



## 4 Court ruling a win for press freedom in Kuwait



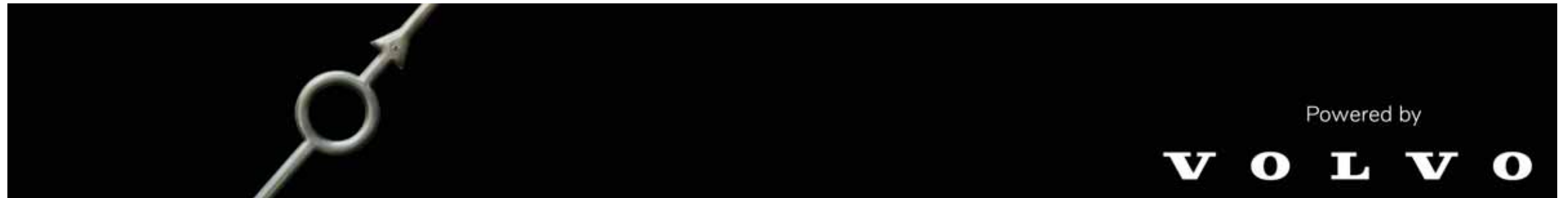
## 9 From small businesses to farmers, middle India is driving demand



## 12 Loneliest elephant heads to Cambodia after campaign



## 14 Tyson comeback fight at 54 ends with draw against Jones



# 74 former MPs among 321 candidates left in the fray

## Local, foreign volunteers to monitor National Assembly elections

### Zain KSA: Strategic transformation opens door to new era of growth

#### Remaining offer of priority shares oversubscribed by 469%

RIYADH: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa announced the successful competition of its subsidiary Zain Saudi Arabia's (Zain KSA) capital restructuring. This follows the high demand by institutional investors in the remaining priority shares that were oversubscribed by an unprecedented 469 percent.

These last steps came as part of Zain KSA's plan to restructure its capital, which included the reduction of the capital and then raising it through the offering of priority rights shares. This contributed to extinguishing most of the telco's accumulated losses, paying part of the Murabaha financing, and capitalizing part of other dues. The transaction paves the way for the company to enter a new era of strategic transformation of its financial performance.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Vice-Chairman and CEO of Zain Group said: "The successful competition of the company's capital restructuring and the massive demand in the remaining priority rights subscription reflects the confidence of shareholders and investors in Zain KSA's opera-



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

tional strategy and future growth plans, reinforced by the company's return to profitability over the last three years. The transaction enhances Zain KSA's capabilities to expand its strategic investments in the kingdom's telecommunications sector, growing its profitability and paving the way for dividends." (See Page 8)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: As many as 74 former MPs are among 321 candidates left in the fray for the 50 National Assembly seats after withdrawals of candidacy closed for the Dec 5 elections. Of the 395 candidates who registered to contest the polls, 54 dropped out and an interior ministry commission disqualified 34 others, of whom 14 have so far been reinstated by the court. The final number of hopefuls could change after the court of cassation issues its final verdict on the issue today.

There are 27 female candidates left in the race, including MP Safa Al-Hashem. In the 2016 general polls, about 300 candidates contested the polls, with around 80 former lawmakers. Forty-four members of the outgoing Assembly along with 30 former MPs from previous assemblies are bidding for re-election amid a very quiet and dull election campaign hit by the coronavirus pandemic that lacks "explosive" issues.

Around 25 opposition members, a majority of them Islamists, are in the race with the main aim to create a strong opposition bloc capable of stopping what opposition figures claim is an unprecedented slide in Kuwait's domestic politics. Pollsters and analysts believe that some 40 percent of the members of the outgoing Assembly will be replaced, but barring a last-minute major event that could influence the outcome, the same policies are expected to be maintained with the government and its supporters retaining their solid control.

Marzouq Al-Ghanem, the house speaker for the past two parliaments, is expected to be reelected for the coveted post as no real threat has emerged to challenge him. Only former MP and minister Roudhan Al-Roudhan said he will contest the speakership post if he

wins a seat in the Assembly, with most analysts ruling out that he can mount any challenge.

As many as 568,000 Kuwaitis are eligible to vote, a 17 percent rise from four years ago. About 51 percent of the voters are females because members of the military and police forces, overwhelmingly men, are barred from voting. Local and foreign observers will monitor the elections, according to the Anti-Corruption Authority, which held a training course for 187 volunteers from Kuwait Transparency Society, which was invited by the government to monitor the polls.

The Anti-Corruption Authority also said 11 Arab and foreign observers will also participate. Kuwait Human Rights Society also announced it will take part in monitoring the polls with an unspecified number of observers. The observers are allowed to monitor and report illegal practices like vote-buying, violations in campaigns and other violations that could impact the outcome of the election.

A local pollster and research center Masarat expected that 13 Islamist candidates will win seats in the next Assembly. Its conclusion was based on a survey conducted by the center. Unlike previous elections, campaigning this time was mainly virtual, depending on social media and television interviews, but only for lucky candidates who could book their interviews in advance.

Local issues like housing, education, corruption, economy and freedom of speech dominated the campaign, with leading opposition figures charging that the country was being controlled by a "deep state". Almost all candidates insisted they will oppose any plans by the government to impose taxes or raise charges on public services to meet a growing budget deficit due to the sharp fall in oil prices.

### News in brief

#### Baby born with COVID antibodies

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean woman, who was infected with the novel coronavirus in March when she was pregnant, has given birth to a baby with antibodies against the virus, offering a new clue as to whether the infection can be transferred from mother to child. The baby was born this month without COVID-19 but with the virus antibodies, the Straits Times newspaper reported yesterday, citing the mother: "My doctor suspects I have transferred my COVID-19 antibodies to him during my pregnancy," Celine Ng-Chan told the paper. — Reuters

#### UAE names climate change envoy

DUBAI: The UAE yesterday approved the establishment of a new national cybersecurity council, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, UAE Prime Minister and Vice-President and ruler of Dubai, said on Twitter. The cabinet also appointed Industry and Advanced Technology Minister and head of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) Sultan Al-Jaber as a special envoy for climate change. Jaber, who holds a PhD in business and economics, is also the chairman of Abu Dhabi's renewable energy company known as Masdar. — Reuters

#### Trump loses another challenge

WASHINGTON: The US state of Pennsylvania's supreme court dismissed another legal challenge to the election by supporters of President Donald Trump on Saturday. A Republican lawsuit had sought to invalidate mail-in ballots in the battleground state or to throw out all votes and allow the state's legislature to decide the winner. The court dismissed both claims in a unanimous decision, calling the second one an "extraordinary proposition that the court disenfranchise all 6.9 million Pennsylvanians who voted in the general election". — AFP

## Firemen rescue 83 people after heavy rainfall

KUWAIT: Firefighters rescued a total of 83 people during heavy rains that hit Kuwait over the past two days, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said yesterday. The persons rescued were trapped in their vehicles in areas where rainwater accumulated, mostly in Jahra governorate, the public relations and information department at KFF said in a statement. Authorities received more than 170 emergency calls, mostly from desert areas, KFF explained, adding that no injuries were reported as firefighters handled all emergency cases. — KUNA (See Page 3)

## Indonesian volcano belches huge tower of smoke and ash

JAKARTA: Indonesia's Mount Ili Lewotolok erupted yesterday, belching a column of smoke and ash four kilometers into the sky, triggering a flight warning and the closure of the local airport. There were no reports of injuries or damage from the eruption in a remote part of the Southeast Asian archipelago. But authorities raised the volcano's alert status to its second-highest level as they warned of possible lava flows.

A two-kilometer no-go zone around the crater was also expanded to four kilometers, while flights were advised to steer clear of the area as volcanic ash rained down on East Nusa Tenggara's Wunopitu airport, which was temporarily closed. "People are advised to not carry out any activities within a four-kilometer radius from the crater," Indonesia's geological agency said.

Indonesia is home to about 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", a belt of tectonic plate boundaries circling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs. — AFP



KUWAIT: A pickup truck and makeshift structure in Mutiaa are submerged in a pool of water yesterday after heavy rainfall a day earlier. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Residents gather to watch as Mount Ili Lewotolok spews ash during a volcanic eruption in Lembata yesterday. — AFP

## Iran mulling response to assassination

TEHRAN: Iran was weighing its response yesterday to the killing of its top nuclear scientist, which it blames on arch-foe Israel, as his body was taken to Shiite shrines ahead of being buried. Two days after Mohsen Fakhrazadeh died following a firefight between his guards and unidentified gunmen outside Tehran, parliament called in a statement for international inspectors to be barred from nuclear facilities.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council usually handles decisions related to the country's nuclear program. President Hassan Rouhani has stressed the country will seek its revenge in "due time" and not be rushed into a "trap". Israel says Fakhrazadeh was the head of an Iranian military nuclear program, the existence of which the Islamic republic has consistently denied.

His body arrived in the northeastern holy city of Mashhad late Saturday and was taken to the shrine of Imam Reza for prayers and a ceremonial circling of the tomb, state news agency IRNA reported.

Continued on Page 2



## Local

## Amir, Crown Prince receive state officials



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



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the

Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Moreover, His

Highness hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. In addition, he received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet

Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour, and Saleh at Bayan Palace. — KUNA

## Kuwait's Foreign Minister meets Bahraini counterpart

KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the visiting Foreign Minister of Bahrain Dr Abdullah Al-Zayani and his accompanying delegation. The talks dealt with bilateral relations and latest regional as well as international developments. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs

Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Gulf Cooperation Council Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Muzain, Assistant Foreign Minister for Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Foreign Minister Office Affairs Counselor Ahmed Al-Shuraim, and a number of senior officials in the ministry. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Bahrain's Foreign Minister Dr Abdullah Al-Zayani. — KUNA

## Minister orders investigation over rain accumulations

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and the Minister of State for Housing Dr Rana Al-Fares formed yesterday a neutral and emergency legal and technical fact-finding committee to investigate the causes of water accumulations in some areas due to recent heavy rains in various parts of the country. In a press release, Minister Fares said that the main objective for committee is to identify deficiencies in rain drainage network and submit its report and recommendations within a week of its date regarding the legal, technical and administrative procedures that must be followed in this regard. The minister stressed that her ministry will not be negligent in taking the necessary

legal measures against any party or company whose negligence is proven, as it will be referred to the regulatory and legal authorities according to what the committee will conclude. She added that in light of the weather conditions and the thunderstorm that the country recently experienced, accompanied by rain, the concerned teams were able to deal with all the reports received on the main roads and highways and regions in the various governorates that witnessed rain gathering. Fares confirmed that the bad weather conditions remain, and there are expectations of another wave of heavy rains which requires the cooperation of all in this regard. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and the Minister of State for Housing Dr Rana Al-Fares inspects a site damaged by heavy rain. — KUNA

## Iran mulling response to...

Continued from Page 1

Then it was taken yesterday to Fatima Masumeh's shrine in Qom, south of Tehran, and later to that of the Islamic republic's founder Imam Khomeini, according to Iranian media. Fakhrizadeh's funeral will be held today in the presence of senior military commanders and his family, the defense ministry said on its website, without specifying where.

Israel has declined to comment on Fakhrizadeh's killing, less than two months before US President-elect Joe Biden is set to take office following four years of hawkish foreign policy under President Donald Trump. Trump withdrew the US from a multilateral nuclear agreement with Iran in 2018 and then reimposed and beefed up punishing sanctions as part of its "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran. Biden has signaled his administration may be prepared to rejoin the accord, but the nuclear scientist's assassination has revived opposition to the deal among Iranian conservatives.

Yesterday, Iran's parliament held a closed session to "investigate the assassination," ISNA news agency reported. Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf called yesterday for "a strong reaction" that would "deter and take revenge" on those behind the killing of Fakhrizadeh, who was aged 59 according to Iranian media.

In an op-ed yesterday, the ultraconservative Kayhan daily called for strikes on Israel if it is "proven" to be behind the assassination. It called for the port city of Haifa to be targeted "in a way that would annihilate its infrastructure and leave a heavy human toll". That will "certainly achieve deterrence, since the US and the Zionist regime ... are in no way ready to fight a war," it added.

The United States slapped sanctions on Fakhrizadeh in 2008 for "activities and transactions that contributed to the devel-



MASHHAD, Iran: A handout picture shows servants of the holy shrine of Imam Reza praying around the coffin of Iran's assassinated top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh during his funeral procession in this northeastern city. — AFP

opment of Iran's nuclear program". Almost a year after the US withdrawal, Iran responded by gradually abandoning most of its essential nuclear commitments under the deal. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Saturday for Fakhrizadeh's killers to be punished.

Yesterday, parliament said the "best response" to Fakhrizadeh's assassination would be to "revive Iran's glorious nuclear industry" by halting the voluntary implementation of the additional protocol, a document which under the 2015 accord prescribes more intrusive inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities. In a statement following its meeting, the legislature said the killing showed that Israel, the US and their allies had become "brazen" in their "terror and sabotage" against Iran.

Signed by all 290 members of parliament, the statement called for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to be barred from the country's atomic sites, said

the legislature's news agency ICANA. Some MPs had earlier accused inspectors of acting as "spies" and potentially leading to Fakhrizadeh's death. But the spokesman for Iran's atomic energy organization, Behrouz Kamalvandi, told IRNA on Saturday that the issue of inspectors' access "must be decided on at high levels" of the Islamic republic's leadership.

Tehran representative Mahmoud Nabavian told Tasnim news agency inspectors should be barred "from interviewing experts and scientists, since our mistrust of the (IAEA)'s inspectors has been proven (to be correct)". "The enemy could have identified martyr Fakhrizadeh either through intelligence work or direct interviews," he added. Firebrand MP Javad Karimi Ghodousi, had on Friday accused Rouhani of setting up a meeting between Fakhrizadeh and IAEA officials in the past - a claim strongly denied by the Rouhani administration. — AFP



KUWAIT: Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud.

## Saudi envoy visits National Guard's Deputy Chief

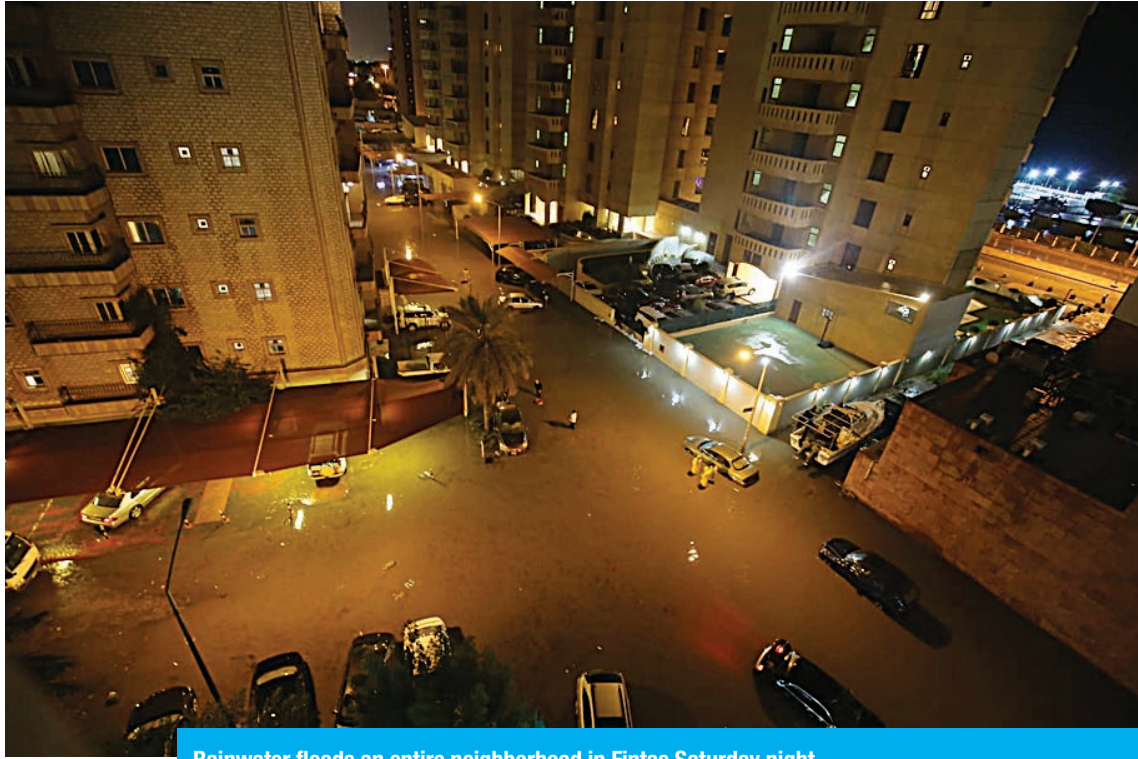
KUWAIT: Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud in his office at the National Guard's headquarters building yesterday. Prince Sultan congratulated Sheikh Ahmad on winning the trust of Kuwait's political leadership, and being appointed in his current post. Sheikh Ahmad, meanwhile, highlighted the deep-rooted relations between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Kuwait National Guard said in a press release. The two sides also discussed issues of common interest between the two countries, it added.



Local

# Firefighters rescued 83 persons as heavy rains swept Kuwait

Rain chances, temperature drop today



Rainwater floods an entire neighborhood in Fintas Saturday night.



Vehicles drive through a flooded road. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Fouad Al-Shaikh

**KUWAIT:** Firefighters rescued a total of 83 people during heavy rains that hit Kuwait over the past two days, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said yesterday. The persons rescued were trapped in their vehicles in areas where rainwater has accumulated, most of which were in Al-Jahra governorate, the Public Relations and Information Department at KFF said in a statement. Authorities received more than 170 emergency calls, mostly in desert areas, KFF explained, adding that no injuries were reported as firefighters handled all emergency cases it received.

KFF had announced on Saturday that firemen responded to calls from 63 persons who sought help after getting stuck in ponds formed due to

the heavy rains. "Those persons were safely rescued and no casualties resulted from the rains," it affirmed. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh visited the operations room and was briefed by KFF Chief Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad on how to tackle the accidents related to the rains.

Kuwait Meteorological Center said meanwhile that chances of rain had started to drop gradually since last night after two days of downpour due to the effects of the Sudan low pressure on the region. Temperatures are expected to drop today as a cold air mass enters the country, meteorologist Abdaziz Al-Qarawi said, adding that light to moderate rain showers are expected between tomorrow and Friday. —KUNA



**More than 170 emergency calls received**



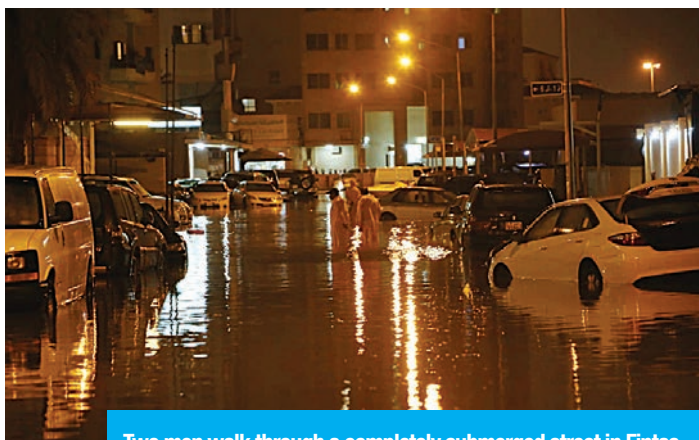
This picture released by Kuwait Fire Force shows Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh and KFF Chief Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad inside the operations room.



This picture released by the Kuwait Fire Force shows firemen rescuing a person whose vehicle is stuck in rainwater.



KUWAIT: Vehicles parked next to a huge pool of rainwater in Mutlaa yesterday.



Two men walk through a completely submerged street in Fintas.



Vehicles sunken deep in a pool of rainwater.

## Rain knocks down Kuwait Times tree



**KUWAIT:** The heavy rains and strong winds that hit Kuwait in the past couple of days have knocked down the longest-standing tree in Kuwait Times' premises. Planted in 1983 by General Manager Badrya Darwish, the tree has provided shade and shelter and welcomed all those who entered our premises. The tree had been a part of the newspaper's history, cut back and pruned over the years to branch out again and again. During the construction of the second building, some suggested cutting down the tree and that its roots might disrupt the underground pipes, but the owners were adamant that a living tree provides not only respite from Kuwait's relentless sun but also growth and hope for a greener future for all.



Heavy traffic due to deluged streets.



