



New Amir Sheikh Nawaf sworn in as Sheikh Sabah laid to rest

Amir urges unity against 'acute circumstances, critical challenges'



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah takes oath at the National Assembly yesterday. - Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday took the constitutional oath in the National Assembly to exercise his authority as the 16th Amir of the country, as late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was laid to rest at Sulaibikhat cemetery.

Sheikh Nawaf took the oath to safeguard the country's interests during a special session held by the Assembly. The house did not undertake any other business for the day and it was unclear whether the current term will end today or will be extended till next week.

The body of Sheikh Sabah, who passed away in a hospital in the United States on Tuesday, arrived in the country yesterday aboard a Kuwait Airways aircraft to a reception led by HH the Amir, senior ruling family members and government dignitaries. The plane was met by royal guard members, each carrying a flagpole at half-staff.

The body was taken in a large motorcade to the nearby Siddiq area, where mourners performed funeral prayers at Bilal bin Rabah Mosque. Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani attended the prayers.

Sheikh Sabah's body was wrapped in a white shroud and a Kuwaiti flag and placed in a simple

metal coffin. The motorcade then drove to Sulaibikhat cemetery, where the late Amir was laid to rest in a simple ceremony attended only by close relatives because of the coronavirus pandemic.

After taking the oath, HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf paid tribute to Sheikh Sabah and recalled his major achievements in the service of the nation. Sheikh Nawaf also called for national unity, insisting that Kuwait had in the past overcome challenges by cooperation and unity. He added Kuwait is currently facing acute circumstances and critical challenges that can be countered only through unity. He committed himself to Kuwait's "democratic approach" in the address before lawmakers, who were spaced out

and wore masks in line with coronavirus precautions.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem praised the great achievements of the late Sheikh Sabah through his wise policies and strategic decisions, which safeguarded the country against dangers. World leaders and Kuwaitis alike have hailed the legacy of the late Amir, architect of the nation's modern foreign policy and mediator in some of the worst crises to grip the Gulf.

Meanwhile, 10 MPs withdrew a non-cooperation motion they filed against the prime minister last week following a grilling. The lawmakers said they made the move as a gesture of cooperation in the new era.



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, senior officials and family members carry the bier of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah upon its arrival at the airport yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani attend the funeral prayers for late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bilal bin Rabah Mosque yesterday.



Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is laid to rest at Sulaibikhat cemetery yesterday.



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, who attended the late Amir's funeral.



Mourners carry the bier of the late Amir for burial.

Kuwait ministers, governors mourn 'symbol of wisdom' Sheikh Sabah

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah mourned the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He said in a tweet that he offers heartfelt condolences to the Kuwaiti people over the loss of the 'Humanitarian Leader.' The Ministry of Health also extended sincere condolences over the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, praising him as a wise man of diplomacy who devoted his life to serving peace and stability worldwide. Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi voiced much commiseration over the death of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad who steered Kuwait during trying circumstances. He said the late Amir has left behind a great legacy not only for Kuwait, but for all Arab, Muslim and world countries as well. The minister said Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's great legacy would remain in historical memory thanks to his wise policy and farsightedness. The late Amir has steered Kuwait's development and prosperity in various fields, rendering it into a big country in political, economic and charitable weight, he added. He also praised His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as having been a bridge-builder and mediator based on strategic equilibrium. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad has turned Kuwait into a modern state where cooperation and fraternity prevail and Kuwaiti people enjoy equality in view of both rights and duties, the minister added.

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Waleed Al-Jassem condoled with the people of Kuwait, Arab and Muslim worlds as well as the entire world over the loss of His Highness the Amir. "His Highness the



KUWAIT: Flags are lowered to half-mast outside Dasman Diabetes Institute on Arabian Gulf Road in Kuwait City on Tuesday as the country mourns the passing of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Amir was a wise and fair leader who has made humanitarian contributions locally and internationally over long decades," the minister said. He added that the UN title of His Highness the Amir as a 'Humanitarian Leader,' in addition to the US military title of the Legion of Merit, stemmed from his unforgettable humanitarian works. By the loss of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, Kuwait and the world have lost a humanitarian leader, praying to Allah Almighty to have mercy upon the late Amir and to grant the peo-

ple of Kuwait more patience.

Governors mourn

Al-Asimah (Capital) Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah mourned Kuwait's late Amir. In a statement, Sheikh Talal said they extend condolences to the Kuwaiti people, and the entire Arab nation, on such tragic loss of a great humanitarian leader who served his country and the Arab world tremendously. Sheikh Talal added, that "His

Highness's generosity and his career in charitable and humanitarian work will remain an example in sacrifice, giving, and redemption," noting that such contributions strengthened the status of the State of Kuwait regionally and globally.

Meanwhile, Al-Jahra Governor Nasser Al-Hajraf said in a statement that the late Amir has placed himself in history for generations to come, and his mark had a great impact, starting in the field of diplomacy until he became the dean of Arab diplomats. Hajraf added the late Amir achieved admiration from everyone as a result of his international efforts, recalling that the United Nations honorary award and title as a Humanitarian leader after His Highness's humanitarian efforts in providing relief and support to peoples and countries in need. He pointed out that His Highness the late Amir concluded his career with the US Military Merit Order with the rank of Supreme Commander for his diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, including his moderate policies that brought positive outcomes for all.

Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah expressed sincere condolences on the sad demise of the late Amir, describing him as the humanitarian leader, a symbol of wisdom and a great loss to Kuwait, the Arab and Muslim nations and humanity in general. "We all find consolation for such a great loss in the late Amir's long career of giving and benevolence, through which he dedicated his life to serving both his nation and the entire world," the governor stressed, praying to Allah Almighty to rest the late Amir's soul in peace.— KUNA

Modi: India lost close friend

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ram Nath Kovind extended their heartfelt condolences on the passing away of late Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying a close friend of India is lost. The Indian Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt condolences saying that Kuwait, Arab world and India lost a beloved leader, a close friend and a great statesman.

"My heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait. In this moment of grief our thoughts are with the Al-

Sabah family and the people of the State of Kuwait," Modi said on his official Twitter account. "Today, the State of Kuwait and the Arab world has lost a beloved leader, India a close friend, and the world a great statesman. His Highness played a leading role in strengthening our bilateral relations, and always took special care of the Indian community in Kuwait," the Indian Prime Minister added.

President Ram Nath Kovind said that he was deeply saddened at the demise of Amir of the State of Kuwait. "Deeply saddened at the demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait. He was a great statesman, humanitarian leader and close friend of India. My condolences to His Highness' family, the Kuwaiti government and its people in this time of grief," Kovind tweeted.— KUNA

Pakistan expresses deep grief over Sheikh Sabah's death

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan expressed his deep grief over the death of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir of Kuwait. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's House expressed deep grief over the death of Amir of Kuwait. "Deeply grieved over the demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Crown Prince (now Amir), Al-Sabah family and to the Kuwaiti people. Amir's

contributions to Pakistan-Kuwait relations will always be remembered," said Khan. Moreover, Pakistan's speaker of the National Assembly, Asad Qaiser expressed grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait.

The Speaker, in a condolence message to the Kuwaiti government and people, said the vacuum created by Amir's death would not be filled for a long time to come. While paying tribute to the Kuwaiti Amir for his services for the progress of Kuwait and unity of Muslim nation, he said his contribution for economic and social progress of Kuwait, interfaith harmony and peaceful co-existence would always be remembered. The government, parliament and people of Pakistan shared the moment of grief of Kuwaiti people and leadership, he added.— KUNA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَارْجِعِي فِي عِبَادِي وَأَرْجِعِي جَنَّتِي
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ



Nissan Middle East

نيسان الشرق الأوسط

Extend their heartfelt condolences to the

AL-SABAH FAMILY

And the people of Kuwait, on the sad demise of
His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait

SHEIKH

SABAH AL AHMAD AL JABER AL SABAH

May His Soul Rest in Peace



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is carried to his final resting place.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad laid to his final resting place



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem lead mourners during the funeral of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: The body of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was laid to its final resting place yesterday. Attending the funeral was His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy

head of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Senior officials attend the funeral prayers for late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bilal bin Rabah Mosque.— Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the funeral prayers for late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bilal bin Rabah Mosque.



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



The bier of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is carried upon its arrival at the airport yesterday.



The ambulance carrying the body of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah proceeds to the Sulaibikhat cemetery.

Embassies eulogize late Amir

KUWAIT: Embassies in Kuwait poured in their condolences on the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, describing his passing as a great loss not only to Kuwait, but the entire world.

Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub expressed his sincere condolences on the sad demise of His Highness the late Amir, noting that he was the greatest supporter to the Palestinian cause and people. "His Highness was an unrivalled leader, this nation's sage, living conscience, beating heart and a safe haven for humanity in general," Tahboub stressed, praying to Allah Almighty to rest his soul in peace.

"I learnt with great sadness and sorrow the death of the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," Ambassador of Turkey to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak said. "We are saddened to lose a 'Humanitarian Leader' who has made valuable contributions to Kuwait's development as well as regional and global peace and stability efforts. On behalf of our Government, Embassy, Kuwait-Turkish community and my family, I pray to Allah Almighty to grant His mercy on the late Sheikh Sabah."

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Elkhon Gahraman said that the news of the late Amir's passing was deeply saddening. "I ask Allah Almighty to bestow His mercy on the late leader, and may his place be in Paradise," he said. "I express my deepest condolences to the family of the late Amir and the people and state of Kuwait, wishing everyone patience. I believe that the people and

state of Kuwait will overcome this loss with endurance and take firm steps towards a bright future. I wish the friendly people and state of Kuwait great success on this path."

"I am highly grieved to learn about the sad demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait," Ambassador of Pakistan Syed Sajjad Haider said. "He was known for his wisdom, generosity and kindness all over the world. He was known as a peace maker. He was highly regarded by Pakistani people."

"The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the State of Kuwait expresses sincere condolences to the Sabah family and the people of Kuwait on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," said Kairat Saki, Charge d'affaires, Embassy of Kazakhstan in Kuwait. "The Embassy expresses deep solidarity with the people of Kuwait in mourning the late Amir, truly a great humanitarian leader and a seeker of peace."

"Tajikistan Embassy along with the Islamic and Arab world, and people of all friendly nations mourns over the passing of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait," said Dr Zubaydullo Zubaydov, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan. "At this time of irretrievable loss our prayers and thoughts are with Al-Sabah family, all friends and brotherly people of Kuwait. Indeed, Kuwait and the Arab world has lost the most precious man and leader. May God have mercy on him."

Ambassador of Japan Masato Takaoka expressed "with great sorrow and grief" his deepest condolences to Al-Sabah family and people of Kuwait on the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "who played a highly significant role in developing the bilateral relations between Japan and Kuwait as well as achieving peace in the world as a great humanitarian leader."

"On behalf of Korean people, I wish to extend my heartfelt condolences to Kuwaiti people regarding the passing away of the late His

Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Dr Hong Youngki said. "His Highness was a humanitarian champion, a great leader devoted to peace, respected globally. Under his leadership, the bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Korea have grown stronger and risen to a new level. I will mourn together with Kuwaiti people over this great loss."

"We have received with great sadness and sorrow the news of the demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait," said Ju Myong Chol, Charge D'affaires Embassy of Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Kuwait. "I express my sincere condolences and sympathy to the friendly people of Kuwait. Sheikh Sabah was a wise and outstanding leader who dedicated his life to the peace, security and humanitarian work in the region and world. His great achievements will remain in the hearts of the people of the world."

"The late His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a wise leader deeply loved by the people of Kuwait and widely respected by the international community, played a pivotal role in bringing upon development and prosperity to Kuwait and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East, and has made significant contributions to the development of China-Kuwait relations," the Chinese embassy said in a statement. "The Chinese side mourns with great sorrow the passing of His Highness the late Amir, and would like to extend its deepest condolences to the Al-Sabah family, the government and the people of Kuwait."

Vietnam's embassy expressed in a statement their "deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the Kuwaiti people and the Al-Sabah family" on the passing of His Highness the late Amir. "[Sheikh Sabah] was a great leader of Kuwait, the region and the world," the statement reads. "He was also a great contributor to the Vietnam-Kuwait relations for which we are always grateful. Prayers are with his family and the people of Kuwait at this very sad moment."

"It is with great sadness and grief that we learnt of the passing of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," the Canadian embassy said in a statement. "Our deepest condolences and sympathies go to the Al-Sabah family and the people of Kuwait. His great contributions to his country and to the world will never be forgotten. His tireless dedication to serve his country for the past 40 years made him an exemplary leader on the international stage and a steady advocate for peace and stability. He was celebrated as a humanitarian leader, and his efforts helped so many escape poverty and suffering. He was a true friend and ally of Canada who recognized the many pillars that kept our countries connected, notably trade, investment, education and humanitarian approaches to foreign policy. Kuwait and the world have lost a great statesman indeed."

The embassy of Brazil conveyed condolences on the demise of His Highness the late Amir, and released an official statement by the Brazilian government on Sheikh Sabah's passing. "The Brazilian government has learnt, with great regret, of the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," the statement reads. "Over almost 15 years as Head of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah has consolidated a period of peace and prosperity for the Kuwaiti people. He has also made a fundamental contribution to the pursuit of peace in the Middle East."

"Today, the ties of cooperation and friendship between Brazil and Kuwait are intensifying and opening up new and promising prospects for concrete progress for the benefit of both peoples. The Brazilian government presents its most heartfelt condolences to the government and Al-Sabah family, and its solidarity with the Kuwaiti people," the statement concludes.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad receives condolences from world leaders

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolences yesterday from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, on the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Saudi King also congratulated the Amir on assuming power. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques said in his cable, "We received with utmost sorrow the news of the death of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah bestow mercy upon him. We lost a dear brother and friend who served his country and nation wholeheartedly and contributed to serving the causes of the Arab and Islamic nations. We pray to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon him and rest him in His widely vast paradise and to grant you and the people of Kuwait patience and solace."

"We offer to you and the people of the State of Kuwait sincere condolences, assuring you and the people of Kuwait our stand with you in these circumstances and that the Kingdom and Kuwait, throughout history, are tied by deep-rooted and distinguished bilateral relations. We congratulate you on assuming the power in the State of Kuwait, praying to Allah Almighty to grant you success and help you to serve Kuwait and its people, wishing Kuwait further security, progress, stability and prosperity," read the statement released by the Saudi News Agency (SPA).

