to evacuate the children who were admitted at the hospital," Rahimi told AFP. "I am scared and have a headache from the shock of the attack. These attackers must die, they don't even spare hospitals." Recent major attacks in Kabul, including two horrific assaults on educational institutions that killed nearly 50 people, follow a familiar pattern in the aftermath, with the Taliban denying any involvement while the Afghan government pins the blame on them or their proxies. "The rocket attack in Kabul city has nothing to do with the mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said, using the insurgents' name for Afghanistan.

The Taliban are under pressure not to attack urban areas, having pledged not to do so under the terms of a US withdrawal deal signed in February. Any acknowledgement of overt involvement in such incidents could in theory slow the American pull-out, though outgoing US President Donald Trump has made clear he wants US forces out regardless of the situation on the ground. The Islamic State group claimed the two attacks on educational centers, but Kabul said the Taliban's ultra-violent Haqqani network was responsible.

Taliban and Afghan government negotiators launched peace talks in Doha in September but



KABUL: People inspect a damaged house after several rockets land at Khair Khana, north west of Kabul yesterday. —AFP

progress has been slow and violence has raged across Afghanistan regardless. Officials told AFP on Friday however that a breakthrough was expected to be announced in the coming days, and the US State Department announced late Friday that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would meet negotiators from the Taliban and the Afghan government in Doha. "Trump has repeatedly vowed to end 'forever wars', including in Afghanistan, America's longest-ever conflict, which began with an invasion to dislodge the Taliban following the September 11, 2001 attacks. —AFP

Close-run Brexit talks underline UK's dilemma

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson's brinkmanship has brought UK-EU talks down to the wire and his choice boils down now to a barebones deal or serious economic disruption in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Covid-19 has intervened directly in the fraught Brexit process, pausing the talks in Brussels when an EU negotiator tested positive, days after Johnson was himself forced to self-isolate after he came into contact with an infected MP.

The blip was particularly ill-timed ahead of Britain's

exit out of a post-EU transition period on December 31, and came at the end of a stormy week in London when Johnson's efforts to reset his government were derailed by various political crises. The policy reset was intended to steady the ship after the departure of arch-Brexiteer and top Downing Street aide Dominic Cummings. But on Brexit itself, the government is maintaining its hard line.

"Our negotiating position remains the same... to take back control of our money, laws and borders," the prime minister's official spokesman told reporters on Friday. "We want an agreement that recognizes the UK as a sovereign nation," he said. The negotiations will continue remotely from tomorrow, but EU officials are clamoring for Johnson to take a hands-on role on negotiating away the blockages that have bedevilled the process for months.

One EU diplomat feared the gap between the two

sides is "only slowly shrinking" and time may run out before ratification can be achieved by the end of year. "Nevertheless, there is hope that the negotiations can be concluded quickly if and when the necessary political decisions are taken in London," the diplomat added. But how badly does Johnson want a deal? He insists that Britain will "prosper" without one, if need be, even with the kind of quotas and tariffs that have been absent from cross-Channel trade for decades.

And if a deal is secured, he will have to sell it to restive Conservative MPs, many of whom will balk at any brakes on UK freedoms imposed by the EU as the price of agreement. In any case, a deal would fall well short of the benefits of EU membership. British exporters will still have to contend with reams of new customs paperwork, and complain the government's preparations on that front have fallen woefully short. —AFP

France accuses Russia, Turkey of feeding hostility in Africa

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron accused Russia and Turkey of promoting anti-France sentiment in Africa, in an interview published Friday where he sought to defend his vision for the role of the former colonial power in the continent. Macron also railed against Guinea President Alpha Conde for clinging onto power, while categorically ruling out negotiating with jihadists to ease the task of the French force deployed in the Sahel region of Africa.

"There is a strategy at work, sometimes led by African leaders, but especially by foreign powers such as Russia or Turkey, who play on post-colonial resentment," he told Jeune Afrique magazine. "We must not be naive on this subject: many of those who speak, who make videos, who are present in the French-speaking media are funded by Russia or Turkey," he added.

"When I decided to attack radical Islam... my

words were distorted. By the Muslim Brotherhood—quite widely—but also by Turkey, which has the ability to influence a lot of public opinion, including in sub-Saharan Africa," he said. Reiterating a position that has caused immense controversy in France and beyond over the last months, he added: "I am not attacking Islam, I am attacking Islamist terrorism."

Tensions between France and Turkey have risen to new levels over a range of disputes in recent months, including Syria, Libya, the eastern Mediterranean and now France's crackdown on radical Islam. France has called for a total rethink of the European Union's relations with Turkey, which under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has significantly built up its presence and influence in Africa.

Russia has also played an increasingly active role in Africa, with analysts pointing to the presence in several countries of the pro-Kremlin mercenary group Wagner. Macron did not give examples or name media outlets where he alleged such anti-French sentiments are aired.

In a wide-ranging interview, Macron also ruled out negotiating with jihadist groups in the Sahel region of Africa, where France has a thousand-strong force deployed. "We don't talk with terrorists. We fight," —AFP

Disclaimer



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Business

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2020

Trump makes rare appearance at APEC summit Forum's main driving force China counters US protectionism

KUALA LUMPUR: US President Donald Trump on Friday made a rare appearance at a virtual Asia-Pacific summit, touting his commitment to work towards "peace and prosperity" in the region, as China's Xi Jinping used the forum to counter American protectionism.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) gathering, held virtually this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, brings together leaders from 21 Pacific Rim economies, accounting for about 60 percent of global GDP. China—which came into the summit days after scoring a huge trade pact victory—has become the main driving force behind the grouping after Trump started withdrawing the United States from multilateral bodies.

But Trump made the surprise decision to attend this year's event, after not participating at APEC since 2017, his first year in office—appearing alongside other leaders via video link. All of the leaders except one had an official APEC backdrop on their screens, which was blue and featured the enormous, green-domed Malaysian prime minister's office. The exception was Trump, who appeared with a beige background under the US presidential seal.

A source involved in arranging the summit said Trump refused to use the official backdrop.

Opening for China

Trump's speech during the two-hour event was not open to the media. The White House said he "reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to building on our unprecedented economic recovery from COVID-19, as well as promoting peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region through strong economic growth". Analysts said Trump likely decided to appear at APEC this year to present himself as presidential as he pursues legal challenges against the election victory of rival Joe Biden.

His appearance was all the more striking as the United States broke with tradition by failing to send a representative to deliver a public speech at the forum

ahead of Friday's official summit.

Trump's turn away from multilateral groupings like APEC has left the floor open for China to write the region's rules of commerce, and Xi used his speech Friday to launch a strident defense of free trade.

"It is important that the Asia-Pacific should remain the bellwether in safeguarding peace and stability, upholding multilateralism, and fostering an open world economy," he said, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV. "Free and open trade and investment cannot be achieved overnight."

His remarks will raise eyebrows however in capitals where Beijing has been accused of blocking trade amid diplomatic rows, and using its enormous economy as a bargaining chip to strongarm weaker rivals. Xi also said China would consider joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership—a giant regional free trade pact once championed by the United States under Barack Obama—but abandoned by Trump.

Pandemic cooperation

This year's APEC gathering came a week after China and 14 other Asia-Pacific countries signed another free trade pact, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will be the world's biggest. The deal, which excludes the US, has been viewed as a major coup for China and further evidence that Beijing is setting the agenda for global commerce as Washington retreats.

Signatories hope RCEP will help their virus-hit economies on the road to recovery, and many leaders at the APEC forum warned against turning inwards in response to the pandemic. "We need to trade and invest our way out of the current economic downturn," Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said in his opening remarks at the summit. "We must come together and work constructively towards navigating the region along a path of robust, inclusive and sustainable



KUALA LUMPUR: A screen shows the virtual meeting between world leaders, including US President Donald Trump (bottom right), Russian President Vladimir Putin (bottom left) and Chinese President Xi Jinping (left, second row from top), during the online Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' summit in Kuala Lumpur Friday. —AFP

economic recovery and growth."

At the end of the summit, the leaders released a joint declaration that pledged their determination to work together to recover from the pandemic.

Even agreeing on a statement was progress compared with the leaders' previous summit in 2018, when

they were unable to hammer out a joint communique due to escalating tensions between the US and China on trade. In his speech, Trump "highlighted the global health leadership of the United States, including our successful development of safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines," the White House said. —AFP

News in brief

Nigeria slips into recession

LAGOS: Nigeria has slipped into a recession after its gross domestic product contracted for the second consecutive quarter, according to data released by the statistician general yesterday. Africa's biggest economy was last in recession in 2016, its first in a generation, and emerged the following year. But growth had been fragile and the coronavirus pandemic hit the economy hard, as did low oil prices. The continent's top oil exporter relies on crude sales for 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings. "Q3 2020 Real GDP contracted for second consecutive quarter by -3.62 percent," Yemi Kale said on Twitter. —Reuters

Mobile startup Wish files IPO

NEW YORK: The operator of the mobile e-commerce startup Wish filed documents for a share offering Friday, revealing a user base of more than 100 million. The filing by US-based parent firm ContextLogic said the platform is looking to expand the business which up to now has been connecting merchants based mainly in China with consumers around the world. Wish's initial public offering (IPO) filing said it was the most downloaded shopping app and operated in more than 100 countries, having shipped more than 640 million items. —AFP

Fitch, Moody's downgrade S Africa

NEW YORK: Ratings agencies Fitch and Moody's lowered their assessments of South Africa's financial strength on Friday, saying pandemic had further stifled the heavily indebted country's economy. The agencies, which had already placed South Africa's debt in the category of speculative investments, both downgraded their ratings one notch, to "BB-" at Fitch and "Ba2" at Moody's, and warned that they could lower them again in the medium term. Fitch said its decision reflects the country's "high and rising government debt, exacerbated by the economic shock triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. —AFP

Apple firm on mobile privacy

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple said it would press ahead with mobile software changes that limit tracking for targeted advertising—a move that has prompted complaints from Facebook and others. The iPhone maker said updates to its mobile operating system would give users more information and control on the tracking of their online activity by apps on Apple devices. Apple earlier this year delayed the changes to give online advertisers time to adapt. But in a letter to the nonprofit group Ranking Digital Rights, Apple said it planned to move forward next year "because we share your concerns about users being tracked without their consent and the bundling and reselling of data by advertising networks and data brokers." —AFP

Struggling airlines seek to stay in the skies

PARIS: The airline industry holds its annual gathering by video conference next week under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic that has plunged the sector into a crisis that may yet claim more carriers.

Unprecedented shock

The restrictions put into place to slow the spread of the coronavirus hit airlines hard, making travel impossible or difficult. Airlines grounded nearly their entire fleets during the first wave of the pandemic. After hitting a low point in April, air traffic began to gradually increase, before slowing once more as the spread of the coronavirus accelerated again.

The International Air Transportation Association (IATA) expects traffic to down by 66 percent for 2020 as a whole. The industry's trade body believes the traffic won't return to its 2019 level before 2024 — an estimation based on the expectation of a vaccine becoming available in mid-2021. It forecasts the revenue of airlines to come in at \$419 billion (354 billion euros), half of the 2019 level.

Job losses

Airlines have already shed tens of thousands of jobs as they try to stay afloat, and according to a survey conducted by IATA in October, 59 percent intend to cut more positions in the coming year. Airlines for America, the trade body for US airlines, estimates that 90,000 jobs will have been shed between March and December. "To reach the level of productivity of recent years the number of jobs

HK, Singapore travel bubble scrapped

HONG KONG: A planned travel bubble between Hong Kong and Singapore was scrapped a day before its launch yesterday after the southern Chinese city announced a sudden spike in coronavirus cases. The decision is both a blow to the two cities' battered tourist industries but also for other countries who had been hoping the scheme might be a model to replicate during the pandemic.

The two financial hubs have both suffered comparatively mild outbreaks with strict social distancing and border measures imposed soon after the pandemic first emerged. But with small populations and a heavy dependence on links to the outside world they have been hard hit as the global economy collapsed.

Desperate to help their key tourism and aviation sectors, they came up with the plan allowing limited, quarantine-free travel between the cities as long as visitors test negative for COVID-19.