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## Kuwait sees 231 new COVID-19 cases, three deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait said yesterday that 231 new coronavirus infections were registered over the past 24 hours, raising the total to 142,426. Meanwhile, three fatalities were recorded over the same period, which upped the country's COVID-19 death toll to 878, the health ministry said. The ministry had earlier reported that 524 patients had recovered from the virus over the past 24 hours, raising total recoveries to 136,413. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood yesterday at 5,135, with 76 of them in intensive care units, according to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, who revealed that 4,827 swab tests were conducted over the same period raising the total to 1,091,469. Dr Sanad went on to urge the public to abide by health precautions, mainly social distancing, which he said is the only way to halt the spread of the virus. — KUNA

## Indian embassy sets up helpdesk

KUWAIT: The embassy of India has set up a helpdesk at its premises for assistance of those who fall in the category of the special announcement made by the Kuwait government for regulation of stay or exit from Kuwait. Information on the announcement is also available at the helpline numbers of the embassy. These numbers are: +965 - 65806158, 65806735, 65807695 and 65808923 from 8am to 8pm, +965 - 65809348 from 8 pm to 8 am. Those who require travel documents may visit the helpdesk during office hours. Any Indian national not having passport and residency and if he has not applied for emergency certificate yet, may do so by filling the EC form and deposit the same either at the boxes kept at Indian passport offices at Al-Sharq, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Fahaheel and at the embassy.

# Kuwait remains committed to creating balance in global market: Oil Minister

## Kuwait participates in OPEC, OPEC+ ministerial meetings

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Oil and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel and Kuwait's Governor of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Haitham Al-Ghais are set to participate in the OPEC 180th Ministerial Meeting today and the 12th OPEC plus Ministerial Meeting tomorrow through videoconference. Fadhel said in a statement released by the Oil Ministry that Kuwait continues its cooperation and full commitment to increase production levels according to OPEC quota in order to create a balance in the global oil markets. He mentioned that Kuwait is still playing an effective role in the negotiations and discussions, which led to the adoption of many OPEC decisions, adding that OPEC's decisions brought stability and confidence to the oil market and increasing the oil sector's contribution to the global economy. Regarding the OPEC meeting, Fadhel said that the global oil market is looking forward to the influential role of state members to stabilize the oil market, especially in the next phase. OPEC appreciated Kuwait's role in advancing the desired cooperation between all member states in the organization in order to achieve balance and stability in the global oil market.

### New deal

OPEC hosts the two meetings today and tomorrow to discuss prospects of maintaining the oil production's cut. The oil sector stakeholders are scheduled to celebrate the possibility of hammering out a new deal whether to keep the decrease of the crude output by 7.7 million barrels per day. On the table is a recommendation of the joint OPEC-non-OPEC ministerial committee to slash production in a bid to boost markets' stability. The virtual sessions coincide with OPEC's 60th anniversary and fourth anniversary of the coalition, established on December 10, 2016.

## Kuwaiti doctor wins at Global Awards in Morocco

KUWAIT: Dr Abdullah Al-Ajeel from the Kuwait Ministry of Health received the Professional Excellence Award for the year 2020 in the field of health at the level of Arab countries. The award is part of the fifth session of the Global Awards of Arab Best Foundation for the year 2020, held recently in Marrakesh, Morocco. The Secretary-General of the Best Arab Award, Abdullah

OPEC+ crude producers, in April, trimmed the output by 9.7 million bpd, 10 percent of the global demand that fell at the time due to ramifications of the coronavirus crisis. Sources close to OPEC said yesterday the conferees would seek to capitalize on the noticeable recovery of the oil prices that hit \$46 pb, highest level since outbreak of the pandemic late last year. Participants in the OPEC+ gathering would look into the latest regular report by the organization that predicted demand increase for OPEC crudes next year at a rate of 5.2 million bpd as compared to 2020. In light of this forecast, the

Moreover in this vein, observers allude, as another factor for the prices' reasonable level: to states' latest financial incentives' policies, intended to relieve cash-strapped citizens and jobless; in the shadow of the corona crisis that paralyzed wide sectors of the businesses.



Oil Minister Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel

### Growing reserves

OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo has acknowledged that balancing supply and demand has become harder due to global reserves' growth by a staggering one billion bpd since start of this year. The crude reserves' glut could have been much bigger had the OPEC+ countries made no significant efforts to maintain the market balance, Barkindo believes. The producers' commitment to the output cut reached a remarkable and record level of 100 percent in November, according to many observers. Moreover, they believe that the conferees will opt to maintain the current level of the crude production in the first half of the coming year (2021).

Statistics showed that costs of facing the second wave of the virus exceeded \$20 trillion, equivalent to 20 percent of the global gross product. OPEC noted in its regular report, released last week, that the demand for the OPEC crudes, in 2020, dropped by 200,000 bpd to stand at 22.1 million bpd, 7.2 million bpd less as compared to 2019. Additionally, the organization predicted in its report that this demand would reach, next year, 27.9 million bpd, some 5.6 million bpd higher than that of 2020. — KUNA



## Efforts to capitalize on price recovery

decision makers will study duration of the output cut. Although current price remained short of the producing states' aspiration to see it at the level of \$60 pb to be compatible with the price upon which their budgets had been projected, they appeared generally satisfied with the latest price level, considering the unchecked spread of the virus globally.

Observers link the price improvement to the US presidential process, high hopes upcoming mass production of vaccines will curb the contagion along with the forecast such a success will dissuade states' leaders from ordering further lockdowns giving way for restoration of normal life and recovery of industries namely those that require energy, in addition to restoration of regular air transports.

AbdulKareem, said in a statement, Sunday that the winners were selected among a group of Arab competencies that lead major institutions from all over the Arab world. The award's supreme committee and its branch in various Arab countries are concerned with the process of nominating individuals and institutions in accordance with the internal controls approved for these committees, he said. In selecting the winners, he indicated that the expert committees use modern evaluation methods to measure the rates of ability, compliance, and administrative excellence, levels of popularity and attractiveness of services, performance, and productivity.

Meanwhile, the representative of the Higher Committee for the Best Arab Award, Mohammad

Al-Kandiri, said in a similar statement that the idea of the award came from the basis of the Arab nation's permanent and renewed need for creativity and excellence in all fields. Dr Abdullah Al-Ajeel is the recipient of several awards at the local, Gulf, regional and international levels, including 6 awards from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Kuwait Electronic Prize in the field of electronic sciences, in the field of e-learning, and in the field of electronic inclusion. He also received the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Prize twice and the Creativity Medal from the Bahrain Conference for Technology Innovation, the most recent of which was the 2017 Information Summit Award from UNESCO-United Nations. — KUNA

## Court ruling a win for press freedom in Kuwait

KUWAIT: In a new court ruling seen as a victory to liberties in general and freedom of the press in Kuwait in particular, the felonies court chaired by Judge Abdullah Al-Othman confirmed that newspapers will not be indicted if they publish genuine news, even if the names of concerned officials are mentioned.

The criminal court exonerated an editor-in-chief for publishing the name of an engineer after an MP demanded to hold him to account through a parliamentary question, which was published by the paper. The court said newspapers cannot be held to account or convicted in cases of publishing official news, even if it mentions names, because it did not accuse anyone - rather it was reporting facts, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday.

Lawyers and legal experts considered this ruling a new victory for freedom of expression, adding that the Kuwait judiciary gives journalistic and information freedom a high status and rejects muz-

zling writers who always seek to reveal the truth and serve public interest, away from any personal convictions or other goals, as responsible freedom is guaranteed by the law and the constitution.

Lawyers said the ruling explains that publishing names in newspapers is not considered defamation, and that conveying news with evidence is not a means of targeting anyone; it is rather to convey the truth. This is the role of the media, especially with regards to issues of public opinion. They said the ruling relied on the role of the paper that published the news, and by publishing the name of the complainant, it only reported the truth and did not write the name by itself. The ruling stressed that the role of the paper is to report true news and this is what took place without any additions.

Lawyers reaffirmed that this ruling is a moral support for freedoms in Kuwait and an answer to all opinions that adopted the idea of limiting freedom of expression, or those who called for shackling the media and making it afraid of reporting facts to the readers as they are. They insisted that enemies of democracy want papers to be as they like, so they support silencing and preventing the publication of truth in public issues and events that preoccupy the society. They added that Kuwaiti journalism was and still is the spokesperson of the people, who are looking for the country's interests.

## Man hurt in Shuwaikh garage fire



KUWAIT: Firemen put out a blaze reported in a garage in Shuwaikh Industrial yesterday. Shuhada and Shuwaikh Industrial fire stations responded to an emergency call reporting a fire that started in a vehicle parked inside the garage. Firefighters towed the vehicle out of



the garage to prevent the flames from spreading, before they put out the blaze. One man was injured in the incident and was taken to hospital in a stable condition, Kuwait Fire Force said. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

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Protesters target Thai royal guards unit in latest rally

## Sydney records hottest November night as heatwave sweeps city

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GEDAREF, Sudan: Ethiopian refugees fill bottles and containers with water at Um Raquba camp on Saturday. — AFP

# Tigray military operation 'over'

## Ethiopia federal forces take over Tigray capital

**ADDIS ABABA:** The Ethiopian government launched a manhunt yesterday for leaders of a rebellious faction in the northern region of Tigray after announcing federal troops had taken over the regional capital and military operations were complete. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed government has been trying to quell a rebellion by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a powerful ethnically-based party that dominated the central government from 1991 until Abiy came to power in 2018.

He said on Saturday evening federal troops had taken control of the Tigrayan capital Mekelle within hours of launching an offensive there, laying to rest fears of protracted fighting in the city of 500,000 people. The prime minister, who refers to the three-week-old conflict as an internal law and order matter and has rebuffed international offers of mediation, said federal police will try to arrest TPLF "criminals" and bring them to court.

However, TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael told Reuters in a text message on Saturday evening that TPLF forces would fight on, raising the prospect that the conflict could drag on. Thousands of people are believed to have been killed and nearly 44,000 have fled to Sudan since the fighting began on Nov. 4. The conflict has been another test for Abiy, who took office two years ago and is trying to hold together a patchwork of ethnic groups that make up Ethiopia's 115 million people.

The flow of refugees and attacks by the TPLF on neighboring Eritrea have also threatened to destabilize the wider Horn of Africa region. Claims from all sides are difficult to verify since phone and internet links to Tigray have been down and access tightly controlled since the fighting began. The police late on Saturday

issued arrest warrants for 17 more military officers charged with crimes in connection with the conflict that include treason and embezzlement of public properties, state-affiliated Fana TV reported. They add to the 117 warrants issued for senior military officers it says are connected to TPLF since the conflict broke out.



### Ethiopia hunts for Tigray leaders

It was not clear if any TPLF leaders had surrendered, their whereabouts or their next plans. "Their brutality can only add (to) our resolve to fight these invaders to the last," the TPLF's Debretsion told Reuters in a text message on Saturday. Asked by Reuters if that meant his forces would continue fighting, he replied: "Certainly. This is about defending our right to self-determination." Debretsion said in another text message that Tigrayan forces were withdrawing from around Mekelle.

### History of resistance

Regional diplomats and experts have warned that a rapid military victory might not signal the end of the conflict. The TPLF has a history of guerrilla resistance. Tigray's mountainous terrain and borders with Sudan and Eritrea helped the TPLF during its long struggle

against Marxist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, whom it eventually toppled in 1991. The TPLF and Eritrean forces fought together against Mengistu, but relations later soured after Eritrea became independent in 1993. The two nations fought over a border dispute in 1998-2000 and the TPLF sees Eritrea as a mortal enemy. Eritrea signed a peace deal with Abiy in 2018, and the prime minister won the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

### Explosions in Eritrea's capital

Six explosions were reported in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, on Saturday night, the U.S. State Department said, although it was not immediately clear if they were related to the Tigray conflict. The State Department post did not mention the cause or location of the explosions. Tigrayan forces fired rockets at Eritrea on Nov. 14. Reuters was unable to reach the Eritrean government or Tigrayan forces for comment. The TPLF, which denounces Abiy's warm relations with Eritrea, has accused Eritrea of sending troops to Tigray to join the Ethiopian government's fight.

It has not been possible to contact the Eritrean government for comment on this. The TPLF also accuses Abiy of wanting to centralize control at the expense of Ethiopia's 10 regions. The constitution grants the regions wide-ranging powers over matters like taxation and security. Abiy has denied he wants to centralize power. This year, Abiy postponed elections scheduled for August to next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Calling this a power grab, the TPLF held its own regional elections in September and announced it no longer recognized federal authority. Abiy's government declared the Tigray election illegal.— Reuters

## Ethiopia PM Abiy: From peace prize to air strikes

**ADDIS ABABA:** Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power promising real democracy, promoting women and feverishly planting trees across his vast country, snapping up the Nobel Peace Prize along the way. But Abiy's image of a modern, peacemaking reformer risks shattering entirely after he sent troops and warplanes into Ethiopia's Tigray region, a move analysts fear could push Africa's second most populous country into a long, devastating civil war. Abiy, 44, announced the campaign on November 4, saying it came in response to an attack by Tigray's ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), on two federal military camps, an accusation the party denies.

A communications blackout in Tigray has made it difficult to verify competing claims on the ground. Yet officials say hundreds of people have been killed, and the UN is warning of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation as thousands flee across the border into neighboring Sudan. World leaders are calling for an immediate halt to fighting and for dialogue, but Abiy has repeatedly insisted on the need to preserve the country's "sovereignty and unity" and "reestablish law and order".

It is a remarkable turn of events for a leader who less than a year ago travelled to Oslo to accept the Nobel for ending a two-decade stalemate with neighboring Eritrea after a brutal 1998-2000 conflict that left some 80,000 people dead and achieved little. Abiy declared in his acceptance speech that "war is the epitome of hell for all involved", and his office insists that this remains his position. His press secretary has even suggested he deserves "a second Nobel Prize" for his efforts to resolve the Tigray conflict.

### Meteoric rise

Born in the western town of Beshasha to a Muslim father and Christian mother, Abiy "grew up sleeping on the floor" in a house with no electricity or running water. "We used to fetch water from the river," he told Ethiopian radio station Sheger FM last year, adding that he was 12 or 13 before he first saw an asphalt road or electricity. Abiy progressed quickly through the power structures created by the ruling coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), ever since it took power in 1991.

Fascinated with technology, he joined the military as a radio operator while still a teenager. In his Nobel speech he described his experiences during the brutal border war with Eritrea, saying his entire unit had been wiped out in an Eritrean artillery attack but he had survived after briefly leaving a foxhole to get better antenna reception. He rose to lieutenant-colonel before entering government as the first head of Ethiopia's cyber-spying outfit, the Information Network Security Agency. He entered parliament as a deputy in 2010 and became science and technology minister in 2015.

The circumstances that led to Abiy's ascent to high office can be traced to late 2015. A government plan to expand the capital's administrative boundaries into the surrounding Oromia region was seen as a land grab, sparking protests led by the Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, and the Amhara people.—AFP

## Iran assassination could undercut Biden's options

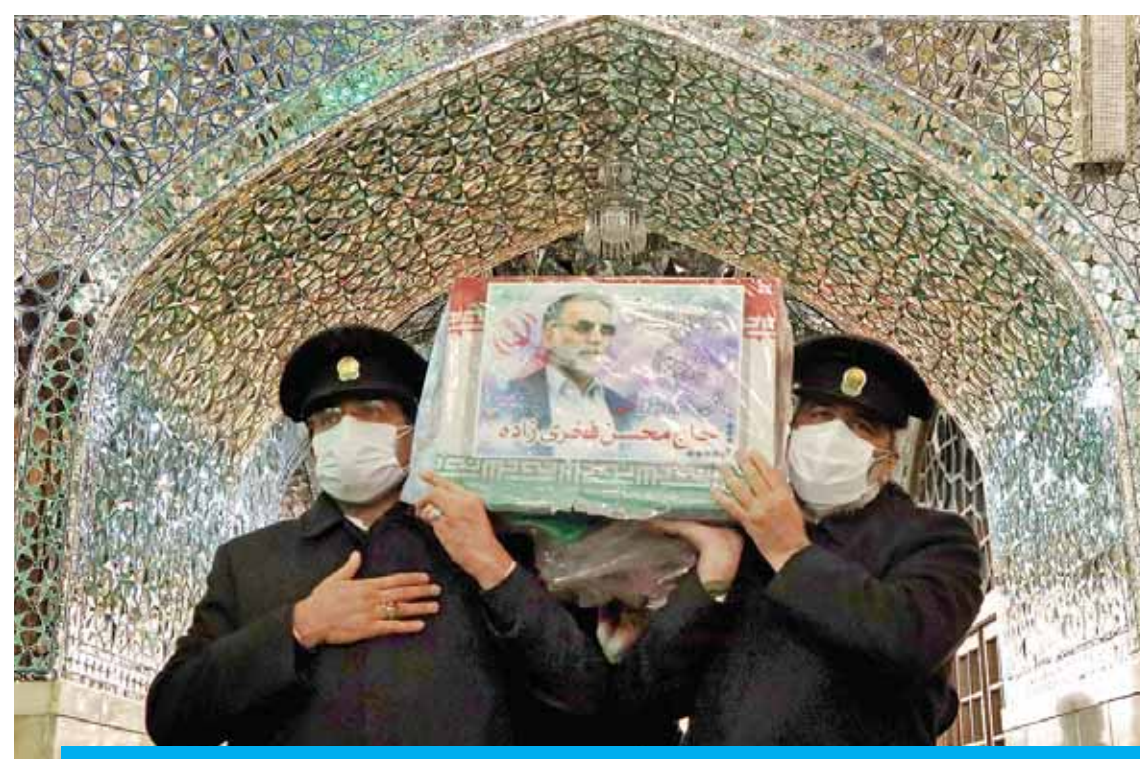
**WASHINGTON:** The assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist, which Tehran has blamed on Israel, risks not only sharpening tensions across the region but also severely complicating plans by US President-elect Joe Biden to resume dialogue with the Islamic republic, analysts said Saturday. Iran has accused arch-foe Israel of seeking to sow "chaos" by killing 59-year-old Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh and has strongly implied that the Jewish state was acting with US blessing.

Washington has not officially commented on the operation, in which gunmen targeted Fakhri-zadeh's car on a road outside Tehran, according to Iran's defense ministry. But President Donald Trump has retweeted others' comments on the incident, including at least one that said the scientist had been "wanted for many years by Mossad," the Israeli intelligence agency.

Trump in 2018 withdrew the US from the multination nuclear agreement with Iran, instead launching a "maximum pressure" campaign which he appears determined to pursue until he leaves office in January. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who recently visited Israel, on Friday announced new economic sanctions against some Chinese and Russian firms accused of having supported Iran's missile program.

"This administration... is here until January 20" and will "continue to pursue its policies," a senior US official traveling with Pompeo said during a stop Sunday in Abu Dhabi. "I would hope that this leverage that the administration works so hard to get will be used to good purpose to get the Iranians to, once again, start behaving like a normal state."

But for some American analysts, the killing of Fakhri-zadeh was a dangerous act that undercuts Biden's stated intention of offering Iran "a credible path back to diplomacy" as a step toward the United States rejoining the nuclear accord. Former CIA head John Brennan tweeted Friday that the scientist's killing was a "criminal act & highly reckless," saying it "risks lethal retaliation & a new round of regional conflict."



MASHHAD, Iran: A handout picture shows servants of the Imam Reza shrine carrying the coffin of Iran's assassinated top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh during his funeral procession yesterday. — AFP

Brennan, who led the US intelligence agency from 2013-2017, when Barack Obama was president and Biden was vice president, exhorted Iran to "wait for the return of responsible American leadership on the global stage & to resist the urge to respond against perceived culprits". As the US was moving a carrier group led by the USS Nimitz back to the Gulf - while insisting this had nothing to do with the assassination - Germany warned on Saturday against any new "escalation."

"We call on all parties to avoid taking any action which could lead to a new escalation of the situation" which "we absolutely do not need at this moment," a German foreign ministry spokesman told AFP. "Weeks before a new government takes office in the United States, existing dialogue with Iran must be maintained in order to resolve through negotiation the conflict over Iran's nuclear program."

That view was shared by Ben Friedman, a defense specialist at George Washington University. The killing, he said, was "an act of sabotage against US diplomacy and interests" and would "likely help Iranian hardliners who want nuclear weapons". For Ben Rhodes, a former advisor to Obama, "This is an outrageous action aimed at undermining diplomacy between an incoming US administration and Iran." He added: "It's time for this ceaseless escalation to stop."

Some analysts, however, saw the killing in Iran as providing leverage to the incoming US administration that could be useful in possible negotiations with Tehran. "Still almost two months before Joe Biden takes office," noted Mark Dubowitz, director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), "Plenty of time for US and Israel to inflict severe damage on the regime in Iran - and build leverage for the Biden administration." — AFP



## International

# 'Catastrophic': Balkan healthcare overwhelmed by COVID-19 surge

## Skyrocketing virus caseload pushes hospitals to the cusp of collapse

**BELGRADE:** Not enough beds and not enough doctors: a skyrocketing coronavirus caseload is pushing hospitals in the Balkans to the cusp of collapse, in chaotic scenes reminding some medics of the region's 1990s wars. After nearly a year of keeping outbreaks more or less under control, the nightmare scenario that the Balkans feared from the start of the pandemic is now starting to unfold. In hard-hit Bosnia, one doctor described the distress of having to juggle the care of multiple patients whose lives were hanging by a thread.