Meanwhile, King Abdullah II of Jordan, in a phone call to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, expressed condolences over the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. King



The plane carrying the body of Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, escorted by fighter jets, prepares to land at Kuwait International Airport yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photo

Abdullah said the Arab and Islamic nations lost a wise leader who dedicated his life to the service of his country and all humanity. King Abdullah also expressed best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, who was sworn in as Amir of Kuwait, and stressed the deep-rooted, brotherly ties between Jordan and Kuwait, according to a statement released by the Jordanian news agency (Petra).

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolences from Egyptian President Abdulfattah Al-Sisi, on the demise of His Highness

the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In the cable the Egyptian President expressed deepest condolences and sympathy to His Highness the Amir, Kuwait government and people on the demise of His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, asking Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on his soul. In return, His Highness the Amir sent him cable of thanks and appreciation for the sincere sympathy and condolences, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad also received a cable of condolences from

Tunisian President Kais Saied, on the demise of His Highness the late Amir. In the cable, the Tunisian President expressed deepest condolences and sympathy to His Highness the Amir, Kuwait government and people on the demise of His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, asking Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on his soul. In return, His Highness the Amir sent cables of thanks and appreciation for the sincere sympathy and condolences, wishing him good health and wellness.

Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received a cable of condolences from Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah. In the cable the Algerian ruler expressed deepest condolences and sympathy to His Highness the Amir, Kuwait government and people on the demise of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, asking Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on his soul. In return, His Highness the Amir sent cables of thanks and appreciation for the sincere sympathy and condolences, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf also received a cable of condolences from Italian President Sergio Mattarella expressing sympathy for the demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah. In return, His Highness the Amir sent cables of thanks and appreciation for the sincere sympathy and condolences, wishing him good health and wellness.

World mourns

UN chief remembers late Amir

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced deep sadness over the passing away of His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Guterres hailed the late Amir as an exceptional man of wisdom, generosity, peace as well as bridge-building. The UN chief spoke highly of the late Amir's humanitarian initiatives and efforts that have saved millions of people during conflicts and natural disasters. He voiced deep condolence to the people and government of Kuwait.

Trump 'deeply saddened'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said he is "deeply saddened" by the passing away of his "dear friend" His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Trump said in a statement that the late Amir "was an unwavering friend and partner to the United States." "Earlier this month, I had the honor of awarding him the prestigious Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander," he added. He affirmed that the late Amir was an "unparalleled diplomat, having served as Foreign Minister for 40 years. His tireless mediation of disputes in the Middle East bridged divides under the most challenging circumstances," he continued. "Melania and I send our sincere condolences to the people of Kuwait," Trump said.

China mourns late Amir

BEIJING: China mourned His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was loved by the Kuwaiti people and respected by the international community, and played an important role in the development and prosperity of his country," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement. The late Amir, he added, contributed to peace and stability in the Middle East, and boosted relations between China and Kuwait.

Iran extends condolences

TEHRAN: Iran extended condolences to the State of Kuwait on "painful" demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a tweet, said the passing away of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad who was "the voice of moderation and balance of his country has hurt our hearts." He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow his blessings upon the deceased, and wishing the Kuwaiti people and their new leadership security, stability, progress and prosperity.

European Union mourns loss of 'global humanitarian leader'

KUWAIT: Head of Delegation of the European Union to the State of Kuwait and the State of Qatar Ambassador Cristian Tudor offered condolences on the passing of Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"I would like to express my deep sadness over the passing away of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," Tudor said in a statement released yesterday. "My most sincere and deepest condolences go out to Al-Sabah family, to the Government of the State of Kuwait, and to the people of Kuwait.

"The European Union has the utmost respect for His Highness and his leadership. His vision earned Kuwait the respectable role of a regional and international mediator, and bestowed upon him the title of a 'global humanitarian leader'. We have all benefited greatly from his experience and perseverance when it came to promoting dialogue and peace, and must now strive to preserve his legacy as we confront common challenges, both within the Gulf region, the broader Middle East and the global stage," Tudor's statement reads.

"The European Union and the State of Kuwait enjoy excellent relations, founded on our shared determination to advance the cause of peace and prosperity in the Middle East region and beyond. The European Union stays firmly committed to strengthen our bilateral ties as we strive to attain our shared interests for the benefit of our peoples," he said. "His Highness Sheikh Sabah, may he rest in peace, leaves behind an invaluable legacy in world affairs. I am confident that the State of Kuwait will remain a regional and international leader for peace and a global actor for humanitarian relief."

"In this moment of sorrow, I would like to reassure that the European Union will continue to work towards consolidating a strong, enduring partnership with the State of Kuwait and its people," Tudor concluded.

European Union mourns

The European Union expressed its condolences to Kuwait over the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, and underlined its commitment to build a strong partnership with Kuwait. "Today we learnt with sadness of the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, late Amir of the State of Kuwait. We

would like to express our deepest condolences to his family, to the people and to the Government of Kuwait," said the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and EU High Representative Josep Borrell in a joint statement. "Under His Highness's leadership, widely regarded as the architect of modern Kuwait's foreign policy, Kuwait assumed the role of a respected international partner and regional mediator. His vision steered a foreign policy that placed Kuwait among the European Union's close partners," said the three EU leaders. "The European Union has been a staunch supporter of the indefatigable efforts of His Highness to promote dialogue towards the settlement of disputes in the Gulf region," noted the statement. "His Highness's dedication to humanitarian relief worldwide have earned him much deserved recognition as a global humanitarian leader. His loss will be mourned for years to come," it said. "The European Union will continue to work towards consolidating a strong and enduring partnership with the State of Kuwait and its people," it added.

Meanwhile, the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli expressed his condolences to the people of Kuwait, following the death of the late Amir. "The region has lost one of its finest statesmen and a longstanding advocate of peace and stability," he tweeted. In the meantime, the former European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini expressed her sadness by the loss of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. In a post on her Twitter account, she said he was "a man of wisdom and peace, mediation and dialogue, in a time and a region where these qualities were, and still are, so much needed."

"He has been a constant source of inspiration and will always be," added Mogherini. Mogherini was the EU High Representative from 2014-2019 and visited Kuwait thrice. She posted a photo on her Twitter page with the late Amir during a meeting in Kuwait. A former Italian foreign minister, she is now the rector of College of Europe based in the Belgian city of Bruges. In the meantime, Belgian foreign and defense minister Philippe Goffin in his message on twitter expressed his "deep sadness over the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. My sincere condolences to his family and the people of Kuwait who

have lost a leader known for promoting dialogue and peace in the region," he added.

'Man of peace'

King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands yesterday expressed "great sadness" over the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "On behalf of the people of the Kingdom of the Netherlands we convey our deepest sympathy to the people of Kuwait at this time of sorrow," they said in a message. "Sheikh Sabah al-Sabah will be deeply missed."

In the meantime, the German Foreign Ministry extended condolences for the Kuwaiti people following demise of His Highness the late Amir. "The wisdom of the late Amir and his diplomatic wit have always impressed us," Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said. The late Kuwaiti Amir "was tireless in mediating to promote channels of understanding, dialogue and balance in the Middle East," he added.

Meanwhile, France described the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a "man of peace and dialogue," who led his country with an "enlightened and balanced diplomacy." "France has learned with sadness of the passing of the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and offers its sincere condolences to the Amir's family and to the Kuwaiti people," read a Foreign Ministry statement. "A man of peace and dialogue ... he worked tirelessly to implement an enlightened and balanced diplomacy to calm tensions and to promote human values. The Kuwaiti people are losing a great leader, respected everywhere for the values of openness and dialogue that he embodied," the statement went on to mention. On the bilateral scale, Sheikh Sabah "contributed to strengthening the deep and sincere bonds of friendship which unite France and Kuwait," it added. Paris concluded by wishing his successor, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah success in his new role. — KUNA

Kuwait Journalists Association mourns late Amir

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) released a statement in which they extended its sincerest condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, members of Al-Sabah family and the Kuwaiti people on the sad demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "We pray to Allah Almighty to bestow endless mercy on his soul and to keep our beloved Kuwait safe and stable," the statement read. "We also urge everybody to unite under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who always confirms his pride in our constitution, democratic practices and in Kuwait as a state of law and liberty."

"Just as the predecessor (may his soul rest in peace) was a leader of humanity and advocate of freedom of speech, the successor (may Allah save him) reconfirms this and always urges us, journalists, to practice constructive criticism for the greater good of Kuwait and its people," the statement concluded.

Palestine mourns late Amir: 'Always stood by our national cause'

RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas mourned the death of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, describing him as "the wise leader and the big brother of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause." Abbas said in a statement, "Palestine has lost with his departure an Arab leader and a leader of humanity who spent his life in the service of his people, his nation and all humanity, and always stood by our national cause, with our Palestinian people, and the just causes of his nation," according to Palestinian Wafa news agency. "Our loss of this great Arab leader in this sensitive period of our history is a great loss," he added, underlining that Palestine

stands by Kuwait and its people in these difficult circumstances. Abbas prayed to Allah Almighty to have mercy on him and declared a period of mourning and flags to fly at half-mast.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said that the late Kuwaiti Amir was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause in international conferences. He said His Highness the late Amir had numerous humanitarian achievements in the Palestinian areas. Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas also mourned the Kuwaiti leader and paid tribute to him. They highlighted his historic support to the Palestinian cause and contributions to the Palestinian people.



NABLUS: Palestinians hang a banner with pictures of the late Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait's Amir urges unity against critical challenges

Constitution guarantees 'smooth transition' of leadership: Sheikh Nawaf

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah took oath before the National Assembly on Wednesday to become the 16th Amir of the state of Kuwait. "I swear by Allah Almighty to respect the Constitution and the laws of the State, to defend the liberties, interests and properties of the people and to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the country," His Highness the Amir, reading Article 60 of the Constitution.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf said the Constitution guaranteed "smooth transition" of leadership to ensure "stability and sustainability," and vowed to carry out his responsibility to his utmost best. His Highness the Amir, in written remarks at the Record of Honor of the National Assembly, said the constitution of the State of Kuwait guaranteed smooth transition of leadership and constitutional-related authorities to avoid "constitutional vacuum" to ensure stability. He paid tribute to late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his humanitarian contributions. "The trust bestowed upon me by the Kuwaiti people is a trust I bear in my neck," he said. He vowed the people to carry out his "responsibilities" to his utmost best and reiterated commitment to the constitution and democracy.

Critical challenges

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said the State of Kuwait was facing "acute circumstances and critical challenges" which required unity. Addressing the parliament after taking oath, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad said Kuwait has been exposed to "serious challenges and difficult ordeals which we succeeded in overcoming through collaboration."

"Today, our nation is facing acute circumstances and critical challenges which can only be overcome and avoid their consequences by being united, as well as with collaboration of faithful efforts for the

best interest of Kuwait and its faithful people," said His Highness the Amir. He reiterated commitment to the constitution and the democratic principles. "We affirm our keenness on our constitution and democratic practice, and we are proud that Kuwait is a state of law and institutions, and we are keen on spirit of one family, a virtue well known in our society in Kuwait ...," he said.

Huge responsibility

His Highness the Amir pledged to the people to live up to his huge responsibility and to "do my utmost to safeguard Kuwait, protect its security and stability, guarantee its dignity and prosperity of its people." His Highness the Amir, meanwhile, paid tribute to the late Amir. "We have lost an icon who gave a lot to his country, people and his nation. He left a rich history full of achievements and remarkable accomplishments at local, Arab, Islamic and international levels. We remember his guidance and advice which reflected his love to our beloved Kuwait and its people, and which will be a guidance and a method to us," said His Highness the Amir.

The Amir Diwan announced the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad on Tuesday, and the Cabinet named His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad as Amir of the State of Kuwait during an extraordinary meeting.

School of wise leaders

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was a "graduate of the school of the late wise" leaders who led Kuwait through wisdom and vision. His Highness the Amir benefited from experience and expertise of the late wise leaders, Ghanem said after His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad took oath before the parliament as Kuwait's 16th Amir following demise of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber



KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah reads a statement after being sworn in as Kuwait's new Amir at the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Al-Sabah. Ghanem described the late Amir as "skillful skipper of Kuwait and the leader who safeguarded the balance and moderation of the State of Kuwait, promoted its status and weight, unaffected by weathering storms of politics." He said the passing away of His Highness the Amir shocked the nation and hearts of people, as he was always a source of peace and tranquility, and a defender of interest of Kuwait and its people. The deceased, he added, formulated a wise policy that prevented "our country - small in size but huge with its people - from raging fires around us and thus took us to peace and safety." Ghanem paid tribute to His Highness the late Amir's political wisdom and expertise in dealing with the most critical situations. Ghanem, meanwhile, noted the pain His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad was feeling with the demise of his brother. But added that His Highness the Amir, a "blend of decisiveness and humbleness," was well-placed to lead the nation. "You have inaugurated your era to continue the march of your predecessors ... an era in which the Kuwaiti people see justice, freedom and prosperity, an era where law is applied on the big and small, and era where the corrupt cannot enjoy corruption ...," he said. Ghanem wished success for the new Amir and congratulated him on assuming office. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah salutes the crowd after being sworn in as Kuwait's new Amir at the National Assembly in Kuwait City, as Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem claps. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait embraces 16th Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Following the demise of its 15th Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the State of Kuwait embraces its 16th Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who has become the Gulf state's ruler in line with the constitution. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad accompanied the late Amir as Crown Prince throughout the past 14 years, witnessing decisive moments in Kuwait's history and stood as firm contributor in decision-making. His Highness the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad nominated His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad as Crown Prince on February 7, 2006, and won the blessing of the National Assembly. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad is known to being close to the people, participating in social occasions and visiting them in their houses. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf's service began more than 50 years ago, bringing an expertise in many domains.

Late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah appointed His Highness Sheikh Nawaf as Governor of Hawally on February 12, 1962, shortly after Kuwait's independence, contributing to transforming the Governorate into a commercial and economic hive. He remained as Governor until March 19, 1978, when he was named by late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Interior Minister. He served as Interior Minister until January 26, 1988, then was named Defense Minister.