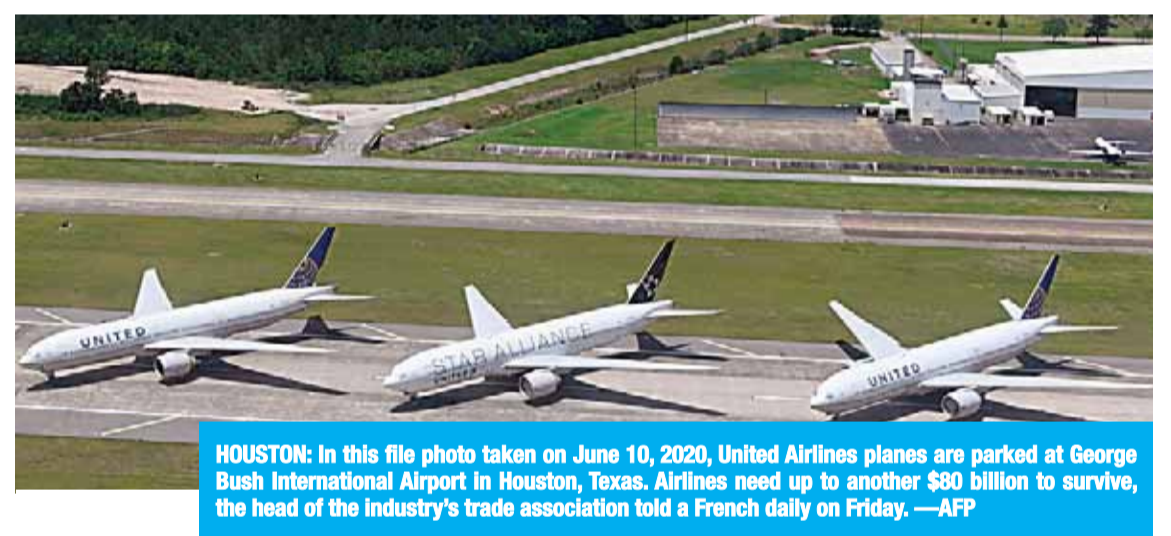
The travel corridor was set to kick

off today morning. But yesterday, Hong Kong announced the scheme would have to be delayed for two weeks following a sudden rise in coronavirus infections. "In the light of recent surge of local cases we have decided, together with the Singapore government, to defer the air travel bubble's launch by two weeks," commerce secretary Edward Yau told reporters.

After weeks of single-digit infections, Hong Kong health authorities have begun reporting a sudden uptick in cases in recent days. Yesterday, they recorded 36 local coronavirus cases. Crucially, 13 were from unknown transmission sources, prompting fears the city has a new wave of out-of-control infections.

Vaccine crucial

Both Hong Kong and Singapore agreed that seven straight days of five or more unknown transmission cases would be enough to halt the travel bubble. But yesterday's double-digit spike was enough for authorities in both cities to postpone the travel bubble. "This is a sober reminder that the Covid-19 virus is still with us, and even as we fight to regain our normal lives, the journey will be full of ups and downs," Singapore transport minister Ong Ye Kung wrote on his Facebook page. —AFP



HOUSTON: In this file photo taken on June 10, 2020, United Airlines planes are parked at George Bush International Airport in Houston, Texas. Airlines need up to another \$80 billion to survive, the head of the industry's trade association told a French daily on Friday. —AFP

needs to be cut by 40 percent," IATA estimates.

Government support

Many governments stepped in to support the sector, but faced with another wave of the pandemic that has emptied their coffers, airlines are again seeking help. The sector has already obtained \$160 billion in various forms of aid, according to IATA calculations.

Two big Latin American airlines, LATAM and Avianca, have sought bankruptcy protection, as has low-cost European airline Norwegian for two of its main subsidiaries. Virgin Australia fell into administration and was then bought by a US company. Britain's Flybe is also hoping to be bought out of bankruptcy protection. Korean Air is set to buy its troubled rival Asiana Airlines.

Freight a bright side

If the pandemic choked off passenger transport,

freight transport received a shot in the arm from urgent demand for masks and other medical gear at the start of the crisis. The distribution of vaccines is also expected to generate considerable business. In recent years a growing portion of air freight has been transported in holds of passenger aircraft rather than dedicated cargo planes.

If freight represented 15 percent of airlines' revenue before the crisis, according to IATA, that has jumped to 20 to 25 percent due to the limited space available and increased demand pushing up prices.

Environmental impact

Despite their financial fragility the airline industry has signalled it intends to stick to a commitment to halve CO2 emissions from 2005 levels by 2050. As a first measure they are turning to biofuels as a shift to electric propulsion is not seen possible for many years. —AFP

French and British fishermen face post-Brexit endgame

ROSCOFF, France: French fishermen who depend on bountiful UK waters fear for their livelihoods in the post-Brexit endgame, but so might their British counterparts who land their catch at the Brittany port of Roscoff for the European market. Lobster, turbot, and monkfish are stacked up on the quayside in northwestern France, a good part of it from British territorial waters.

"We are really in a period of certainty, we don't know what will become of us," said Erwan Dussaud from Beganton fisheries that operates five trawlers catching crab and lobster in English waters.

The UK officially quit the EU last January 31, but an 11-month transition period to allow for agreement on a new relationship ends on December 31. Both sides are still at loggerheads and need a trade deal to govern ties, or risk economic chaos. Fishing has been one of the most politically explosive issues blocking agreement. "It's very difficult to look forward," Dussaud said.

While Europe is eager to keep UK

territorial waters open, London wants that access rethought to satisfy Britain's coastal communities, which voted strongly for Brexit. If access is restricted for French vessels, "it will be over for us in two or three years", said Jean-Philippe Guillermin, skipper of a 15-metre trawler that makes 40 percent of his turnover in British seas. It's the same for Franck Brossier and his three bigger boats among the 40-odd that work from Roscoff.

"We are going to lose a historic fishing zone," he said, predicting major problems to find another elsewhere. "We will find ourselves with more boats in a restricted area which in the very short term will lead to over-fishing."

He said in such a situation "problems" could be expected from Spanish, Dutch or Irish vessels scouring the same seas. "It's going to get very complicated," said Brossier, a serious fan of Liverpool FC who has named his boats "Liverpool", "Anfield Road" and "Ian Rush" after the club, ground and legendary goalscorer. —AFP

Business

KIB issues Tier 2 Capital Sukuk of \$300m

In efforts to achieve significant growth and strengthen its capital base

KUWAIT: As part of its efforts to strengthen its capital base and diversify its funding mix, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) issued a \$300 million Tier 2 (T2) Basel III compliant 10-year non-call 5-year Sukuk with an expected rating of [A-] by Fitch. The issuance was priced at a profit rate of 2.375 percent per annum and was 9 times oversubscribed, with an order book of approximately \$2.7 billion. This is the highest rated T2 in Kuwait and the GCC, in addition to being the first US dollar T2 Sukuk from Kuwait to be listed on London Stock Exchange (LSE).



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen



Joint Lead Managers and Bookrunners.

Commenting on the issuance, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of the Bank, said: "Despite the challenging global environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic during which the market for hybrid capital issuances was limited, KIB was able to issue the first Tier 2 Capital Sukuk out of Kuwait and the highest rated T2 Sukuk in Kuwait and the GCC with an expected [A-] rating. KIB is seeking to be proactive in optimizing its capital structure through this issuance, as it continues to

drive its growth strategy and establish itself as an active participant in the regional Sukuk market."

Bukhamseen stated that this financial transaction comes after KIB had obtained the necessary approvals from the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority, stressing that the Bank is establishing itself as a key player in the regional Debt Capital Market, by playing an active role in both high quality issuances and participation in high quality Sukuk instruments in the local, regional and global markets.

Bukhamseen added, "This Sukuk issuance confirms that the State of Kuwait continues to offer a prosperous environment that attracts international investors to the Kuwaiti market, irrespective of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic". Bukhamseen continued, "I would like to extend my appreciation to the efforts by The Central Bank of Kuwait and Capital Markets Authority, for their continuous support and guidance, in granting necessary regulatory approvals."

He further added: "We believe that this issuance is a step forward towards strengthening the regulatory ratios set forth by the Central Bank of Kuwait,



in addition to diversifying KIB's long-term financing sources".

He also noted that this is not the first time that KIB has achieved such a breakthrough, stressing that this Sukuk issuance follows an extremely successful Additional Tier 1 Sukuk issuance in 2019 by KIB, which was 15 times oversubscribed and listed on the Euronext Dublin stock exchange.

- First T2 Sukuk from Kuwait
- First US\$ T2 Sukuk from Kuwait
- First LSE listed T2 Sukuk from Kuwait
- Lowest coupon achieved by a T2 Sukuk from GCC
- Highest expected ratings for a T2 Sukuk from GCC
- Order book of approximately \$2.7B - 9 times oversubscribed.
- Over 50% of allocations were to international investors

Markaz expands its real estate program across USA, Europe

KUWAIT: The International Real Estate Investment program of Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" delivered a solid performance in 2020. It produced healthy returns for its clients despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, confirming its position as a leading asset manager in the MENA region. Being a leader in anticipating market conditions and industry trends, Markaz leveraged opportunities presented by the pandemic, successfully completing a series of sales transactions from its real estate portfolio in the USA and Europe. Building on this success, and on the expertise of its team, Markaz is purposefully expanding its real estate investment program in these international markets.

Markaz competitive edge

Abdullatif W Al-Nusif, Executive Vice President, Wealth Management & Business Development at Markaz, stated: "We are very pleased with the performance of our real estate investments across the US and Europe. This year represents another milestone for the program's success and our capability to achieve attractive returns despite continuing uncer-

tainty across all markets and sectors. Our competitive edge comes from having a fully operational office in the USA for over 30 years, with its highly experienced team building and proactively leveraging our strategic partnerships with leading partners."

Capitalizing on opportunities

Al-Nusif added: "At Markaz, We remain focused on expanding our portfolio in existing and new markets across the USA and Europe. The current market conditions have and will continue to create, if well-selected, exciting opportunities. Capitalizing on the partnerships we have built with leading partners, service providers and lending institutions over the past 30 years, we are amplifying our existing development program in the USA, and very similarly in Europe, expanding into Poland, Germany and the Netherlands. In a parallel strategy, the team is currently assessing the landscape for sectors that have been temporarily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but which have enduring future potential, such as hospitality."

Investors' trust

Deena Y Al-Refai, Senior Vice President, Investor Relations at Markaz said: "The International Real Estate Investment program reflects Markaz's consistent success in creating value for its stakeholders, through its well-designed, innovative investment solutions, steeped in five decades of hands-on experience. A solid track record has increased investor appetite, which Markaz sees increasing with each new transaction and product launch. Having the well-earned trust



Abdullatif Al-Nusif



Deena Al-Refai

of investors and other stakeholders is key to Markaz's ability to realize healthy returns from the program."

Leadership anchored by strong USA track-record

Markaz remains one of the leading asset managers in the region, performing consistently over the years a track record springing from its research-based approach to durable investment decisions. Markaz has been active in the US real estate market since launching its first syndicated transaction there in 1977. Since 1988, Markaz has been conducting its real estate transactions through its Mar-Gulf USA real estate arm, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary. Over these highly-active thirty years, Markaz has been involved in the ownership and development of real estate properties across industrial, storage, retail, residential and office segments across the entire USA, with total acquisitions exceeding \$1.8 billion as of September 30, 2020.

Mnuchin defends decision to halt Fed lending programs

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Friday defended a decision to halt a series of emergency lending programs after Democratic lawmakers claimed Donald Trump's administration was trying to sabotage the economy following his loss in the presidential election. Mnuchin said he was following congressional intent in phasing out at year's end Federal Reserve programs intended to help the US financial system weather the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, adding that the funds unused by the central bank should be repurposed to other pandemic relief efforts.

But the move drew scathing criticism from congressional Democrats and skepticism from a major business group, which questioned the wisdom of reining in the central bank in the weeks before Democrat Joe Biden takes over following a contentious election. Trump refuses to accept. Executive Vice President at the US Chamber of Commerce Neil Bradley called the Treasury move a "surprise," saying it "prematurely and unnecessarily ties the hands of the incoming administration, and closes the door on important liquidity options for businesses at a time when they need them most."