"The situation reminds me of the war, and I'm afraid it could get even worse during the winter," the doctor, who requested anonymity said. "We can do the work of three (people), but not of five". The Western Balkans, one of Europe's poorest corners, has for weeks been battling an explosive coronavirus spike, its death toll doubling in the last month alone to reach nearly 10,000. The crisis is exposing gaps in healthcare systems that have long suffered from low funding and a brain drain crisis, with an exodus of promising young doctors and nurses leaving to seek better wages and training abroad.

Even before the pandemic began, the Balkans had some of the lowest density rates of doctors in Europe, according to World Health Organization data. Hospitals are now facing further shortages as staff fall victim to the respiratory disease. In Serbia, some 2,000 medical workers have been forced to self-isolate just as medical wards are seeing a huge inundation of patients filling beds in the capital Belgrade.

"I never had such an experience in my professional career", Rade Panic, the president of a Serbian doctors' union, told regional TV channel N1 on Friday in a trembling voice. "I didn't have room for patients that we medically consider young, I didn't have anywhere to transport them", added the anaesthesiologist, who works in the "red zone" of a hospital treating the most serious Covid-19 cases.

### Bed shortage

Bosnia, North Macedonia and Montenegro are all in Europe's top ten when it comes to highest per capita death rates on the continent. Yet governments in the region have been reluctant to return to the drastic lock-



SARAJEVO: People wait for a medical examination outside a COVID hospital on Nov 5, 2020. — AFP

downs imposed at the start of the pandemic, instead opting for lighter restrictions such as early closure of restaurants. While Serbia is racing to build two brand new hospitals, Kosovo is considering adapting old hotels into makeshift wards, including the Grand Hotel in downtown Pristina.

Overflowing clinics in Pristina mean that some patients, such as 33-year-old Veprim Morina, are being turned away. The doctor "told me to take my medication at home since the hospitals are full," the fitness instructor said. Morina managed to hire a nurse to provide treatment at home — an option those who can afford it are opting for when possible. Getting a hospital bed now requires having "connections", he said. "You have to be very lucky to find a place."

In neighboring North Macedonia, the government is marshalling private clinics and their staff to treat COVID-19 patients after public hospitals hit full capacity. "We have been providing new beds, but it is harder and harder", health minister Venko Filipce said last week. Outside clinics in the capital Skopje, relatives of patients bring food and sometimes even medicine to their loved ones. "Catastrophic. Unorganized. No one

answers the phone for hours," said one man seeking information on his sick relative. "They (medical staff) are fighting, giving their best, but they simply cannot do everything".

### Slow to act

Croatian doctors have also warned of staff and equipment shortages. More than 2,100 patients are currently hospitalized and 3,000 would push the healthcare system to "collapse," they say. Experts say politicians have struggled to strike a balance between controlling the virus and protecting fragile economies. "We are too poor that all (lockdown measures) be repeated twice", said Croatian economist Ljubo Jurcic.

In Bosnia, shops, restaurants and gyms all remain open while Serbia recently cut hours for businesses but has stopped short of an all-out closure. While progress on vaccines is giving doctors hope, they fear the chaos that could unfold in the meantime. "I don't understand why the authorities don't put in place more restrictive measures," said Jasmina Smajic, a doctor in the Bosnian city of Tuzla. "Something must be done about this if we want to prevent catastrophic consequences".—AFP

## 'Silent majority' of Poles favor strict abortion law

**WARSAW:** While mass protests against a court verdict backing a near-total ban on abortion have taken on an increasingly political flavor in Poland, the devout Catholic country is far from turning pro-choice. Surveys show that Poles have grown comfortable with existing abortion legislation - among Europe's most restrictive - adopted in 1993 as part of a church-state compromise after the collapse of communism.

Abortion is only permitted in cases of rape or incest, when the life of the mother is at risk or if there is a severe foetal anomaly. That last provision was struck down by the constitutional court last month, triggering a wave of protests nationwide. "We're seeing a surprising mobilization of the younger generation in particular in these protests. And in that group, support for a more liberal law is growing — but that's not the majority," said Adam Szostkiewicz, a commentator on political and religious issues.

"The majority had been silent for years, holding the belief that if the Church says so and politicians don't question it, then evidently that's just how it must be," he told AFP. Only 22 percent of Poles are in favour of abortion on demand, according to a survey published late last month by the independent Kantar pollsters. Sixty-two percent think it should be legal in certain cases, while 11 percent are in favour of a total ban. According to sociologist Katarzyna Zielinska, the attachment of Poles to Catholicism as well as conservative family and gender roles is rooted in the communist past. —AFP

## French police risk charges over black man's beating

**PARIS:** Four French police yesterday risked being charged over the beating and racial abuse of a black music producer that shocked France and intensified controversy over new security legislation. Tens of thousands protested across France Saturday against the security bill which would restrict the right of the press to publish the faces of on-duty police—with the rally in Paris ending in bitter clashes.



PARIS: Demonstrators clash with French riot police during a protest against the 'global security' draft law on Saturday. — AFP

## Belarus protesters take to the streets with new tactic

**MINSK:** Opposition protesters in Belarus took to the streets of capital Minsk yesterday in the latest of three months of demonstrations against the re-election of strongman president Alexander Lukashenko. Since an August election, Belarus has been gripped by massive protests that erupted after Lukashenko, 66, secured a sixth term as president of the ex-Soviet republic. The opposition believes the election was rigged and political novice Svetlana Tikhanovskaya - who ran against Lukashenko in the place of her jailed husband - was the true winner of the polls.

In recent weeks, authorities imposed an intense crackdown in which hundreds were detained and protesters were prevented from gathering in central Minsk. That prompted Lukashenko's opponents to change tactic, calling on supporters to create small gatherings in every district of the capital. According to local media, some twenty rallies were recorded yesterday across the city.

"Large columns of people have assembled in all districts of Minsk, without exception. The Lukashenko police are desperately rushing from district to district," said opposition Telegram channel Nexta Live that has helped coordinate the ongoing demonstrations. As in previous weeks, several metro stations in the city center were shut and mobile connection was limited.

Riot police were deployed in large numbers, with the Tut.by news website reporting the use of stun grenades and tear gas. Human rights group Viasna said that at least 20 people have been taken into police



MINSK: Opposition supporters hold former white-red-white flags of Belarus as they gather to protest against police violence and the Belarus presidential election results yesterday. — AFP

custody so far. "Everyone takes to the streets in their district and sees dozens, hundreds and thousands of supporters," Tikhanovskaya, 38, said in a video address posted on her Telegram channel on Saturday.

She added that Belarusians are a "proud, brave and peaceful people that have learned the price of freedom and will never agree to live without it". Tikhanovskaya fled to EU member Lithuania shortly after the August vote and has received support from several Western leaders, who refuse to recognise the election results. The European Union has slapped sanctions on Lukashenko and a number of his allies over election rigging and a violent crackdown on demonstrators.

Belarus police detained thousands of protesters in the first days of the demonstrations, with many reporting torture and abuse in custody. Lukashenko, who has the firm backing of Moscow, has refused to step down and instead has suggested reforms to the constitution to placate the opposition. — AFP

"We are shocked by the injuries suffered by our colleague Ameer al-Halbi and condemn the unprovoked violence," said Phil Chetwynd, AFP's global news director, demanding that the police investigate the incident. Police said 62 officers were injured at the demonstrations and 81 people arrested, with Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin saying the violence in the protests was "unacceptable". Authorities did not have a tally for the number of marchers injured, saying only that two people outside the capital had complained of police violence.

### 'Shame us'

Four police have been detained over the beating of Zecler, with three of them specifically probed for using racial violence as well as for making false statements. Following questioning by the police's National Police Inspectorate General (IGPN) they have now been handed over to the judicial authorities to decide on the next steps, which could see them being charged. They could face a fast-track trial or a more standard procedure which would see a case being opened and the men appear before an investigating magistrate. Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz is due to give an update on the measures to be taken against them from 5:00 pm.

Commentators say that the images of the beating first published by the Loopsider news site may never have been made public if the contentious Article 24 of the security legislation was made law. The bill would criminalize publishing images of on-duty police with the intent of harming their "physical or psychological integrity". It was passed by the National Assembly although it is awaiting Senate approval. The controversy over the law and police violence is developing into another crisis for the government as President Emmanuel Macron confronts the pandemic, its economic fallout and a host of problems on the international stage.—AFP

## Sydney records its hottest Nov night amid heatwave

**SYDNEY:** Sydney recorded its hottest November night as Australia's largest city suffered through a weekend heatwave that saw daytime temperatures peak above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). The overnight temperature did not drop below 25.3 degrees Celsius Saturday into Sunday in central Sydney, according to the meteorology bureau, making it the hottest November night since records began.

The temperature had already hit a scorching 30 degrees Celsius by 4:30 am Sunday, before reaching above 40 degrees for the second consecutive day. "New South Wales is in the midst of a severe heatwave with very warm conditions already being experienced yesterday, and today being a repeat of some of those conditions," said the Bureau of Meteorology's Agata Imielska.

Daytime records for November fell elsewhere in Australia's southeast, with the outback towns of Griffith and Mildura reaching 43.2 and 45.7 degrees Celsius respectively on Saturday. The heatwave saw bans on lighting fires imposed across large swathes of New South Wales (NSW) state, which was badly hit by catastrophic bushfires during the last southern hemisphere summer. A number of blazes broke out Sunday, including one on Sydney's western outskirts that the NSW Fire and Rescue Service said damaged a property.

More than 60 bushfires were still burning across the state, but most had been brought under control by firefighters as a southerly wind change led to a rapid drop in temperatures. It was the first burst of significant bushfire activity since the devastating 2019-2020 fires, which burned an area roughly the size of the United Kingdom and left 33 people dead as tens of thousands fled their homes. The fire season also killed or displaced nearly three billion animals and cost the economy an estimated US\$7 billion. The latest heatwave comes just two weeks after government scientists warned the fossil-fuel reliant country should brace for worse to come, predicting climate change will continue to exacerbate bushfires, droughts and cyclones in Australia.—AFP

## Sao Paulo, Rio elect mayors in runoffs

**SAO PAULO:** Brazil's biggest cities, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, began electing their next mayors yesterday as the country held municipal runoffs, the last polls before far-right President Jair Bolsonaro is up for reelection in 2022. In Sao Paulo, Brazil's economic capital, centrist incumbent Bruno Covas faces leftist challenger Guilherme Boulos, a leader of the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST). Boulos, 38, who is running for the upstart Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL), trails in the polls by about 10 points.

But he has momentum: he came from behind in the first round on November 15 to beat both Bolsonaro's candidate and a leftist rival from the more-established Workers' Party (PT). Young and charismatic, he is being called the new face of the Brazilian left, which is still reeling from the 2016 impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the jailing of ex-president and PT founder Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on corruption charges. The runoff took a twist two days before the vote when Boulos announced he had tested positive for the new coronavirus, forcing the cancellation of the candidates' final debate.

Covas, a cancer survivor, meanwhile has a powerful backer in Sao Paulo governor Joao Doria, his predecessor and mentor, a top contender to challenge Bolsonaro for the presidency. In June, Covas was also diagnosed with coronavirus. The virus has indelibly marked the municipal elections in the giant country of 212 million people. The polls were postponed by six weeks because of the pandemic, with the period between the first and second rounds reduced from four weeks to two.

The authorities are urging voters to bring their own pens, respect social distancing guidelines and disinfect their hands multiple times. Bolsonaro, who has downplayed the virus as a "little flu," faces criticism for his handling of the pandemic, which has killed more than 172,000 people in Brazil — the second-highest death toll worldwide, after the United States. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second city, opinion polls indicate incumbent Mayor Marcelo Crivella, an Evangelical pastor and Bolsonaro ally, is set to lose in a landslide to ex-mayor Eduardo Paes of the traditional right-wing Democrats party (DEM).

Other races to watch include the northeastern city of Recife - scene of a family feud on the left between cousins Joao Campos of the center-left Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) and Marilia Araes of the PT - and the southern city of Porto Alegre. There, another rising left-wing star, Manuela D'Avila of the Communist Party of Brazil, faces centrist candidate Sebastiao Melo, in a city rocked by violent protests following the first-round vote after two white security guards killed a black customer at a supermarket. In all, 57 cities across Brazil are holding mayoral runoffs. Results are expected from around 0100 GMT today.—AFP



## International

# Suicide bomber hits Afghan army base, kills 30 security personnel

## One of the bloodiest attacks in recent months

**GHAZNI:** A suicide car bomber struck an army base in Afghanistan yesterday killing at least 30 security personnel, officials said, in one of the bloodiest attacks targeting government forces in recent months. The attack occurred on the outskirts of Ghazni city, capital of the eastern province of Ghazni, which has seen regular fighting between the Taliban and government forces.

It came as the Afghan government and Taliban are engaged in peace talks, but a top official said such attacks have the potential to "harm the peace process" as violence continues to surge across the country. "Thirty bodies and 24 wounded people have been brought to hospital. All of them are security personnel," Baz Mohammad Hemat, director of Ghazni hospital said. Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said a suicide bomber had detonated a vehicle full of explosives. "The bomber drove a Humvee vehicle right inside the base and detonated it," Ghazni governor spokesman Wahidullah Jumazada said.

The base is located on a vast swath of arid land surrounded by mountains. Video footages showed military ambulances taking the dead and wounded to hospitals and cranes deployed to remove the debris from the site of the attack in the base. The ministry of defense gave a toll of 10 security personnel killed and seven wounded. The ministry is known to downplay tolls in attacks against its forces. No group has so far claimed the attack, and the Taliban who are fighting government forces

largely in rural areas have often not commented on deadly strikes since the peace talks commenced in September.

### 'Atmosphere of fear'

"Such terrorist attacks will create an atmosphere of fear, terror and pessimism among the Afghan people and will harm the peace process," said Abdullah Abdullah, who is leading the overall peace process in Afghanistan. "The increase in violence is not acceptable to people... and runs against the peace process, negotiations and reconciliation."

The Ghazni attack comes just days after two bombs killed 14 people in the historic city of Bamiyan, ending years of calm in the isolated town famous for its ancient Buddhist heritage. In another suicide car bomb attack yesterday, one civilian was killed and 20 others wounded in the southern city of Qalat in the province of Zabul, provincial police chief Hekmatullah Kochi told AFP. Yesterday's bombings marked the latest carnage in Afghanistan, where violence has surged since the start of peace talks on September 12 in Doha.

Brutal attacks have killed more than 50 people in Kabul in recent weeks, including two assaults on educational centers and a rocket attack. The three Kabul attacks were claimed by the Islamic State group, but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban - who denied any involvement. Peace talks had been bogged down by disputes on the agenda, the basic framework of discussions and



GHAZNI, Afghanistan: Security personnel are seen after a suicide car bomber struck an army base yesterday. —AFP

religious interpretations, but agreement has now been reached on all issues, according to sources close to the talks.

Late on Saturday, a spokesman for the government negotiating team, Nader Nadery, said on Twitter that there had been progress in talks but an overall agreement was still to be finalized. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

called for "expedited discussions" during a visit to Doha last week where he met negotiators from both sides. The Pentagon said earlier this month that it would soon pull out some 2,000 troops from Afghanistan, speeding up the timeline of a full withdrawal by May 2021 as agreed with the Taliban in a separate deal signed in February. —AFP

## Protesters target Thai royal guards unit in latest rally

**BANGKOK:** Hundreds of protesters marched on a barracks of Thailand's royal guards unit yesterday hoisting inflatable rubber ducks high above their heads, a whimsical show of force by a pro-democracy movement calling for curbs to the power of the monarchy. The yellow toy has been harnessed as a symbol by the protesters, whose leaders have emphasized peaceful tactics despite recent use of water cannon and tear gas by security forces.

But their demands to reform the kingdom's unassailable monarchy—once a taboo topic due to a draconian royal defamation law—have sent shockwaves through Thailand's political and ruling class. Yesterday's protest—the latest in a series of near-daily turnouts across Bangkok—was meant to target the 11th Infantry Regiment. Along with the 1st Infantry Regiment, the two units were placed under King Maha Vajiralongkorn's direct control last year—a move experts saw as a way for the monarch to assert more authority.

"These two regiments have been involved in cracking down on people in the past," said prominent protest leader Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak. "They have also played key roles in past coups." The black-clad protesters wore hair clips with yellow rubber ducks, while those on the frontlines donned gas masks and helmets—prepared for any potential skirmishes with authorities. The entrances, gates and walls of the barracks were covered with coils of barbed wire, while police in riot gear stood guard outside.

"The things used against us are bought using our taxes, so they are using our money to hurt us," Farnq, a 30-year-old graduate student, told AFP, declining to provide her full name. "As taxpayers, the army should be serving us, not the monarchy," she said. "Their duty should be to protect the people." The military has long positioned itself as a defender of Thailand's enormously wealthy royal family, who boast assets conservatively estimated to be some \$30-\$60 billion. In the name of protecting the king, the army has staged more than a dozen coups since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932. The most recent was in 2014.

Coup mastermind General Prayut Chan-O-Cha was head of a junta regime before renewing his lease on power in elections last year, which were governed under a military-scripted constitution.



BANGKOK: A line of pro-democracy protesters wearing helmets link hands as they walk in front of others carrying large inflatable ducks during a march to the 11th Infantry Regiment yesterday. —AFP

Besides royal reform, the protesters are also demanding Prayut's removal as premier and a rewrite of the constitution. So far scores of protesters have been charged with sedition, while at least a dozen prominent leaders were summoned for questioning on royal defamation allegations. Army Chief Narongphan Jitkaewtae has rejected coup rumors, saying the chance of another putsch was "less than zero". —AFP

## Armenians rally for soldiers missing in Karabakh fighting

**YEREVAN:** A thousand people took to the streets of the Armenian capital yesterday demanding the authorities take action to find soldiers missing in recent fighting with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The protesters, including several local celebrities, marched through Yerevan holding up photos of the missing soldiers and posters that read "Help return our captives". At the start of the march, the demonstrators read out a letter addressed to the Russian ambassador in Yerevan asking him to "personally intervene in the process" and pass on their request to Moscow.

The six weeks of fighting over the restive region were halted by a Russia-brokered peace deal that was signed by the ex-Soviet rivals on November 9. Under the document, Azerbaijan reclaimed swathes of territories that for three decades were held by Armenian separatists. The accord also provided for the exchange of prisoners and bodies. AFP journalists

reported that a smaller gathering of 30 people took place on Saturday in Karabakh's main city Stepanakert.

Demonstrators briefly blocked a main street in the city until their representatives were received by Arayik Harutyunyan, the president of the self-proclaimed republic. "We are calling for immediate action to resolve the problem. But the authorities say that it is not up to them, that it depends on the Azerbaijanis," 47-year-old Arsen Ghukasyan said after the meeting. Ghukasyan says he is searching for his son and brother who was last in touch in early October, less than a week after fresh clashes broke out over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave that declared independence from Baku during a war in the 1990s.

Another man, who is looking for his son, said the missing soldiers are "waiting for the Armenians to come and rescue them". "But we, parents, are without hope. We do not know



HADRUT, Azerbaijan: A burned armored personnel carrier and car are pictured in the countryside outside this town of Hadrut on Saturday. —AFP

how to save our children," the 47-year-old father added. Karabakh rights ombudsman Artak Beglaryan said on Friday that around 50-60 Armenian soldiers were being held as prisoners in Azerbaijan. Armenian authorities have reported more than

2,300 military casualties while Baku has not disclosed army losses. The International Committee of the Red Cross has overseen the exchange of casualties under the protection of Russian peacekeepers who have been deployed to the region. —AFP

## South Korea bans year-end parties, music lessons

**SEOUL:** South Korean authorities announced a ban on year-end parties and some music lessons yesterday and said public saunas and some cafes must also close after coronavirus infections surged at their fastest pace since the early days of the pandemic. South Korea has been one of the world's coronavirus mitigation success stories but spikes in infections have reappeared relentlessly, triggering alarm in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

Authorities reported 450 new infections yesterday after more than 500 cases were recorded for three days in a row, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said. What authorities are calling a third wave of infections is spreading at the fastest rate in nearly nine months, driven by outbreaks at military facilities, a sauna, a high school and churches.

Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said restrictions would be tightened on gatherings and activities seen as prone to virus transmission, especially in the capital Seoul and surrounding urban areas. "Year-end events and parties hosted by hotels, party rooms, guest houses and other accommodation facilities will be banned outright," Chung told a briefing after meeting health officials.

Saunas and steam-bath rooms with a high risk of mass infection would also be banned as would the teaching of wind musical instruments and singing, he

said. For the rest of the country, social distancing rules would also be tightened from tomorrow, he said. Chung said the government was talking to parliament about the possibility of new relief funds for households and businesses, the third this year as the economy struggles.