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, months after the February 1991 liberation of Kuwait, was named Minister of Social Affairs and Labor on April 2, 1991 until October 17, 1992. He served as Deputy head of Kuwait National Guard between October 16, 1994 and July 13, 2003. He became Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister on October 16, 2003 until he was named Crown Prince in 2006. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad steered the interior ministry to cementing security and stability, applying information technology, in addition to implementing a defense strategy against external threats. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf is a strong believer in national unity as the main pillar against challenges. — KUNA



Foreign diplomats attend the session.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ الْفَيْسُ وَالْمُطَمِّسُ اجْعَلِي لِي بَرَكَةً فِي رَوْحِي وَفِي عِبَادَتِي وَفِي حَيَاتِي

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

With deep sorrow and profound grief

The Chairman, the Board Members and the employees of
Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

would like to extend their heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences to

His Highness the Amir
Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah,

the Al Sabah family,

the people of Kuwait, and the Arab and Islamic nation

on the demise of His Highness
Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah,
The Late Amir of Kuwait

We pray to the Almighty to rest his soul in peace and grant patience and solace to the Al Sabah family and the people of Kuwait.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَجْعَلُكَ لِي بَرَكَةً

International

Indian police accused of forcing cremation of gang rape victim

Demonstrators demand death penalty for the accused men

NEW DELHI: Indian police were accused yesterday of cremating the body of a 19-year-old woman against her family's will after she was allegedly gang-raped by four men in the country's latest horrific sexual assault.

The teenager from India's marginalised Dalit community suffered serious injuries in a brutal sexual attack two weeks ago, according to her family and police, and died at a New Delhi hospital on Tuesday.

The case has sparked widespread anger across India that was further fuelled Wednesday by accusations that police seized the woman's body and cremated it against the wishes of her family.

On Tuesday night clashes between police and protesters appalled by the killing erupted outside the hospital, before a large group of officers escorted the hearse back to her native village in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

Her family told local media that the corpse was seized by police upon its arrival at the village in Hathras district, despite resistance from relatives and villagers, and was cremated in the middle of the night. Police did not offer an explanation but multiple relatives protested against the 3 am cremation, saying they wanted the body to lie at the family home for a time so absent loved ones could return to pay their respects.

"We begged them to let us bring her body inside the house one last time, but they didn't listen to us," the woman's brother was quoted as saying by the Indian Express daily. Hathras police then ordered that the cremation go ahead and family members

were forced to join, relatives told local media. Police chief Vikrant Vir denied the allegations, saying the cremation took place with the consent of the family. "The police provided the firewood and helped the family in the cremation. Most of the family members were present at the cremation. We did not want any outsider to create law and order disturbances," Vir told AFP.

On September 14 the victim was found lying in a pool of blood and was paralysed from injuries to her neck and spine after she went missing while heading to fields in the village. The tragedy has sparked uproar and lit up social media in India, with politicians, Bollywood personalities, cricket stars and women's rights activists condemning the attack.

On Tuesday hundreds of people including the victim's relatives gathered outside the Delhi hospital to protest against the attack before authorities deployed riot police forcing them to disperse.

Officers detained Chandrashekhar Azad, a Dalit politician, as he led demonstrators demanding the death penalty for the accused men. Another protest was due to take place in Delhi on Wednesday as well as in Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow.

The four alleged attackers have been arrested. India's 200 million low-caste "untouchable" Dalits have long faced discrimination and abuse, and campaigners say attacks on them have increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

The latest assault comes months after four men were hanged for the brutal gang rape and murder of a student on a bus in Delhi in 2012 — a case that came to symbolise the nation's prob-



NEW DELHI: Congress supporters react as they face the police during a demonstration outside the Uttar Pradesh Bhawan (state house) in New Delhi yesterday, a day after a 19-year-old woman who was allegedly gang-raped died from her injuries near Bool Garhi village in the UP state. Indian police were accused of forcibly cremating the body of a 19-year-old alleged gang-rape victim as anger grew over the latest horrific sexual assault to rock the country. — AFP

lem with sexual violence. Women in India continue to be subjected to alarming levels of sexual abuse. An average of 87 rape cases were reported every day last year, according to the latest data released Tuesday by the National

Crime Records Bureau, but large numbers are thought to go unreported. The bureau reported an increase of more than seven percent in the number of crimes against women in 2019 compared to the previous year. — AFP

Armenia accuses Turkey of shooting down warplane

YEREVAN: Armenia said Tuesday that a Turkish fighter jet had shot down one of its warplanes during heavy fighting with Turkey's ally Azerbaijan, but Ankara fiercely denied the claim. Direct Turkish military action against Armenia would mark a major escalation after three days of heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over the breakaway region of Nagorno Karabakh.

And the UN Security Council called on both sides for an immediate end to the fighting. The two sides have defied calls for a ceasefire over Karabakh — an ethnic-Armenian enclave that broke from Azerbaijan in the 1990s — and are both claiming to have inflicted heavy losses on opposing forces.

Ankara has backed Azerbaijan in the conflict and on Tuesday the Armenian defence ministry said a Turkish F-16 flying in support of Baku's forces had downed an Armenian SU-25 warplane. Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said the Turkish jet was supporting Azerbaijani aviation bombing civilian settlements in Armenia when it shot down the Armenian plane, killing the pilot.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's top press aide called the claim "absolutely untrue". "Armenia should withdraw from the territories under its occupation instead of resorting to cheap propaganda tricks," said the aide, Fahrettin Altun.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said: "There is not a shred of evidence of Turkey's participation in the conflict." Ankara was giving only moral support, he insisted.

'Serious losses'

Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked for decades in a territorial dispute over Karabakh and have blamed each other for sparking fierce clashes that erupted on Sunday and have since caused nearly 100 confirmed deaths. Foreign powers including the United States and Russia have called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to negotiations over the future of Karabakh, talks that have been stalled for years.

On Tuesday, the UN Security Council called on both sides to "immediately stop fighting", according to a statement seen by AFP. Earlier, both Azerbaijan's Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had vowed to continue fighting, their armies claiming to have dealt heavy blows to enemy forces. The Armenian defence ministry said separatist forces in Karabakh had repelled Azerbaijani attacks along the frontline and that "the enemy suffered serious losses in manpower".

It claimed Azerbaijan's military had lost 72 drones, seven helicopters, 137 tanks, a plane and 82 military vehicles since Sunday. In Baku, officials denied that Armenian-backed separatists had regained control of territory lost in Sunday's fighting. Azerbaijan said its military had repelled an Armenian counter-attack and destroyed a motorised column, an artillery unit and, later, an entire motorised infantry regiment.

Tuesday evening, Russia President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone with Pashinyan at the request of the latter. The Russia leader stressed the "urgent need for a ceasefire" and for the crisis to be defused. The fighting between majority-Muslim Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia has raised fears of a wider conflict involving regional powers Turkey and Russia. Armenia is part of a military alliance of former Soviet states led by Moscow, and the Kremlin on Tuesday urged Turkey and the warring sides to pursue "a peaceful settlement of this conflict using political and diplomatic means". — AFP

Outcry over nurses' racist abuse of indigenous woman

MONTREAL: Quebec's premier on Tuesday denounced nurses' racist comments about a dying indigenous woman in hospital that sparked uproar in Canada after the victim broadcast the incident live on Facebook.

In a seven-minute video streamed on Monday evening, Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman, screamed in distress and made urgent calls for help from a stretcher while two hospital staff members made racist insults about her.

Their comments, in French, included calling Echaquan stupid and saying she was only good for sex and would be better off dead.

Echaquan died soon after. She had gone to the Joliette hospital, about 70 kilometers (44 miles) from Montreal, a few days earlier for stomach pain, according to local media.

Premier Francois Legault announced that one of the nurses had been fired.

"The nurse, what she said, is totally unacceptable, it's racist and she was fired," Legault told a news conference. "We must fight this racism."

The Atikamekw council of Manawan also decried the nurses' remarks, saying they "clearly demonstrate racism against First Nations." "I know very well that most of the time, the racism we are subjected to is not intentional and that it is often the result of unconscious biases," said

Ghislain Picard, Grand Chief of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador.

But "it is also very often the fruit of government policies which lead to systemic discrimination," he added. Legault announced two investigations, one by the regional health authorities and the other by a forensic pathologist, who is responsible for investigating deaths in suspicious circumstances or due to negligence.

On Twitter, reactions multiplied under the hashtag #JusticePourJoyce, while a vigil was scheduled Tuesday evening in front of the Joliette hospital. Echaquan's death comes a year after the publication of a public inquiry report that concluded that "members of the First Nations and Inuit of Quebec are indeed victims of systemic discrimination in their relations with public services." — AFP



HONG KONG: Family members of 12 Hong Kong residents who were intercepted and detained in mainland China after they were caught trying to flee serious protest-linked prosecutions by boat in Hong Kong in August, gather outside China's Liaison Office to petition for the return of the 12 to Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

Families of detained Hong Kongers petition Beijing office

HONG KONG: Relatives of 12 Hong Kong fugitives detained on the Chinese mainland after trying to flee the financial hub petitioned Beijing's office in the city yesterday, pleading for their loved ones to be returned.

The small gathering outside the Liaison Office came as its director said authorities needed to do more to instil patriotism in the city, which was rocked by seven months of huge and often violent democracy protests last year.

"As Chinese, patriotism is not a choice, it's a duty and a righteous path," Luo Huining, Beijing's top official in the city, said at a banquet. Luo was speaking ahead of today's National Day — the annual holiday that marks the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Democracy supporters have been denied permission to march today. Authorities cited security concerns and anti-coronavirus measures against more than four people gathering in public, measures which have made protest all but impossible for most of this year.

As Luo spoke, five relatives of the detained Hong Kongers rallied outside the Liaison Office. Police did not break up the gathering and no official came to meet the group. The Hong Kongers were detained in August by the Chinese coast-guard as they tried to flee to Taiwan in a speedboat. They were all facing protest-linked prosecutions in Hong Kong.

The group has since disappeared into China's

notoriously opaque judicial system. Relatives say they have been denied access to family-appointed lawyers and authorities have not given adequate updates on their health or well-being.

"I have no information of my son," a man who identified himself as the father of detainee Cheng Tsz-Ho, told reporters, weeping as he spoke. "They ask us not to badger them any more," a woman who identified herself as the mother of Li Tsz-yin added.

"Why shouldn't we when our family members have gone missing? We can't send any medicine or do anything." Mainland authorities say the fugitives are being held on suspicion of "illegal border crossing" and must face mainland law before they are returned to face any earlier prosecution.

Political tensions are rising in Hong Kong ahead of National Day, a time of celebration for government supporters but a day of grievance for those worried about authoritarian Beijing's increased control over the city.

Last year's celebrations — on the seventieth anniversary of the PRC's founding — were marred by some of the most violent clashes of the months-long unrest in Hong Kong.

Since then Beijing has imposed a strict national security law on Hong Kong, a measure that it says has returned stability.

While mass rallies today are unlikely, some online groups have called for flash-mob demonstrations in the evening. Over the last 16 months more than 10,000 people have been arrested at protests and courts are crammed with trials.

Yesterday a court granted bail to Joshua Wong, one of the city's most prominent dissidents, following a recent arrest for his involvement in one of last year's protests.

He currently faces three protest-linked prosecutions. "Even if they try to arrest us, prosecute us and lock us up in prison, there is no reason for us to surrender," he told reporters outside court. — AFP

Hezbollah arsenal next to Beirut 'gas' depot: Netanyahu

UNITED NATIONS: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday accused Lebanon's Hezbollah of manufacturing weapons next to a "gas station" in Beirut, warning of "another tragedy" if it explodes.

Israel has repeatedly accused the Shiite movement Hezbollah, backed by Israel's arch-enemy Iran, of building missiles to attack the Jewish state. Hezbollah swiftly denied the latest charge and invited journalists to visit the site.

In a video speech from Jerusalem broadcast to the UN General Assembly in New York, Netanyahu presented a map with coordinates he said showed a "secret weapons depot" in Beirut's southern suburb of Jnah, a stronghold of the movement.

Beirut is still reeling from an August 4 explosion when a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate exploded in the port, killing more than 190 people, wounding thousands and ravaging large parts of the city.

The Israeli illustrations showed what Netanyahu said was a weapons depot sandwiched between two compounds. The alleged precision missile factory is "a few metres away from a gas station" on one side, and 50 metres (164 feet) from a "gas company" on the other.

"If this thing explodes, it's another tragedy," Netanyahu said. The site is also close to Beirut's international airport. The Israeli images appeared to show cooking gas depots, but there are also petrol stations nearby according to Google Maps. Netanyahu showed details of two other alleged missile production sites, in Beirut's Laylaki and Chouifat districts, which he said were located under apartment buildings. "I say to the people of Lebanon, Israel means you no harm," he added. "But Iran does. Iran and Hezbollah have deliberately put you and your families in grave danger."

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah retorted in a previously announced address that Netanyahu was "inciting the Lebanese people against Hezbollah as usual" and invited journalists to visit the Jnah site. "We will allow media outlets to go into this site and see what's there," he said in his televised address, accusing Netanyahu of lying. "We don't store rockets at Beirut port, nor do we put them next to gas stations," he said.

Within an hour, an AFP photographer had joined dozens of journalists on a media tour of the site in south Beirut, where he saw heavy machinery inside a two-storey warehouse. He also saw large gas tanks that an employee told him were produced on site. — AFP



Bahrain Exchange Company (BEC)
 extend their heartfelt condolences to the Al-Sabah family and the people of Kuwait on the sad demise of
His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

May his soul rest in peace.



CONDOLENCES

In the Name of Allah Most Merciful Most Gracious



Schneider Electric in Gulf Countries extends its sincere condolences to

Al Sabah family and the people of Kuwait on the passing of His Highness Sheikh **Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah,** a man of wisdom, tolerance and peace.

We pray to Allah to bless his soul, and grant people of Kuwait the strength to endure and persevere



May Allah grant his soul eternal peace

CONDOLENCES

In the Name of Allah Most Merciful Most Gracious

The Members of Board, Management & Staff of



Jassim Transport & Stevedoring Co. K.S.C.C

extend their deepest condolences to

AL-SABAH FAMILY
 and the people of Kuwait, on the sad demise of
His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
 Humanitarian Leader of the World



May Allah Almighty grant his soul eternal peace



Our Heartfelt Condolences

With deepest sorrow we mourn the demise of
 H H the Amir
 Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah
 Great Visionary and Humanitarian Leader
 May Allah grant his soul eternal peace



International

Biden faces down raging Trump in chaotic opening debate

No handshake as the two men took the stage

CLEVELAND: Democrat Joe Biden told a raging President Donald Trump to “shut up” in a chaotic opening debate that turned almost immediately into a shouting match weeks ahead of the most tense US election in recent memory.

The debate in Cleveland, Ohio, was as bad-tempered as had been feared, with Trump leading the way in yelling over his challenger and the Fox News moderator Chris Wallace alike. There was no handshake as the two men took the stage and while this was due to Covid-19 restrictions, the absence of the traditional greeting symbolized divisions through the country in the final countdown to November 3.