Senator Jack Reed was among the Democratic legislators who went further, accusing the Trump administration of deliberately sabotaging the economy. "Secretary Mnuchin knows pulling the plug on these economic support programs now will make it harder to resuscitate the economy," Reed said.

"The incoming Biden administration will have to clean up President Trump's economic mess."

In an appearance on CNBC, Mnuchin said Congress was "very clear" in its intent about having the programs expire at the end of December and added that financial markets have steadied significantly compared with the turmoil when the programs were announced. The treasury secretary had the day before notified Fed Chair Jerome Powell that programs targeting the corporate credit market, municipal lending and small and medium-enterprises through the Main Street Lending Program would not last beyond the end of 2020.

Mnuchin requested that the Fed return \$455 billion in unused funds allocated for the program. Minutes after the announcement, the Fed on Thursday night sent out its own statement, saying it "would prefer that the full suite of emergency facilities established during the coronavirus pandemic continue to serve their important role as a backstop for our still-strained and vulnerable economy."

Mnuchin brushed aside a question on whether the move was an attempt to tie the hands of the incoming Biden administration in the Friday interview. "This is not a political issue," Mnuchin said. "This is very simple, and really that the story is, let's go reappropriate \$500 billion."

Trump has not conceded the election and is pushing state officials to overrule the will of voters, after his numerous attempts to claim voting irregularities were dismissed by courts or withdrawn by his attorneys. Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell praised Mnuchin's plan as "fully aligned" with congressional intent. — AFP

Enjoy lightning internet speeds with stc's MBB 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 the launch of its revamped 5G internet mobile broadband (MBB) plans with exclusive benefits. The MBB plans offer a one-year free subscription to Jawwy TV, the ultimate home entertainment streaming service offering a range of live TV channels and quality on-demand content, that include OSN, Starzplay, Wide Khaliji, FOX+ and more, all in one place.

stc released a statement indicating that new subscribers can take advantage of the new MBB plans ranging from KD 10 per month for a 1TB internet capacity, KD 13 offers 2TB internet capacity and KD 18 offers unlimited 5G internet, as well as other benefits that include 2 5G SIM cards, 2 routers. All plans come with free one-year subscription to

Jawwy TV. The offer also extends to existing stc customers interested in renewing their subscription to enjoy all the benefits.

Chief Consumer Officer (CCO) of stc, engineer Nasser Al-Saadon, said, "As the demand for MBB services continues to grow, we are committed to providing our customers with cost-effective plans that take advantage of our advanced 5G network that covers 100 percent of the populated areas in Kuwait."

Al-Saadon 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 stc's 5G network, and our wide range of resources, allows us to offer unrivaled and interactive experiences to our customers through new-to-market offerings, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait."

Al-Saadon mentioned that the MBB plans, offered at competitive prices, are available to customers at any of stc's branches, the stc website (www.stc.com.kw), and mystc App.

For more details, customers can follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download the mystc application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center on 102 for around-the-clock assistance.

term, especially with the lockdowns." Equities have garnered support from a series of upbeat coronavirus vaccine announcements. US pharma giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said Friday they have applied for emergency use authorization for their coronavirus vaccine, which could come next month.

Moderna has also said trial results have shown its vaccine to be 95 percent effective at preventing COVID-19. "Seeing as a lot of progress has been made with respect to coronavirus drugs, it seems like a floor has been put in place under equity benchmarks now, but that could all change should the drug story get derailed," said market analyst David Madden at CMC Markets UK. Traders have also been closely monitoring the prospects of a new deal on US stimulus materializing after the president of a regional Federal Reserve bank warned Thursday the United States could see growth contract again in the fourth quarter. — AFP

ABK Congratulates second, final summer promotion winners

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the names of the 10 lucky winners of the second and final draw for its "Spend and Win this Summer with ABK Credit and Prepaid cards" campaign. The draw was held at ABK's Head Office under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The winners who will each receive KD 500 each were:

Hani Mohamad Aboun, Entisar Aabdlaheem Al-Suwaidi, Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa, Jassim Faisal Abdullah, Saad Mohammad Al-Qahtani, Maitham Hussain Bohamad, Mona Mubarak Alfaleh, Abdurrahman Aziz Alenezi, Ahmad Adnan Abdulkarim and Bader Ahmad Al-Ansari.



Global stocks mixed amid vaccine progress, rising COVID cases

NEW YORK: Global stock markets moved gingerly Friday, with Europe posting modest gains while Wall Street dipped as traders weighed coronavirus vaccine hopes against lockdowns and the lack of a new US stimulus deal. In Europe, both Frankfurt and Paris ended the day with a gain of 0.4 percent, while London added 0.3 percent. But Wall Street ended a volatile week on a negative note, with all three indices finishing lower.

"There's the push-pull of short-term versus long-term and that's what investors are looking at right now," Chris Gaffney, at TIAA Bank, said. "There are some very serious risks in the short

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait opened its branches Friday midnight with strongest iPhone12 offers!

With the adherence to safety precautions and social distancing



KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Al-Babtain (center), Mijbil Al-Ayoub and Fadi Qa'awar pose for a group photo with Academy team



KUWAIT: Mijbil Al-Ayoub and Fatima Dashti with the first customer who received iPhone 12



Abdulaziz Al-Babtain talking to customers

KUWAIT: The smartphone market is packed with an extensive variety of mobiles to choose from, however, if you are on the lookout for Apple's first 5G enabled device that combines both: the fastest chip in a smartphone and a solid performance including unparalleled new camera systems, then look no further, the iPhone12 is the one and now it is available in Ooredoo Kuwait branches. The company's headquarters opened its doors on Friday at mid-night amid with adherence to social distancing and safety measures to welcome customers who were keen on the two-day exclusive offer, iPhone 12 launch offer on Shamel starting from KD 25 per month. Customers who pre-ordered their devices online were able to seamlessly pick up their devices from the convenience of their cars at the drive-thru location set-up at company's headquarters.

Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, launched the latest iPhone 12 lineup: iPhone 12 mini, iPhone 12, iPhone 12 Pro, and iPhone Pro max last Friday, 20 November 2020 to be available for all to purchase from its branches in the country.

Commenting on the iPhone12 launch, Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "Our successful partnerships with leading companies in the global technology sector set us apart and distinguish us, and our strong relationship with Apple is just one of them. With our shared values, we constantly strive to deliver our promise of offering our valued customers the latest technologies and devices to satisfy their changing needs to keep pace with the modern digital developments."

Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Senior Director, Corporate



Mijbil Al-Ayoub and Yousef Al-Shallal

Communications, Ooredoo Group, said: "We are constantly striving to achieve the company's vision of enriching people's digital lives, cementing our leadership in providing innovative digital services in Kuwait." Then he added: "We, at Ooredoo, have been leveraging our competencies in the digital age and have brought to our customers a group of innovative products and services with proven track of records. Today, I am personally thrilled to round off the year with the launching of the much-awaited Apple's latest devices, iPhone 12 line up and bringing the four

- **Al-Babtain:** Our relationship with Apple is strong and we constantly strive to deliver our promise of providing our valued customers distinctive digital experience and the latest devices
- **Al-Ayoub:** We, at Ooredoo, have been leveraging our competencies in the digital age
- **Al-Shallal:** Exceptional packages for the all-new iPhone12 line, starting from KD 25 per month with great benefits

new iPhones to the local market."

From his side, Yousef Al-Shallal, Director of Marketing, Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "In today's era of digitalization, innovation, speed, and agility are essential tools for a successful journey towards sustaining competitive excellence. Packed with advanced technologies and features, the all-new iPhone 12 lineup creates the ultimate balance between efficient performance and power. Indeed, the turnout on the devices was mesmerized, and our amazing packages attracted the customers' attention."

With a beautiful all-new design, iPhone 12 devices 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.

Ooredoo Kuwait started the pre-orders of the all-new iPhone 12 mini, iPhone 12, iPhone 12 Pro, and iPhone Pro max in November 13, 2020, and now the four models are available for customers to purchase from Ooredoo Kuwait's branches nationwide.

CAVARATY, a leading company in Kuwait specializing in smart phone accessories and other products such as headphones, batteries, pens, power banks and more, added to the customers' excitement as well where all Ooredoo customers who purchased the iPhone 12 received a complementary screen protector and special discount on covers.

Great organization work was done by Ooredoo team who maintained the safety precautions and social distancing with the support of members from Events Academy prioritizing the attendees' health and safety.



Mijbil Al-Ayoub handing over an iPhone 12 to a customer at midnight



Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Fadi Qa'war and Teppan Tripathy talking to a customer who drove through and got an iPhone 12.



The section displaying iPhone 12 covers



Ooredoo strictly maintains social distancing during the sales



A group photo of the Academy team



A customer checks out an iPhone 12

Classifieds

Sunday, November 22, 2020

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

الطيران المدني
Civil Aviation
 State of Kuwait - دولة الكويت



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

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Unstable and Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind to north westerly wind with speed of 22 - 60 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

BY NIGHT: Rather cold and Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind to north westerly wind with speed of 20 - 50 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at

WEATHER WARNING			Fresh wind	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/11/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	23 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31 °C	22 °C		
ABDALY	29 °C	23 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	30 °C	22 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	28 °C	24 °C		
SALMIYAH	27 °C	23 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWAISIB	30 °C	20 °C		
WAFRA	32 °C	19 °C		
SALMY	31 °C	21 °C	<small>MSL Analysis (DPA) Valid 0000 UTC 21 NOV 2020</small>	

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	11/22	A significant decrease in temperature and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open	25 °C	17 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Monday	11/23	Fair and Partly cloudy	24 °C	15 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	11/24	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	24 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Wednesday	11/25	Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust	25 °C	14 °C	SE	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:54
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:11

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. U.P.O

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	29 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	83 %
MIN. RH	38 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Cyrus Louis Brittu**, holder of Indian Passport No. N9723703 presently residing in Kuwait, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Cyrius Louis and surname: Brittu. (C 5816) 19-11-2020

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

NOTICE
 November 19, 2020

Mr. Hari Sankar Rajasekhara Menon, Indian National, son of Mr. Padmanabhan Rajasekhara Menon, resident of Annapoornalayam, Mullaikal, Alappuzha, Kerala 688010 and Ms. Annalyn Faye Camarines Yanos, Philippine national, daughter of Mr. Agapito Caraan Yanos Jr, resident of 1564 Sagrada Familia St Corner, Alabastra, San Andres Bukid, Manila, Philippines 1017, both presently residing in Kuwait have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@m.ea.gov.in)/ letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22533315, 00965 - 22533125.)

(Ranveer Bharti)
 Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer.