"Our assessment is that we need the third crisis support fund ... The government will come up with a conclusion on this after discussing with both the ruling and opposition parties," he said. President Moon Jae-in toured a Seoul high school on Sunday that was being prepared as a test center to accommodate students in quarantine on Dec 3, when almost 500,000 students sit for the annual college entrance exam. Moon toured classrooms where desks were equipped with partitions and hand sanitizers to host five test takers in quarantine. —Reuters

## Indian farmers defiant as Modi tries to calm anger

**NEW DELHI:** Thousands of Indian farmers, angry over reform of the agriculture sector, held a third day of protests on the outskirts of the capital yesterday, blocking roads into the city and defying a government appeal to move to a designated site. The government on Saturday invited farmers' union leaders for talks on new legislation to deregulate agricultural but that has not calmed farmers' anger over what many see "anti-farm laws", and their action appeared to be spreading.

"We will stay put here today," said Rakesh Tikait, spokesman of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, one of more than 30 protesting unions, as he and his members blocked a road on the eastern approaches to Delhi. The farmers object to legislation introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in September that would let farmers sell their produce anywhere, including to big corporate buyers like Walmart, not just at government-regulated wholesale markets where growers are assured of a minimum price.

Small growers worry they will be left vulnerable to big business and could eventually lose price support for staples such as wheat and rice. Modi sought to allay farmers' concerns yesterday. "From these reforms, farmers will get new rights and opportunities," he said in his monthly radio address. But one farm union leader said many protesters were demanding that the government withdraw the laws. "The farmers' leaders will meet later on to decide their response to the government," he said, referring to the government's call for talks.

The protests began with farmers from the northern states of Haryana and Punjab on the outskirts of New Delhi on Friday, when police fired tear gas and water cannon in a bid to disperse them. But instead farmers from the neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh joined in over the weekend, blocking roads to the east of the capital. Media reported protests by farmers in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Saturday. Prices of fresh produce prices at wholesale markets in the city began to tick up and commuters have faced travel disruption. —Reuters

## Arrested Salvador gang members paraded for cameras

**SAN SALVADOR:** Hundreds of handcuffed Salvadoran gang members were displayed before assembled reporters on Saturday, a vivid show of President Nayib Bukele's policy of confronting them and the violent crime they are accused of committing. Some 600 members of El Salvador's Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang and its rival Barrio 18 made up the bulk of the detentions that were announced on Friday, following a one-week US-backed round-up of Central American gangs that also netted arrests in neighboring Guatemala and Honduras.

The detainees paraded before the press on Saturday, a common tactic that predates Bukele, have been charged with murder, kidnapping and human trafficking, among other crimes, according to officials. In April, Bukele provoked the ire of rights groups when he published on social media jarring pictures of hundreds of semi-naked jailed gang members, pressed tightly together in rows, despite the raging pandemic. —Reuters



# Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020

## Zain KSA: Strategic transformation opens door to new era of growth

### Remaining offer of priority shares oversubscribed by 469%

RIYADH/KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa announces the successful completion of its subsidiary Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) capital restructuring. This follows the high demand by institutional investors in the remaining priority shares that were oversubscribed by an unprecedented 469 percent.

These last steps came as part of Zain KSA's plan to restructure its capital, which included the reduction of the capital and then raising it, through the offering of priority rights shares. This contributed to extinguishing most of the telco's accumulated losses, paying part of the Murabaha financing, and capitalizing part of other dues. The transaction paves the way for the company to enter a new era of strategic transformation of its financial performance.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Vice-Chairman and CEO of Zain Group said, "The successful completion of the company's capital restructuring and the massive demand in the remaining priority rights subscription reflects the confidence of shareholders and investors in Zain KSA's operational strategy and future growth plans, reinforced by the company's return to profitability over the last three years. The transaction enhances Zain KSA's capabilities to expand its strategic investments in the Kingdom's telecommunications sector, growing its profitability and paving the way for dividends."

Zain KSA's management is targeting the further growth of its operations in



Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

the areas of digital innovation, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence, with the view to becoming the preferred digital service provider for individuals and businesses.

#### 5G expansion

The operator is set to continue its expansion of 5G into new cities, as well as increasing coverage in current locations, raising the quality of services provided in a manner that ensures the superiority of the company locally and internationally. The capital restructuring process coincided with Zain KSA maintaining its profitability for the ninth consecutive quarter, after its conversion to profit three years ago. The company

recorded net profits during the first nine months of 2020 amounting to SAR 224 million, while total revenues for the third quarter of this year amounted to SAR 1,928 million, compared to SAR 1,889 million, up 2 percent from the previous quarter.

Zain KSA's accumulated losses have continued to decline based on the net profit achieved during the third quarter of 2020, with the capital restructuring having taken place during the fourth quarter of the year, and thus, most of the accumulated losses were amortized to SAR 34 million. Hence, since the capital restructuring, the company's share price has increased to reach its highest level this year with a value of over SAR 13 per

- Bader Al-Kharafi: A return to profitability over last three years enhances Zain KSA's strategic growth, profitability and future outlook

- Zain KSA: The preferred digital service for businesses and individuals

- Growth focused on digital innovation, cloud computing, IoT and AI

share, compared to just SAR 6 last year. Zain KSA recently announced its success in signing an agreement to reschedule the joint Murabaha financing with a consortium of several banks, with an estimated value of SAR 3.85 billion on preferential terms. This agreement extends for a period of five years to 2025. The funds will be drawn down according to the company's requirements, at a much lower interest than before, and with better commercial terms. In addition, this agreement includes working capital facilities worth SAR 1 billion until 2025, which will provide additional liquidity to finance the company's business growth plans.

In the last 12 months, Zain has launched one of the largest 5G networks in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and has since become the only operator in the Kingdom to cover all administrative regions, with its network being

judged as the best performing one in 12 of the 13 administrative regions, according to a report issued by the Kingdom's Communications and Information Technology Commission.

Zain KSA also recently announced the launch of the frequency integration feature for its 5G network, becoming the first telecom operator in the world to provide this feature to customers, enabling connection speeds of up to 2.4 gigabits per second. Recently, Zain KSA was awarded three accolades at the 14th Telecom Review Leaders' Summit, for the Best 5G Infrastructure Deployment, Best 5G User Growth, and Best Cloud Provider. Earlier in the year, Zain KSA gained international recognition by being recognized as running the fastest fixed Internet in Saudi Arabia by Ookla, owner of SpeedTest, the globally acclaimed Internet speeds measuring website.

## OPEC and allies mull extending output cuts

VIENNA: The OPEC oil producers' club and its allies will hold a virtual meeting today and tomorrow to finalize an expected extension to production cuts as the coronavirus pandemic continues to weigh on global demand.

The meeting comes as the oil industry hopes to turn a page on a disastrous year which saw the cartel forced to adopt drastic cuts in response to the cratering of demand caused by the pandemic.

Member states want to avoid a repeat of the collapse in prices seen in April. According to the deal reached in that month, the current cut of 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd) is meant to be eased to 5.8 million bpd as of January 2021, but most observers expect this to be extended by between three and six months. Key players within the grouping have hinted in recent weeks that such a move may be on

the cards despite positive news on the development of vaccines against the virus by several pharmaceutical companies.

AstraZeneca, Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna have all shared encouraging trial results from their candidate vaccines in recent weeks, providing a lifeline for the oil demand. However, while the effects of a vaccine will play out over the longer term, OPEC and its allies will be focused on supporting prices in the first and possibly the second quarter of 2021.

#### Tensions and price wars

While an extension of the cuts is the most likely scenario, there is always the possibility of discord arising among the 23 countries involved. The memory of the debacle of a meeting in March this year is still fresh, when Saudi Arabia and key ally Russia failed to reach agreement and spent the next month engaged in a fratricidal price war.

In mid-November the United Arab Emirates displayed reluctance at the prospect of fully applying the cuts past the end of the year. Then there is the sensitive topic of whether all members are currently sticking to the output quotas

that have already been assigned to them.

Those exceeding their allotted output-foremost among them Iraq and Nigeria-regularly come in for a scolding from Prince Abdelaziz bin Salman, energy minister of OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia.

#### Falling US output

The cartel's main focus is on crude oil prices, which have returned to roughly their pre-pandemic levels of between 45 and 50 dollars per barrel for both the US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), and Europe's Brent North Sea contracts. But members also have to keep a keen eye on production figures outside the bloc as well as how much oil is currently being stored at any one time.

Output from the world's biggest producer, non-OPEC member the US, has fallen from the historic highs at the beginning of the year to around 11 million bpd now. The trend is unlikely to be reversed as victorious Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has committed to modest curbs on fracking. Within its ranks, OPEC will also have to pay attention to developments in the three members which have been granted



exemptions from quotas-Libya, Iran and Venezuela.

Libya's production had been almost wiped out by civil conflict but spiked since October and now stands at over a million bpd, according to the country's National Oil Corporation (NOC). In the longer term,

Iran's offer on the oil market may also increase if the incoming US administration pursues a policy of detente with Tehran and relaxes sanctions. That would lead hundreds of thousands of barrels coming on to market, exerting a fresh downward pressure on prices. — AFP

## Sudan's inflation soars amid fears of hyperinflation

CAIRO: Inflation in Sudan has risen to one of the highest levels in the world, and the country risks slipping into hyperinflation unless it gets its budget deficit and money supply under control, economists say. The runaway prices have worsened an economic crisis for millions of ordinary Sudanese and imperiled a political transition under a military-civilian power sharing deal.

The government has run up enormous budget deficits by subsidizing the cost of fuel, then financed the deficits by printing money. This has debased the currency, weakening it against other currencies and driving inflation up to annual 230 percent in October, according to the state statistics bureau.

The skyrocketing prices have led many consumers to spend their salaries quickly, particularly on durable items that hold their value. Idrees Abdelmoniem, who works in marketing at an engineering company in Khartoum, said he had snapped up car spare parts and furniture, but was not as quick with food and drink, whose prices were not increasing as fast.

"If I have something I want to buy outside of the monthly house supplies, I buy it as soon as I get money, and I won't even try to haggle because tomorrow it could be double the price," he said.

Central bank figures show the scale of money printing by the authorities with the M2 money supply measure increasing by over 50 percent in the year to end-



Inflation in Sudan jumped to 99 percent because of rising food prices, official figures showed Saturday. — AFP

September. In September alone M2 rose by 7.13 percent. Steve Hanke, a hyperinflation specialist at Johns Hopkins University, calculated that on a monthly basis, the inflation rate has accelerated to about 24 percent a month, dangerously high, but still below hyperinflation, generally defined as 50 percent a month.

He placed Sudan among the five countries with the highest inflation.

"It's pretty scary," he said, adding that it was hard to predict what direction inflation would go from here.

#### Subsidies

A US decision to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism has provided little immediate relief from the economic crisis and the country has turned to the International Monetary Fund for help. Sudan is counting on a reform program drawn up with the lender to help get control of the deficit, exacerbated by decades of US economic sanctions and by economic mismanagement under President Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted in a popular uprising in April of last year. — Reuters

## Cyprus olive farmer vows change to face climate challenge

AKAKI, Cyprus: Standing in her olive grove in Cyprus, Elena Sampson sighs at the sight of hundreds of barren trees and vows to tackle climate change after another scorching year. The first of several heatwaves in 2020 descended in May, the flowering season for her 2,500 olive and citrus trees in Akaki, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) outside the Mediterranean island's capital Nicosia.

"This year the heatwave struck at the exact time that the olive trees were flowering, and it was not just a heatwave of a couple of days," said the 38-year-old Greek Cypriot. "We were watering, watering, but we didn't manage to save the blossoms," Sampson said. "This year, maybe 40 (of her 1,200 olive) trees had olives-Nothing! Nothing!" Harvested for millennia on Cyprus, olives are at the heart of the local culture and trees now cover 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres) of its land, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

More than 19,000 tons of olive oil were produced in 2018. But olive oil and other sectors of Cypriot agriculture face the threat of climate change, Adriana Bruggeman, an associate professor at the Cyprus Institute, told AFP. "Not only droughts, but also increasing temperatures and heatwaves affect the flowering, fruit set and ripening of crops," she said. Although olive trees are generally resistant to drought, they do need water during the flowering season in the



Elena Sampson, an owner of an olive grove and farm, sits by an olive tree with a fungus growing nearby, as she gives an interview at her premises in the village of Akaki in central Cyprus. — AFP

spring. But Bruggeman warned that some semi-arid areas of Cyprus now face the threat of becoming fully arid by 2050 because of global warming.

Official figures show average annual rainfall has fallen to 470 millimeters (18.5 inches) since 1971, down from 540 mm (21 inches) between 1902 and 1970. On top of that, heatwaves are growing more common and have squeezed the duration of springtime. This year alone, the mercury soared above 42 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on May 17 and the island experienced its highest ever recorded average daily temperatures for July, August and September. "We know that climate change will make the region hotter and drier... We need to adapt to this change and make our agricultural and semi-natural ecosystems more resilient," said Bruggeman. — AFP



Business

# From small businesses to farmers, middle India is driving demand

## Carmaker Maruti Suzuki's rural sales up 10% in July-Sept

**NEW DELHI/MUMBAI:** Manish Mehra, owner of Washex Hospitality, an industrial laundry service, recently flew from Delhi to Jodhpur, a city in north-western India, to win a contract to service a large, government-run hospital - a move essential to kickstarting his business.

"For a new relationship it is essential to know each other before you can establish the trust and confidence to work online and that need is higher in case of government departments," said Mehra, who had to stay for a week in a Jodhpur hotel. Increased demand for air travel and hotel stays by small business owners like Mehra, accompanied by a rise in rural incomes and spending after two good monsoons, is helping the pandemic-hit Indian economy slowly recover. Government data released on Friday showed the economy shrank 7.5 percent in the July-September quarter, performing better than analysts' expectation of an 8.8 percent contraction as lockdowns were eased and some pent-up demand was met. In the April-June period, the economy shrank 23.9 percent.



### Farm income revs up demand for tractors

Annual growth of 3.4 percent in farm sector and 0.6 percent in manufacturing during the September quarter has raised hopes of an early recovery and some service sectors such as trade, hotels and transport contracted at a much slower pace compared with the April-June period. Farmers, benefiting from a bumper crop, are lapping up tractors while demand for personal vehicles, due to a lack of public transport and the need for safer travel options, has boosted sales of cars and motorcycles.

There has also been an uptick in goods and services, tax collections and higher energy consumption.

A recovery is taking shape and it has been led

by the manufacturing sector which has moved from near annihilation in the July quarter to rebound mode, said Yuvika Singhal, an economist at QuantEco Research. "Until there is a stronger recovery in high contact service sectors, which make up 60 percent of the GDP, agriculture and manufacturing are expected to carry the growth," said Singhal, adding that India is still growing on a lower GDP base and it will take more than a year to recover lost output.

### Slow start for hotels, airlines

A string of Marriot hotels in industrial towns like Sriperumbudur, Visakhapatnam and Nasik are operating at 50 percent to 60 percent occupancy with the bulk of guests working with domestic manufacturing companies, said Ashish Jakhanwala, CEO of hospitality firm SAMHI which owns the properties. Meanwhile SAMHI's hotel in the tech-city of Bengaluru, that mainly depends on large corporates, is filling only 20 percent to 30 percent of rooms.

"Demand from large corporates and international travel will take longer to recover. Hotels catering to public sector and infrastructure companies are doing better," said Jakhanwala.

Since the end of May, when the government lifted a ban on flights, monthly domestic passenger traffic has more than doubled from 2 million in June to over 5 million in October. But that is still down from about 12 million a year ago.

India's biggest carrier IndiGo and rival Vistara are seeing an uptick in business travel but to a much smaller extent than before. "Much of it is from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or small business owners who cannot afford to sit at home," said Vinod Kannan, chief commercial officer at Vistara, a joint venture between Singapore



**BANGALORE:** Laborers winnow millet grain to separate it from its chaff at a farm on the outskirts of Bangalore on Saturday. —AFP

Airlines and Tata Group.

SMEs have contributed to a 35 percent to 40 percent recovery in hotel bookings compared with pre-COVID times and between 27 percent and 32 percent recovery in flights, according to online travel agency MakeMyTrip.

### Rural revival robust

In the hinterlands, the impact of COVID-19 has not been as severe as in the big cities and farmers have benefited from good rainfall for two consecutive years leading to a bumper harvest and adequate conditions for winter-sown crops. This is driving up sales for tractor makers

like Mahindra & Mahindra.

Lack of adequate and safe public transport in small towns and villages has also pushed up demand for cars and motorcycles. Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest carmaker, had a 10 percent growth in rural sales between July and September versus a 4 percent rise overall, led by small, entry-level models, said Shashank Srivastava, executive director, marketing and sales.

"While Bharat (rural India) is leading India in terms of a recovery, it cannot carry India," he said, adding that steady, long-term demand will depend on improving economic factors, growing incomes and a rebound in urban markets. —Reuters

## Desolate WSahara truck stop doubles as 'gateway to Africa'

**RABAT:** It might be a dusty frontier truck stop in the far south of the disputed Western Sahara, but locals call Guerguerat Morocco's "gateway to Africa". On the border with Mauritania, the remote outpost consists of three motels, three cafes, three grocery stores, two gas stations and a hairdresser.

"There is nothing else here," says Aziz Bouldiane, a Moroccan who runs one of the grocery stores.

Bouldiane has set up tables outside his shop to serve coffee to truck drivers and passing travellers, as Moroccan customs officials check heavy goods vehicles nearby. The border crossing in the rocky arid area has become a source of friction.

Rabat on November 13 launched a military operation in a UN-patrolled buffer zone along the border after it said the pro-independence Polisario Front had been blocking road passage for around three weeks. The Polisario, which says the border road was built in violation of a 1991 UN-sponsored ceasefire deal, declared the truce null and void

after the Moroccan intervention.

Western Sahara, a vast swathe of desert on Africa's Atlantic coast, is a disputed former Spanish colony. Morocco controls around three-quarters of the territory, including its phosphate deposits and its fishing waters.

### Gateway to Africa

Rabat has extended a 2,700 kilometer (1,700-mile) defensive sand wall in the territory to secure the road to the border and has consolidated the last section of the route-little more than a sandy track.

Moroccan Prime Minister Saad-Eddine El Othmani visited Guerguerat on Friday for the first time. The military operation was carried out "in the interest of Africa, Morocco" and Europe, he said. El Fekir Khattat, a local council official, proudly described the area as "Morocco's gateway to Africa".

"The border post carries important economic weight and generates sizeable revenues," he said.

The army's intervention "will bolster its economic attractiveness", he said. Khattat said he was counting on the construction of two industrial zones "to develop commercial activity" along the highway and create jobs in the sparsely-populated area. Rabat has already undertaken several large infrastructure projects in the Western Sahara. In 2017, the year Morocco officially rejoined the



**RABAT:** Workers unload goods from trucks near the border in Guerguerat located in the Western Sahara after the intervention of the royal Moroccan armed forces in the area. —AFP

African Union, King Mohammed VI released some \$8 billion for investments to transform the region into an "economic hub".

But the Polisario Front says its people's natural resources in the Western Sahara are being "pilaged". One of the projects, worth around \$1 billion, was to develop the "National 1" north-south highway that runs through the territory. Another is to turn the port of Dakhla into a "regional maritime hub" to serve Morocco and West Africa, along with Spain's Canary Islands. —AFP

## COVID dampens cheer for Black small businesses

**LOS ANGELES:** It's been a rough year for Black-owned small businesses in the United States, and the latest surge in coronavirus cases suggests a festive season without much celebration. "Black Friday" normally kicks off the holiday shopping season the morning after Thanksgiving. But rising coronavirus cases have prompted fresh restrictions in Los Angeles and elsewhere.

The new rules mean Hotville Chicken, a south Los Angeles restaurant specializing in "Nashville-style" spicy dishes, will have to shut its outdoor eating space after already closing the dining room. "It's going to hurt," said owner Kim Prince, who expects the business should pull through with pickup and delivery.

Many stores like "One of a Kind Hats" are still open, but struggling. "It's really slow," said owner Meeka Robinson Davis, who estimates sales of her custom-made hats are down about 70 percent because her cliental no longer needs items for church,

weddings or other gatherings. "Where are people going? They're not going anywhere."

At least three businesses on Davis' block have shuttered as she turns to personal savings and grant funds to stay afloat. Between March 1 and August 31, 163,735 businesses on Yelp closed across the US, with about 60 percent permanently shut, the website said in September. Non-white businesses have been hit harder. An August Federal Reserve of New York paper said the number of Black small businesses fell by 41 percent compared with a 17 percent drop in white-owned businesses. Factors behind this difference include the more severe health toll of coronavirus among communities of color and weaker banking relationships that positioned Black companies unfavorably for federal small business supports, according to the Fed paper.

"COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues and businesses in the hardest hit communities have witnessed huge disparities in access to federal relief funds and a higher rate of business closures," said Claire Kramer Mills, assistant vice president at the New York Fed. Pinning down the total number of Los Angeles casualties is difficult, because some companies have relocated or scaled back to bare bones, said Joe Rouzan III, chief executive of the non-profit Vermont Slauson Economic Development



**LOS ANGELES:** Customer Tamara Jenkins tries on a hat with Meeka Robinson Davis, owner of One-Of-A-Kind Hats, as Davis' daughter Christiana Davis looks on, at the store in the Windsor Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles, California. It's been a rough year for Black-owned small businesses, and the latest surge in coronavirus cases suggests a festive season without much celebration. —AFP

Corporation (VSEDC) in Los Angeles. "Not until the dust settles with Covid will we see the full effect, but we know there's going to be some serious damage," he said. "When you look at Covid, we haven't even peaked yet." —AFP

Britain and globally. "Taken together with the huge amounts of policy stimulus provided this year, this in my view leave risks to the economic outlook more evenly balanced than for some time, including risks to inflation over the medium term," he said.