Trump went as hard on 77-year-old Biden as he'd threatened, saying the “radical left” had the centrist Democrat “wrapped around their little finger.” And he got personal, seeking to rile the former vice president by accusing one of his sons of corruption, and telling Biden that “there's nothing smart” about him.

Biden, though, not only gave as good as he got — he launched the kind of attack on Trump the billionaire president has rarely had to endure to his face. “Liar,” “racist” and “clown” were just some of the missiles launched from Biden, who also branded Trump the “puppy” of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

At times, neither Biden nor Wallace could get a word in, as Trump loudly touted his economic record and went after Biden's son Hunter. “This will go down as one of the worst debates in history,” Aaron Kall, a presidential debate specialist at the University of Michigan, told AFP.

Conspiracy theories

At one point an exasperated Biden, who leads strongly in the polls, turned to Trump and said: “Will you shut up, man!” That moment symbolized Biden's performance in an arena where Trump's campaign had for months been predicting he would crumble.

The Republican had spread lurid conspiracy theories right up until the last minute that Biden would need drugs or an earpiece secretly providing answers to get through the night.

The anger-filled event did nothing to calm fears around the country that the presidential election, taking place in the middle of an ongoing coronavirus pandemic, could end in chaos.

Asked by Wallace whether they pledged to urge calm and refrain from declaring victory if the results are not immediately known November 3, Biden said: “Yes.” Trump, though, wouldn't commit, saying that if he saw “tens of thousands of ballots being manipulated, I can't go along with that.” And when asked if he condemned far-right armed militias like the Proud Boys, Trump gave a cryptic reply: “Proud Boys — stand back and stand by.” The paramilitary group later appeared to adopt the phrase, with a social media account linked to the Proud Boys posting a logo that read “Stand Back, Stand By.”

Direct to American people

Biden sought to tie Trump squarely to the Covid-19 pandemic that has claimed more than 200,000 lives in the United States, more than in any other country. And he came with a visible plan to dodge the Trump rhetorical storm by frequently turning to face the cameras directly and addressing the tens of millions of people watching across the country.

“How many of you got up this morning and had an empty chair at the kitchen table because someone died of Covid?” Biden said, channeling his famed ability to show empathy for the suffering — something that Trump has long had difficulty in matching. Mocking the 74-year-old Trump for one of his more notorious statements on supposed cures for coronavirus, Biden said: “Maybe you could inject bleach in your arm and that would take care of it.”

Before they even appeared for the first of their



CLEVELAND: US President Donald Trump (L) and Democratic Presidential candidate and former US Vice President Joe Biden exchange arguments during the first presidential debate at Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

scheduled three 90-minute TV debates, Biden was capitalizing on bombshell revelations in The New York Times that the businessman managed to avoid paying almost any federal income taxes for years.

Trump — who has broken longtime presidential transparency by refusing to publish his tax returns — reportedly used loopholes to pay just \$750 in federal tax during the first year of his presidency.

Hours before the Cleveland showdown, Biden published his own tax returns — and at the debate demanded that Trump do likewise. Trump insisted at the debate that he has paid “millions” in taxes.

But the affair continues to provide Biden ammunition to try and chip away at Trump's crucial support from blue collar voters or what the Republican calls “the forgotten men and women.” — AFP

Hungary students dig in at blockade for academic freedom

BUDAPEST: A month into a blockade of Hungary's top arts university, hundreds of students rebelling against control by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's right-wing government show no sign of quitting. “The blockade remains until our demands to restore the university's autonomy are met,” said Aron Heppes, 23, a film set design student at the University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE) in downtown Budapest.

Heppes and dozens of other students began the sit-in September 1, a day after SZFE's management resigned in protest at their loss of autonomy to a new, government-picked board whose trustees are appointed indefinitely.

The move is seen by Orban's opponents as the latest step in his attempt to reshape Hungary's public life to fit his own nationalist and culturally conservative agenda. “I've been sleeping here since then, hundreds of us are inside now,” Heppes, tall with cropped hair and a facemask emblazoned with “Free SZFE!”, told AFP outside the building.

With no end to the standoff in sight, staff at the 155-year-old institution, which has produced Oscar-winning directors and cinematographers, also plan to strike from October 1.

At its entrance — barricaded with red-and-white tape — students sit on guard, keeping out the new management and only letting in fellow so-called “university citizen” staff and students, after a temperature check. Members of the public regularly arrive with cash or food donations. “If we need something like mattresses or food, there's an online list, people bring it the next day, it's been an uplifting experience,” said Heppes.

Celebrity solidarity

Each afternoon student performers entertain those below from the first-floor balcony and the facade is adorned with many hundreds of messages of support and portraits of sympathisers.

International acting luminaries abroad like Ian McKellen, Cate Blanchett, and Helen Mirren have also expressed support. The outpouring of solidarity with the 400-strong student body has not surprised SZFE's deputy rector Laszlo Úpor, 67, a drama teacher there for 32 years.

“We may be small, our problem is not everyone's, but people clearly see how politics intervened in a direct way,” Úpor, who led the management's mass resignation last month, told AFP near the blockade. “Our autonomy is directly related to the freedom of art,” he said, calling the new board and its leader, conservative theatre director Attila Vidnyanszky, “ideological” appointments.

Seen as close to Orban, Vidnyanszky, 56, has said he wants a “different kind of thinking” at SZFE. “They claim it's time to teach people to become true patriots or true Christians or whatever, it is hard to deny it is part of a polarising culture war,” said Úpor.

The self-styled “illiberal” premier Orban, 57, declared in 2018 that “big changes” were afoot for Hungary's cultural and academic scenes, seen in pro-government circles as hotbeds of liberalism. Since then, laws have reformed how theatres are controlled and removed autonomy from the leadership of the prestigious Hungarian Academy of Sciences. — AFP

Belgium to form government, 493 days after vote

BRUSSELS: Belgian political leaders were to announce yesterday the formation of a new seven-party coalition government, after 21 months with no ruling majority. Some 493 days after inconclusive federal elections, and on the day when Belgium's reported coronavirus death toll passed 10,000, pre-dawn talks finally bore fruit.

A source close to the negotiations confirmed to

AFP that the new coalition and the name of the next prime minister would be announced during the day. “The final details of the deal are being read over, and discussions are continuing on the cast list,” he said.

Belgium, which has a long history of political instability, went without a government for 541 days in 2010 and 2011. Alexander de Croo, a 44-year-old Flemish liberal and finance minister in the caretaker government, is the frontrunner for the top job.

If confirmed, he will replace French-speaker Sophie Wilmes who has served as acting premier during the epidemic but never wielded a parliamentary majority.

The new coalition will bring together two socialist parties — one French-speaking, and one

Flemish — two liberal parties and two sets of greens. The CD&V, a party of Flemish Christian democrats will also join, but the larger Flemish nationalist N-VA, which was in government between 2014 and 2018 will leave power.

The draft agreement still has to be validated by each of the seven parties, probably by Thursday, when the House of Representatives will sit to welcome the new cabinet.

The country has been governed by a minority coalition since December 2018, when the N-VA abruptly left the government of liberal Charles Michel. The legislative elections of 26 May 2019 saw gains by various green and fringe groupings, further fragmenting the political landscape and making it harder to build a majority around the traditional parties. — AFP



CUAJINICUILAPA: Teenagers, members of the Afro-Mexican community, make Los Diablos dance, at El Pitayo community in Cuajinicuilapa, Guerrero state, Mexico, on September 10, 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there are 1.5 million African descendants in a country of 128 million inhabitants, it is normal to hear that “in Mexico there are no blacks”. — AFP

Mexico's forgotten Afro-descendants celebrate roots

CUAJINICUILAPA DE SANTA MARIA: With dancing devils, fireworks and traditional musical instruments like the donkey jawbone, Afro-Mexicans proudly celebrate a heritage that is often forgotten in the Latin American country despite a centuries-old presence.

The festival in honor of their patron saint Nicolas of Tolentino is part of efforts by the community of Cuajinicuilapa in southern Guerrero state to stop their culture and identity dying out.

Around 1.5 million of Mexico's 128 million people are of African ancestry, but they are largely invisible outside of a stretch of Pacific coast known as the Costa Chica.

These descendants of slaves are hard to find in the country's history books and sometimes mistaken in their own country for immigrants from Cuba, Haiti or Belize. “We're proudly Afro-Mexican,” says 28-year-old dancer Ady Cruz, her twists and turns illuminated by fireworks stuffed into a traditional cane frame that she swings through the air, leaving a trail of sparks.

“People ask me: ‘Are you Cuban?’ And I say ‘no, I'm from the Costa Chica of Guerrero,’” she adds. The air is filled with the smell of fireworks and pozole, the traditional Mexican stew.

Even the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 76,000 people dead in Mexico, does not deter this year's festival-goers. “We do it from the heart and I hope no one gets infected,” says Cruz.

Hugo Sandoval, a farmer who has been dancing for Saint Nicolas for 22 years, says people in the community are fed up with the virus. “They're waiting for a party to celebrate.”

'Still denial'

Angelica Sorroa, 58, is the manager, guide and lone employee of a museum in Cuajinicuilapa dedicated to educating people about Afro-Mexican history and culture. “We encourage children from an early age to accept their origin because there's still denial,” she says.

“Who wants to be the descendants of slaves?” Africans first arrived in Mexico with the Spanish conquistador Heenan Cortes in 1519. A decade later slaves were shipped over to work on cocoa and cotton plantations as well as in livestock farming.

Around 250,000 Africans arrived over the course of several decades and spread across the country, according to historians. By the 18th century, many had already won their freedom and took up jobs such as foremen, muleteers, fishermen and cowboys. Although in other areas they mixed with indigenous people, after Mexico won independence Cuajinicuilapa was largely cut off, helping to preserve its identity. “The highway came here very late and that meant that there was no mixing and black people lived in isolation,” says teacher and musician Jorge Anorve.

The September celebration in honor of Saint Nicolas is considered the feast of “the poor”, and Afro-Mexicans remain a disadvantaged community.

Only 15 percent of them earn more than three times the minimum wage, compared with 30 percent of the rest of Mexicans, according to official figures. Around 15 percent are illiterate, against the national average of 5.5 percent.

Mexicans of African descent have faced “internalized racism” for generations, says Mijane Jimenez, the 31-year-old founder of the National Network of Afro-Mexican Youth. Afro-Mexican identity is not just about physical appearance. Jimenez considers herself Afro-Mexican for having “been born, danced, given birth and eaten” alongside other people in the community.

Jose Pacheco, a 39-year-old teacher, has devoted a large part of his life to preserving traditions such as the Dance of the Devils, which commemorates dead ancestors. — AFP

Japan's military seeks record \$52bn budget

TOKYO: Japan's defence ministry yesterday unveiled a record \$52-billion budget request in a push to maintain military readiness under pressure from China and North Korea. The military budget has been rising steadily for nearly a decade, with Japan saying it feels threatened by China's vast military resources and territorial disputes, as well as unpredictable North Korea.

Pyeongyang has repeatedly tested nuclear devices in recent years, and also missiles — including some flown over Japan. The Ministry of Defence is asking for 5.49 trillion yen (\$52 billion) for the fiscal year from April 2021, marking nine straight years of increases and a rise from the 5.3 trillion yen for the ongoing year to March.

Among Japan's planned big purchases are two frigates and a submarine, with money also going to the development of a next-generation fighter. The budget does not include a request for an alternative to the US-developed Aegis Ashore missile interception system, which is intended primarily to protect against possible North Korean attacks.

The Japanese government has scrapped a controversial plan to build the system in two key locations on the main island of Honshu and is now considering putting the interception system at sea — either by using ships or mega-floats, or by building structures similar to offshore oil rigs.

Japanese defence officials said they cannot attach a price to the system until the government officially decides what to do with it. Under the planned budget, the defence ministry also said it aims to boost the nation's defensive capabilities in space and cybersecurity, although Japan's progress on those fronts has been slower than other top economies.

Japan's Self-Defence Force plans to launch a new cyber unit with 540 personnel, while a planned space unit will have 70. It is the first military budget under Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who came to power this month by pledging to continue the policies of Shinzo Abe.

Abe steadily sought to expand the role of Japan's military, which is highly circumscribed by the country's pacifist post-war constitution. But the rising defence spending comes with the world's third-largest economy chronically reliant on borrowed money to finance itself, contributing to public debt that stands at twice the size of its economy. The government budget is facing particular pressure this year to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



On the sad occasion of the passing of

His Highness

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

The late Emir of Kuwait

Amundi and **Credit Agricole Corporate & Investment Bank**

offer their heartfelt condolences and sympathies to

His Highness

The Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

and to the Honorable People of Kuwait

May his Soul Rest in Peace

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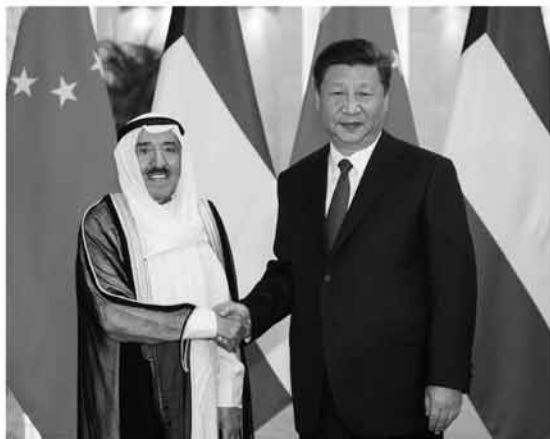


The 71st Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China (1949-2020)

10

Thursday, October 1, 2020

Chinese President Xi Jinping's discourse on Working Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind (Excerpt)



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ahead of their talks at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, July 9, 2018.

All countries should jointly shape the future of the world, write international rules, manage global affairs and ensure that development outcomes are shared by all. Big countries should treat smaller ones as equals instead of acting as a hegemon imposing their will on others.

When neighbors are in trouble, instead of tightening his own fences, one should extend a helping hand to them.

Development is the top priority for all countries. Instead of begging thy neighbor, countries should stick together like passengers in the same boat.

Different histories, national conditions, ethnic groups and customs give birth to different civilizations and make the world a colorful one. For us Chinese, China will do well only when the world does well, and vice versa. China will continue to pursue a win-win strategy of opening-up, share our development opportunities with other countries and welcome them aboard the fast train of China's development.

Building a community of shared future is an exciting goal, and it requires efforts from generation after generation.