Embassy of India, Kuwait.
 Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

REQUIRED

We have an urgent requirement for the post of Trencher Operator with +5 years of experience

Required Visa number 18 (transferable)
 Food and accommodation will be provided

Cv to be sent by email
a.bagwan@sk-jv.com
 Kolin Construction - South Al Mutlaa

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
 Call **MSALHOTLINE 128**

Word Search

Famous Native Americans

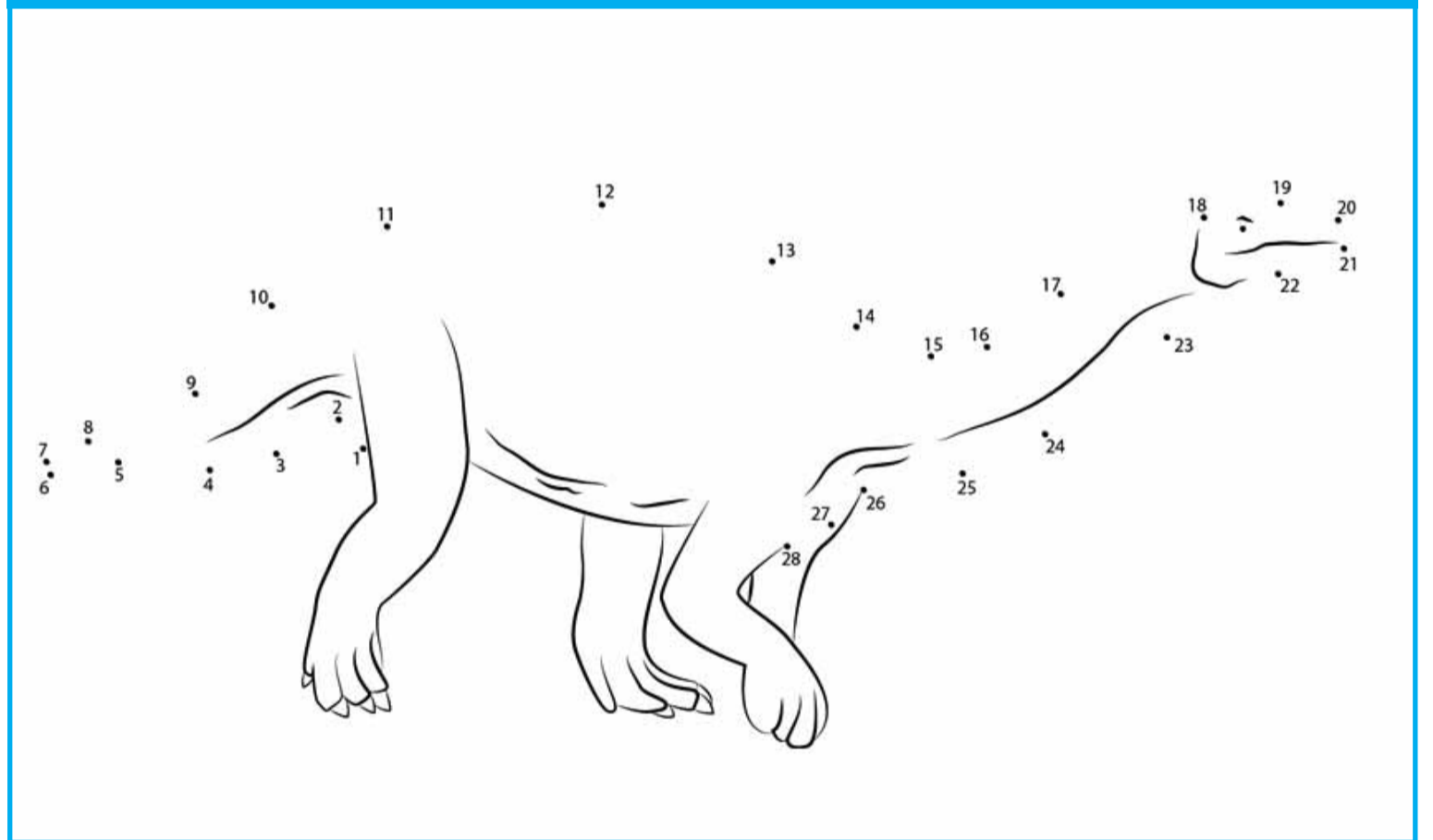


DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the names in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

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

- BLACK HAWK: 1767-1838, War chief.
 - CHIEF JOSEPH: 1840-1904, Chief of the Nez Perce tribe.
 - COCHISE: 1815-1874, Apache leader.
 - CRAZY HORSE: 1840-1877, Sioux Indian war chief.
 - GERONIMO: 1829-1909, Apache leader.
 - HIAWATHA: c. 1450, Legendary chief of the Onondaga remembered in a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
 - JIM THORPE: 1888-1953, Olympic athlete and football player.
 - MARIA TALLCHIEF: 1925-2013, Ballerina.
 - POCAHONTAS: 1595-1617, Powhatan princess.
 - PONTIAC: 1720-1769, Ottawa war chief.
 - RED CLOUD: 1822-1909, Lakota Sioux warrior.
 - SACAIAWEA: 1788-1812, Explorer, interpreter, and guide.
 - SEQUOYAH: 1767-1843, Invented the Cherokee alphabet.
 - SITTING BULL: 1831-1890, Chief of the Lakota Sioux Indians. Won the Battle at Little Bighorn.
 - SQUANTO: 1581-1622, Interpreter, teacher. Instrumental in the Pilgrims' survival.
 - TECUMSEH: 1768-1813, Shawnee leader. Fought in the war of 1812.
 - WILL ROGERS: 1879-1935, Entertainer.
- (Some dates are approximative.)

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

The latest equipment might suddenly be available to you. It's likely to make life easier and more interesting. It could also open doors to make new friends and find new opportunities. Increased income is also a possibility. You could stumble on some surprising information, Aries, and this could set your mind going in a new direction. Today promises a lot of stimulation.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The social agitation that has been in your life for the last three weeks is coming to an end, Cancer. The celestial energy will help you learn some lessons and prepare for the next cycle. It would be great if you had some success and honors because this would help you confront the coming weeks. It will be a time of meditation and feeling a little bit disconnected from the world.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

After the events of the last few weeks, do you still want to continue acting like the same person? This is always a good question to ask with a celestial atmosphere like today's. People generally feel that they have a chance to get out of old systems and relationships. But people always hesitate to do this because of a fear of the future. Don't waver. Take the next steps!

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Are you feeling somewhat annoyed today? This is hardly surprising since the day inspires you to take a long, hard look at what's happening with your life. It's as though you suddenly realize that decisions you make may have impacts that reach far and wide. But don't let that stop you from committing yourself to a course of action, Capricorn. Be adventurous!

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The planets are moving you into a new cycle, Taurus. Soon you will be in a new "story." You will have to take stock of what you've learned in previous weeks. Who you are is related to the degree of peace you have in your life and whether or not you've been able to resolve some conflicts. Did you learn your lessons well? Without a doubt, you have a gift for calming tense situations.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is the end of the first stage in your "socialization," Leo. Are you satisfied with the people you've met? You can usually make the most out of these encounters, but did your political savvy let you down? Did it lead you in directions you didn't want to go? Take advantage of this pause to catch your breath and figure out where you are today and where you want to be tomorrow.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

The day ahead should give you an opportunity to analyze the events of the past three weeks, Scorpio. You will draw many important conclusions about your love life. You may conclude that matters have evolved little, if at all. This is discouraging, to be sure, but don't place too much trust in appearances. Remember, things aren't always as they seem.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Are you feeling scattered, Aquarius? It's possible that you're wondering about a million different things today. Are you strong enough to assume your family duties? Are you attractive? Are you important? Of course, all these questions simply distract you from your anxiety. Don't worry. The next few weeks will be less stressful.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Have you done the cleaning that the planetary configurations asked you to do in recent weeks, Gemini? If this is the case, today you should start to feel less weighed down by the conventions in your life. You've undoubtedly solved some of the problems in your relationships. You will feel as if you're in a kind of renaissance through the next cycle.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is the end of the voyage you've been on over the past few weeks, Virgo. You undoubtedly saw some interesting sights. Whether you were on an inner or outer voyage, the cosmic energy will bring you to a safe harbor. Unpack your bags carefully, as they're filled with treasures and souvenirs. You will want to put them around the house as happy reminders of how much you've grown.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you feel as though you aren't making sufficient progress toward your goals, use this day to correct your aim. Are you disappointed with your love life? You may have devoted a great deal of energy to it lately without seeing much payoff. Wait a few more days before you make any drastic decisions about the future, Sagittarius.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Perhaps you notice some weariness today, Pisces. You have been much more active than usual for the past few weeks. You've been communicating with new people, having new experiences, attending virtual meetings, and perhaps even taking short trips. In the long run, will any of it further your goals? That's the question you have to answer today.

Lifestyle | Features



In this screengrab, Bad Bunny is announced the winner of the Best Reggaeton Performance award for 'Yo Perreo Sola' at the Premiere Ceremony during The 21st Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards at American Airlines Arena 20 in Miami.



Natalia Lafourcade is named winner of the Best Regional Song for 'Mi Religión' at the Premiere Ceremony during The 21st Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards at American Airlines Arena in Miami.



Co-host Vector Manuelle announces that Natalia Lafourcade wins the Album of the Year award for 'Un Canto por Mexico, Vol 1' during The 21st Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards at American Airlines Arena. — AFP photos

LATIN GRAMMYS DISAPPOINT REGGAETON; MEXICO'S LAFOURCADE WINS BEST ALBUM

Mexican pop-rock folk singer Natalia Lafourcade took home the coveted Latin Grammy for Album of the Year, at a socially distanced gala where high hopes for reggaeton fell short. Lafourcade won the night's top prize for "Un canto por Mexico," after reggaeton superstar J Balvin had led the pack with a record 13 nominations. But in the end the Colombian took home just a single trophy, as fellow leaders of the massively popular style also lost out in the general field in what had been billed as the year the genre would get its due.

Spaniard Alejandro Sanz snagged the coveted Best Record for "Contigo," as Puerto Rican Residente—a co-founder of the alt-rap group Calle 13—won Best

Song, which honors songwriting, for "Rene." The 21st edition of the awards normally held in Las Vegas were instead anchored in Miami, with a slew of virtual performances, including from Anitta in Rio de Janeiro and Bad Bunny from San Juan. Balvin, decked out in a white suit with a heart image bleeding from his chest, was the telecast's first winner, taking home Best Urban Album for "Colores."

"What the world needs right now is color," said Balvin in accepting the award, noting in particular the Latin American countries hard hit by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. The disappointment in the general categories for reggaeton—a massively popular Puerto Rican-born amalgam of Caribbean

beats and hip-hop influences—follows years of snubs by the Latin American Recording Academy. After much protest this year the institution gave the genre its own category, with Latin trap king Bad Bunny taking home that prize, for "Yo Perreo Sola."

Reggaeton demands a seat

Oscar-nominated Mexican actress Yalitza Aparicio—famous for her role in Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma"—hosted the event, flanked by singers Carlos Rivera and Ana Brenda. Miami's own Pitbull paid tribute to frontline workers fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, with special guests including nurses and firefighters joining the act. Most of the 53 awards were handed out prior to broadcast, with

performers including the norteno act Los Tigres del Norte and Colombian crooner Carlos Vives taking home trophies.

Residente won the gramophone in another new category, Best Rap/Hip-Hop song, for "Pausa" as Ozuna and Spanish flamenco experimentalist Rosalia won two prizes in the "urban" category for "Yo x ti, tu x me." Rosalia, who was 2019's big Latin Grammy winner, also won for Best Short Form Music Video for "TKN," a clip featuring rapper Travis Scott.

Reggaeton's 2020 letdown follows years of controversy that came to a head in the award show's previous edi-

tion, with superstars including Balvin, Bad Bunny, Ozuna, Maluma, Daddy Yankee, Karol G and Nicky Jam snubbed in the general categories. "Without reggaeton, there's no Latin Grammys" read a slogan in Spanish that mushroomed across social media, along with an image of the Grammy logo crossed out with a large red "X." Balvin went so far as to skip the 2019 show, as Bad Bunny, who won that year's Best Urban Music Album, decried "people who still have trouble accepting that reggaeton is a genre established for more than two decades." — AFP



Winning Author Douglas Stuart is seen on screen at The 2020 Booker Prize Awards Ceremony, broadcast in partnership with the BBC, at the Roundhouse in London. — AFP photos



Photo shows this year's winning book Shuggie Bain by the author Douglas Stuart at The 2020 Booker Prize Awards Ceremony.

Scottish author Douglas Stuart wins Booker Prize for 'Shuggie Bain'

Scottish author Douglas Stuart on Thursday was awarded the 2020 Booker Prize for his acclaimed debut novel "Shuggie Bain," set in his home city of Glasgow. "I always wanted to be a writer so this is fulfilling a dream," said Stuart, whose novel about a working-class family in the 1980s was inspired by his own childhood. "This has changed my entire life," he said in his acceptance speech.

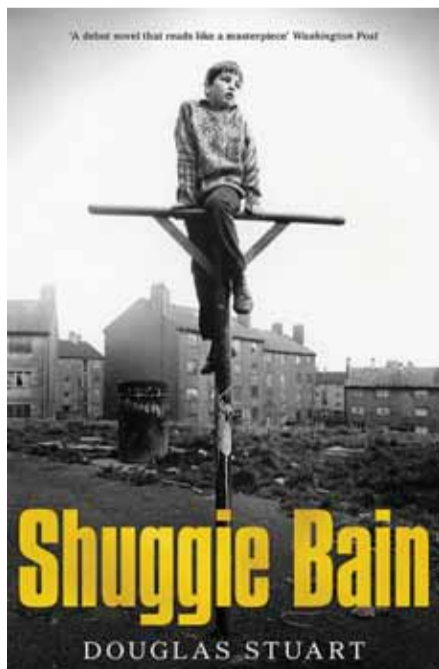


Photo shows the book 'Shuggie Bain' by Douglas Stuart.