Britain's most recent consumer price index showed inflation at 0.7 percent. Haldane focused most of his speech on central bank independence and said the blurring of the distinction in some people's minds between governments and central banks had been reflected partly in a fall in public trust in central banks. "These developments underscore the crucial importance of efforts to improve public understanding of the economy, financial system and build trust in central banks' role in supporting both," he said. —Reuters

## BoE's Haldane sees inflation risks as economies rebound

**LONDON:** Bank of England Chief Economist Andy Haldane said inflation could rise by more than expected as progress on COVID-19 vaccines and huge amounts of stimulus raised the chances of a swift economic bounce-back. "As the economic recovery gathers pace next year, it will be important central banks remain squarely focussed on their core medium-term price

## Global stocks bull run to race on, spurred by cheap cash, vaccine hopes

**LONDON/BENGALURU:** The blistering rally in global stock markets is set to continue for at least six months, albeit at a shallower pace, amid hopes more cheap cash and a COVID-19 vaccine allow economies to heal and corporate earnings to recover, a Reuters poll found. With the coronavirus pandemic sweeping across the globe, economic activity ground to a halt as governments forced citizens to stay home and businesses to close, disrupting supply chains.

That collapse led to unprecedented levels of fiscal and monetary stimulus and with that cheap money supply set to continue, around 75% of respondents to an additional question said the bull run would last at least six months. Over half of those respondents in the Nov 12-24 poll said at least a year. "The rebound in equities from March to October was the initial 'hope'-driven phase of a new bull market, led mainly by valuation expansion as profits collapsed, while we are now moving into the longer 'growth' phase as profits start to recover," noted analysts at Goldman Sachs.

"Negative real interest rates should continue to support the bull market in 2021." While around 1.4 million people have died globally from COVID-19 and the Northern hemisphere is experiencing a second wave, expectations were pinned on effective vaccine developments, and around 80% of respondents said their forecasts were based on the progress.

The tough lockdowns imposed by governments put a big dent in company profits but hopes a vaccine will allow some return to normality led around two-thirds of respondents to say corporate earnings would return to pre-COVID-19 levels within a year. So while nine of the 17 indexes Reuters polled around 170 strategists on were expected to end this year down from 2019 closes, most were predicted to end 2021 above pre-pandemic levels - with some significantly higher.

The range of forecasts suggests a higher proportion of strategists expect the indexes polled to rise from here by mid and end-2021. "Equities are set to rise further. They increased already appreciably since March notwithstanding the second wave of new COVID-10 cases thanks to huge policy support, both fiscal and monetary," said Michele Morganti at Generali Investments.

### Run on

The S&P 500 has staged a 60 percent recovery roughly from March lows and will rise over 9 percent between now and the end of 2021, finishing next year at 3,900. US stocks were nervous ahead of the presidential election this month but investors were upbeat about Democrat Joe Biden's win, a feeling likely to linger if a divided Congress means limited regulatory changes and Biden's Cabinet picks are market-friendly.

North of the border, Canada's main stock index is also set to extend its rally over the coming year, as the likely vaccine rollouts bolster prospects for the economically-sensitive financial and resource stocks that dominate the index. European stocks were forecast to flirt near record highs next year, driven by expectations of a strong bounce in corporate confidence and profitability as the European Central Bank looks set to keep stimulus flowing. —Reuters



# 29 scholars from KU sound alarm over Kuwait's economic future

## KuwaitImpakt.com paper; 'Before It's Too Late: A Vision to Reform Kuwaiti Economy'

**KUWAIT:** KuwaitImpakt.com published yesterday a new paper authored by 29 distinguished Kuwait University scholars titled "Before It's Too Late: A Vision to Reform the Kuwaiti Economy". The paper proposes alternative scopes of analysis for the existing economic imbalances in Kuwait and offers solutions for future economic reforms that enable development and safeguards the welfare status of Kuwait and its future generations.

The paper carefully investigates the foundations that led to the current instability and imbalance of the Kuwaiti economy. It identifies the dependency on oil, the fiscal imbalance, a weak educational system, and the inflated public sector as key factors. How the paper differs from the prevailing discourse is that, rather than examining the economy as a disconnected entity, it focuses on the symptoms and impact of these imbalances in all aspects of the socio-economic landscape.

The authors outline five structural imbalances in the Kuwaiti economy that were deepened by accumulating crises, including:

1. Heavy Dependence on Oil Revenues accounts for 91% of Kuwait's exports
2. Public Finance Imbalance exemplified by the accumulated budget deficits since 2015 amounting to KD 28 billion
3. Labor Market Imbalance caused by a bloated public sector, and a low skilled private sector dominated by cheap labor
4. Poor student rankings on international standardized tests as a result of a Weak Education System
5. Demographic Imbalance as a net result of other imbalances

"This is not the first time that the urgent need for economic reform has been floated," said Dhari S Al-

Rasheed, PhD, a signatory to the paper, "but what we seek for this vision is a comprehensive treatment of the economic imbalance that targets the root of the problem rather than its symptoms. It isn't suitable to deal with the economic sectors as separate units while neglecting the spillover effects of public policies among them."

Shamlan W Al-Bahar, PhD, another signatory to the paper added: "This is not the first time that the urgent need for economic reform has been raised and discussed. However, what we seek in this vision is a comprehensive treatment of the economic imbalance that targets the roots of the problem rather than its symptoms. It would be a mistake to deal with economic imbalances as separate units while neglecting the spillover effects of public policies across them. Our aim is not to propose short-sighted solutions that disregard their long-term effects, or superficially associating them to the state's financial situation, so that the calls for reform are not contingent on the price of oil."

"Before It's Too Late" sets forth a corrective vision divided into five axes that should be taken as an integrated approach, it includes:

1. A private sector with added value to the national economy.
2. Openness to neighboring regional markets by expanding trade relationships.
3. Small and medium enterprises that expand the economic base and create national job opportunities.
4. Defining the concept of "future generations", clarifying the objectives of their reserve, and defining a general framework for the timeline and the circumstances that warrant withdrawing from it.
5. Periodically assessing the use of state-owned industrial and agricultural plots to prevent sublet-

ting and use contrary to their intended economic objectives.

6. Reforming social and consumer subsidies by allocating them equitably based on income level.

7. Modifying the salary scale in the public sector to reflect the productive value of each job and achieve competitiveness with the private sector.

8. Imposing a tax on businesses for employing foreign workers, and directing their revenues to incentivize and train Kuwaitis to work in the private sector.

9. Increasing the research budget and raising the standards for obtaining it.

10. Establishing a public commission to implement the immigration and residency policy and regulate the recruitment of foreign workers and their rights and obligations.

The paper was authored by 29 distinguished scholars who specialize in economic and business administration at the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University. They were at the academic frontlines during the 2008 economic crash, and have continued to monitor the influx of data and research that has emerged since and its continued consequences on Kuwait. Their ethos is based on concrete economic and scientific research that offers well-rounded and viable solutions. The 29 scholars behind this vision are:

- Nawaf M. Al-Abduljader, PhD
- Abdulrahman M Al-Taweel, PhD
- Shamlan W Al-Bahar, PhD
- Dhari S Al-Rasheed, PhD
- Saoud A Al-Thaqib, PhD
- Barrak G. Al-Gharabli, PhD
- Ahmed M Ashkanani, PhD
- Yaqoub A Baqir, PhD
- Mohammad N Al-Marzouq, PhD



- Sulaiman H Al-Bader, PhD
- Abdulrahman A Al-Rifaie, PhD
- Hessa H Al-Ajjan, PhD
- Salman A Al-Jazzaf, PhD
- Saad A Al-Nahid, PhD
- Ahmed F Al-Qassar, PhD
- Abdullah S Al-Awadhi, PhD
- Mohammad I Askar, PhD
- Yousef J. Abdulsalam, PhD
- Abrar A Abul, PhD
- Ali E Dasthi, PhD
- Sayed M Al-Mahri, PhD
- Abrar R Al-Hassan, PhD
- Hussain A Ali, PhD
- Sarah E Khalaf, PhD
- Dalal S Ahmed, PhD
- Zainab M Al-Bader, PhD
- Mohammad J Ghom, PhD
- Ebrahim K Al-Ebrahim, PhD
- Asma'a A Al-Fadhel, PhD

The paper can be downloaded from [KuwaitImpakt.com](http://KuwaitImpakt.com)

## Huawei Mate 40 Pro is the ultimate 5G performance King

**KUWAIT:** Huawei's latest flagship the Huawei Mate 40 Pro is not only commended for its ultimate 5G performance, which is complemented by Huawei's own top of the line Huawei Kirin 9000 5G chipset. The flagship also comes with a futuristic Space Ring design, stellar videography, fastest Huawei SuperCharge solutions, long lasting battery, innovative and intelligent interactions and of course solid privacy and security features. We are going to take a detailed look at the Ultimate 5G Performance King with Stellar Videography and come up with an honest verdict of what we think.

### (Huawei Mate 40 Pro)

#### 5G powerful performance and an iconic design

When you hear "world's first 5nm 5G chipset", you would probably ask yourself, how efficient could this chipset be? Well, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro comes with Huawei Kirin 9000 chipset, which is not only more powerful and power efficient than its predecessor, it also ensures an impactful, high speed experience for all your online streaming, downloading, gaming and uploading of huge chunk of files that can all be smoothly done at once and on the go! In terms of design, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro continues in the Huawei Mate Series' focus on outstanding designs. At the back, the flagship comes with a futuristic Space Ring Design that is reminiscent of interstellar portals in sci-fi films. Upfront, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro comes with the 88° Huawei Horizon Display that provides a wider viewing area and a more immersive visual experience for video calls, movies, games etc. it also features physical and virtual volume buttons for your convenience. Lastly, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro is water and dust resistant with an IP68 rating. Available in Black and White, as well as an enchanting Mystic Silver

#### Extraordinary Videography

The Ultra Vision camera system on the Huawei Mate 40 Pro is co-engineered with Leica to provide the best camera solution possible. The Ultra Vision



Cine Camera comprises of two Cine Cameras at the front and back that support 100-degree ultra-wide angle cinema-like shots in addition to Super Sensing Wide Camera, Ultra Wide Cine Camera, Periscope Telephoto Camera and a Laser Sensor. Additionally, with features like XD Fusion HDR Video, Steady Shot, Front and Rear Dual-View Video, Tracking Shot, Audio Focus, Audio Zoom and more - you can ensure memorable moments are recorded anytime and anywhere! Up front, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro features an Ultra Vision Selfie Camera. Which is the perfect vlog tool. You can also spice up your vlogs with Super slow-motion video recording, which shoots footage at 240fps.

#### Powerhouse Battery with Huawei SuperCharge Abilities

The Huawei Mate 40 Pro has a 4400 mAh (typical value) long-lasting 5G battery life that can power through your hectic day without bailing out on you. Moreover, this humongous battery is rapidly fed with a 66W Huawei Wired SuperCharge and a 55W Huawei Wireless SuperCharge. These smart fast charging solution ensure the battery's health and longevity are never compromised.

#### Innovative and unique intelligent interactions

The Huawei Mate 40 Pro comes with EMUI 11 that delivers an enhanced cross-device user experience, i.e. Smart Gesture Control, which allows total hands-free control of your device. Simply hover your hand over the device to wake it up or navigate your phone by swiping left, right, up and down. There is also an air press gesture for answering calls. The all-new dynamic Eyes on Display on the HUAWEI Mate



40 Pro can be activated at a glance, with fully customizable interactive displays hosting all the information you need from your phone. Here is a trick: improvements made to Multi-screen Collaboration bring your smartphone closer to your PC. Multi-tasking is now better, with support for up to three concurrent active apps, so you do not have to flip between screens to access different apps.

#### Safe and secure

Based on the Trusted Execution Environment (TEE), Huawei Mate 40 Pro bolsters the security of the device in aspects that are applicable to various usage scenarios. The security features in place ensure that only you can access your data, providing you with comprehensive protection. Dual biometric authentication including 3D Face Unlock and features an in-screen fingerprint reader including enables quick and secure identification.

To indulge you with a wide range of mobile apps, the Huawei Mate 40 Pro comes pre-installed with Huawei AppGallery - Huawei's official app store with a constantly growing list of apps, where you can simply browse and download the apps you need. Complementing AppGallery is Petal Search, the search tool offers Huawei users an open gateway to a million apps. You can also download news, movies, images and so much more directly from your home screen, offering you a more convenient way which ultimately saves you time.

#### The verdict

After looking at the Huawei Mate 40 Pro, it is safe to say this is the flagship smartphone we have all been waiting for.



Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Bibeau also announced an acceleration in disbursements of the Can\$1.75 billion pledged in 2019 to compensate dairy farmers over eight years.

More than 10,000 farmers had received a first aid tranche of Can\$345 million last year.

The remaining Can\$1.4 billion is to be paid to them over the next three years. Bibeau cited an

example payment, saying the owner of an 80-cow farm would receive compensation of about Can\$38,000 per year. Bibeau also reiterated the government's intention to offer compensation to producers affected by a greater opening of the Canadian market under the new free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico, in force since earlier this year. —AFP

## Fishing rights top of the menu as Brexit talks continue



**LONDON:** EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier walks to a conference center to continue negotiations on a trade deal between the EU and the UK in London yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Last-ditch Brexit trade talks continued in London yesterday with fishing rights remaining an "outstanding major bone of contention," according to British foreign minister Dominic Raab.

European Union chief negotiator Michel Barnier told reporters that "work continues, even on a Sunday," as he arrived for the second day of talks. Barnier had arrived in London on Friday following a spell in self-isolation after a member of his team contracted coronavirus and ahead of the resumption of talks with British counterpart David Frost on Saturday. Both men warned that a deal could not be reached without major concessions from the other party. There are only five weeks to go until the end of the current transition period, during which trade relations have remained largely unchanged.

The two key sticking points remain post-Brexit access to British fishing waters for European vessels and the EU's demand for trade penalties if either side diverges from common standards or state aid regulations rules. Raab told Sky's Sophy Ridge On Sunday that this could be the final week of "substantive" talks, with time running out to agree and ratify a deal.

"There's a deal to be done," he said. "On fishing there's a point of principle: as we leave the EU we're going to be an independent... coastal state and we've got to be able to control our waters," he added. Barnier told envoys last week that London was asking that European access to UK waters be cut by 80 percent, while the EU was willing to accept 15 to 18 percent, according to a Brussels source.

A British official called the demands "risible", according to the domestic Press Association, adding that the "EU side know full well that we would never accept this." "There seems to be a failure from the Commission to internalize the scale of change needed as we become an independent nation," said the source. However, Raab was cautiously optimistic over the "level playing field" issue, saying "it feels like there is progress towards greater respect" for Britain's position.

A failure to reach an agreement would see Britain and the EU trading on World Trade Organization terms, with tariffs immediately imposed on goods travelling to and from the continent. — AFP

## Canada grants poultry, egg producers aid over free trade losses

**MONTREAL:** Canada on Saturday announced aid of Can\$691 million (\$531 million) to its poultry and egg producers for losses caused by free trade deals with Europe and Asia-Pacific countries. Canada controls the production and price of eggs, poultry and milk through annual quotas and import taxes—a system deemed protectionist by its foreign partners.

But with the entry into force in recent years of free trade deals with the European Union (CETA) and another with a dozen Asia-Pacific countries (TPP), Ottawa has agreed to open further its market to foreign producers, angering Canadian farmers. By announcing these breaches of the supply management system, in place since the 1970s, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government had promised that compensation would be paid to breeders.

Federal aid to some 4,800 egg and poultry producers will extend over 10 years, said Marie-Claude



# Classifieds

Monday, November 30, 2020

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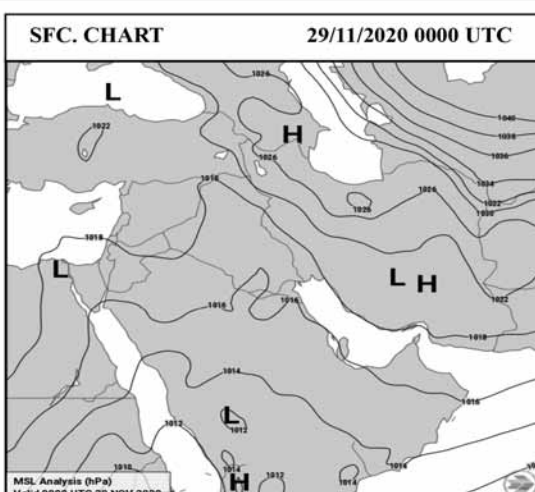
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind with speed of 12 - 45 km/h with a scattered rain that might be thundery at times.

**BY NIGHT:** Rather cold and Clouds will decrease gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 12 - 38 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	19 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	27 °C	19 °C
ABDALY	28 °C	17 °C
BUBYAN	24 °C	17 °C
JAHRA	27 °C	18 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	22 °C
SALMIYAH	24 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	26 °C	20 °C
WAFRA	27 °C	18 °C
SALMY	28 °C	16 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/30	Fair	23 °C	14 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	12/01	Fair and Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	21 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	12/02	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	22 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Thursday	12/03	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	24 °C	17 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:00
Sunrise	06:24
Zuhr	11:36
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	17 °C
MAX. RH	98 %
MIN. RH	68 %
MAX. Wind	SE 60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	18.9mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP:0

## 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

## FOR SALE

**A local construction company intends to sell some of its equipment, machinery, and scaffolding materials.**  
 For persons / companies interested please contact through the following whatsapp number:  
**97279818**

## LOST

**My BTech** Degree semester mark lists (10 nos.) in Instrumentation and Control Engineering from the University of Calicut lost in Kuwait during travel. The details of semester register number with year is given as follows:  
 1st and 2nd Semester - Reg.No: 28787 (June-1992), 3rd Semester-Reg.No: 21702 (Dec-1992) & Reg.No:5304 (Oct-1993), 4th Semester-Reg.No: 6973 (Sept-1993) & 2356 (Oct-1994), 5th Semester-Reg.No:1824 (April-1994), 6th Semester Reg.No: 948 (June-1995), Reg.No:822 (Dec- 1995) & Reg.No:847 (Dec-1995), 7th Semester Reg. No: 1323 (May-1995).  
 If found, kindly return to me at the following address. If the same is not found in one week time from the date of this advertisement, I will be applying for the duplicated semester mark lists.  
 Shemej Kumar K.K, Flat 902 - Ghaliya Tower, Mahboula, Kuwait.  
 Mob: 97106957. **(C 5820) 30-11-2020**

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Shazeen** Mahamad Shaif Alaji (Indian Passport no. T8991335 issued in Kuwait) D/o Alaji Mahamad Shaif Kasam, resident of Kurhunda, Tal. Sangmeshwar, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra-415611 hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as, given name: Shazeen Mahamad Shaif, surname: Alji and Father's name as Mahamad Shaif Kasam Alji for all purposes. **(C 5819)**

**I, Nuwair** Mahamad Shaif Alaji (Indian Passport no. T2416290 issued in Kuwait) S/o Alaji Mahamad Shaif Kasam, resident of Kamte Mohalla, Tal. Chiplun, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as, given name: Nuwair Mahamad Shaif, surname: Alji and Father's name as Mahamad Shaif Kasam Alji for all purposes. **(C 5819) 27-11-2020**