There is only one Earth in the universe and we mankind have only one homeland. We should not only think about our own generation, but also take responsibility for future ones.

China's proposition is: build a community of shared future for mankind and achieve shared and win-win development.

Following 71 years of epoch-making changes and transformation, China moves forward with resolve

Today marks the 71st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China since its founding on Oct 1, 1949. Over the past 71 years, the Chinese people have achieved a remarkable transformation from standing up, growing rich to becoming strong, and have blazed a development path that suits China's actual conditions. A Kuwaiti elder once told me, "It is because of the choice of the Kuwaiti people that the Kuwaiti royal family becomes the prestigious and legitimate ruling family of Kuwait. It is also under the leadership of the Kuwaiti royal family that all Kuwaiti people have pulled together and achieved independence, liberation and development. Just like the two sides of the same coin, the royal family and the people of Kuwait are interdependent and indivisible as one". Similarly, after going through many vicissitudes and various explorations, the Chinese people have finally chosen the Communist Party of China as the governing party to lead them to make remarkable achievements in China's development. In just a few decades, China has completed an industrialization process that took developed countries several hundred years. China has become the world's second largest economy with its GDP exceeding 14 trillion US dollars and the largest trading partner of more than 120 countries and regions, and is expected to become the world's largest consumer market.

Chinese President Xi Jinping once said, "Whether the shoe fits or not, only the wearer knows." Facts have proved that China has chosen the right path, which is also the true feeling of the Chinese people. Although China's GDP per capita has just exceeded 10,000 U.S. dollars, which ranks around 50th in the world, China still faces the problem of unbalanced and inadequate development, and many regions remain economically underdeveloped. However, we believe that with a resolute focus on our path and concerted efforts, China will become a great modern country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the time of the centenary of the founding of New China. Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with China. As good friends of mutual trust and good partners of sincere cooperation, our two countries always support each other on issues involving each other's core interests and major concerns. Recent years have witnessed the deepening of China-Kuwait relations. In 2018, at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a state visit to China. The two heads of state agreed to establish a strategic partnership between the two countries to open a new chapter of China-Kuwait relationship. Kuwait was also the first MENA country to sign a cooperation agreement with China under



H.E. Ambassador Li Minggang

the Belt and Road Initiative. China's Belt and Road Initiative is highly aligned with the Kuwait Vision 2035, and bilateral cooperation in such areas as energy, infrastructure construction, finance, investment and people-to-people exchange has achieved fruitful outcomes. In the face of the COVID-19 epidemic this year, China and Kuwait have stood firmly together to combat the virus, which demonstrates the profound friendship and solidarity between our two countries and reflects the high level of the China-Kuwait strategic partnership. Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kuwait. We are ready to work in concert with our Kuwaiti counterparts to bring the China-Kuwait strategic partnership to new heights in order to yield more benefits for our two countries and peoples, and promote regional peace and development.

China and Kuwait stand in solidarity against COVID-19



Chinese anti-epidemic medical expert team is received at the airport by Ambassador Li Minggang and Assistant Undersecretary of Kuwaiti Ministry of Health for Supporting Medical Services Dr. Fawaz Al-Rifai, April 27, 2020.

Since the emergence of COVID-19, China and Kuwait have always been mutually supportive and have maintained close communication on anti-epidemic efforts, which reflects the high-level strategic friendship between the two countries. President Xi Jinping and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged letters to express solidarity and support for each other. During the critical moments in China's battle against the epidemic, Kuwait extended a helping hand and donated medical supplies with the value of USD 3 million to China, and in return, China has provided necessary facilitation to Kuwait in procuring medical supplies from China.

On April 14, the health experts from Shanghai and officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health held the virtual meeting to exchange experience on combating the COVID-19. On April 27, a Chinese anti-epidemic medical expert team dispatched by the Chinese government arrived in Kuwait. During their stay in Kuwait, Chinese medical experts exchanged ideas on the prevention and control of COVID-19

with officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health and the health experts and medical staff from medical institutions. On June 16, Chinese military medical experts held a virtual conference with the Kuwaiti military officials and counterparts to exchange experience on combating the COVID-19.

Meanwhile Chinese enterprises in Kuwait also actively cooperated and fully supported various local anti-epidemic measures. In early April, the project camps of both Sinopec Tenth Construction Company and Sinopec Fifth Construction Company were requisitioned by Kuwait government as a centralized quarantine point and the first mobile cabin hospital in Kuwait. These two Chinese companies promptly relocated their personnel and main materials out of the camps, and actively cooperated in the maintenance and renovation of the camp facilities. In addition, Sinopec International Petroleum Service Corporation donated 50,000 masks and 50,000 gloves to Kuwait Petroleum Company. SANY Group handed over sterilized trucks to the Kuwait Ports Authority to support its fight against the epidemic.

President Xi Jinping's speech at the high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations

On September 21, 2020, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN). Xi Jinping stressed, major changes unseen in a century are taking place in our world. The sudden attack of COVID-19 is a grave test for the entire world. Mankind has entered a new era of interconnectedness, with countries sharing intertwined interests and their future closely linked together. Global threats and global challenges require strong, global responses. In the face of new realities and challenges, we must do some serious thinking: What kind of UN is needed for the world? How should the organization play its role in the post-COVID era? Xi Jinping put forward four proposals. First, the UN must stand firm for justice. Mutual respect and equality among all countries, big or small, represents the progress of our times and is the foremost principle of the UN Charter. No country has the right to dominate global affairs, control the destiny of others, or keep advantages in development all to itself. Even less should one be allowed to do whatever it likes and be the hegemon, bully or boss of the world. Unilateralism is a dead end. All need to follow the approach of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. All need to come together to uphold universal security, share the fruits of development, and jointly decide on the future of the world. It is imperative that the representation and voice of developing countries be increased so that the UN could be more balanced in reflecting the interests and wishes of the majority of countries in the world. Second, the UN must uphold the rule of law. The purposes and principles of the UN Charter are the fundamental guidelines for handling international relations. They constitute a cornerstone of stable international order and must be unswervingly kept and upheld. Relations among countries and coordination of their interests must only be based on rules and institutions; they must not be lorded over by those who wave a strong fist at others. Big countries should lead by example in advocating and upholding the international rule of law and in honoring their commitments. There must be no practice of exceptionalism or double standards. Nor should international law be

distorted and used as a pretext to undermine other countries' legitimate rights and interests or world peace and stability. Third, the UN must promote cooperation. To promote cooperation among countries is a founding mission of the UN and an important purpose spelt out in the UN Charter. Cold War mentality, ideological lines or zero-sum game are no solution to a country's own problem, still less an answer to mankind's common challenges. What we need to do is to replace conflict with dialogue, coercion with consultation and zero-sum with win-win. We need to pursue the common interests of all as we each work to safeguard our own interests. We need to expand the converging interests of all and build a big global family of harmony and cooperation. Fourth, the UN must focus on real action. To put into practice the principle of multilateralism, we must act, not just talk. There must be a cure, not just a therapy. The UN should aim at problem solving and move toward tangible outcomes as it advances security, development and human rights in parallel. In particular, as the UN advances its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, priority should be given to addressing non-traditional security challenges such as public health; the issue of development should be highlighted in the global macro framework; and there should be a greater emphasis on the promotion and protection of the rights to subsistence and development. Xi Jinping stressed, China was the first to sign on the Charter of the United Nations. It is a founding member of the UN and the only developing country that takes a permanent seat on the Security Council. China will continue to be a true follower of multilateralism. It will stay actively engaged in reforming and developing the global governance system. It will firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, firmly uphold the international order underpinned by international law, and firmly defend the UN's central role in international affairs. Finally, Xi Jinping emphasized, the world now stands at a new historical starting point. Let us renew our firm commitment to multilateralism, work to promote a community with a shared future for mankind, and rally behind the banner of the UN to pursue greater unity and progress.



Sinopec International Petroleum Service Corporation donates medical supplies to the project owner, May 5, 2020.



Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr. Basel Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Chinese medical expert team, April 28, 2020.



The 71st Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China (1949-2020)

Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Kuwait

China and Kuwait began direct civil trade as early as in 1955. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, bilateral economic and trade exchanges have become more frequent, and bilateral trade value has been on the increase. The trade value between China and Kuwait in 2019 was US\$17.281 billion, of which the Chinese export was US\$3.836 billion, and import US\$13.445 billion.

So far China has been the largest trade partner of Kuwait in non-oil sector. Kuwait has been the 8th largest source of crude oil im-

port of China. China's investment in Kuwait has reached US\$ 1.1 billion. Chinese companies in Kuwait have been actively involved in development of Kuwait's projects in the sectors of energy, housing, infrastructure and others. From 1982 till now, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has provided China with about US\$1 billion of loans on favorable terms for 39 projects, such as Xiamen Airport Expansion Project, Xinjiang Boston Lake Environmental Protection Project, Guiyang Second People's Hospital Project, etc. The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) becomes the first foreign investor in China's high-speed rail network.

Figures of China 2019

GDP	\$14.38 trillion	GDP Per Capita	\$10,289
GDP Growth Rate	6.1%	Export and Import	\$4.6 trillion
Export	\$ 2.5 trillion	Import	\$ 2.1 trillion
Outbound Non-Financial Investment	\$110.7 billion	FDI	\$136.6 billion
Retail	\$ 6 trillion	Online Sales	\$1.5 trillion
R&D Expenditure	\$ 315 billion	Number of Patents	9.72 million

Leading Exhibitions and Trade Fairs in China



China International Import Expo (CIIE)

In May 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that China would hold China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai starting from 2018.

It is a significant move for the Chinese government to hold CIIE to give firm support to trade liberalization and economic globalization and actively open the Chinese market to the world. It facilitates countries and regions all over the world to strengthen economic cooperation and trade, and to promote global trade and world economic growth in order to make the world economy more open.

The Chinese government sincerely welcomes government officials, business communities, exhibitors and professional purchasers across the world to participate in CIIE and to explore the Chinese market. We would like to work with all countries, regions and international organizations to make CIIE a world-class Expo, providing new channels for countries and regions to do business, strengthen cooperation and promote common prosperity of the world economy and trade.

Official website of CIIE: <https://www.ciie.org/zh/en/>



China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair)

China Import and Export Fair, also known as Canton Fair, is established in 1957. Co-hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of PRC and the People's Government of Guangdong Province and organized by China Foreign Trade Centre, it is held every spring and autumn in Guangzhou, China. Canton Fair is a comprehensive international trading event with the

longest history, the largest scale, the most complete exhibit variety, the largest buyer attendance, the broadest distribution of buyers' source country and the greatest business turnover in China.

Official website of Canton Fair: <https://www.cantonfair.org.cn/en/>



China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS)

CIFTIS is an important platform for spreading ideas, connecting supply and demand, sharing business opportunities, and promoting common development in the field of international trade in services. CIFTIS is the largest comprehensive exhibition in the field of global trade in services and the leading exhibition in

the field of trade in services in China, which has become one of the three major exhibition platforms for China's opening-up together with China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) and China International Import Expo (CIIE). Official website of CIFTIS: www.ciftis.org

Association of Chinese Enterprises in Kuwait

Association of Chinese Enterprises in Kuwait was founded in 2010 to assist Chinese enterprises doing business in Kuwait. Up to date, Chinese enterprises have actively engaged in more than 100 projects in Kuwait, covering sectors of engineering contracting, trades, logistics, communication services, industrial investment, financial services, etc. Chinese enterprises, with their hard work and outstanding skills, are offering Kuwait society the exceptional competence inherent in 'Built by China' and making great contributions to advancing Kuwait's development.

Association of Chinese Enterprises in Kuwait has successfully organized series of activities aiming to provide all kinds of supports for Chinese enterprises. The association has positively played an important role in promoting the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation, whilst making new contributions to better aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Association of Chinese Enterprises in Kuwait Tel 22299128

New version of China's 'Four Great Inventions'

The "Four Great Inventions" of ancient China are widely known to be the compass, gunpowder, papermaking and printing, which had once significantly boosted the world's progress of civilization. In recent years, the country has been gaining momentum in developing and creating science and technol-

ogy, and from this, several new inventions have emerged. The so-called new "Four Great Inventions" were decided by youths from 20 countries along the ancient land and maritime Silk Roads as a result of a survey. They are Chinese high-speed railway, mobile payments, online shopping and sharing bikes.



On September 2, 2017, China launched its self-developed bullet train: "Fuxing", which boasts a top speed of 400 km/h. The trains' arrival has shortened the travel time between Shanghai and Beijing by nearly two hours.

40 years on: Shenzhen Special Economic Zone

Shenzhen, the trailblazer in reform and opening-up, marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China's first special economic zone on August 26, 2020. The southern Chinese city, which transformed from a fishing village to modern metropolis with a population of over 13 million, has been widely dubbed as a "miracle". The city's GDP grew by 6.7 percent

year on year in 2019, reaching 2.69 trillion yuan (US\$381.40 billion), the third-biggest in China after Shanghai and Beijing. Shenzhen is known for its business environment and robust private sector, and the city government has always attached great importance to realizing sustainable growth and improving the local business environment.



A light show performed with 826 drones combined with city lights in Shenzhen to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ), Aug 26, 2020.

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2020

Virus-hit Saudi economy shrinks 7%

Unemployment spikes, private sector contracts 10.1%

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's economy shrank by 7 percent in the second quarter, a sign of how deeply the new coronavirus hit both the oil and non-oil sectors, while unemployment hit a record high of 15.4 percent, official data showed yesterday. The world's largest oil exporter is facing a deep recession after the COVID-19 pandemic curbed global crude demand and measures to contain the coronavirus hurt domestic activity.

"The private sector and the government sector recorded a negative growth rate of 10.1 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively," said the General Authority for Statistics.

The Saudi unemployment rate was "largely impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Saudi economy," it said. In the first quarter, Saudi Arabia posted a 1 percent economic contraction, but that only captured part of the oil price collapse and the impact of the pandemic, which escalated in March.

Back then, the oil sector slumped by 4.6 percent, while the non-oil sector posted a positive growth rate of 1.6 percent. But the coronavirus-driven lockdowns were bound to impact the Saudi economy hard in the second quarter. The non-oil sector, which is the focus of Saudi reforms aimed at diversifying the economy away from crude revenues, shrank by 8.2 percent, while the oil sector declined by 5.3 percent, the statistics authority said.

The overall quarterly GDP performance was the largest year-on-year drop since the quarterly series

began in 2010, Capital Economics said.