Like the other finalists, the 44-year-old writer, who now lives in New York, was watching the socially distanced ceremony via video link due to the anti-virus lockdown in place in Britain. Stuart's book reflects his own experiences growing up with a mother who was an alcoholic and died from her addiction. He described the book as a

"love story" looking at the kind of "unconditional, often-tested love" that children can have for flawed parents.

In an emotional speech, the 44-year-old, who now lives in New York, said: "My mother would be thrilled, she would be absolutely thrilled and I think she would be proud." He said that he had carried "a lot of love and pain" and writing the book was "incredibly healing for me." He also paid tribute to his native city, saying that "growing up in Glasgow I think is one of the greatest inspirations of my life." Stuart was one of four debut novelists among the six finalists for one of the world's most prestigious literary awards.

Ahead of the announcement, British bookmakers had backed Stuart to claim the prize for the best work of English-language fiction published in the UK and Ireland. He was chosen as winner from the most diverse shortlist in the prize's five-decade history at a ceremony featuring contributions from former US president Barack Obama and the Duchess of Cornwall. The Booker has launched careers and courted controversy since its creation in 1969.

The winner receives £50,000 (\$66,000, 56,000 euros) in prize money and huge international attention. Judges last year tore up the rule book by awarding it jointly to Canadian author Margaret Atwood and Anglo-Nigerian author Bernardine Evaristo. Evaristo said at Thursday's ceremony that winning the prize was a "magical moment" and "I feel like I was launched out into the world as an author." Past laureates have included celebrated writers from Ian McEwan and Julian Barnes to Kazuo Ishiguro and Roddy Doyle. Paul Beatty became the first American winner when the Booker bowed to pressure and began including authors from outside the Commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe in 2013.



In this handout image released by the Booker Prize, shortlisted authors (top left to right) Douglas Stuart, Diane Cook, Avni Doshi, (bottom left to right) Brandon Taylor, Maaza Mengiste and Tsitsi Dangarembga are seen on a screen at The 2020 Booker Prize Awards Ceremony at the Roundhouse in London.

'Welcoming the new'

This year's finalists also included American Avni Doshi's first novel "Burnt Sugar" alongside fellow US debutants Diane Cook ("The New Wilderness") and Brandon Taylor ("Real Life"). Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga ("This Mournable Body") and Ethiopian-American Maaza Mengiste ("The Shadow King") were the only established authors on the list. The list was whittled down by a panel of five judges from a US-dominated longlist of 13 finalists, which had included veteran Hilary Mantel.

Margaret Busby, chair of the five 2020 judges, said before announcing the prize that "discovering great literature depends on freeing the imagination, being open to welcoming the new." "I don't think I'm breaking the rules to say this: please read all the

books on the shortlist," she added. Dangarembga's final volume in her trilogy that started with "Nervous Conditions" chronicles the journey of a young girl from Zimbabwe sinking into poverty.

Mengiste, the first Ethiopian author to make the Booker's shortlist, tells the story of the uprising against the Italian invasion in the 1930s. "Burnt Sugar" by Doshi explores the complex relationship between an ageing mother and her daughter in contemporary India, while Cook's "The New Wilderness" is a dystopian fiction set in a world made inhospitable by the climate crisis. Taylor's "Real Life" debut follows an introverted man's experience of racism as he arrives at an American university. — AFP

Turkmen leader opens village, museum named after his father

Turkmenistan's autocratic leader Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov opened a village and museum named after his father, state media said yesterday, the latest honour bestowed on the ruling family's ageing patriarch. The new village north of the capital Ashgabat is home to several dozen two-story houses where police and other servicemen will live with their families, according to a report on state television. Berdimukhamedov was shown cutting a ribbon for the new village and showing off storage units full of meat, eggs and fruit while decked out in military attire. The head of Turkmenistan's security council Charymyrat Amanov told the president that the honour was a tribute to the "selfless and impeccable" career of his father Myalikguly Berdimukhamedov — a career policeman. Amanov praised the older Berdimukhamedov's "special merits in educating young people in the spirit of devotion to the Motherland" and his "high moral qualities".

Myalikguly Berdimukhamedov, 88, has been awarded multiple state honors during his son's rule and his poetry has formed the basis for several popular songs. The museum in the new village is the second one honoring him with another housed inside a barracks where he once served as a policeman. In 2017, Berdimukhamedov authored a book about his father and Turkmenistan's police force called "Brave Guys are Born for Fortitude".

But Berdimukhamedov, 63, has not yet gone as far as his eccentric predecessor Saparmurat Niyazov who renamed the month of April after his mother. It was changed back to April after Niyazov died and Berdimukhamedov - his former dentist and health minister - cemented control. Berdimukhamedov regularly opens new accommodation for state officials despite an economic downturn that began with the 2014 oil price crash. The practice is seen as a method of binding government officials to the authoritarian regime.

Human Rights Watch said in September that state inaction in response to the economic drag of the coronavirus had "drastically exacerbated Turkmenistan's pre-existing food crisis". State officials have never acknowledged food shortages. Earlier this month Berdimukhamedov opened a large residential complex for civil servants with a six-meter gold leaf statue of a dog as its centerpiece. The Alabai shepherd dog, like the Akhal-Teke horse, is a native breed that Berdimukhamedov has promoted as part of his leadership cult. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Teenage protest leader Benjamaporn 'Ploy' Nivas (center) writes messages on a white sheet on the ground by Democracy Monument during a pro-democracy rally in Bangkok.



Teenage protest leader holds a framed portrait of Thai Education Minister Nataphol Teepsuwan next to the Education Ministry building during a pro-democracy rally in Bangkok.

Thailand's 'Bad Students' get an education from the streets

A mild-mannered teenage girl with owl glasses, a bob haircut and daisies painted on her fingernails is not your typical school troublemaker. But in the eyes of Thailand's ultra-conservative school system and the kingdom's justice system, Benjamaporn "Ploy" Nivas has been cast as a rebel for daring to express herself. "Students should be able to think for themselves and be themselves," Ploy told AFP during a recent protest at Bangkok's democracy monument.

The 15-year-old is at the forefront of Thailand's "Bad Student" movement which is planning a major rally in Bangkok. Ahead of the event, officers on Thursday issued her and two male students with a summons to report to a Bangkok police station for questioning. Thai Lawyers for Human Rights say the trio have brought the tally of juveniles facing prosecution over protest activities in Thailand to four - while overall 175 protesters have been charged with sedition or public assembly offences.

Thai schools have very strict dress standards, with ponytails and ribbons mandated for girls and military-style crew cuts for boys. But after years of having rules drummed into them, Ploy and her fellow high school activists have gone rogue, emboldened by the broader political protest movement currently sweeping Thailand. The students want cultural change, a curriculum overhaul, equality and a relaxation of rigid rules. "We are brainwashed... as students we are taught not to ask questions, but to study and memorize facts for exams," she said.

History textbooks are a particular bone of contention in a country which has seen



Benjamaporn 'Ploy' Nivas poses with a framed portrait of Thai Education Minister Nataphol Teepsuwan during a pro-democracy rally in Bangkok. — AFP photos

a dozen coups since becoming a democracy in 1932. School books gloss over events such as the massacre of pro-democracy university students in the 1970s, and instead focus on promoting the work of the monarchy. The campaign has had a mixed reaction from her teachers. "If my teachers are on same side with me, the democracy side, they will admire me - but if they want (the status quo) those teachers hate me," Ploy said.

Defying dangers

Youth-led pro-democracy demonstrations have rocked Thailand since July, and have for the most part been peaceful. But at a rally on Tuesday police used water cannons and tear gas on activists, and six people suffered gunshot wounds. Despite the dangers, Ploy insists protesting is her duty. "We cannot afford to be afraid of anything, otherwise we cannot

change anything," she said. Since August, the Bad Student movement has campaigned for the resignation of Education Minister Nataphol Teepsuwan and even staged a mock funeral for him.

There have long been calls to reform the kingdom's schools but progress has been piecemeal, Pumsaran Tongliemnak, an expert at the state-backed Equitable Education Fund, said. The Thai government needs to shift its focus from granting access to education to improving its quality, he told AFP, particularly for those who cannot afford expensive private schools. "The gap between the haves and the have-nots is quite high," Pumsaran said. In international assessments, Thai students score lower than the OECD average in maths and science. They perform particularly badly in reading, and a World Bank report in 2015 noted widespread "functional illiteracy" among students

across all types of Thai schools.

The report said problems included chronic teacher shortages, too many under-resourced small schools, and a focus on rote learning. Corporal punishment is still practiced regularly in Thai schools, despite government efforts to ban it. Teenage girls are the backbone of the Bad Student movement, which Ploy attributes to growing frustrations over the lack of gender equality in Thailand. "I think that girls and LGBTQ people are suppressed by the patriarchy both at home and at school. This has made me come out to fight for myself and for everyone," she said.

'Schools are dictatorships'

At an early October rally outside a high school in central Bangkok, scores of mostly female students tied white ribbons on the gate. They covered the student identification numbers embroidered on their uniforms with tape and shielded their faces from the media throng. A young female student leader made an impassioned speech atop a truck outside the school, demanding respect from teachers instead of "preaching about rules". It's a sentiment that strikes a chord with Vegas, a 16-year-old transgender student forced to change schools because of discrimination and bullying. Vegas, who declined to give their full name, describes schools as training students to fit in with Thailand's hierarchical society, rather than challenge or question it. "Schools are like small dictatorships, with all their rules." — AFP

Can surgical masks be reused?

Health authorities say the most widespread anti-COVID weapon - surgical masks - must be thrown away after a single use, but environmental concerns are pushing some scientists to question this recommendation. As the coronavirus continues to spread, masks have in many places become mandatory on public transport, in shops and at work.

But cost has become an issue, as has the fact so many disposable plastic masks wind up in waterways and the oceans. One alternative is reusable cloth masks, but many people prefer single-use surgical masks because they are lighter and individually cheaper. "Medical masks are for single use only," the World Health Organization has said. "Discard the mask immediately, preferably into a closed bin."

But in the context of scarcities during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic the WHO allowed in a April report for the reuse of decontaminated disposable masks when there is a "critical PPE (personal protective equipment) shortage, or lack of PPE." The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allowed - in emergency circumstances - hydrogen peroxide vapour to decontaminate the N95 masks worn by healthcare workers. Other methods to purify single-use masks include exposing them to high temperatures or ultraviolet radiation. But these methods are inconvenient for people at home, said French microbiologist and member of Adios Corona, Denis Corpet.

Adios Corona - a group of scientists who provide information on Covid-19 to the public - recommends "placing the mask in a paper envelope with the date clearly marked, and leaving it for seven days". "Several scientific studies show that viruses are almost all dead on a mask after seven days," said Corpet. A study published in The Lancet found that only 0.1 percent of the virus on the outside surface of the mask was still detectable after one week. — AFP



Drummers play for a demonstration next to protesters dressed in dinosaur costumes-which pro-democracy activists said represents the older generation of Thai politicians-during a 'Bad Student' rally in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP photos



Protesters dressed in dinosaur costumes play with inflatable balls representing asteroids-the impact from which contributed to the extinction of the dinosaurs, which activists said represents the older generation of Thai politicians-during a 'Bad Student' rally in Bangkok.

THAI STUDENTS AND DANCING DINOSAURS RALLY IN BANGKOK

Thousands of high school students upset about Thailand's lacklustre education system rallied alongside protesters dressed as dancing dinosaurs in Bangkok yesterday. It was the first mass gathering in the kingdom since Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha warned authorities would use all laws, including harsh royal defamation charges, to crack down on pro-democracy protesters. Since August, emboldened by a broader political protest movement sweeping Thailand, a group called the "Bad Students" have campaigned for the resignation of Education Minister Nataphol Teepsuwan, demanded cultural change, equality, a curriculum overhaul and relaxation of strict rules.

Ahead of the rally, three student leaders were summoned for police questioning and Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said there were now four juveniles facing potential prosecution. But despite the threats the youngsters remained defiant as they danced alongside half a dozen T-Rex characters representing Thailand's "political dinosaurs" and bounced around giant "asteroid" balls.