## EMERGENCY ☎ 112

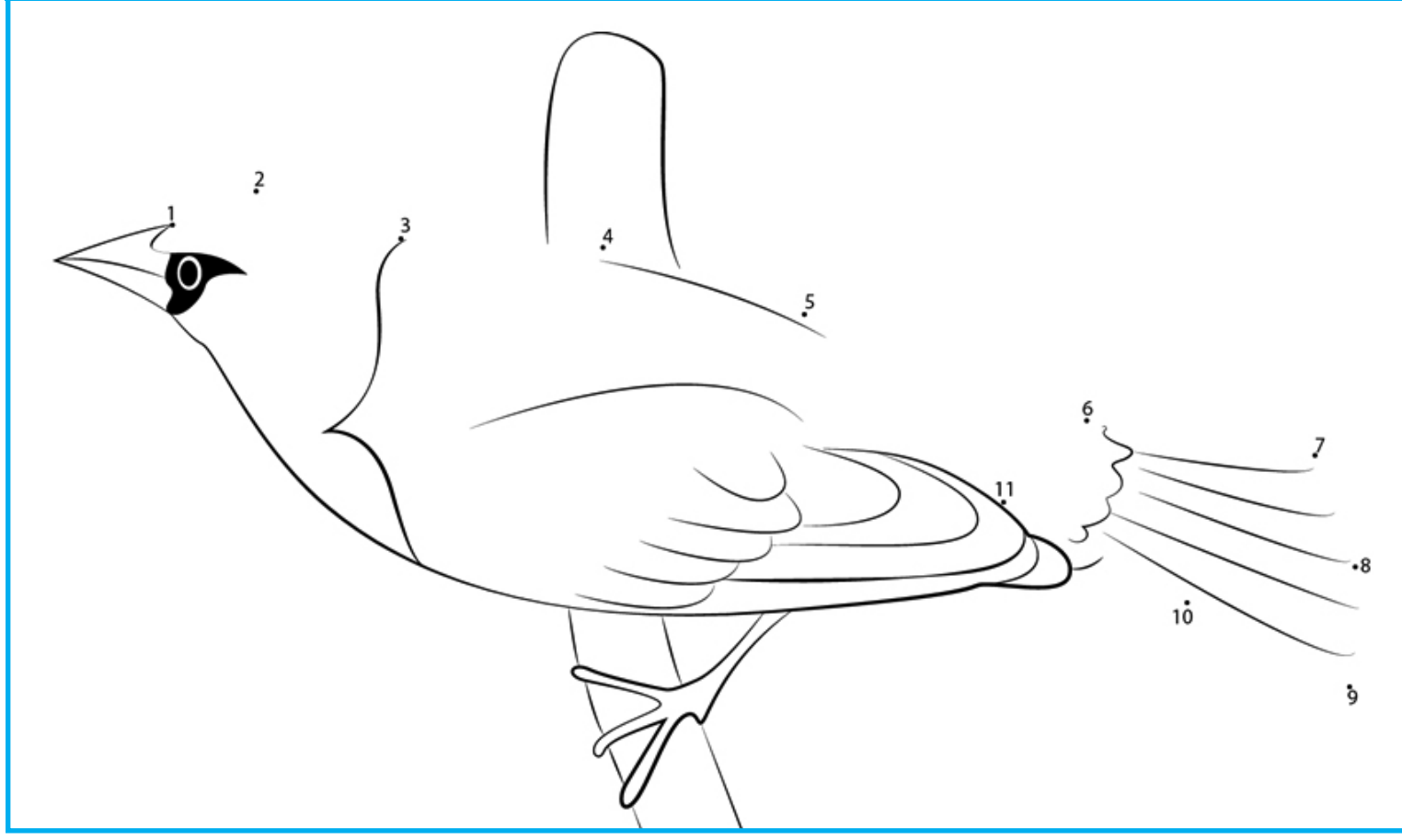
## Word Search

**An Apple a Day**  
 Word Search

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

Applejack  
 Baked  
 Brown Betty  
 Butter  
 Cake  
 Candied  
 Caramelized  
 Chips  
 Cider  
 Cobbler  
 Crisp  
 Danish  
 Dried  
 Dumpling  
 Eve's Pudding  
 Fritter  
 Juice  
 Pie  
 Sauce  
 Soda  
 Strudel  
 Tarte Tatin  
 Turnover

## Join the Dots



## STAR TRACK

<p><b>Aries (March 21-April 19)</b></p> <p>There is some likelihood that the mood at home is fraught with tension, Aries. Did you dare to express some contrary intellectual opinion? In any case, it looks like your self-confidence is stronger than usual right now. Go ahead and express any complaints or opinions you may have been keeping to yourself. But try and do it gently, especially where your family is concerned.</p>	<p><b>Cancer (June 21-July 22)</b></p> <p>You've been stamping the ground impatiently. You're waiting for the moment to jump into new adventures with renewed vigor after your meditation of the last few months. Cancer, know that the moment has almost arrived! You now have the strategy, objective, and means at your disposal to succeed. Just a bit more work remains. Gather your strength and get ready for action!</p>	<p><b>Libra (September 23-October 22)</b></p> <p>This is the right moment to extricate yourself from relationships that have seen their day, Libra. This won't be easy, but you must. In your professional and private lives, you're too hesitant to get out of distasteful situations or obligations. You're afraid of hurting people or making them mad. But in the end, you're hurting yourself.</p>	<p><b>Capricorn (December 22-January 19)</b></p> <p>Today more than ever you will yearn to escape from the daily routine. You're thirsty for new sights and sounds, new faces and places. However, you're well aware that you must juggle your desires with your professional or domestic obligations. It isn't always easy, but you should trust your imagination to suggest a way to amicably settle this conflict.</p>
<p><b>Taurus (April 20-May 20)</b></p> <p>It would seem that your sensitivity is in slight conflict with your actions, Taurus. You continue to go through the motions and do what you planned to do, but it seems like your heart isn't in it anymore. Don't ask yourself why. It's just that you've worked hard and have been thinking hard lately. You have reached your limit and it's time for you to rest.</p>	<p><b>Leo (July 23-August 22)</b></p> <p>If you find yourself tired and irritable now, Leo, you should know that this is normal. You may have had a few months that were a little too studios. Would you like to continue with the same rhythm? Be careful that your ambitions don't lead you to physical exhaustion. If you get sick, you will be even more frustrated. So be wise and take care of your own basic needs.</p>	<p><b>Scorpio (October 23-November 21)</b></p> <p>You took off like a bullet a few days ago, Scorpio, making great progress in a short amount of time. But now you're grappling with doubts that are undermining all your energy. Reflecting on the events of the past few days, it's obvious that you were somewhat reckless in your headlong pursuit of your goals. Don't give up! Just rethink your strategy.</p>	<p><b>Aquarius (January 20- February 18)</b></p> <p>Finally, you're on the mend, Aquarius. The minor ailments that have been dragging you down lately are beginning to disappear, and you're about to regain all of your physical energy. However, if you overindulge, your energy levels are likely to plummet again. If nothing else, you will have learned a valuable lesson about the importance of moderation, especially now. Don't overdo it!</p>
<p><b>Gemini (May 21-June 20)</b></p> <p>You may have been spending or saving too much money, Gemini. It's clear that a rebalancing is in order if you're to find pleasure rather than eternal frustration. It's a curious phenomenon. It's as though you have lost contact with your body. Yet it's in your body where you will ultimately find your balance. You certainly won't find it in your head!</p>	<p><b>Virgo (August 23-September 22)</b></p> <p>This is going to be a good moment to look elsewhere, Virgo. You should do just as the artist does when he has worked on a painting for too long, which is take a step back. You need to see some people, travel, go to the theater, and clear your head. This is never easy for you, but don't hesitate. You will realize afterward that it was the best thing for you to do.</p>	<p><b>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)</b></p> <p>There is some likelihood that thoughts of your love life will haunt you today, Sagittarius. Perhaps you're intrigued by the idea of exploring certain realms of your relationship that remain secret, but you're unsure how to communicate this to your mate. Perhaps you're still testing the waters, waiting until you're sure of how you feel. In any case, you may decide to proceed!</p>	<p><b>Pisces (February 19-March 20)</b></p> <p>Do you feel a little under the weather, Pisces? It's possible, considering all the emotional turmoil you've been through lately. It takes time to recover from those storms. As you know, the work itself isn't what gets you down but rather your worries about the future that drain your energy. Give yourself a break today. Take some time for rest and recuperation.</p>



# Mammoth move: Loneliest elephant heads to Cambodia after Cher campaign

Following years of public outcry and campaigning by American pop star Cher, the "world's loneliest elephant" embarked yesterday on a mammoth move from Pakistan to retirement in a Cambodian sanctuary. The famed singer and Oscar-winning actress has spent recent days at the Islamabad zoo to provide moral support to Kaavan—an overweight, 36-year-old bull elephant—whose pitiful treatment at the dilapidated facility



Officials of Four Paws International and wildlife rangers move Kaavan, Pakistan's only Asian elephant.

sparked an uproar from animal rights groups and a spirited social media campaign by Cher. "My wishes have finally come true", Cher said in a statement thanking her charity Free The Wild. "We have been counting down to this moment and dreaming of it for so long and to finally see Kaavan transported out of (the Islamabad) zoo will remain with us forever." Kaavan's case and the woeful conditions at the zoo resulted in a judge this year ordering all the animals to be moved.

"Thanks to Cher and also to local Pakistani

activists, Kaavan's fate made headlines around the globe and this contributed to the facilitation of his transfer," said Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws International—an animal welfare group that has spearheaded the relocation effort. Experts spent hours coaxing a slightly sedated Kaavan into a specially constructed metal crate at one point using ropes to help pull him in—that was to be hoisted onto a lorry and taken to Islamabad airport. From there, Kaavan will be sent via a Russian transport jumbo jet for the lengthy flight to Siem Reap in northwestern Cambodia. The plane will stop for refuelling in New Delhi. Cher spent several days in the Pakistani capital to visit Kaavan before the trip to a 10,000-hectare (25,000-acre) Cambodian wildlife sanctuary, with Prime Minister Imran Khan personally thanking the 74-year-old star.

Cher was due to fly to Cambodia yesterday to be in the Southeast Asian nation when the elephant arrives. Officials said Kaavan will initially be kept in a small designated section of the park where he can see other elephants. "Sending him to a place where he can be with other elephants of his kind ... is really the right choice," climate change minister Malik Amin Aslam told AFP. "We will be happy to see him happy in Cambodia and we hope he finds a partner very soon."

## 'Loneliest' elephant

Dubbed by the press as the world's loneliest elephant, Kaavan is the only Asian elephant in Pakistan—the tiny number of other pachyderms at other zoos are African. A team of vets and experts from Four Paws have spent months working with Kaavan to get him ready for the trip to Cambodia, which has included training the elephant to enter the massive metal transport crate that will be placed in a cargo plane for the seven-hour flight.



Officials of Four Paws International and wildlife rangers pose for a photograph beside a crate carrying Kaavan, Pakistan's only Asian elephant, after placing it onto a trailer truck prior to transport it to a sanctuary in Cambodia, at the Marghaz Zoo in Islamabad on Sunday. — AFP photos

Zoo officials have in the past denied Kaavan was kept in substandard conditions or chained, claiming instead the creature was pining for a new mate after his partner died in 2012. But Kaavan's behavior—including signs of distress such as continual head-bobbing—raised concerns of mental illness. Activists also said Kaavan was not properly sheltered from Islamabad's searing summer temperatures. Kaavan's mate Saheli, who also arrived from Sri Lanka, died in 2012. Rights groups and

conservationists have said that the abysmal conditions at the Islamabad zoo resulted in part from the lack of legislation in Pakistan aimed at protecting animal welfare. "There's a lot of improvement to be made," said Rab Nawaz with the World Wildlife Federation in Pakistan. "Kaavan is just one animal. There's lots of animals in Pakistan... which are in miserable conditions." — AFP

## DARTH VADER ACTOR DAVE PROWSE DIES AT 85

Dave Prowse, the British actor behind the menacing black mask of Star Wars villain Darth Vader, has died, his agent Thomas Bowington said Sunday. "It's with great sadness that we have to announce that our client Dave Prowse... passed away yesterday morning at the age of 85," Bowington wrote on Facebook. "May the force be with him, always!" the agent told the BBC. Bowington added that Prowse's death was "a truly and deeply heart-wrenching loss for us and millions of fans all over the world". Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the epic saga, tweeted that he was "so sad to hear David Prowse has passed." "He was a kind man & much more than Darth Vader," he wrote.

"Actor-Husband-Father-Member of the Order of the British Empire-3 time British Weightlifting Champion. He loved his fans as much as they loved him." A former body-builder turned actor, Prowse's towering stature at almost two meters (6.5 feet) clinched him the role of the instantly-recognizable antagonist in the original Star Wars trilogy. But while he donned the glossy black armor and cape, the Bristol native's strong western English accent meant the filmmakers turned to James Earl Jones for the chilling voice that would emerge from behind the mask. Prowse nevertheless remained attached to the character, telling AFP in 2013 that he was "the greatest big-screen villain of all time".



This file photo shows David Prowse, the British actor behind the menacing black mask of Star Wars villain Darth Vader. — AFP

He was born in the southwest English city on July 1, 1935, to a working class family, winning a scholarship to the prestigious local school. Prowse soon developed a love for weightlifting and went on to represent his country at the Commonwealth Games in the early 1960s before forging a career in Hollywood. He trained Christopher Reeve for the role of Superman and was reportedly spotted by Star Wars director George Lucas as an extra in "A Clockwork Orange". Lucas asked him to audition for the roles of Vader and hairy giant Chewbacca, plumping for the dark side because "you always remember the bad guys," he once told the BBC.

At home, he is equally well remembered for playing the "Green Cross Code" Man, a superhero created as part of a public information campaign to teach children road safety.

He played the role for almost 20 years, and earned an MBE in 2000. Other film credits include 1972's "Minotaur" and 1977's "Jabberwocky", and he also appeared in many TV shows including "The Saint" and "The Benny Hill Show". Since the original Star Wars trilogy was released in the late 1970s and early 80s, Prowse had travelled the world meeting hardcore fans. — AFP



In this file photo (from left) US actresses Amelia Heinle, Sharon Case and Camryn Grimes pose during a photocall for the TV soap opera "The Young and the Restless" during the 59th Monte-Carlo Television Festival in Monaco. — AFP

## US soap opera 'The Young and the Restless' hits 12,000th episode

"The Young and the Restless," one of the longest-running TV soap operas ever filmed, marks another milestone next week with its 12,000th episode in the US. "Since 1973, 'The Young and the Restless' has been part of daily life for millions of Americans," CBS, which airs the series, said in a release about the big day next Tuesday.

The show has tens of millions of fans in dozens of countries. It centers on families living in an imaginary Wisconsin town called Genoa City, and follows their personal dramas of love, marriage, separation and people vanishing before mysteriously reappearing. Some of the actors have played the same characters for decades. To celebrate episode 12,000, a special week for the show is planned, featuring flashbacks and the return of what CBS called beloved characters. — AFP

## You're gonna need a bigger museum: 'Jaws' shark installed

Over four decades after terrorizing beachgoers in "Jaws," the blockbuster movie's 25-foot shark model has been installed at Los Angeles' long-awaited Oscars museum, it was announced Monday. "Bruce the Shark," rumored to have earned its nickname from director Steven Spielberg's razor-sharp lawyer, now lurks 30-foot (nine-meters) above the third floor of the Academy Museum, which is set to open in April. The fiberglass predator is the only remaining version created for the classic 1975 movie, but with jaws measuring nearly five feet wide, was too large for the building's elevators—and had to be levered in by crane through the window. "It's been a long journey for Bruce since he was acquired in 2016, and we couldn't be happier to welcome him to his new home," said museum president Bill Kramer.

Weighing more than 1,200 pounds (540 kilos), it is the largest object so far in the collection of the upcoming Academy Museum of Motion Pictures—a project by the body organizing Hollywood's Oscars, first dreamt up nearly a century ago but



This undated handout photo shows the sole surviving full-scale model of the 1975 Jaws shark, donated by Nathan Adlen. — AFP photos

beset with delays. Billed as "the world's premier institution inside a seemingly-suspended glass, steel and concrete orb designed by Renzo Piano, connected by sky bridges to a converted department store housing the main galleries—and the shark. "We look forward to our opening when museum visitors can engage with our exhibitions, experience our beautiful Renzo Piano-designed building, and come face to face with one of the most iconic characters in film history," added Kramer. — AFP

The futuristic museum contains a 1,000-seat theater inside a seemingly-suspended glass, steel and concrete orb designed by Renzo Piano, connected by sky bridges to a converted department store housing the main galleries—and the shark. "We look forward to our opening when museum visitors can engage with our exhibitions, experience our beautiful Renzo Piano-designed building, and come face to face with one of the most iconic characters in film history," added Kramer. — AFP



In this file photo workers clean the roof of the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, in Los Angeles, California.

## Chihuly: Creating in the glass bubble

Leslie Chihuly, the wife and business driver behind glass artist Dale Chihuly, believes these are fighting times, especially for artists. "If we don't have our paintings and art and music and culture and civility, then what do we have?" said the president and chief executive of Chihuly, Inc., who chaired the board of the Seattle Symphony for nine years until 2018. "What art does is create that thin veneer that separates us from our more base instincts. Without it, I don't like how life looks." Chihuly, 59, had a chat with Reuters about her personal, professional and philanthropic choices. Edited excerpts are below.

### Q. What did your first job teach you?

A. My first job was probably when I was around 14 or 15. I worked in a small boutique store on the Main Street in my hometown (Guymon, Oklahoma), and it was called The Vogue. I wanted to save up for a Christmas present for my mother. I loved having a job, having my own little bit of money in my purse. I also learned how to perfectly wrap gifts. I'm really good at gift wrapping.

### Q. What was your toughest job?

A. Doing multiple jobs at the same time. I was doing the job of being a mother. I was doing the job at Chihuly with a lot of complexity and a lot of projects and issues. I was also simultaneously board chair of the Seattle Symphony, which is a huge job. It's more than a full-time job at times. Having all of those jobs at the same time and trying to balance the load, I found out that I can really push myself. I had to learn how to prioritize and also delegate.

### Q. It's a particularly bleak time for creative professionals such as artists and musicians. Do you have any advice for creative types?

A. I know it's a difficult time, but it's also a very fertile time. Dig deep and keep making work. Keep writing, keep making music, keep doing what you do. It's so essential.

### Q. What has been your biggest challenge this year?

A. We had to figure out how to blow glass safely. We closed our glass shops for quite a while. We have fewer people on our team now, but we're still spread out in three locations. We can't travel and so many of

our projects involve working all over the world and in different parts of the country. We had three different gallery shows - in London, Toronto and Seattle. Not being able to travel, we had to show those galleries how to install the shows without us.

### Q. What's the best piece of job advice you've received?

A. Learn how to listen. If you can listen to others and you can listen to your employees and subject matter experts, you're going to make better decisions. It's great to be proactive, to be leading and guiding, but you still have to have that back and forth.

### Q. Do you have tips for someone just starting out right now?

A. In every dark time or challenging time there are still opportunities, and there are opportunities for creative approaches on how to do things. There are always goods and services that people need and there are always those needs to be filled. There's always a path forward. You need to draw a support team around you and know that you can't do it by yourself.

### Q. What is your work-from-home set up?

A. I like to move around a lot, so I don't have one desk where I sit and work. I use the couch in our TV room for doing my Zooms because I like having a piece of art behind it. It's a Samuel Levi Jones, one of his paintings, and it's made of book covers.—Reuters



Glass artist Dale Chihuly and his wife Leslie Chihuly.



Lifestyle | Features



In this picture Champa Devi Tuladhar knits during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu. — AFP photos



In this picture Dil Hera Tuladhar stitches a handmade shawl during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu.



In this picture jeweler Ratna Kaji Tamrakar makes silver jewelry in his workshop during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu.



Dil Hera Tuladhar stitches a handmade shawl during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu.

# HANDMADE WITH LOVE: NEPALI TAKES GRANDMA'S SOCKS TO THE WORLD

Every winter, Lorina Sthapit and her cousins would warm their feet in woolen socks freshly knitted by their grandmother. As the brightly coloured pairs stacked up in her cupboard, the 32-year-old felt inspired to share the creations with the world-co-founding a crafts venture that not only sells such handmade products but also delves into the seldom-told lives of their mostly elderly female makers. "Each product has a story and historical and cultural value. We want to keep their legacy and skills alive for the future," Sthapit told AFP. "They grew up at a time when most things were handmade, not store-bought. So there is an amazing wealth of skills and experiences among people of that generation." Aji's—which means grandmother—was founded in 2018 by Sthapit, her sister Irina and husband Pursarth Tuladhar, selling a variety of products including knitwear, blankets and jewelry.

Through podcasts and blogs, Sthapit and the makers' grandchildren take listeners and readers on a nostalgic journey through the lives of the elderly artisans. The tales—from being married at just eight-years-old, battling to be given an education and raising five children as a single mother in the patriarchal society—shed light on Nepal's rich social and cultural history, but also its strict gendered social order.

### Sharing stories

Born in Kathmandu in 1988, Sthapit found herself drawn to the Indian classical dance of Kathak—derived from the Sanskrit word kathaka, or storyteller. From just 18-years-old, she started to perform in national and international dance events. The gender studies graduate then taught a course in women's empowerment at Nepal's first women's college Padma Kanya Multiple Campus. A decade-long career in international development followed, including working for Oxfam and the United Nations' International Fund for Agricultural Development

(IFAD). She worked around the world from Uganda to Uzbekistan, but felt she wanted to make a difference in her home country. Undaunted by the male-dominated start-up world, Sthapit quit her NGO job to work full-time on Aji's.

She slowly cultivated loyal customers who shared their love for the products with others, eventually drawing the attention of the wider public and international clients. Aji's now has 30 elderly women and men working with them, using traditional Nepali techniques and materials. The crafts are sold at two stores in the Kathmandu valley and on the online marketplace Etsy. The company works closely with makers' children or grandchildren, in an effort to help the families develop closer bonds. Sthapit herself learnt that her grandmother was "more confident and bold than I thought". "It was as if this side of her was hidden and she has now found recognition and uncovered her bolder confident self," she said.