Weak outlook

"No surprises in the pace of decline. Non-oil GDP was going to be hit harder with the lockdowns. Oil contraction instead was partly limited by the marked ramp up in oil output in April," said Monica Malik, chief economist at Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank. "More important is going to be the ongoing impact of COVID and the continued low oil price. Fiscal retrenchment and tightening will result in a weak domestic economic backdrop and a weak outlook for private sector job creation for nationals," she said.

Saudi Arabia tripled a value-added tax in July to



Non-oil sector contracts 8.2%

boost non-oil revenues, but that is limiting domestic demand, dampening economic recovery. Consumer spending fell 5.5 percent year on year in August, as



RIYADH: Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, is facing a deep recession after the COVID-19 pandemic curbed global crude demand and measures to contain the coronavirus hurt domestic activity. — Reuters

the VAT hike kicked in, said Arqaam Capital, citing August central bank data. Inflation meanwhile spiked to 6.2 percent in August, due to the VAT increase.

The tax hike "weighs on disposable income, and

largely offsets the benefit of travel restrictions that drive local demand," Arqaam said in a research note, referring to expectations of higher domestic demand as Saudi Arabia's borders were shut to contain the virus outbreak. — Reuters

UK GDP collapsed nearly 20% in Q2

LONDON: Britain suffered a record collapse in economic output in the second quarter of 2020 when COVID-19 lockdown measures were in full force, though the decline was slightly smaller than first estimated. Gross domestic product shrank by 19.8 percent in the three months to June, the Office for National Statistics said, slightly less than the initial estimate of a quarterly 20.4 percent crash but still more than for any other major advanced economy.

The fall was the biggest since the ONS records began in 1955. Other data has suggested Britain is on course for its biggest annual fall since the 1920s.

Britain's economy had already shrunk by 2.5 percent in the January-March period as the country entered lockdown in late March. Output has rebounded in recent months but the recovery looks to be fading with rising coronavirus cases and forecasts of a

jump in unemployment as the government scales back job support. "The renewed COVID-19 restrictions will probably mean that GDP stagnates in Q4, leaving economic activity marooned 5.5 percent short of its pre-crisis level," Ruth Gregory of consultancy Capital Economics said.

"And the risk now is that renewed containment measures send the recovery into reverse," she added.

Households saved a record 29.1 percent of their income, up from 9.6 percent in the first quarter, as they were unable to spend in many shops and restaurants during the lockdown, while incomes were supported by a government job program which ends next month.

Heavy toll

Britain has suffered Europe's highest death toll from COVID-19, with more than 42,000 fatalities. Compared with a year earlier, Britain's second quarter output tumbled 21.5 percent - the same as in Spain - while France reported a 19.0 percent drop. The statistics office said differences in how countries estimated public sector activity - especially whether they focused on money spent or used the ONS's approach of looking at the extent of disruption to



Ethiopian Airlines CEO Tewelde Gebremariam speaks during an interview in Addis Ababa. — AFP

normal services - complicated international comparisons. Nonetheless, it said Britain's economy shrank more than any other Group of Seven economy in the first half of 2020.

There have been some bright spots in the recovery. Retail spending exceeded pre-pandemic levels in July and August - driven by a boom in online shopping, groceries and home improvement - and figures on Wednesday showed the biggest annual rise in house prices in more than four years.

However, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey has warned the expansion is likely to lose pace, with unemployment set to rise to 7.5 percent later this year, some parts of the economy facing new COVID restrictions and headwinds from a fresh jump in cases. Britain's current account deficit - normally one of its weak spots - shrank sharply to 2.8 billion pounds (\$3.6 billion), or 0.6 percent of GDP, reaching its smallest in nine years as a result of the slump in global trade caused by the pandemic. — Reuters

Oil giant Shell axes thousands of jobs on virus fallout

LONDON: Royal Dutch Shell will axe up to 9,000 jobs or more than 10 percent of its global workforce, the energy giant said yesterday as the coronavirus pandemic slams oil demand and prices.

The Anglo-Dutch group will cut between 7,000 and 9,000 positions by the end of 2022, including 1,500 staff who have agreed to take voluntary redundancy this year, it said in a statement.

"This is an extremely tough process. It is very painful to know that you will end up saying goodbye to quite a few good people," said Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden, who oversees 80,000 staff across more than 70 countries. "But we are doing this because we have to, because it is the right thing to do for the future of the company."

"We have to be a simpler, more streamlined, more competitive organization that is more nimble and able to respond to customers," he added. The virus has hit the entire energy sector, with Shell's fierce rival BP axing about 10,000 jobs or 15 percent of its staff.

Shell yesterday added that it aims to generate annual savings of between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion (1.7-2.1 billion euros) by also cutting back on refining capacity. It will help the company to achieve a \$3-\$4 billion efficiency drive announced in March and that runs to 2021.

Shell had in July flagged that job cuts were in the pipeline after posting a colossal \$18.1-billion second-quarter net loss. Yesterday it warned that it would suffer more post-tax



The logo of energy giant Royal Dutch Shell is pictured on pumps at a petrol station in London. Energy major Shell unleashed a major restructuring plan yesterday to combat plunging oil prices driven by the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

impairment charges of \$1.0-\$1.5 billion in full third quarter earnings due next month.

Van Beurden added that Shell was looking at a raft of other areas where it can cut costs, such as travel, its use of contractors and virtual working. Covid-19 slammed the brakes on the global economy and sent oil prices off a cliff-even causing them to briefly turn negative in April.

The market also crashed on the back of a vicious price war between key producers Saudi Arabia and Russia. The resulting meltdown ravaged revenues and profits.

Shell was already in the red in the first quarter, which prompted it to cut its shareholder dividend for the first time since the 1940s. Oil prices currently stand at about \$40 per barrel, which is still well down on the same time last year. — AFP

Stock markets weaker after chaotic Trump-Biden debate

LONDON: Global stock markets were mostly weaker yesterday following a chaotic US presidential debate in which Donald Trump again suggested the election could be fraudulent while hopes for a second coronavirus stimulus package out of Washington helped lift the dollar.

In Europe, London also sank as investors digested official data confirming that Britain's virus-hit economy collapsed by almost a fifth in the second quarter. Sentiment was additionally hit after Anglo-Dutch energy giant Shell announced plans to axe up to 9,000 staff over the next two years to combat this year's coronavirus-driven slump in oil prices.

Yet it was Republican Trump's chaotic jousting with Democrat opponent Joe Biden that grabbed the spotlight. "The US presidential debate has done little to boost market sentiment, as Trump fails to take his opportunity to regain ground," said Joshua Mahony, senior market analyst at online trading group IG. "Pollsters point towards a potential Biden gain in the polls... with the president's erratic style likely helping Biden to shift the focus away from his often lackluster memory and debating abilities."

Personal barbs

Trump and Biden traded personal barbs in the first of three debates ahead of the November 3 vote, with observers saying the president had needed a strong showing as he trailed in most national and battleground polls. The much-anticipated match-up, however, descended almost immediately into a shouting match, with little of substance emerging from either man.

When asked if they pledged to urge calm and refrain from declaring victory if the election result is not immediately known, Biden said "yes", while Trump would not commit, saying that if he saw "tens of thousands of ballots being manipulated, I can't go along with that". The president's claims about voter fraud have raised concerns among investors that the result could be drawn out and fuel uncertainty for the US economy. — AFP

US private payrolls increase more than expected in Sept

WASHINGTON: US private employers stepped up hiring in September, but diminishing government financial assistance and a resurgence in new COVID-19 cases in some parts of the country could slow the labor market's recovery from the pandemic. Private payrolls increased by 749,000 jobs this month, the ADP National Employment Report showed yesterday. Data for August was revised up to show 481,000 jobs added instead of the initially reported 428,000. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast private payrolls would rise by 650,000 in September.

The ADP report is jointly developed with Moody's Analytics. Though it has fallen short of the government's private payrolls count since May because of methodology differences, it is still watched for clues on the labor market's health. The ADP report is based on active and paid employees on company payrolls. The Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) counts workers as employed if they received a paycheck during the week that includes the 12th of the month.

When businesses were shuttered in mid-March, millions of workers were either laid off or furloughed. Economists say the return of furloughed workers when most businesses reopened in May boosted the payrolls numbers reported by the government. New weekly applications have stalled at higher levels after dropping below 1 million in August as the government changed the way it strips seasonal fluctuations from the data. Data from Homebase, a payroll scheduling and tracking company, showed fewer employees at work in September relative to August.

New daily COVID-19 cases started spiking last week for the first time in eight weeks. Infections are expected to rise in the fall, which economists believe will lead to some restrictions being imposed on businesses in the services sector.

The government is scheduled to publish its closely followed employment report, which includes public workers, tomorrow. According to a Reuters survey of economists, private payrolls probably increased by 850,000 jobs in September after rising 1.027 million in August.

With government employment expected to be held back by the departure of some temporary workers hired for the 2020 Census and coronavirus-related budget challenges at state and local governments, nonfarm payrolls are forecast advancing by 850,000 in September after increasing 1.371 million in August. That would leave employment 10.7 million below its level in February. Employment growth peaked in June when payrolls jumped by a record 4.781 million jobs.

Economists attribute the moderation in job gains to the lapse of programs that helped businesses to pay wages, as well as an income subsidy for the unemployed. — Reuters

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَيْتِكَ مُضِيَّةً وَأَخْرِي إِلَىٰ بَيْتِكَ وَأَخْرِي جَنَّتِي

صِدْقَةَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمَةَ

The People of

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AL-SABAH FAMILY

and the people of Kuwait, on the sad demise of
His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait

SHEIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-JABER AL-SABAH

May His Soul Rest in Peace

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Business

Big opportunity: Entrepreneurs in Cuba reinvent to survive pandemic

Entrepreneurs find a way to survive and even create jobs

HAVANA: From a restaurant mixing take-away cocktails to a cosmetics company delivering home-made products by bicycle, Cuba's entrepreneurs - no strangers to hardship - are coping with the coronavirus shutdown in innovative ways.

Except for a few offshore resorts, Cuba's Communist government has kept its borders shut for seven months to curb the spread of infection and recently placed the capital Havana in lockdown for a second time due to a local surge. The drastic action has limited deaths from COVID-19 to just 122 on the island of 11 million people, but has all but shut down the vital tourist industry - adding to economic woes from decades-old US sanctions tightened by President Donald Trump.

In Havana's colonial district, mixing restored historic buildings and urban decay, the once-thriving streets are empty of tourists and scrawled "closed" signs are on the doors of many shops.

David Roque and partner Diana Figueroa's tavern El Jibaro looks from the outside like another casualty. But the two entrepreneurs have found a way to survive and even create jobs through a take-out service and cocktails to go, a novelty in Cuba. "The quarantine became a big opportunity when we began to develop the mixes, beginning with our house cocktails and now the classics such as the Mojito, Habana Libre and Daiquiri," Roque said.

With other restaurants doing the same, thousands of motorcyclists in Havana have stepped up, some under new gig-job companies, to deliver food

from state and private eateries before a 7 p.m. curfew. Some also transport single passengers despite their lack of transport licenses, as buses and Havana's vintage Chevrolet taxis are grounded.

Policy changes

Though the government has not provided statistics on the size of the economic contraction wrought by the pandemic, it has forced some changes in policy. President Miguel Diaz-Canel,



Self-employment becomes a top priority

who has said the crisis is likely to drag on for a few years, in July announced market-oriented reforms including giving "immediate priority to the expansion of self-employment".

Private eateries have recently been granted access to some poorly stocked state-owned wholesale outlets and small businesses have been given permission to export and import, two long-standing



HAVANA: In Havana's colonial district, mixing restored historic buildings and urban decay, the once-thriving streets are empty of tourists and scrawled "closed" signs are on the doors of many shops.

demands of the heavily regulated sector. Cuba's state owns and operates the lion's share of the economy, while the non-state sector, excluding agriculture, is composed mainly of small private businesses and cooperatives, artisans, taxi drivers and tradesmen.

All are under the rubric of the self-employed, numbering 600,000, or 13 percent of the workforce

before the pandemic. Oniel Diaz, who heads business consulting firm AUGE, said the coronavirus was adding to the two biggest obstacles to developing the private sector in Cuba, U.S. sanctions and chronic shortages. Diaz estimated 250,000 people in the private sector - most of them linked to the tourist sector - had lost most if not all of their income since March. — Reuters

China building giant Evergrande surges as it averts crisis

BEIJING: Shares in China's biggest property developer surged almost 20 percent yesterday after it reached an agreement with key investors that helps it avoid a cash crunch that some fear could hit the global financial system.

The future of China Evergrande Group has been thrown into doubt as it struggles to cover repayments on debts totaling more than \$120 billion, with a letter last week circulating on Chinese social media appearing to show it asking the government in Guangdong for help.

The company, the world's most indebted developer, refuted the claims yesterday, saying they were "fabricated" and "pure defamation", adding it would take legal action. Its shares plunged by a fifth in Hong Kong, while its Shanghai-listed stock was suspended and ratings group S&P downgraded its credit outlook to "negative".

Analysts have warned that a default on huge debts owed by the company, founded by billionaire Xu

Jiayin and a key player in China's building boom, could send bad loans cascading through the country's opaque banking system. But the firm moved to stabilize its affairs on Tuesday after key investors agreed not to sell 86.3 billion yuan (\$12.6 billion) in Hengda Real Estate, an Evergrande unit.

The company had raised billions of dollars by selling stakes in the unit and pledged to repay the cash if it did not float by January. There had been fears they would push to get their money but the developer said in a statement the investors "will continue to hold their interests in Hengda Real Estate, with their percentage of equity interests remaining unchanged".

Tuesday's deal, which also starts the process of shoring up a further 28 billion yuan of shareholdings, buys some time for the developer to sort out its debt repayments. Evergrande shares jumped 19.4 percent in Hong Kong yesterday. That followed a more than 20 percent jump Monday after



BEIJING: Shares in China's biggest property developer surged almost 20 percent yesterday after it reached an agreement with key investors that helps it avoid a cash crunch that some fear could hit the global financial system.

the firm sought to reassure investors about its future. "The agreement solves the core issue of Evergrande, which is liquidity concern," Raymond Cheng, a property analyst at CGS-CIMB Securities, said.

Wednesday's rally was also helped by news Evergrande had filed to spin off its property services business in Hong Kong, helping to raise much-needed cash. According to Bloomberg, the developer owes \$88 billion to banks and other lenders

inside China and has borrowed a further \$35 billion from bondholders around the world. And while the latest deal will buy the company some time, Bloomberg Intelligence analysts Kristy Hung and Patrick Wong warned that it was not out of the woods yet.