"We have to come out and make our voices heard to force change," Leaf, 15 told AFP. Many students wore colored wrist bands to indicate they were underage, so older protesters could protect them. "School is not a safe place (for

girls)," one student's placard said. Hundreds of protesters at the rally wore rubber duck hair clips, a reference to pro-democracy protesters using inflatable pool toys to shield themselves from police water cannon and tear gas on Tuesday.

Anger over poor teacher quality

Many protesters were upset families have to fork out extra money on tutoring because of the poor quality of teaching. "I spend so much for my daughter's tutoring fees and need to enrol her in a faraway school so that she could get a good education. It should not be like this," said Supaporn Pratumrat, 41, who attended the rally with her daughter. Izzy 18, went to the US on an student exchange last year and said students there were able to have fun and pursue their hobbies after school but many Thai students don't have that luxury.

"In Thailand some students go to extra classes from 4pm to 9pm," he told AFP. Since July, Thailand has been rocked by youth-led protests demanding a new constitution, unprecedented calls to reform the untouchable monarchy, and for Prime Minister Prayut, who came to power in a 2014 coup, to resign. Police used tear gas and water cannon against protesters outside parliament on Tuesday and 55 people were injured

including six people shot during scuffles between democracy activists and hard-line royalists.

A day later protesters graffitied the outside the national police headquarters and threw paint at the complex. The government's decision to give police the green light to pursue royal defamation charges against pro-democracy protesters is likely to increase tensions ahead of the next major rally scheduled for Wednesday. "Destroying public property, unprecedented violation of the monarchy, I personally cannot accept this," Prayut said on Friday night.

In Thailand lese majeste charges are routinely interpreted to include any criticism of the monarchy-including content posted or shared on social media. Anyone convicted of defaming, insulting or threatening the king, queen, heir or regent faces between three and 15 years in prison on each count. Meanwhile, Berlin is keeping an eye on events in Thailand. "If the democratic movement was crushed by the army or the security forces, and victims were killed, then I do not believe that the king of Thailand can continue to stay in Germany," German Social Democratic parliamentarian Nils Schmidt told German channel ARD. — AFP

FROM 'GREY'S ANATOMY' TO 'THIS IS US,' COVID INFECTS TV PLOTS

With Covid upending every aspect of viewers' lives, some TV shows - from the obvious medical dramas to sitcoms - have woven the pandemic into their latest seasons' storylines, but a handful have avoided it altogether. In the opening scenes of the latest season of long-running hospital drama "Grey's Anatomy," Meredith Grey enjoys a quiet moment alone on a beach.

She suddenly emerges from the dream, exhausted, in full PPE, in a frantic emergency room. "I think we have a responsibility to really show what these health care workers have been going through," series star Ellen Pompeo said in a recent Deadline interview. At a time when many Americans are "irritated with wearing a mask" and "disconnected" from the challenges facing hospitals, the latest season of "Grey's" offers "an opportunity to tell the story of how hard this is for our health care workers," she said.

Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, showrunners for NBC's "Chicago Med," told AFP that "as a hospital show, we knew we'd have to deal with the pandemic." "So far it plays if not a direct then a tangential role in every one of the new episodes," said Frolov and Schneider about the show's sixth season, which premiered on November 11. "Even if we're not doing COVID patient stories, the virus has profoundly changed protocols and procedures in the hospital." Other medical shows like ABC's "The Good Doctor" have already tackled the virus, while "New Amsterdam" and "The Resident" are ready to follow suit in 2021.

To touch or not to touch

Outside of hospital settings, US network shows have also incorporated elements of the pandemic's impact. NBC's hit drama "This is Us" has members of the Pearson family sheltering at home, and matriarch Rebecca having to postpone an Alzheimer's clinical trial, because of coronavirus. ABC's "The Conners" put its own spin on the issue, addressing the pandemic through the financial hardships it has created for the sitcom's characters.

"For a family that is always struggling economically and lives mostly without a safety net, the economic impact of this was something we felt we had to write about," said Dave Caplan, writer and executive producer of the show spun off from "Roseanne." Initially trying to get her career as a writer off the ground, Darlene Conner is forced to get a job at a local factory, working alongside her sister Becky who is also struggling financially. Their father is on the verge of being evicted. "We don't shy away from going to a very serious place for some of the subjects, which allows us to also exploit that tension with humor," explains writer and co-producer Bruce Helford.

"We've always found that the biggest laughs come when the audience is a bit uncomfortable and then they're allowed to just laugh at it." "Finding the comedy and the humor is actually easier because these are brand new circumstances that haven't been dealt with before," which is very rare, according to Helford. "The Conners" also made a conscious effort to portray the nation's stark political divisions over the pandemic and its handling. Darlene's son Mark is confronted at school by a boy whose family opposes COVID restrictions. "We touched on it because you can't ignore it," said Helford. "And we tried to do it evenhandedly."

'More important'

In addition to existing shows, streaming platforms and cable channels have tried putting together new series centered on coronavirus, like HBO's "Coastal Elites" or Netflix's "Social Distance" — but with no real success. At the other end of the scale, many shows have offered a dose of escapism by completely leaving out COVID, sometimes because they were shot before the pandemic hit - such as recent Netflix hit "Emily in Paris" or CBS's "Mom." Last spring, writers on "The Neighborhood," a CBS comedy which revolves around a white family moving into a Black neighborhood, were pondering whether to address the pandemic in season three, recalled actor Cedric the Entertainer in an interview with TVLine. — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Tom Vialle of Red Bull KTM Factory Racing competes during FIM MX2 Motocross World Championship in Spain. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Nashville send Beckham's Miami packing 3-0, book the next round

New England top Henry's Montreal

News in brief

Rare Gaza boxing contest

GAZA: Trading jabs and punches, young Palestinian girls competed in a female boxing tournament on Friday in the Gaza Strip, where the sport is mostly popular with men. Friday's contest featured female boxers as young as seven years old, and was attended by dozens of spectators. One boxer, Hala Ayoub, said she hoped the contest would show people that boxing is not only a man's sport. "My ambition is to become a famous boxer and to raise the flag of Palestine and fight in local and international contests," said Ayoub, 15. "It (boxing) taught me how to defend myself, and how to release bad energy," she said. The number of female boxers in Gaza has doubled in the past six months since an initial 18-member all-girl team was formed. It now has 45 athletes, according to captain Osama Ayob. —Reuters

Man Utd missing 'X-factor'

LONDON: Manchester United have had a poor home record in the Premier League this season and manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has said the absence of a roaring crowd at Old Trafford due to the COVID-19 pandemic has not helped his side. United are yet to win at home this season with three defeats in four games, including a 6-1 hammering by Tottenham Hotspur. Arsenal also claimed their first victory in 14 years at the stadium that is usually packed with 75,000 fans. United took on winless West Bromwich Albion, who are third from bottom, later. "Home and away is different, not like it used to be," Solskjaer told reporters. "The games against Chelsea (0-0) and Arsenal were very close games where I'm 100% sure if we had had our fans that would have helped us and sparked that little extra X-factor we needed. "It's a different sensation now playing without the fans behind the goal at the Stretford End, they normally score a goal for us." —Reuters

Haaland wins 2020 Golden Boy

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund striker Erling Haaland has won the 2020 Golden Boy award after an impressive start at the Bundesliga club, Italian newspaper Tuttosport announced yesterday. Haaland beat Barcelona teenager Ansu Fati and Bayern Munich winger Alphonso Davies to the award, which is given to the best under-21 player from one of the top-flight European leagues. The Norwegian scored 44 goals in all competitions last season, which included 16 for Dortmund following his mid-season transfer from Austrian club Salzburg. The 20-year-old has scored 11 goals in 11 games in all competitions this season, including four goals in the Champions League. Atletico Madrid forward Joao Felix won the award last year. —Reuters

Lyon's first defeat in 4 years

PARIS: Paris St Germain handed Olympique Lyonnais their first women's first division defeat in almost four years when Marie-Antoinette Katoto earned them a 1-0 home win on Friday. Katoto found the back of the net after 10 minutes to put PSG on top of the standings on 25 points from nine games, one ahead of Lyon, who had their 80-match unbeaten streak ended. It was seven-times European champions Lyon's first loss in the first division since Dec 12, 2016. France internationals Eugenie Le Sommer and Katoto both sustained injuries that could rule them out of next week's decisive Euro 2022 qualifier against Austria. —Reuters

NASHVILLE: David Beckham's Inter Miami saw their Major League Soccer play-off hopes destroyed Friday, as fellow newcomers Nashville sealed a place in the next round with a resounding 3-0 triumph at Nissan Stadium. Nashville were in control after an early wonder goal from Randall Leal before a penalty from Hany Mukhtar and a second-half Dax McCarty effort helped the team from Music City hit all the right notes.

Gary Smith's team, who were great value for this triumph in the first ever post-season game to feature two expansion clubs, face Toronto next Tuesday for a place in the Eastern Conference semi-finals. "Toronto are a top side with a lot of experience but we'll have a plan and make life difficult for them," Smith said. Elsewhere, Gustavo Bou scored the stoppage time winner in New England's 2-1 victory over Thierry Henry's Montreal Impact. The Revolution booked a date with the Philadelphia Union, winners of the Supporters' Shield as the team with the best regular-season record.

It was a sorry end to a difficult first campaign for the Miami team co-owned by former England captain Beckham, who were forced to take the field without star striker Gonzalo Higuain and key defender Leandro Gonzalez Pirez after they tested positive for Covid-19. Losing such important performers was a hammer blow for Inter Miami coach Diego Alonso, who has won just seven matches from 23 in the pandemic-disrupted regular season.

But Alonso was not looking for excuses. "We knew the difficulties we were facing missing some players," he said. "The last two weeks have been complex and complicated because it was tough for us to train. I didn't make excuses ahead of the game and I am not going to make them now." With Higuain missing, the pressure was on Mexican international Rodolfo Pizarro to be the cre-

ative spark for Inter, but it was Nashville's Costa Rican forward Leal who stole the show early on with a wonderful 14th minute opener.

He picked up the ball 25 yards from goal and sent an unstoppable shot past John McCarthy and when the Miami keeper was somewhat harshly adjudged to have brought down Mukhtar in the area on 23 minutes, the visiting team were suddenly in very deep trouble. The German dusted himself down and coolly scored the resulting penalty to put Smith's impressive side firmly in control. From that point, they never looked back and McCarty sealed the deal with a well-taken strike on 56 minutes.

Stoppage-time drama

There was more drama in Foxborough, Massachusetts, where a hard-fought contest appeared headed for extra-time after Montreal's Romell Quioto equalized to cancel out the Revs' first-half opener from Carles Gil. New England laid siege to the Montreal goal in the final frantic minutes, forcing Impact goalkeeper Clement Diop into a string of fine saves as the tension mounted.

Diop produced a superb diving save to tip Matt Polster's header onto the post in the 92nd minute and it looked as if Montreal had done enough to force extra time. But in the dying seconds of the fifth minute of stoppage time, New England left back DeJuan Jones squared to Bou on the edge of the Montreal penalty area. The Impact defense backed off, and the 30-year-old former Racing player took a touch before thumping a low shot past the despairing Diop into the bottom corner from 25 yards. It was a disappointing end to a first season in charge of Montreal for Henry, the former France, Arsenal and Barcelona superstar. —AFP

GAZOO Racing achieves podium finish at Rally Italia Sardegna

KUWAIT: The GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team's (WRT) Sebastien Ogier claimed a podium finish recently in the No 17 Toyota Yaris WRC in third overall after a valiant effort during Rally Italia Sardegna during the World Rally Championship (WRC) organized by the International Automobile Federation (FIA). Elfyn Evans finished fourth in the No 33 Toyota Yaris WRC and continues to lead the drivers' championship, 14 points ahead of his team-mate Ogier and 24 in front of the driver in third.

As a result of their strong championship placings, the Toyota drivers were positioned at the front of the road order on the second day to deliver exhilarating performance on Sardinia's sandy gravel roads. After winning four of six stages on the third day, Ogier and co-driver Julien Ingrassia came into the final day in second overall, 27.4 seconds behind the leaders. Stage wins in both passes of the Cala Flumini test helped them to close that gap to just 9.2 seconds with one stage remaining.