### Empowering the elderly

Sthapit found the social enterprise had another benefit—it gave the artisans a sense of purpose. When she first told her grandmother, Champa Devi Tuladhar, that her socks were being snapped up, the 77-year-old's eyes lit up. "My grandmother really enjoys being busy and even forgets her joint pains when knitting," Sthapit said. Parents traditionally live with their children in Nepal with the elderly discouraged from working and earning.

But ageing populations have forced a global shift in attitudes to those aged 65 and older—in fashion catwalks have seen greater age diversity and models such as Jan de Villeneuve, and Elon Musk's mother Maye Musk, have made names for themselves as fashion stars in their 60s and 70s. Businesses pay greater attention to so-called "grey dollar" and older consumers, while studies have shown keeping active boosts older people's physical and mental well-being. Sthapit was emboldened by her

grandmother's joy about how popular her socks had become. "The excitement it brought in her life made me think of other grandparents who might enjoy creating things too," she said. Tuladhar herself has become an evangelist for staying active.

"Old people say that you shouldn't work but I really enjoy working... and also tell others to get involved," Tuladhar told AFP. Another craftswoman, Dil Hera Tuladhar, has sewn traditional blankets and shawls for years. But for the first time, she's started earning from them. "I had never made money in my life. It made me so happy and proud," the 85-year-old said. For Sthapit, the venture has grown much bigger than she envisaged. "We want to be able to help elders live a healthy, happy life, whether by promoting their creations... or sharing their stories. "It just gives them a lot of joy... That's what drives us." — AFP



People visit with their cars at a drive-in Christmas market in Landshut, southern Germany.



People visit with their cars at a drive in Christmas market in Landshut.—AFP Photos



Christmas sweets are offered in a sales booth at the drive in Christmas market in Landshut.



People visit with their cars at a drive in Christmas market in Landshut.—AFP Photos

## Drive-ins, scattered huts: German Xmas markets find ways around virus

Chestnuts roasting, mulled wine steaming and music blaring from wooden chalets lined with artificial snow—the Landshut Christmas market in southern Germany has all the usual trimmings. But this year, visitors must enjoy the sights and smells of the traditional Christmas market from inside their cars due to precautions to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Every night after dark, several dozen vehicles roll into the Christmas market drive-in, their occupants cozy and socially distanced inside. Once through the gates, they must wait for an employee wearing a mask and a Christmas hat to knock on their window and offer them a menu of savory treats to choose from, such as crepes, sausages and roasted chestnuts. Orders placed, they can then drive on to the next hut offering sweets such as candy floss or gingerbread hearts.

"We take our inspiration from fast-food chains," smiles Patrick Schmidt, 31, market organizer and owner of the Zollhaus Landshut restaurant. "We wanted to recreate a bit of the Christmas atmosphere, even if it's more complicated this year." The market is a way of helping his business get through "a difficult time", he said.

### Billions at stake

As Germany battles a second wave of coronavirus infections, leisure and sporting facilities have been ordered to close while restaurants and bars can only offer take-aways. The restrictions also include limits on social gatherings and have been a huge blow to Germany's 3,000 or so annual Christmas markets. The markets have been an annual fixture in Germany since the 15th century, when craftsmen and bakers were given special permission to ply their wares in town squares in the run-up to Christmas.

But many German cities have cancelled their Christmas markets entirely this year, despite the huge financial losses—the markets draw about 160 million visitors annually and bring in revenues of three to five billion euros (\$3.6 billion and \$5.9 billion), according to the BSM stallkeepers' industry association. To keep the spirit—and the economic benefits—of Christmas alive, cities across the country have come up with creative initiatives.

### 500 cars

In Berlin's Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district, small clusters of huts have been spread across several streets, though food and drink cannot be consumed on site. The world-famous Nuremberg Christmas

market has been cancelled this year but managed to hold an online version of its traditional opening ceremony. And in north-western Germany, the town of Kalkar is also offering a drive-in Christmas market. The market in Landshut has been open since mid-November and is proving popular with locals, according to Schmidt. "Last Saturday we had 500 cars," he said.

And they're not just here for the mulled wine, served in thermos flasks to keep it warm—many are coming with the whole family in tow. "I'm here to support the restaurants, because I miss them," said Markus Renneke, 55, visiting the market with his wife. "And I think it's a great idea." Sandra, joined by her teenage daughter Laura, is here to enjoy that special Christmas market "atmosphere". "You have to put a bit of time aside and there are no stands selling anything but food, but that's OK," she said as a waitress arrived with two grilled sausages. Her daughter, "starving", cannot resist starting to tuck into her sausage before the final stop: the checkout. Once they've settled up, customers are free to return home basking in the glow of mulled wine—apart from the designated drivers, of course.—AFP

## MYSTERIOUS MONOLITH IN US DESERT REPORTEDLY DISAPPEARS

A mysterious metal monolith found in the remote desert of the western United States, sparking a national guessing game over how it got there, has apparently disappeared, officials said. The Bureau of Land Management in Utah said Saturday it had received "credible reports" that the object had been removed "by an unknown party" on Friday evening. The bureau "did not remove the structure which is considered private property," it said in a statement. "We do not investigate crimes involving private property which are handled by the local sheriff's office."

The shiny, triangular pillar which protruded some 12 feet from the red rocks of southern Utah, was spotted on November 18 by baffled local officials counting bighorn sheep from the air. After landing their helicopter to investigate, Utah Department of Public Safety crew members found "a metal monolith installed in the ground" but "no obvious indication of who might have put the monolith there."

### 2020 'reset button'

News of the discovery quickly went viral, with many noting the object's similarity with strange alien monoliths that trigger huge leaps in human progress in Stanley Kubrick's classic sci-fi film "2001: A Space Odyssey." Others remarked on its discovery during a turbulent year that has seen the world gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic, and optimistically speculated it could have a different function entirely. "This is the

'reset' button for 2020. Can someone please press it quickly?" joked one Instagram user.

"Somebody took the time to use some type of concrete-cutting tool or something to really dig down, almost in the exact shape of the object, and embed it really well," Nick Street, a spokesman for the Department of Public Safety told the New York Times. "It's odd," he added. "There are roads close by, but to haul the materials to cut into the rock, and haul the metal, which is taller than 12 feet in sections—to do all that in that remote spot is definitely interesting." Some observers pointed out the object's resemblance to the avant-garde work of John McCracken, a US artist who lived for a time in nearby New Mexico, and died in 2011.

His son, Patrick McCracken, told the Times recently that his father had told him in 2002 that he would "like to leave his artwork in remote places to be discovered later." Although officials had refused to disclose the object's location out of fear that hordes of curious sight-seers would flock to the remote wilderness, some explorers had been able to track it down. Instagram user David Surber said he trekked to the monolith using coordinates posted on Reddit. "Apparently the monolith is gone," he posted later. "Nature returned back to her natural state I suppose. Something positive for people to rally behind in 2020." — AFP

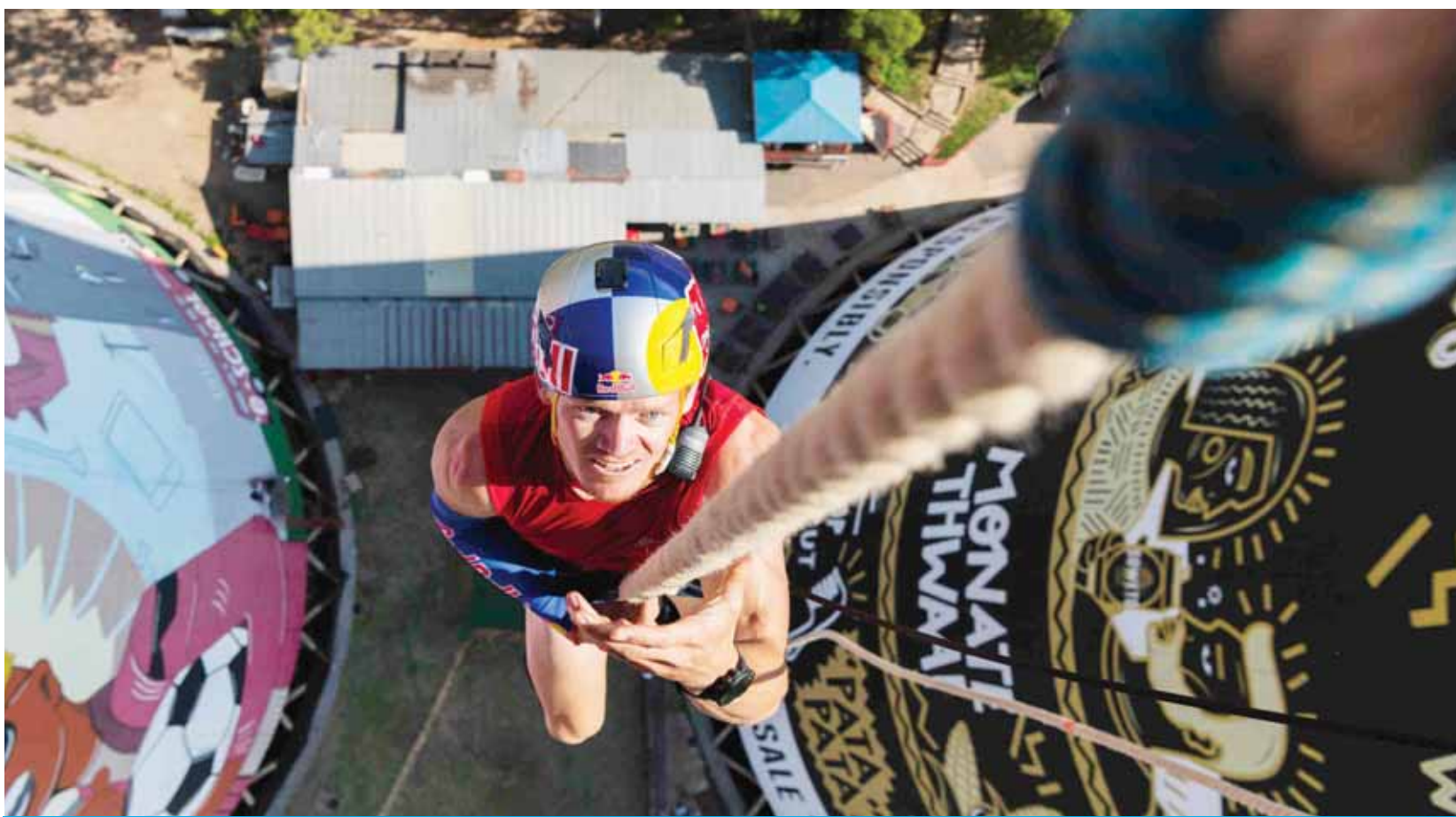


This video grab image shows a mysterious metal monolith that was discovered in Utah after public safety officers spotted the object while conducting a routine wildlife mission. — AFP



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Thomas van Tonder is seen setting a Guinness World Record for fastest 50m rope climb at Red Bull Rising in South Africa. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Elite runners brave pollution, COVID in Delhi half marathon

## Shanghai marathon defies coronavirus with 9,000 runners

**NEW DELHI:** Elite runners brushed off poor air quality and a surge in coronavirus cases yesterday in India's capital for the Delhi Half Marathon, one of the country's first major sporting events since the pandemic started. Forty-seven professional runners hit the 21-kilometre (13.1-mile) course in the men's and women's event, while amateur participants raced between Wednesday and Sunday to prevent overcrowding.

The route was sprayed with chemicals to minimize the effect of Delhi's annual toxic smog, which blankets the megacity in winter due to traffic and industrial pollution, crop stubble burning and cold temperatures. The air quality index—which monitors tiny PM2.5 and PM10 particles that get into the bloodstream and vital organs—was at 244 and in the “poor” category, the Central Pollution Control Board said yesterday. Doctors last week said it would be “suicidal” for runners to take part in the competition given the twin risks.

Ethiopia's Amdework Walegn won the men's race with a course record of 58.53 minutes with last year's champion Andamlak Belihu just a sec-

ond behind. The previous best was 59.06 set by Ethiopia's Guye Adola in 2014. “The course was very good,” Walegn said. “In earlier years there were a lot of U-turns, but this time it was flat and good to race on.” In the women's race, Yalemzerf Yehualaw of Ethiopia won in 1.04.46 — also a record—with Kenya's Ruth Chepngetich second. Avinash Sable, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in 3000m steeplechase, was the top Indian finisher with a record national time of 1:00.30.

### Shanghai marathon

In another development, around 9,000 runners—some wearing face masks—took part in the Shanghai International Marathon yesterday, Chinese media said, a rare mass event in a year when coronavirus laid waste to most such sport. Prior to the race officials touted it as an opportunity to show how China—where the virus emerged late last year before unleashing a pandemic—is moving ahead despite the continuing global health crisis.

The prestigious New York, Berlin, Boston and

Chicago marathons all fell victim to coronavirus this year, while London and Tokyo were open only to elite runners. Bucking that trend, the Shanghai marathon went ahead under sunny skies following several days of rain, and with virus prevention measures in place to thwart infections. Shanghai is on edge following a scattering of recent local cases, but China has largely got to grips with the epidemic thanks to strict lockdowns and aggressive mass testing.

Runners had to pass a coronavirus test in order to take part and were ordered to wear a mask immediately before and after the race. Some kept them on the whole time. About 9,000 runners had been expected to take part, down from 38,000 in previous Shanghai marathons. No overseas athletes flew in for the race and spectators were told to stay away. Distance running is booming in China, with state media saying there is “marathon fever”. In February, when the country was shut down by the pandemic, one fanatical runner jogged the equivalent of an ultra-marathon inside his small apartment. — Agencies

## Tyson comeback fight at 54 ends with draw against Jones

**LOS ANGELES:** Mike Tyson's return to boxing at age 54 ended in a draw with 51-year-old Roy Jones Jr. on Saturday in an eight-round exhibition battle of former heavyweight champions. Fifteen years after retiring with a 2005 loss to journeyman Kevin McBride, Tyson made his comeback at Staples Center in Los Angeles without spectators in a pay-per-view matchup that mixed curiosity and nostalgia.

California State Athletic Commission officials required two-minute rounds instead of the usual three-minute rounds, mandated larger than normal 12-ounce gloves, said neither fighter could seek a knockout and declared there could be no official winner in safety moves for the over-50 fighters. “Sometimes that two minutes felt like three minutes,” Tyson said. “I'm glad I got this under my belt and I'm looking forward to doing it again.”

An “unofficial” panel of former World Boxing Council champions at ringside scored the bout a draw, an outcome that Tyson applauded despite appearing to dominate. “I'm good with that,” Tyson said, admitting he thought he had won the fight. “Yeah, but I'm good with a draw. The crowd was happy with that.” Jones, who looked tired and grabbed Tyson much of the fight, was unhappy at a draw. “I ain't never happy with a draw. I don't do draw,” Jones said, admitting that Tyson hurt him throughout the bout, particularly with body blows.

“If he hits you with his head, punches, body shots, it don't matter, everything hurts. Body shots definitely took a toll. Body shots are what makes you exhausted,” Tyson, who entered 50-6 with 44 knockouts, lost 100 pounds and began training again, his desire to get back in shape becoming a hunger to strap on the gloves once more. Jones, who entered 66-9 with 47 knockouts, had not fought since a February 2018 cruiserweight victory. He hoped a solid effort against Tyson might set up a fight with 45-year-old Brazilian mixed martial arts star Anderson Silva.

Tyson came out aggressive and fast, swinging and connecting often to the body of Jones, who was able to hit and evade at times, then hugging Tyson often when all else failed. “You came back. I hit you with good shots and you took it,” Tyson told Jones. “We have to do this again.” A hard left to the head stung Jones in round two and he spent much of the third and fourth rounds holding and moving into clinches with Tyson. “It's something in there taking punches from Mike,” Jones said. — AFP

## News in brief

### Bezuidenhout takes tour title

**MALELANE:** Christiaan Bezuidenhout held his nerve to win the Alfred Dunhill Championship by four shots at Leopard Creek Country Club yesterday as the rest of the contenders faltered in a dramatic finish. The 26-year-old South African took his second European Tour victory after birdies on the 14th and 15th holes helped him surge through a crowded leaderboard and end with a fourth-round 69 for a tournament total of 274. Bezuidenhout, ranked 61 in the world, proved steady on the back nine as super-fast greens and tight pin positions proved the undoing of the other frontrunners. Four golfers tied for second place, including American Sean Crocker, who was one shot behind the lead with a hole to play but hit his ball out of bounds twice on the 18th for a horror-show eight that put paid to his hopes. Poland's Adrian Meronk, who had led from the start of the tournament, South African teenager Jayden Schaper and Englishman Richard Bland also all finished on 10-under-par 278. — Reuters

### Delayed Olympics to cost more

**TOKYO:** The coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Olympics could cost \$1.9 billion more than its original budget of \$13 billion, a 15 percent increase, a report said yesterday. The Olympics organizers will formally decide the increased budget for the Games as early as mid-December after communicating with the Japanese government and the host city Tokyo, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, citing unnamed Olympic sources. The 2020 Games were pushed back a year as Covid-19 spread around the globe, and are now scheduled to open on July 23, 2021. But the delay has thrown up a plethora of new costs, from rebooking venues and transport to retaining the huge organizing committee staff. With many countries experiencing second or even third waves of infection, there have been doubts about whether the event can be staged, but organizers and Olympic officials insist it can be done safely. — AFP

### Palmeiras win 3-0 to go fourth

**SAO PAULO:** A brace from Rony either side of halftime helped Palmeiras to get a 3-0 win over visitors Athletico Paranaense on Saturday and lifted the Sao Paulo club into fourth place in Brazil's Serie A. Patrick de Paula with a nice turn and finish put Palmeiras 1-0 up after eight minutes and Rony doubled their leader 11 minutes before the break. Rony got his second with a header four minutes into the second half to seal all three points for the home side. Palmeiras are now five points behind leaders Atletico Mineiro and have a game in hand. Athletico sit in 11th spot in the 20-team table. — Reuters

### Players losing ‘joy of playing’

**LONDON:** Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said his players could not revel in their 5-0 victory over Burnley on Saturday as hectic match scheduling had sucked some of the joy out of the sport. The novel coronavirus pandemic forced last season to finish late and this campaign to be condensed into a shorter period, with a chorus of club managers lamenting the relentless schedule that they believe has contributed to more player injuries. City, who bounced back from last week's defeat by Tottenham Hotspur and moved up to eighth with the win against Burnley, travel to Porto for a Champions League game on Tuesday before facing Fulham in the Premier League on Saturday. “The problem is the players lose the joy of playing football,” Guardiola told reporters. “Before it was nice playing once or twice a week with spectators. Now it's three days and then another one. We will travel to Porto to win, then prepare against Fulham.” — Reuters

### Bahrain crash cuts car in two

**MANAMA:** Romain Grosjean escaped from a horrific first-lap crash at the Bahrain Grand Prix yesterday when his car split in two and burst into flames. The French driver's Haas collided with Daniil Kvyat's Alpha Tauri on turn three, skewing into a barrier. Grosjean, 34, was lodged in the front half of his monocoque as it appeared to fly under the barrier, leaving the rear half behind on the edge of the circuit after spinning on impact. His car's fuel tank was clearly ruptured in the accident, releasing the fuel that ignited in a huge blaze. The crash came at a service road access point where the driver and medical crew from the circuit Safety Car were on the scene immediately. They helped Grosjean from his car as he leapt over the barrier. A medical official used a fire extinguisher on his race suit as they tackled the blaze and quickly put it out. A clearly shaken Grosjean was taken back to the pits by the medical car at the Sakhir Circuit suffering from minor burns. — AFP



SAKHIR: Fire marshals put out a fire on Haas F1's French driver Romain Grosjean's car during the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit in the city of Sakhir yesterday. — AFP



## Kuwait's Shooting Tournament ends in style

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Annual Shooting Tournament came to a conclusion Saturday at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. Capital governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah represented HH the Crown Prince during the closing ceremony which was attended by Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Sport Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Engineer Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi, Secretary General Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi, board members and other dignitaries.

Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi in his speech welcomed the guests on behalf of board members and the entire shooting community. He said “we are honored to organize HH the Crown Prince tournament,” adding that the committee provided all that is necessary — including the sterilization of the complex as they followed the instructions of the health authorities to protect against coronavirus.

Engineer Al-Otaibi said the tournament enjoyed the participation of a large number of shooters from the club, National Guard, military and Police Sports Associations as more than 300 shooters registered for the tournament. He said the competition was very strong as each shooter sought the honor of winning the season opener. The results of the tournament were as follows:

In the Men's Skeet — Saud Abdelrahman



Habeeb: In the Men's Trap - Abdelrahman Nasser Al-Faihan; In Women's Skeet - Iman Salem Al-Shamma; In Women's Trap - Sarah Al-Hawal; In the Men's 10 Meter Air Pistol - Saad Mane Nuhaqan; In the Men's 10m Air Rifle - Abdallah Awadh Al-Harby; In the 50 Meter 3 Positions Rifle Abdallah Awadh Al-Harby; In the 25 Meter Rapid Pistol - Hassan Abdelaziz Abdelmajid; In the Women's 10 Meter Air Rifle Hessa Nabil Al-Zayed; In the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol - Huthama Ali Al-Baghlhi; In the Olympic Archery - Abdallah Mohammad Taha and in the Compound Archery - Abdallah Yaqoub Malallah.