"Evergrande faces the task of restoring the confidence of buyers and lenders, and still risks liquidity woes despite investors tossing it a financial life jacket," they said. — AFP

Pennsylvania miners forgive Trump for failed coal industry revival

HEGINS, Pa: Rick Bender, who owns a coal processing plant in Hegins, Pennsylvania, voted for Republican Donald Trump in 2016, in part because of his promise to revive the industry from a decade-long decline. The revival never came. Bender says he is struggling to keep workers employed at the plant in eastern Pennsylvania because coal prices are so low. Still, he plans to vote for Trump again come November. He says the president's Democratic challenger Joe Biden is too focused on fighting climate change.

"We feel if Trump doesn't get elected, the coal business is done," said Bender, 61.

Bender represents a dynamic that could complicate Democratic efforts to win back battleground states like Pennsylvania in the 2020 fight for the White House. Instead of punishing Trump for failing to deliver the coal renaissance he promised, many voters with ties to blue-collar industries continue to support him.

Reuters interviewed 26 coal workers across Pennsylvania and found that all but one plans to back Trump on Nov. 3. While many cited faults with the president, whose incendiary style turns some off, they fear Biden's clean-energy plan would hasten coal's decline, and that the new green jobs wouldn't come quickly enough to keep their families financially secure. An experienced miner can expect to earn as much as \$100,000 annually including overtime, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"There really is a very big human cost of just turning the light switch off," on coal, said Jarrod Geniec, 40, a miner at Silver Creek in eastern Pennsylvania's Schuylkill County. Recent polls show Biden ahead in Pennsylvania, helped by his strength in Philadelphia and surrounding suburbs. A Reuters/Ipsos poll from last week showed the former vice president with a narrow 3 percentage-point lead in the state, while a Washington Post-ABC News poll released Sept. 29 shows Biden with a 9 percentage-point advantage there among likely voters.

But many rural and blue-collar areas remain devoted to Trump. In Schuylkill County, for example, Republican voter registrations have surged on his watch. Republicans there held a slim 5,600-voter



The fortunes of the coal industry have not fared as well. US production peaked in 2008 at 1.2 billion tons, and it has mostly fallen since as US utilities have embraced cheaper - and cleaner - natural gas.

advantage over registered Democrats in 2016, an edge that now exceeds 17,000 voters, according to Pennsylvania voter data.

The fortunes of the coal industry have not fared as well. US production peaked in 2008 at 1.2 billion tons, and it has mostly fallen since as US utilities have embraced cheaper - and cleaner - natural gas. Since 2010, 252 US coal-fired power plants have shut, 66 since Trump's inauguration, according to the Sierra Club environmental group. US coal production last year sank to 706 million tons, the lowest level since 1978, when a strike crippled output. Industry employment has plummeted more than 40 percent since 2008 to around 46,500 workers currently. Still, miners say Trump has earned their loyalty.

The president put a former coal lobbyist, Andrew Wheeler, at the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Trump rolled back Obama-era rules to limit power-plant emissions and to protect streams from coal waste, signing a measure on the latter while surrounded by helmeted miners in the White House. And he pulled the United States out of the Paris agreement on climate, in part because he said it hurt US coal jobs. Pennsylvania, with 20 Electoral College votes, is a critical battleground state that could determine whether Trump wins a second term. He carried the state by less than a percentage point in 2016 and has almost no path to victory if he doesn't prevail there again this year. — Reuters

Nigeria's gas flaring plan risks going down in flames

UGHELLI, Delta State, Nigeria: Jonah Gbemre often has no electricity, but he says his home is permanently lit at night by the flames of waste gas being "flared" near his home town in Nigeria's Delta State.

Like Gbemre, nearly half of Nigerians have no stable power supply, yet government attempts to harness gas belching from its oil fields to generate urgently-needed electricity or revenue have stalled.

And experts say that without progress towards its 2030 target of virtually eliminating flaring, which releases carbon dioxide along with polluting methane and soot, Nigeria cannot meet its pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent.

"This flare site makes the nights like days," said 42-year-old Gbemre, his eyes both bloodshot and milky, something he said his doctor attributes to the burning of the waste gas. Reuters could not establish if there was any link between Gbemre's eye problems and the flaring. Nigeria's National Oil Spill Detection & Response Agency has said the practice can damage human health and the environment.

After sunset, nearly 200 blinking flares dot the landscape around Port Harcourt, the Delta oil hub. Experts say the gas that Nigeria flares nationwide could be worth billions of dollars if captured and transported to be used as liquefied natural gas or for plastics or fertilizers.

But a 2016 program by the Nigerian government to address this by auctioning rights to capture and sell flared gas is struggling, six sources close to the process told Reuters. The coronavirus crisis has compounded delays to a project which the World Bank hoped could serve as an example in its bid to cut global warming through zero flaring globally by 2030. Oil-producing nations all flare some gas, particularly at remote fields or where there is ageing infrastructure. Nigeria first targeted gas flaring in the late 1970s and, through various schemes and regulations, has more than halved it since 2001. Chevron, Shell and Eni, which operate in Nigeria, say they have cut flaring by some 90 percent and are working to cut it further. ExxonMobil and Total declined comment. — Reuters

German retail sales, falling jobless rate raise recovery hopes

BERLIN: German retail sales rose much more than expected in August and unemployment fell further in September, boosting hopes that household spending in Europe's largest economy will power a strong recovery in the third quarter from the coronavirus shock.

The upbeat data, released by the Federal Statistics Office and the Labor Office yesterday, came as rising infection numbers were clouding the growth outlook for the fourth quarter. Chancellor Angela Merkel and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz have since March unleashed an unprecedented array of rescue and stimulus measures to help companies and consumers recover as quickly as possible from Germany's deepest recession on record.

The packages include unlimited liquidity aid for struggling companies, a massive job protection scheme to shield workers from sudden unemployment as well as cash handouts for parents and a temporary value added tax cut to boost domestic demand. There had been some doubt whether the VAT cut, valid from July 1 to Dec. 31, was actually working, as some companies seemed not to be passing it on to consumers. But figures released by the Federal Statistics Office on Wednesday showed retail sales jumped by 3.1 percent on the month in real terms in August after an upwardly revised drop of 0.2 percent in July. This easily beat a Reuters forecast of only 0.5 percent.

Retail sales rose by 3.7 percent in real terms from a year ago, after an upwardly revised increase of 5.0 percent the previous month. Compared with February, the month before the COVID-19 outbreak in Germany, retail sales in August were 5.8 percent higher, suggesting the sector has already put the crisis behind it.

Demand was particularly strong for furnishings and household appliances with year-on-year increase of 8 percent. Online retailers continued to benefit from shifting consumer habits with a 23 percent jump in sales, which came at the expense of clothing and shoe stores which suffered a 10 percent drop.

Business associations have warned that the pandemic is accelerating a structural transformation in retailing as consumers move online and away from small stores in cities.

Ghost towns

"Politicians urgently need to take countermeasures at all levels, otherwise we will see that large areas of our city centers will turn into ghost towns," said Stefan Genth from the HDE retail association. HDE said last week it expected nominal sales to grow by 1.5 percent this year despite the pandemic, a sharp upward revision from its previous estimate of a 4 percent drop. It pointed to booming online sales and the government's stimulus measures.

In a further good sign for household spending, unemployment fell for the third month in a row in September, separate labor office data showed. The number of people out of work fell by 8,000 in seasonally adjusted terms to 2.907 million and the unemployment rate eased to 6.3 percent from 6.4 percent in the previous month. The number of people on short-time work schemes, which have shielded the labor market from the brunt of the pandemic, dropped to 4.24 million in July from its April peak of nearly 6 million. The German economy contracted by 9.7 percent in the second quarter as household spending, company investments and trade collapsed at the height of the pandemic. — Reuters

Business

China's factory activity accelerates in Sept on boost from overseas demand

Survey underlines a steady economic recovery from coronavirus shock

BEIJING: China's factory activity extended solid growth in September, twin surveys showed, as the nation's crucial exports engine revved up on improving overseas demand and underlined a steady economic recovery from the coronavirus shock.

The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) rose to 51.5 in September from 51.0 in August, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Wednesday, remaining above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction for the seventh month.

Analysts had expected it to pick up slightly to 51.2. A private survey, also released on the day, painted a similar picture of the manufacturing sector gaining momentum backed by stronger overseas demand.

China's vast industrial sector is steadily returning to the levels seen before the pandemic paralysed huge swathes of the economy, as pent-up demand, stimulus-driven infrastructure expansion and surprisingly resilient exports propel a recovery. The official PMI, which largely focuses on big and state-owned firms, also showed the sub-index for new export orders stood at 50.8 in September, improving from 49.1 a month earlier and snapping eight months of declines.

The signs of stronger overseas demand were also highlighted in the Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which focuses more on small and export-oriented firms. Its gauge for new export orders rose at the

fastest pace in over three years. Recently, economic indicators ranging from trade to producer prices have all suggested a further pick up in the industrial sector. Profits at China's industrial firms extended robust growth in August to the fourth month, official data showed on Sunday.

Domestic demand also shows signs of broadening, with industrial output accelerating the most in eight months in August and retail sales growing for the first time this year. Adding to the demand recovery from the coronavirus-induced slump, the official PMI showed activity in China's services sector expanded at a faster pace in September.

"We are entering a period of above trend growth, which should help absorb the remaining slack in the labor market and allow for some policy tightening next year," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, senior China economist at Capital Economics, in a note to clients.

New export orders return to growth



Challenges ahead

Yet, even as China emerges from the pandemic in a fairly stable shape, many expect the road ahead to be bumpy. China's economy, which grew 3.2 percent in the second quarter year-on-year, is set to expand 2.2 percent this year - the weakest in over three decades.

A sub-index for employment in the official PMI improved slightly but remained in contractionary territory. It stood at 49.6 in September from 49.4 the month before, indicating the pressure on jobs and keeping policymakers primed for more support measures. Moreover, a growing rift between



WUHAN: This file photo taken on September 14, 2020 shows an employee working on a car assembly line at a Dongfeng factory in Wuhan in China's central Hubei province. —AFP

China and the United States over trade, technology and a range of other issues have analysts warning about risks to the outlook. Tensions between the two countries are expected to escalate further ahead of the U.S. Presidential election in November, which some China observers say could undercut the recovery.

"Although overall manufacturing demand has

improved, the industry has recovered unevenly," said Zhao Qinghe, an official at the NBS, in comments accompanying the data, noting weaknesses in demand for clothing and wood processing manufacturing in particular. "In addition, the global epidemic has not yet been fully and effectively controlled, and there are still uncertain factors in China's imports and exports." —Reuters

Investors react to Trump-Biden election debate

SINGAPORE: Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden sparred on stage for the first time on Tuesday in a pivotal debate ahead of the Nov 3 US presidential election. S&P 500 index futures dropped 0.5 percent after the heated and chaotic debate ended, erasing earlier gains of 0.7 percent.

With more than a million Americans already casting early ballots, the debates kick off as investors worry about prolonged uncertainty if Trump were to lose, after his refusal to commit to accepting the election outcome.

Shane Oliver, head of investment strategy, AMP Capital, Sydney

"I didn't see a lot in there on the policy front to change things fundamentally from what was already known. The share market normally prefers the incumbent to win. US futures initially rose - as perhaps Trump delivered some punches - but it wasn't enough and I thought Biden did pretty well and so it's no surprise to now see US share market futures down as investors have gone back to worrying about a contested election, a delay in the outcome and whether Trump will go peacefully if he loses."

Phil Blancato, president, Ladenburg Thalmann asset management, New York

"This was an emotionally charged debate and both sides have strong convictions. A Trump victory will lead to a reduction in spending due to the large deficit but no tax hike and less headwinds for the market and an opportunity in value stocks as the economy strengthens.

"The investment implications should Biden win would have to deal with a tax impact at the personal and corporate level which will bring in volatility to the market, but long term could represent an opportunity in healthcare and alternative energy."

James Rosenberg, financial adviser, EI&C Baillie, Sydney

"Regional investors remain cautious ahead of the election and expect more volatility as rhetoric ramps up. Many believe this is not a good outcome for the US."

Quincy Crosby, chief market strategist, Prudential Financial, Newark

"If the attempt was to change the minds of anyone undecided I don't think this debate, such as it's called, did the job. It was out of control. Trump's space probably enjoyed it tremendously and Biden's space probably were hoping he could get more time to focus on his platform.

"I would have a feeling that it comes out most likely a wash (for the markets). Although I did find it interesting that the two betting sites that I follow, I'm not saying that they galloped higher for Biden, it took a while, but you did see a little bit of an uptick."

Vasu Menon, senior investment strategist, OCBC Bank Wealth Management, Singapore

"I think the market outcome from the debate is fairly neutral because it didn't favor either candidate in any big way.

"Wall Street futures only showed a modest uptick and Asian markets showed a mixed performance after the debate probably because the debate did not move the dial in any big way on electorate sentiment."

Masahiko Loo, portfolio manager, Alliancebernstein, Tokyo

"The markets hadn't had high hopes. The biggest takeaway was that Biden did not turn out to be 'Sleepy Joe', and dispelled concerns that he could not cope with debate and would reduce the chance of his winning. So I think the markets pricing of the outcome has not changed much. —Reuters

UK finance chief in balancing act over virus plan

LONDON: UK finance minister Rishi Sunak, battling record deficits and soaring debt due to his government's emergency coronavirus response, faces a politically dangerous balancing act to pay the bill, analysts say. As the outbreak raged, total public debt rocketed above £2.0 trillion for the first time, striking a record high proportion of 102 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Commentators argue that a combination of taxation, inflation, spending cuts, and even economic growth could help balance the books for Sunak.

But the public purse also faces the additional threat of a potential no-deal Brexit at the end of this year. Public sector net borrowing - the state's preferred measure of the deficit - hit a record £173.7 billion in the first five months of its 2020-2021 fiscal year, or April to August. That was an eye-watering £145 billion

more than the year-earlier figure.

'Unavoidable' tax hikes

"It is unavoidable that taxes will rise... but the right decision is to not raise taxes now," Warwick University economics professor Arun Advani said. "It is hard to predict when it will depend on the pandemic. If we see a winter not as bad as the spring, then end of March 2021 could be the time to... lay out an economic plan."

Chancellor of the Exchequer Sunak, a rising star in Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson's administration, has so far pumped billions into virus-related health spending and jobs support schemes. Last week he launched a new coronavirus jobs protection initiative that will support wages of staff keeping at least one third of their usual working hours.