They eventually finished just 6.1 seconds from the winners in third overall, taking another strong points haul towards their bid for a seventh world title. Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "The spirited performance of the GR team at the Rally Italia Sardegna made it an exciting event to watch. Congratulations to Ogier for achieving a podium finish and Evans for sealing his lead in drivers' championship."

One of our main reasons for participating in motorsport activities is to test our cars in challenging conditions. The insights and experiences we gain allow us to fine-tune our machines, and are also reflected through refinements to our mass production vehicles to bring satisfaction and smiles to the faces of our customers. The support of our fans has been one of the driving factors



Seahawks hold on to beat Cards; seize lofty perch atop NFC West

LOS ANGELES: Russell Wilson had two touchdowns as the Seattle Seahawks showed why they are one of the top teams at protecting leads with a 28-21 win over Arizona to break a three-way tie for first place in the NFC West. Seattle was struggling coming into Thursday's showdown, but by avoiding their first three-game losing skid since 2011 they were able to grab the lofty perch atop the NFL's West Division.

Russell completed 23 of 28 passes for 193 yards and had no interceptions as the Seahawks improved to 7-3 on the season. "We ran the ball extremely well, we threw it well and we made our plays. It was great," said quarterback Wilson. "We were prepared and ready to go. The coached called a great game. We were locked in and zoned in."

The Cardinals, who were coming off a thrilling last second-win over Buffalo when Kyler Murray threw a 43-yard touchdown pass to DeAndre Hopkins in the end zone, dropped to 6-4 on the season. The logjam at the top of the division also includes the Los Angeles Rams, who are in second place at 6-3. The Rams play Monday at Tampa Bay. Carlos Hyde, who missed three games with a hamstring injury, returned to rush for a season-high 79 yards, for the Seahawks, who limited the Cardinals to 314 yards on offense. The Cardinals reached Seattle's 27-yard line in the final minute, but recent acquisition Carlos Dunlap sacked Murray on fourth-and-10 to help seal the win. "That's why we brought him here to make plays like that," Wilson said of Dunlap. Wilson tossed touchdown passes of 25 yards to DK Metcalf and 11 yards to Tyler Lockett in the first half, and the Seahawks took a 16-7 lead into the third quarter. Jason Myers booted a 27-yard field goal on the final play of the half.

Wilson had been in a funk of late after being considered the league MVP favorite by many at midseason. The interception-prone Wilson had committed 10 turnovers in the past four games. He was so please with his play on Thursday that Wilson started singing to himself. —AFP

Unbeaten Steelers wary of Jags; Chiefs face Raiders

LOS ANGELES: Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin has warned his unbeaten team against complacency as they look to extend their winning streak to 10 games against the Jacksonville Jaguars in Florida today. The Steelers have made the best start to a season in franchise history this year, going 9-0 to top the AFC North and firmly establish themselves as authentic Super Bowl contenders.

Today they face a Jaguars side who are officially the second worst team in the NFL, propping up the AFC South with just one win and eight defeats. Only the 0-9 New York Jets have a worse record. Yet recent results have hinted at a possible Jacksonville revival, with a narrow 27-25 loss to the Houston Texans followed by a 24-20 defeat against the Green Bay Packers at Lambeau Field last weekend.

Tomlin says those results should give the Steelers all the forewarning they need as they prepare for today's game at TIAA Bank Field. "Every time we step into a stadium, we're playing professionals, players and coaches," Tomlin told reporters this week. "We've got a ridiculous level of respect for that. Write your story, follow your storylines about trap games and things of that nature. "We understand what we're going into in Jacksonville—and that's a group that's trying to kick our butt. A professional group, capable group, and we're preparing with that understanding." —AFP



behind our success in motorsports, and I would like to thank each one of them for inspiring us to keep delivering better performance."

Sebastien Ogier, Driver of the No 17 Toyota Yaris WRC, added: "It's been very intense for more or less the entire race. Of course, at the end, third place may be doesn't show the performance that we had here, but that's how it is. We had to be second on the road for a big part of the rally. But I think we tried our best and I cannot be disappointed with my performance. I gave everything I had and it's still solid points for the championship. I'm getting more and more settled in the Yaris WRC and the performance is there. I just need to continue with that and I'm confident about the future."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's partici-

pation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to "making 'ever-better' cars."

Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone. Belgium is set to host a round of the WRC for the first time when the Ypres Rally takes place on November 19-22. First held in 1965, the rally is known as a demanding asphalt event on farmland roads lined with ditches. Its WRC debut will also include a final day held around the famous Spa-Francorchamps racing circuit.

Sports

Monaco come back to stun PSG after Mbappe's double

Rennes slump to Bordeaux defeat ahead of Chelsea clash

PARIS: Cesc Fabregas scored a late winner from the penalty spot as Monaco came from two goals down to stun reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain 3-2 in Ligue 1 on Friday. Kylian Mbappe had netted a first-half brace, including a penalty, against his former side, taking him to 99 goals for PSG and leaving his current team seemingly on course for a ninth consecutive league win.

But German international Kevin Volland struck twice for Monaco after the break and Fabregas converted from 12 yards in the 84th minute after Abdou Diallo had been sent off for conceding the all-important penalty. PSG remain clear at the top of Ligue 1, but this result is a major setback for Thomas Tuchel's team before a crucial Champions League tie against RB Leipzig next week.

"I am more surprised than I am angry," said Tuchel, who was also disappointed to see further first-half goals for Mbappe and Moise Kean disallowed. "I saw two totally different halves. First of all we completely controlled the game...and then the second half was completely different. I can only say it is our responsibility." Niko Kovac's Monaco climb up to second in the table, four points behind PSG, but Lille can reclaim second spot and move to within two points of the leaders if they beat Lorient on Sunday.

"If you come back from two down to win 3-2 it is for sure something special, but I don't want to glorify it too much," said ex-Bayern Munich coach Kovac. "We cannot stop and say everything is done. It was a big victory but nothing more." PSG have been severely handicapped by injuries and suspensions this season, and Neymar was only deemed fit

enough for a place on the bench at kick-off at the Stade Louis II after missing Brazil's World Cup qualifiers over the last week due to fitness problems.

Volland stars

Mbappe was back in the starting line-up, however, after missing his club's last two outings prior to the international break with a hamstring injury. Facing his former club, with whom he won the Ligue 1 title in 2017, Mbappe burst through to put Paris in front in the 25th minute after being released by Angel Di Maria. He then found the net again in the 37th minute, converting a penalty awarded for a foul on Rafinha by Youssouf Fofana. His ninth goal of the season leaves him just one away from a century of goals in a PSG shirt since his arrival from Monaco at the start of 2017/18 in a 180 million-euro (\$213m) deal. He even had another goal disallowed just before half-time.

Without their French international striker Wissam Ben Yedder after he tested positive for coronavirus, it was a long way back for Monaco but they reduced the deficit seven minutes after half-time when Gelson Martins set up Volland to score from close in. Volland then equalized with a tap-in after Fabregas, on as a substitute, had beaten goalkeeper Keylor Navas to a cross. Worse was to come for the visitors, as Diallo—another former Monaco player—clumsily conceded a penalty and was shown a red card after the referee opted to review the images.

Fabregas made no mistake from the spot, as PSG lost a Ligue 1 game after leading by two goals for just the second time since the Qatari takeover of the club in 2011. Earlier Rennes warmed up for their



MONACO: Monaco's Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas (left) reacts as Paris Saint-Germain's Costa Rican goalkeeper Keylor Navas (right) dives and concedes a second goal to Monaco during the French L1 football match between Monaco (ASM) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) on November 20, 2020. — AFP

Champions League rematch with Chelsea in the worst possible fashion, going down to a 1-0 home defeat at the hands of Bordeaux. Hatem Ben Arfa scored the only goal of the game against his old

club, as Rennes slip to fifth before entertaining Chelsea in a game they realistically need to win to keep any hopes of reaching the Champions League last 16 alive. — AFP

Kuwait League Roundup; Nasr stun Sulaibkhat 6-0

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Qadisiya Football Club which started the 2020-2021 so strongly on Friday during their 7th round match against Salmiya lost 0-1. The match started in an open fashion as Qadisiya hunted for a quick goal. Qadisiya's Denis Sisojo had an excellent opportunity to score in the 9th minute, followed by a very strong pass by Bader Al-Mutawa in the 17th minute, which was kept out of the goal by the skillful act of Salmiya's goalkeeper Bader Al-Saanoon. There were exchanges during the second half until the 76th minute when Salmiya's Patrick Fabiano lead a counter attack. He then made a pass to Hussein Al-Mousawi who was able to score the goal.

In another match, Kuwait's Ahmad Al-Akaishi lifted his team against Yarmouk which had a goal at the 21st minute. It was not too long before Abdelaziz Bin Naji scored the equalizer in the 29th minute. In the 40th minute, Akaishi scored what proved to be the winning goal - and after which he scored the third goal for his team in the 63rd minute.

Meanwhile Jahra Football Club overcame their Fahaheel counterpart and defeated them 2-1. The match started with Fahaheel attacking continuously. They had many scoring chances most notably when Mohammad Naeem was all alone in the 27th minute but missed this opportunity. Jahra had two opportunities - one in the 39th minute but the goalkeeper Mohammad Al-Saab was able to keep it out. Then in the 44th minute, Ahmad Al-Thafeeri took the ball from the mid-field and scored for his team. Fahaheel started the second half with three substitutions and Salman Buramy was able to score in the 62nd minute. Jahra (playing with ten men), were able to score in the 73rd minute.

Al-Nasr club was ruthless in this 7th round as they rained six unanswered goals against Sulaibkhat - taking their point total to 14 - just one point behind leaders Al-Qadisiya. Al-Nasr's



goals were scored by Ahmad Al-Riyahi in the 2nd minute, Bahaa Abdelrahman in the 6th, Robin Abo in the 48th, Sayyed Dhiyaa in the 75th, Nasser Al-Ajmi in the 80th and Muaath Al-Dhafiri in the 82nd minutes.

Tadhamon Club defeated Burqan 1-0. Mohammad Al-Qabandi scored in the 46th

minute. Tadhamon now has 8 points equaling that of Burqan. Al-Arabi Club defeated Al-Sahel 2-1; while Kazma defeated Al-Shabab 1-0. The matches were as follows: Yarmouk 1: 3 Kuwait; Fahaheel 1: 2 Jahra; Sulaibkhat 0: 6 Nasr; Qadisiya 0: 1 Salmiya; Shabab 0: 1 Kazma; Burqan 0: 1 Tadhamon; Arabi 2: 1 Sahel.

Dragic to return to Heat; NBA free agency begins

LOS ANGELES: Goran Dragic didn't wait long to confirm he'll be staying with the Miami Heat, tweeting the news minutes into the NBA's free agency negotiating period on Friday. The Sun Sentinel reported Dragic had agreed to a two-year deal worth \$37 million with a team option in the second year. Agreements can't become official until the signing period begins on Sunday. Slovenian point guard Dragic came off the bench during the pandemic-disrupted 2019-2020 regular season, but returned to a starting role to help lead the Heat to the NBA Finals.

The 34-year-old tore his plantar fascia during Miami's six-game loss to the Los Angeles Lakers in the championship

series, but says he has recovered and is eager to get back to work. It will be a quick turnaround, with training camps due to open the first week of December and the NBA season scheduled to tip off on December 22. "I'm glad I can announce that I'm staying," Dragic tweeted Friday, as teammate Meyers Leonard also indicated he would remain with the franchise.

Things weren't so clear everywhere, with free agent center Dwight Howard posting a tweet indicating he was returning to the Los Angeles Lakers and then deleting it before reports emerged he was headed to the Philadelphia 76ers. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Howard agreed to a one-year guaranteed minimum deal of \$2.5 million with the Sixers. The Lakers did agree to a deal with free agent guard Wesley Matthews, the Los Angeles Times reported, a move that could be key after the Lakers traded shooting guard Danny Green to the Oklahoma City Thunder for point guard Dennis Schroder.

The newspaper also reported that

reigning sixth man of the year Montrezl Harrell had agreed to jump from the Los Angeles Clippers to the Lakers on a two-year deal. The Lakers can reportedly expect it to take longer to sort out a deal with star Anthony Davis, who opted out of the final year of his contract to become an unrestricted free agent. Davis is expected to remain a Laker, but ESPN reported that he plans to mull his options as to length and structure of a contract for several days.