Sports

# Lyon see off Reims to climb to provisional 2nd in Ligue 1

## Neymar scores his 50th league goal; PSG held

**DECINES-CHARPIEU:** Lyon continued their fine run of form with a 3-0 win over Reims in yesterday's early game which lifted them provisionally to second in Ligue 1. Karl Toko Ekambi, Bruno Guimaraes and Moussa Dembele scored for Lyon as they made it 16 points from their last six matches to sit two points behind leaders Paris Saint-Germain. Lille can leapfrog them if they win at Saint-Etienne. Reims, who had Moreto Cassama sent off after 33 minutes, remain fourth from bottom and look destined for a relegation dog fight.

Toko Ekambi, returning from suspension, proved the key for Lyon, hitting the post early on before scoring the opener in the 22nd minute with a header at the back post from a cross by Memphis Depay. He also created the second - Guimaraes's first for Lyon - four minutes after the break, the Brazilian's shot taking a deflection off Marshall Munetsi. Toko Ekambi also teed up Dembele for the third shortly after he came on as a substitute for Tino Kadewere who had hit the post in the first half and had a goal ruled out for offside. Cassama was sent off for a foul on Depay when he looked to be in on goal.

Meanwhile, Neymar scored his 50th league goal for Paris Saint-Germain but warned the Ligue 1 leaders needed to improve quickly as they prepared for a crunch European clash with Manchester United by drawing 2-2 with Bordeaux on Saturday. The world's most expensive player scored a penalty to cancel out an early Timothee Pembele own goal and become the quickest to reach a half century of league goals in a PSG shirt, outdoing Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Moise Kean then put PSG in front only for Yacine Adli to fire in a superb second-half equaliser for mid-table Bordeaux, who deserved their draw. It is a setback for the reigning French champions, a week after they lost 3-2 at Monaco, and nearest challengers Lille can move level on points at the top of the table with victory at Saint-Etienne. "If we don't improve it's going to be diffi-

cult for us in the league and in the Champions League," Neymar told Canal Plus ahead of the trip to Old Trafford on Wednesday.

PSG were again missing key players, as has often been the case this season, with goalkeeper Keylor Navas and captain Marquinhos among those absent at an empty Parc des Princes. Yet, regardless of that, the performance will do little to ease concerns that have been growing since they succeeded in beating RB Leipzig in midweek despite a disjointed display. "We know how important Wednesday's match is. It's decisive. We didn't play well (against Leipzig) but we won. On Wednesday we will try to play our best game. We need to play more as a team and be better organised, otherwise it will be difficult," Neymar added.

A failure to beat United at Old Trafford could leave last season's Champions League runners-up staring at a group-stage exit from the competition for the first time in the Qatar era. Bordeaux took a 10th-minute lead when 18-year-old defender Pembele, making his first senior start, turned a corner into his own net as he jumped with Josh Maja at the near post. PSG honored the late Diego Maradona with a minute's silence before kick-off and a banner at one end of the empty Parc des Princes which read, in Spanish, 'Goodbye number 10! Rest in Peace!'. But, rather than an Argentine, it was their own Brazilian superstar who turned this game around before the half-hour mark. A foul in the box on the ex-Barcelona forward by Otavio was spotted by the referee following a VAR review, and Neymar rolled in the resulting spot-kick, just as he had done against Leipzig. Signed for 222 million euros (\$264m) in August 2017, Neymar has needed just 58 matches to score 50 goals in Ligue 1, fewer than any other player. Ibrahimovic required 59 games to get to the milestone.

### Marseille bounce back

Within a minute of equalising, PSG went ahead, with goalkeeper Benoit Costil parrying



**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar fights for the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Girondins de Bordeaux (FCGB) at the Parc de Princes stadium on November 28, 2020. —AFP

Neymar's fizzing shot and Kean following in to score his sixth goal since signing on loan from Everton. PSG should then have put the game to bed but Costil tipped a Kylian Mbappe shot onto the post on 35 minutes and then denied Mbappe again early in the second half when he dived at the feet of the France star. Instead Bordeaux drew level on the hour mark when Hatem Ben Arfa set up former PSG youngster Adli to score with a fine first-time strike.

"Normally I protect my team but our second-half performance was not ok. There is no way we

can repeat our second-half showing when we play in Manchester," Tuchel said. Earlier Marseille put their humiliating losing run in the Champions League to one side as they beat Nantes 3-1. Florian Thauvin and Dimitri Payet scored before Dario Benedetto made it three from a penalty. Ludovic Blas pulled a goal back for Nantes. It was a fourth straight Ligue 1 victory for Marseille, moving them up to third. Andre Villas-Boas's team suffered a Champions League record 13th straight defeat in the competition in midweek when they lost 2-0 at home to Porto. —AFP

## Ronaldo-less Juventus held 1-1 at Benevento

**MILAN:** Juventus again showed their reliance on Cristiano Ronaldo as, with the superstar attacker absent, they drew 1-1 at promoted Benevento on Saturday, while Serie A title rivals Inter Milan beat high-flying Sassuolo 3-0 to move second. The champions' fifth draw in nine league matches leaves Andrea Pirlo's side fifth, three points behind leaders AC Milan who faced Fiorentina yesterday. Ronaldo did not play after scoring in Juventus's 2-1 victory over Ferencvaros on Tuesday which sealed their berth in the Champions League last 16.

"Every team is addicted to Ronaldo, even at Real Madrid he scored a lot," said Pirlo, describing the Portuguese star as "a catalyst". "He is an important player and it's normal that he makes you win games, but even without Ronaldo we have to be good at winning games." Alvaro Morata and Paulo Dybala started up front in Ronaldo's absence, which Pirlo put down to "tiredness". "(Ronaldo) had a little problem and he wanted to play anyway in the Champions League. "He had played many games with the national team, it is normal for

him to get tired and rest."

Morata, who scored the late winner on Tuesday, opened the scoring in the 21st minute after collecting Federico Chiesa's cross-pitch pass to bring his tally to eight goals in all competitions this season. Gaetano Letizia's volley just before the break earned a point for 13th-placed Benevento. Dybala wasted chances to score his first league goal this season, including one four minutes from time when goalkeeper Lorenzo Montipò tipped over the bar. Morata also missed opportunities to rescue Juventus before being shown a red card after the final whistle for arguing with the referee. "When we lack players of experience and personality, we struggle," added Pirlo, also without injured defenders Giorgio Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci.

### Inter defy 'mud slingers'

In Emilia-Romagna, Antonio Conte's Inter bounced back from the 2-0 loss to Real Madrid which left their Champions League hopes dangling by a thread, inflicting this season's first defeat on Sassuolo. Inter move second ahead of Sassuolo, with both teams on 18 points after nine games, two points behind AC Milan and one ahead of Conte's old team Juve. "It's not easy, especially at Inter, because many people can't wait to criticise, to throw mud at us," said Conte. "But we are united and such situations should provide us



**BENEVENTO:** Juventus' Welsh midfielder Aaron Ramsey (right) outruns Benevento's Finnish midfielder Perparim Hetemaj (left) after colliding with Benevento's Italian midfielder Riccardo Improbato (Bottom left) during the Italian Serie A football match Benevento vs Juventus on November 28, 2020. —AFP

with more strength."

Alexis Sanchez opened the scoring in the fourth minute following good work from Lautaro Martinez and poor defending from Sassuolo's Vlad Chiriches. It was a nightmare match for Chiriches who 10 minutes later accidentally turned a powerful Arturo Vidal centre into his own net, with the Romanian later limping off with a muscular problem. Roberto Gagliardini added a third just before the hour mark, sealing a win that will boost Inter

before Tuesday's European trip to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Romelu Lukaku and Ashley Young came on in place of Lautaro and Sanchez for the final 10 minutes, with the Belgian forward having a goal ruled out for offside. Conte also brought on Christian Eriksen, who looks set to leave Inter in January after just one year. The Danish midfielder came on for Ivan Perisic for the final five minutes to make his first appearance in more than a month. —AFP

## Real Madrid slump to 2-1 loss at home

**MADRID:** Real Madrid slumped to a 2-1 loss at home to Alaves in La Liga on Saturday as city rivals Atletico moved level with leaders Real Sociedad after extending their winning run to six matches. Lucas Perez scored a fifth-minute penalty at Alfredo di Stefano stadium and Joselu added a second just after half-time following an awful mistake by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Casemiro gave Real a lifeline on 86 minutes but Alaves held on for a victory that lifted them to ninth. Madrid remain in fourth place and six points behind Real Sociedad and Diego Simeone's Atletico. "I don't have any explanations," said Real coach Zinedine Zidane, whose side followed an impressive 2-0 midweek win at Inter Milan by losing for the third time in 10 league games this season. "We alternate between good and bad moments. The other day in Milan we played a good match, and today, three days later, we put in a display like that at home."

"It was our worst start to a match this season," he added. "We can't

change the flow of the match. It bothers me, and the players too I think. The problem we have right now is consistency." After a minute's silence in honor of Diego Maradona, in keeping with the poignant tributes around Spain this weekend following the death of the Argentine legend, Real soon fell behind when Nacho handled a corner. Perez powered the spot-kick beyond Courtois to give Alaves the lead, and the forward should have struck a second when he was played clean through, his attempted chip superbly swatted aside by the Real keeper.

Madrid's night went from bad to worse when Eden Hazard was forced off on 28 minutes after taking a knock, the latest in a long list of injury setbacks for the Belgium star. While a terrific double save by Fernando Pacheco denied Toni Kroos, a howler from Courtois presented Joselu with the second goal on 49 minutes when a wayward pass went straight to the forward who steered home from 30 yards. Mariano Diaz's header was cleared off the line before Casemiro tapped in from close range after Pacheco kept out Vinicius Junior's effort, but Alaves clung on as Isco clipped the bar with the final kick.

Earlier in the day, Atletico edged a tight contest at Valencia 1-0 that stretched their unbeaten league run to 25 matches. They stay second but are



**MADRID:** Alaves' Spanish defender Ximo Navarro (left) vies with Real Madrid's Brazilian midfielder Casemiro during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Deportivo Alaves on November 28, 2020. —AFP

equal on 23 points with Sociedad with a game in hand thanks to Toni Lato's own goal 11 minutes from time. Stingy Atletico have conceded just twice in their nine league matches so far this season and have only scored two less than La Liga top scorers Sociedad, who hosted third-placed Villarreal yesterday.

"We have made huge progress since April, since that wonderful match at Liverpool," said Simeone, referring to the Champions League last-16 tie his team won 4-2 on aggre-

gate. "The return to La Liga (after the first lockdown) was very good and the team was already starting to show encouraging signs. This is the result of the progression of all of the players." Simeone applauded his former teammate and friend Maradona while teams held a minute's silence before kick-off. Barcelona are 12 points back in 14th place, although they hosted Osasuna in yesterday's early match and will still have two games in hand on Sociedad come the end of the weekend. —AFP

## England do enough to subdue Wales, secure top spot

**LLANELLE:** England had took much power and strength in depth as they overcame a spirited but limited Wales with a 24-13 victory in Llanelli on Saturday to secure top spot in Autumn Nations Cup Group A and set up a title decider against France at Twickenham next week. A Johnny Williams try gave new-look Wales an early lead but they were second-best for most of a messy, largely forgettable match as Henry Slade and Mako Vunipola crossed for England and, after their powerful bench wrestled control, captain Owen Farrell brought them home with four penalties.

"It was a dogged game, no-one could really get a foothold and we couldn't really get any momentum until the end," Farrell said. England topped the group with 13 points from their three wins. Ireland, who play Georgia on Sunday, are on four points and are very likely to finish second, with Wales third, also on four. In the decider at Twickenham next Sunday, England will play France who, despite fielding a largely second-string team due to club commitments, outclassed Italy 36-5.

England fielded their most experienced starting team, boasting 807 caps, while the Welsh, who broke a run of six successive defeats with an unimpressive victory over Georgia last week, had very much a side building to a new era. The hosts struck first when Dan Biggar charged down a Slade clearance and kicked ahead, with centre Williams - who scored a try for England in a non-cap game against the Barbarians last year - first to the ball. Slade made amends with England's first try after man of the match flanker Sam Underhill and Kyle Sinckler made deep inroads and Farrell shifted the ball wide.

England were on top for most of the half, though it was a disjointed effort, and could manage only two Farrell penalties to take them to the break 11-7 ahead. England stretched the lead when Vunipola cleverly spun off the side of a tryline ruck but they were unable to build on that score in a messy period for both teams. Wales did gain some territory and earned two penalties that Biggar slotted to move within five points and spark hopes of an upset. However, England quickly regained control on the pitch and the scoreboard as Farrell landed two more penalties to take them safely clear, and they finished in comfortable control without ever really threatening any fireworks. —Reuters



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Leicester City v Fulham	beIN Sports HD 1	20:30
West Ham v Aston Villa	beIN Sports HD 1	23:00
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Real Betis v SD Eibar	beIN Sports	23:00
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Torino v Sampdoria	beIN Sports	20:30
Genoa CFC v Parma	beIN Sports HD 4	22:45



**14** Elite runners brave pollution, COVID in Delhi half marathon



**15** Real Madrid slump to 2-1 loss at home to Alaves



**15** Neymar scores his 50th league goal; PSG held



## Barcelona trounce Osasuna 4-0

Messi salutes Maradona as Clubs across Europe pay tribute



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Argentinean forward Lionel Messi shoots the ball during the Spanish League football match between FC Barcelona and CA Osasuna at the Camp Nou stadium yesterday. — AFP

PARIS: Clubs across Europe continued to pay tribute to Diego Maradona yesterday with particularly poignant moments in Italy and Spain where the Argentine played. Maradona, who played two seasons for Barca, one for Sevilla and spent seven mostly glorious years at Napoli, died on Wednesday aged 60. Barcelona played yesterday afternoon while Napoli were planning an elaborate and emotional tribute before their game in the evening.

Before Barcelona faced Osasuna, the club played 'The Song of the Birds' by Catalan cellist Pablo Casals as the teams stood around the centre circle where a Maradona shirt was laid on the centre spot. Lionel Messi, who has inherited Maradona's legendary Argentina number 10 shirt, bowed his head. Flags at the Camp Nou flew at half mast. Maradona's image was displayed on every screen and digital advertising hoarding, while a club official held a framed Maradona Barcelona shirt.

Messi got his goal in the 74th minute with a dazzling strike that sealed a 4-0 victory. The Argentine picked up the ball in midfield, danced past two defenders and smashed a rising left-foot shot into the top far corner. He celebrated by pulling off his Barcelona shirt to reveal a vintage Newell's Old Boys jersey from Maradona's one season with the club in Rosario, Argentina.

Earlier this week, Newell's tweeted a photograph from Maradona's debut showing a six-year-old local prodigy, in a similar black and red shirt, doing ball tricks for the crowd at half-time. That boy was Messi. "It was a great moment," said Koeman. "Leo's goal, his gesture dedicated to Maradona. "It was something very big. We Europeans don't realise how big Maradona is in Argentina." On Friday, Koeman said the best tribute his team could pay Maradona was to "show what we can do on the pitch". In Italy, in addition to the minute's silence,

players have stopped to applaud for 60 seconds as Maradona's picture appears on the stadium screens in the 10th minute.

### 'I felt like crying'

In Rome, Lazio's players took to the pitch with special edition 'ADIÓS' jerseys in honour of Maradona but lost 3-1 to Udinese, for whom four Argentine-born players followed Koeman's advice. Roberto Pereyra set up the first goal, then Rodrigo De Paul provided assists for the next two, scored by Ignacio Pussetto and Fernando Forestieri.

After his goal, Pussetto opened his hands wide, to form 10. "This victory is for him," said Forestieri. "After the goal I felt like crying. Diego was the greatest of all time." Maradona's former club Napoli host Roma with tributes planned for the player who led the club to their only league titles in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in 1989. Napoli will wear a

jersey reminiscent of Argentina's for their first league game since his death. The club said the launch had already been planned with kit sponsors Kappa before Maradona's death.

"A year ago, together with Kappa, we thought of designing a special jersey that echoes Diego Maradona, his beloved Argentina and the very strong bond with the people of Naples," Napoli said in a statement. "Together we hoped that Diego could see it, maybe wear it and share in the excitement with us. "The presentation of the new kit had already been agreed for the ninth matchday of the championship, on the occasion of the SSC Napoli-Roma match. "The Kombat that will be worn by the players tonight will have an even greater significance than initially assumed." In Germany, Bundesliga clubs observed a minute's silence before games. In England, players applauded for a minute. — AFP

## AC Milan pull 2 points clear

MILAN: AC Milan shrugged off the absence of injured star Zlatan Ibrahimovic to consolidate their lead in Serie A yesterday with a 2-0 win over Fiorentina. Milan pulled five points clear of city rivals Inter Milan and Sassuolo, with AS Roma and Juventus six points adrift. But Lazio slumped to a 3-1 home defeat to Udinese, days before their Champions League trip to Borussia Dortmund, in a victory paved by the visitors' Argentina players on a day Serie A paid tribute to Diego Maradona.

Serie A top scorer Ibrahimovic watched from the stands after picking up a muscle injury last weekend. Head coach Stefano Pioli was absent recovering from coronavirus, but Milan extended their unbeaten run in the league this season. Franck Kessie set up Alessio Romagnoli for the opener after 17 minutes with the Ivorian forward adding a second from the penalty spot 10 minutes later. Fiorentina goalkeeper Bartlomiej Dragowski denied Kessie a second in the first half after Martin Caceres fouled Theo Hernandez.

Franck Ribery missed chances for Fiorentina with Gianluigi Donnarumma holding firm in the Milan goal. Pioli spoke to the team by video link after the game. "Pioli congratulated everyone for winning this very important match," said Kessie. "It's like this on penalties, either your score or miss, but I'll still take the next one." New Fiorentina coach Cesare Prandelli fell to his second defeat in as many games, with his side above the relegation zone without a goal in their last four games.

In Rome, Lazio's players took to the pitch with special edition 'ADIÓS' jerseys in honour of former Argentina and Napoli great Maradona who died last week aged 60. But the hosts trailed after quarter of an hour when Argentine Roberto Pereyra set up Turkish midfielder Tolgay Arslan for Udinese's first goal against Lazio in the Stadio Olimpico in six years. Rodrigo De Paul then set up fellow Argentine Ignacio Pussetto for the second just before the break, and provided the assist for another compatriot Fernando Forestieri's third midway through the second half. After his goal, Pussetto opened his two hands wide, to symbolise the number 10, Maradona's jersey number. Forestieri dedicated the success to Maradona after the match: "This victory is for him!" "After the goal I felt like crying. Diego was the greatest of all time," said Forestieri. — AFP

## Tottenham take back top spot with goalless Chelsea draw

LONDON: Tottenham moved back to the top of the Premier League after grinding out a 0-0 draw at Chelsea that bolstered their claim to be contenders for a first league title in 60 years. Chelsea enjoyed the better of a game of few chances, but Spurs showed the resilience and steel of Mourinho's three Premier League title-winning seasons when Chelsea manager to hold out for a fourth consecutive clean sheet.

A share of the spoils means Chelsea remain just two points behind their London rivals in third, with Liverpool trailing Tottenham only on goal difference. By extending a now nine-game unbeaten run in the Premier League, Mourinho also ensured he did not lose three consecutive league meetings to the same manager for the first time in his career and to one of his former players, Frank Lampard. Lampard showed what he has learned from the Portuguese as the cautious tactics from both saw the sides largely cancel each other out.

Chelsea were wary not to give Tottenham any chance to counter-attack in the manner that cut open Manchester United and Manchester City in recent weeks. Spurs showed why with a sprightly team move that ended with Steven Bergwijn turning inside and blasting just over the bar early on. The arrival of

Edouard Mendy has resulted in a huge upturn in Chelsea's defensive record and the Senegalese produced a smart stop to deny Serge Aurier's strike from outside the box.

But that was the only effort on goal either side managed before the break as Chelsea controlled possession with little potent threat. Timo Werner did produce an exquisite finish to fire in off the far post, but the goal was ruled out for offside against the German international. Chelsea began to push with more purpose early in the second half as three times Tammy Abraham could not get a clean contact on inviting crosses from Reece James and Werner.

Lampard showed his intent to try and win the game by throwing on Christian Pulisic, Kai Havertz and Olivier Giroud in the final quarter, while Mourinho kept Gareth Bale in reserve for the full 90 minutes. Hugo Lloris was finally forced into a meaningful save 10 minutes from time when the Spurs captain turned Mason Mount's powerful strike behind. But the biggest chance to win the game came in stoppage time when Giroud pounced on a weak header from Joe Rodon, but he did not get enough on his attempted lob over Lloris and his French teammate easily saved. — AFP