Another highly scrutinized free agent is Gordon Hayward, who opted out of his contract with the Celtics and is expected to depart Boston. Other deals reported Friday included the Sacramento Kings' agreement with point guard De'Aaron Fox on a long-term contract extension that the Sacramento Bee reported could be worth nearly \$200 million with incentives. The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported the Atlanta Hawks were finalizing a deal with Italian free agent forward Danilo Gallinari, who averaged 18.7 points and 5.2 rebounds with the Oklahoma City Thunder last season. — AFP

Djokovic backs domestic violence policy for tennis

LONDON: Novak Djokovic said he supported a domestic violence policy for tennis following allegations made against Alexander Zverev after the top seed reached the last four at the ATP Finals on Friday. The Serbian beat his German opponent 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) and played US Open champion Dominic Thiem in yesterday's semi-finals. Zverev, who won the 2018 ATP Finals in London, has been competing under the shadow of serious abuse claims made by his ex-girlfriend Olga Sharypova.

He strongly denies the allegations, which were made by the former junior player on Instagram and in two media interviews, but has not addressed

them in any detail. The ATP, which runs the men's tour, had been criticized for not making any public comment until last week, when it issued a generic statement saying it "fully condemns any form of violence or abuse". Several major American sports have a policy setting out a procedure to be followed in such situations, and Djokovic believes tennis should go down the same route.

"I've known Sascha (Zverev) for a very long time since he was very young," he said. "I always had a great relationship with him, he's a very nice guy. I have a lot of respect for him, his family. I was sad to hear that he's going through something like this. 'I don't know what happened. Obviously I'm not supporting any kind of violence. Whether ATP should develop a policy? Yes, why not? Probably it should be there in place.' Tennis has largely closed ranks around Zverev, with Australian Daria Gavrilova a notable exception in saying she believes Sharypova, and Djokovic has offered the German his support. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Fulham v Everton	15:00
beIN Sports HD 1	
Sheffield United v West Ham	17:00
beIN Sports	
Leeds United v Arsenal	19:30
beIN Sports HD 1	
Liverpool v Leicester City	22:15
beIN Sports HD 1	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
SD Eibar v Getafe	16:00
beIN Sports HD 3	
Cadiz CF v Real Sociedad	18:15
beIN Sports HD 3	
Granada CF v Real Valladolid	20:30
beIN Sports HD 3	
Deportivo Alaves v Valencia	23:00
beIN Sports HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Fiorentina v Benevento	14:30
beIN Sports HD 4	
Inter Milano v Torino	17:00
beIN Sports HD 1	
AS Roma v Parma	17:00
beIN Sports HD 5	
UC Sampdoria v Bologna FC	17:00
beIN Sports	
Hellas Verona FC v US Sassuolo Calcio	17:00
beIN Sports HD 10	
Udinese Calcio v Genoa CFC	20:00
beIN Sports HD 4	
SSC Napoli v AC Milan	22:45
beIN Sports HD 4	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
SC Freiburg v FSV Mainz 05	17:30
beIN Sports	
FC Koln v FC Union Berlin	20:00
beIN Sports	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
Nantes v Metz	15:00
beIN Sports HD 6	
Dijon v Racing Club de Lens	17:00
beIN Sports	
Montpellier v RC Strasbourg	17:00
beIN Sports HD 6	
Stade Reims v Nimes Olympique	17:00
beIN Sports	
Angers SCO v Olympique Lyonnais	19:00
beIN Sports HD 6	
LOSC Lille v Lorient	23:00
beIN Sports HD 6	

14 GAZOO Racing claims podium finish at Rally Italia Sardegna



15 Kuwait League Roundup; Nasr stun Sulaibkhat 6-0



15 Monaco come back to stun PSG after Mbappe's double



Spurs sink City to take top spot

Tottenham show title credentials; Chelsea up to second



LONDON: Manchester City's Portuguese defender Ruben Dias (2nd left) jumps to win a header from Tottenham Hotspur's English defender Eric Dier (3rd left) during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Tottenham powered to the top of the Premier League with an impressive 2-0 win against Manchester City, while Chelsea are up to second place after their victory at Newcastle yesterday. Jose Mourinho's side are two points clear of Chelsea thanks to goals from Son Heung-min and Giovani Lo Celso at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Tottenham took the lead after five minutes as South Korean forward Son ran onto Tanguy Ndombele's lofted pass, beat the City offside trap and slotted a cool finish under Ederson. It was Son's ninth league goal this season and his 11th in all competitions. City dominated possession after Son's goal and thought they had equalised in the 27th minute when Aymeric Laporte fired home. But Gabriel Jesus controlled Rodri's cross with his arm before setting up Laporte and the goal was disallowed after referee Mike Dean consulted the pitchside monitor.

Lo Celso came off the bench to score with his first touch just 35 seconds after his introduction. The Argentine midfielder netted his first Premier League

goal in the 65th minute, driving his shot past Ederson after Harry Kane's sublime pass prised open the City defense. On the one-year anniversary of Mourinho's appointment, Tottenham are unbeaten in their last eight league games since losing to Everton on the opening weekend of the season.

Mourinho's team are on a four-match winning run in the league and have been transformed into genuine title contenders just months after finishing outside the top four last term. Tottenham, who last won the top-flight title in 1961 and haven't lifted a major trophy since 2008, would surrender pole position if Leicester beat champions Liverpool at Anfield today. City are languishing in 10th place, eight points behind the leaders after their first defeat in 10 games in all competitions. Pep Guardiola's timid side look a shadow of the swaggering outfit that won successive league titles in 2018 and 2019.

'Stay humble'

Next weekend, Tottenham face a fascinating clash

with London rivals Chelsea, who maintained their fine form as Federico Fernandez's first-half own goal and Tammy Abraham's strike sealed a 2-0 win at St James' Park. Frank Lampard's side are unbeaten in nine games in all competitions and have not lost in their last six league matches.

With five clean sheets in their last six outings in all competitions, Chelsea's third successive league victory was the perfect way to start a hectic period leading up to Christmas. Chelsea's pressure was rewarded in the 10th minute when a short corner caught Newcastle flat-footed. Mason Mount whipped in a low cross and Fernandez turned it into his own net under pressure from Ben Chilwell at the far post. Chelsea put the result beyond doubt in the 65th minute when Timo Werner accelerated away from the Newcastle defense and slipped a pass to Abraham, who guided his shot past Karl Darlow and in off the post.

"It's not an easy game. We played well in patches and the result is key in these games," Lampard said.

"The Premier League is tough, relentless, and we deal with the challenge of the game very well. 'I won't get excited about being top of the table for five minutes. It's important to be humble and know it's a long race.'" Brighton's 2-1 success at Aston Villa ended a run of seven games without a win in all competitions, but it didn't come easily for the Seagulls.

Graham Potter's side, who had won only once in the league this term, took the lead through Danny Welbeck before Ezri Konsa's equaliser for Villa. Solly March put Brighton back in front, but Brighton defender Tariq Lamptey was sent off for a foul on Jack Grealish in stoppage-time. Villa were controversially denied a penalty in the final seconds when Michael Oliver gave a spot-kick for March's challenge on Trezeguet, only for the referee to change his mind after consulting the pitchside monitor. Having survived the late drama, Brighton were able to celebrate their first ever win at Villa Park. Manchester United host West Brom in the day's late game. — AFP

Superb Neuer saves Bayern Munich from shock defeat

BERLIN: European champions Bayern Munich remained top of the Bundesliga despite being held yesterday to a 1-1 home draw by Werder Bremen, who were only denied a shock win by a string of excellent saves from Manuel Neuer. Germany goalkeeper Neuer produced great stops to twice deny US forward Josh Sargent as Bremen earned their first point at Bayern for a decade. "We had to invest a lot," Neuer told Sky. The 34-year-old bounced back after conceding six goals in Germany's crushing defeat by Spain in midweek with two brilliant first-half saves in quick succession. He used a boot to block a Sargent shot, then lunged across goal to save from Ludwig Augustinsson.

In the dying stages, Neuer then stood tall to block a shot by Sargent, who had broken clear. Bayern coach Hansi Flick was far from pleased that Bremen took the lead in his 50th game in charge, saying his team "have to defend better". Bremen deservedly went ahead just before half-time when midfielder Maximilian Eggestein finished off a superb attack. "We conceded a very cheap goal, that's how Bremen's plan worked and they defended very well," said Bayern forward Thomas Mueller.

Kingsley Coman equalized in the 62nd minute at

the Allianz Arena by meeting a Leon Goretzka cross at the far post. Bayern forward Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting fired over with the goal at his mercy five minutes from time. However Neuer's heroics at the other end preserved the draw to leave Bayern one point clear of Bayer Leverkusen at the top of the table. A day after his 16th birthday, Youssoufa Moukoko could become the youngest player in Bundesliga history if he plays for Borussia Dortmund at Hertha Berlin.

Leverkusen climbed to second with a 2-1 win at strugglers Arminia Bielefeld thanks to Aleksandar Dragovic's late winning goal. The win was a relief for Leverkusen goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky, who scored an embarrassing own goal early in the second half. Leverkusen were 1-0 up thanks to a Leon Bailey goal when Hradecky sliced a clearance, which rolled into the empty net behind him. Dragovic stabbed home from close range two minutes from time to spare Hradecky's blushes. RB Leipzig are third as Yussuf Poulson came off the bench and produced a deft second-half volley in their 1-1 draw at Eintracht Frankfurt after winger Aymen Barkok gave the hosts an early lead.

Despite having seven players quarantined with the coronavirus, a depleted Hoffenheim drew 3-3 at home with Stuttgart. Hoffenheim striker Andrej Kramaric converted a late penalty for his seventh goal in four league games to put the hosts 3-2 ahead. However, in the fourth minute of added time, Stuttgart defender Marc-Oliver Kempf fired the ball through the legs of Hoffenheim's Stefan Posch to grab an equalizer. Schalke's winless run stretched to 24 league games, dating back to January, after losing 2-0 at home to Wolfsburg. — AFP

Depleted Real Madrid pinned back by Villarreal

MADRID: A patched-up Real Madrid had to hang on for a 1-1 draw at in-form Villarreal yesterday, handing Barcelona and Atletico Madrid the chance to capitalize in La Liga. Barca and Atletico faced each other at the Wanda Metropolitano later on, when victory for either side would now prove even more valuable after another stumble from the reigning champions.

Mariano Diaz gave Real Madrid the lead after just 105 seconds but Zinedine Zidane's team faded at La Ceramica and Villarreal claimed a deserved point through Gerard Moreno's second-half penalty. "It feels like a small reward," said Zidane. "We deserved more today for the game we played. I'm annoyed because of the effort from the boys." Mariano was almost sold last summer but had to stand in for Karim Benzema, who is injured, and Luka Jovic, who tested positive for coronavirus on Friday.

Sergio Ramos, Eder Militao and Casemiro were all missing following the international break, leaving Nacho Fernandez and an unfit Raphael Varane to fill in at the back, while Martin Odegaard made a rare start in midfield. Given the absences, a draw was not worry Zidane too much, particularly against a buoyant Villarreal side who sat second at kick-off after four victories on the bounce. But another slip means Madrid have now won only three of their last seven games in all competitions, with a crucial visit to Inter Milan to come in the Champions League on Wednesday.

If Atletico Madrid beat Barcelona they will move



VILARREAL: Villarreal's Spanish goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo (left) blocks a shot on goal by Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric (right). — AFP

three points clear of their city rivals, with a game in hand, and nine ahead of Barca. Mariano had not started for Real Madrid since May 2019, when he again scored early against Villarreal after just 83 seconds. He was not far behind this time, heading in Dani Carvajal's cross after Villarreal's defense had stopped for an offside on Lucas Vazquez that never materialized. Villarreal increasingly took charge of the game, their slick passing giving a sense of control but few chances, the best of them in the first half falling to Dani Parejo, who nodded over.

But Madrid appeared to tire as the match wore on and Villarreal's pressure turned more threatening in the last 20 minutes, with Moreno flashing wide from the angle and then Parejo missing the target from a cutback. The equalizer was late but deserved, as Thibaut Courtois flew out to meet a through ball from Moreno but arrived second and fouled the striker with his hands. Courtois dived the right way but Moreno's shot was well-placed into the corner. — AFP