But the plan is dwarfed by the current generous furlough scheme, which is due to end next month after paying out billions of pounds to support wages of almost 10 million workers. Analysts now fear a spike in unemployment in the coming months, as many businesses cannot afford to keep staff even on reduced hours.

A tale of 2 Britains: Home markets boom deepens social divide

LONDON: Claire Tomlinson dreams of buying a three-bedroom house in the leafy northern English town of Sandbach but now finds herself priced out of the market, a story that is becoming all too familiar in Britain in the pandemic era.

The 28-year-old e-commerce worker and her partner were saving diligently while renting in Sandbach so they could buy their own home this year, an ambition that has been thwarted by forces beyond their control. A post-lockdown stampede for bigger houses outside of urban areas in the new work-from-home age has sparked a fresh boom in Britain's housing market - especially in areas like Sandbach, a small country town surrounded by the rolling Cheshire Plains. While this dash for the countryside is not a phenomenon unique to Britain, its decision to suspend taxes on residential property purchases till April 2021 has turbocharged the market.

UK resumes beef exports as US lifts two-decade ban

LONDON: Britain's first beef exports to the United States in more than 20 years left Northern Ireland yesterday, six months after Washington lifted a ban, the government said. "This is great news for our food and farming industry, who have estimated it will bring a £66 million (\$85 million, 72 million euros) boost to beef producers over the next five years alone," Environment Secretary George Eustice said.

Washington imposed restrictions on all EU beef exports in 1998 due to concerns about mad cow disease but has gradually eased them as it tries to negotiate a free trade deal with Brussels.

It has permitted Irish beef imports

since 2015 and granted the Netherlands approval to renew its exports the following year. Britain, which left the European Union on January 31 after the 2016 Brexit vote, received permission to restart its transatlantic beef shipments in March.

British herds were badly hit by mad cow disease - officially known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) - in the late 1980s and 1990s.

More than four million cows were slaughtered, then burned on huge pyres across the countryside, in an effort to contain the spread. Eating infected beef can cause the degenerative brain condition variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) in humans. In 2000, 24 people died in Britain from vCJD.

Britain is aiming to strike a free trade deal with the United States as the country tries to take advantage of life outside the EU from 2021. Although the country formally left the bloc earlier this year, it is still abiding by EU rules in a standstill

"The best option now is holding your breath. The whole private sector is at risk at the moment," said Advani. Inflation would only "slowly" erode state debt over time, he added.

Johnson had previously ruled out more spending cuts following harsh state austerity implemented in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, according to Advani.

"There's basically nothing left to cut. Last time it was hard to see where to cut; this time it is basically impossible."

Spending cuts over decade?

Josie Dent, economist at the Centre for Economics and Business Research think-tank, argued that spending cuts would be in the pipeline in the longer term. "When the coronavirus crisis has been dealt with - to the extent that businesses are able to fully resume normal trading - there will have to be measures taken to bring the budget back to balance," Dent said.

"It is likely that this will come about through a combination of higher taxes and public spending cuts. The government should aim to reduce the deficit over around a



LONDON: UK Finance Minister Rishi Sunak, battling record deficits and soaring debt due to his government's emergency coronavirus response, faces a politically dangerous balancing act to pay the bill, analysts say. —AFP

decade, so as not to limit economic growth as the UK recovers by taxing businesses too harshly or cutting spending."

She conceded there was "limited scope" to tax business or cut public spending - and warned that income tax might have to rise. Economic growth could be a distant hope for the recession-mired economy after Johnson last week imposed fresh lockdown restrictions to combat rising Covid-19 infections - and stop a lethal second spike. —AFP

Hasvs have-nots

Britain's housing market has long been a story of winners and losers. Now the coronavirus pandemic is likely to deepen the sector's role as a driver of inequality. The rate of home ownership among people aged 25 to 34 has fallen sharply over the last few decades, from 67 percent in 1991 to around 40 percent today, according to government data.

Six years ago, Britain sought to boost home ownership via the state-backed equity loan program, called Help to Buy, for newly built houses worth up to 600,000 pounds (\$770,000). Tomlinson looked seriously at using Help to Buy, but found that the scheme was due to be scaled back significantly next March, when the 600,000-pound price cap will be cut to just 224,400 pounds for the northwest of England. Since the average price of a new-build house in Cheshire East stands at around 330,000 pounds, the chances of finding a home in Sandbach eligible for the scaled-back support looked slim. As it stands, homebuyers are increasingly likely to come from already well-off families. Recent research from insurance company Legal and General showed 33 percent of Britons who are likely to buy a house in the next five years plan to do so with their parents' financial backing - up from 19 percent in 2019. —Reuters



transition period until December 31.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said the resumption of beef exports to the US "could be just the tip of the iceberg". "The free trade deal we are negotiating with the US will create a

host of export opportunities for British agriculture," she added.

"We are seeking an ambitious and high standards agreement that benefits farmers and delivers for consumers." —AFP

The trailblazing Vietnamese beauty queen pushing girls to stay in school

Skin-whitening, child marriage, a curtailed education: Vietnamese model and literacy campaigner H'Hen NIE has defied traditional expectations laid on her-and is now determined to show the next generation a different way. The 2017 Miss Universe Vietnam winner, who hails from the Ede ethnic minority group in the Central Highlands, was 14 years old when her

represent the country on Miss Universe's world stage and finishing in the Top 5. She is now an ambassador for global non-profit Room to Read, which focuses on girls' education in the developing world-an issue pulled into sharper focus as the coronavirus exposes inequalities globally. A recent Malala Fund report found that 20 million more secondary school-aged girls are at risk

young age what was expected of her due to her gender and ethnicity-but she defiantly rejected the pressures to conform. Even beauty became a battleground. Colourism-prejudice against darker skin tones-is pervasive across Asia. Today, in the aftermath of the global Black Lives Matter protests, a backlash has begun against archaic beliefs that fair complexions are more desirable.

But even as a young girl, H'Hen was ahead of the times. Her mother tried to convince her to use skin whitening products. "I refused to take it and would run away to play," H'Hen remembered. "Teenagers often bought cream that made their faces extremely white... but I didn't want to be like them." And while never outright rejecting her mother's suggestions of marriage, she instead turned to her books and taught herself Vietnamese-her passport out of the rural village where only a local dialect was spoken.

A decade later, sitting in a golden, chandeliered convention center in Ho Chi Minh City, H'Hen is helping choose a local designer to dress her Miss Universe Vietnam successor. Her early days in the bustling city were less glamorous. She worked as a maid to fund her degree in corporate finance, and family too came round to her ambitions. She says: "My mother started to save money for my studies. It was a huge sacrifice. I think my siblings were perhaps not given that much food-certainly no treats."

Empowering girls, changing lives

After a couple of years in the country's commercial hub, she got her break as a model, and was soon thrust into the



This photograph shows Miss Universe Vietnam winner H'Hen NIE posing for a photograph in Ho Chi Minh city. — AFP photos



This photograph shows Miss Universe Vietnam winner H'Hen NIE talking to AFP during an interview in Ho Chi Minh city.



This photograph shows Miss Universe Vietnam winner H'Hen NIE posing with her crowns at her house in Ho Chi Minh city.

farmer mother suggested she find a husband. "I was really scared of getting married. At that time I liked to swim, slide down slopes and play in the forest," the 28-year-old tells AFP. She was being led down the path of many poor, marginalized ethnic minority children in Vietnam-marrying young, dropping out of school, and having a slimmer shot of making it to positions of power compared to the country's Kinh majority.

But H'Hen had other plans, explaining: "I was competitive and I loved to study. And I had lots of dreams." Today, as the first ethnic minority woman to win Vietnam's crown, H'Hen is widely regarded as a trailblazer, going on to

of permanently dropping out of school compared to boys by the time the crisis has passed. Charities are also warning that years of progress tackling child marriage is being undone as desperate families, plunged into poverty because of the pandemic, marry young daughters off-meaning they are less likely to complete their education.

Refusing to conform

In Vietnam, the legal age to wed is 18, but UNICEF says one in ten girls are married before. Amongst ethnic groups the figure is almost double that. Growing up with six siblings in a traditional stilt house, H'Hen knew from a

spotlight as the first ethnic minority woman to win the Miss Universe Vietnam title. But her win brought out racists-who claimed her skin was too dark for her to be beautiful. "I got made fun of so much that it became normal," H'Hen says. The taunts only increased her determination to instill confidence and a love of learning in girls from disadvantaged families. "The thing that I couldn't stand was their comments about my people. I didn't want others in my community to be criticized because of their skin... so I would speak out."

On the advice of her mother-now her biggest champion-H'Hen poured all of her Miss Universe prize money into scholarship programs for schoolchildren. Since her win, she has raised tens

of thousands of dollars to build libraries in Vietnam's rural central provinces and supported girls across Asia and Africa to complete secondary school. H'Hen also mentors older girls who want to go onto further studies. "I guess I'm a little biased when I meet girls from my community in Ho Chi Minh City," she laughs. "If she's a student, I encourage her to study more. If she's struggling, I'll offer to share her tuition fees." If they are given the tools to succeed, she says, nothing can hold them back. H'Hen insists: "I want to share this message and change some lives." — AFP



In this file photo fans wait outside the Dolby theatre as guests arrive for the world premiere of Disney's "The Lion King" on July 9, 2019 in Hollywood. — AFP

Disney confirms new 'Lion King' film with 'Moonlight' director

Disney's blockbuster remake of "The Lion King" is getting a follow-up from Oscar-winning "Moonlight" director Barry Jenkins, the company told AFP Tuesday. The 2019 movie featuring photo-realistic graphics and a star-studded voice cast including Beyoncé took over \$1.6 billion at the worldwide box office, despite mixed reviews. The film about young lion cub Simba avenging his father's death became the highest-grossing of the Mouse House's many recent remakes, more than justifying its estimated \$250 million budget. It employed cutting-edge technology that saw a traditional camera crew "film" computer-generated characters roaming the African savannahs from inside a virtual reality world. The follow-up is expected to use the same approach, though no start date for production, plot or cast has yet been announced.

Jenkins, whose 2016 coming-of-age drama "Moonlight" about an African-American gay man won the Academy Award for best picture, said in a statement that he "grew up with these characters" after helping his sister raise two young boys in the 1990s. "Having the opportunity to work with Disney on expanding this magnificent tale of friendship, love and legacy while furthering my work chronicling the lives and souls of folk within the African diaspora is a dream come true," he said in a statement to AFP. The 1994 "Lion King," on which last year's remake was closely based, is seen as the peak of Disney's 1990s "renaissance," spawning a smash-hit Broadway musical version as well as a direct-to-video sequel. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN FEMINIST SINGER HELEN REDDY DIES IN LA

Australian singer Helen Reddy, best known for her feminist anthem "I Am Woman", has died in Los Angeles aged 78, according to a statement from her children yesterday. "It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Helen Reddy, on the afternoon of September 29th 2020 in Los Angeles," the statement on her official Facebook fan page said. The trailblazing musician from Melbourne shot to global stardom with the 1971 hit "I Am Woman", which became the rallying cry of the women's liberation movement. Born on October 25, 1941, Reddy married three times and had two children, Traci Wald Donat and Jordan Sommers. "She was a wonderful mother, grandmother and a truly formidable woman," they said. "Our hearts are broken. But we take comfort in the knowledge that her voice will live on forever." — AFP



In this file photo singer Helen Reddy performing onstage at the women's march in Los Angeles. — AFP

Very nice! 'Borat' sequel coming to Amazon Prime

A sequel to the comedy "Borat" has been purchased by Amazon Prime and is expected to hit the streaming platform before November's US election, a source familiar with the deal told AFP Tuesday. The movie will see British comedian and actor Sacha Baron Cohen reprise his cult favorite role as a bumbling and politically incorrect reporter from Kazakhstan, after nearly 15 years. The 2006 original, "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan," grossed more than \$260 million, winning over critics and spawning endless catchphrases among devoted fans. It even earned an Oscar screenplay nomination. According to Deadline, the follow-up movie was shot covertly with minimal crew as soon as coronavirus restrictions eased this summer in the US and overseas.

The original saw Cohen's fictional and homophobic journalist blundering across the US in search of cultural enlightenment-with the joke at the expense of Americans, who nevertheless lapped it up at the box office. The sequel will again see Cohen "going undercover to get people to reveal their true selves and their often unflattering biases, with only the slightest provocation," the Deadline report said. The controversial satirist's anarchic, gonzo-style comedy has spawned multiple celebrated TV and movie characters such as wannabe rapper Ali G and gay Austrian TV presenter Bruno.



British comedian and actor Sacha Baron Cohen.

Cohen-who also made the 2012 movie "The Dictator" starring himself as a Moamer Kadhafi-style despot-was recently seen pranking public figures in the TV series "Who is America?" In one memorable scene from the show, Cohen hoodwinked Republican politicians into endorsing a made-up plan to train preschoolers in how to fire a gun, although the show drew mixed reviews. Sarah Palin, the former vice-presidential nominee and ex-Alaska governor, slammed the comedian's "evil, exploitive, sick humor." Cohen plays a leading role in Aaron Sorkin's Oscar-tipped drama "The Trial of the Chicago 7," streaming on Netflix next month. — AFP

French trial opens for activists seeking to 'return' African art

Five activists go on trial in Paris yesterday for trying to seize an African funeral staff from France's pre-eminent indigenous art museum, hoping to increase pressure on the government to reconstitute items they claim were stolen. Emery Mwazulu Diyabanza, a 41-year-old Congolese activist, led the operation at the Quai Branly museum last June, denouncing "the pillage of Africa." "We're taking it home," he said in a video posted on social media after removing the 19th-century funeral staff from Chad and parading it around the building. Since then Diyabanza has staged similar operations at indigenous art museums in the southern French city of Marseille and in Berg en Dal, in the Netherlands. "It was important to approach this trial with a combative spirit, even if it's risky," Diyabanza told AFP. "We had no intention of stealing this work, but we will continue as long as the injustice of pillaging Africa has not been remedied," he said.

He and the four others are charged with

attempted theft of a registered artwork, and face up to 10 years in prison and 150,000 euros (\$176,000) in fines. Diyabanza himself sued the French state after his arrest in June, accusing it of "theft and receiving stolen goods" in amassing the huge collection of native artworks beginning in the colonial era.

'An insult'

French officials condemned the stunt, which came after President Emmanuel Macron pledged shortly after his 2017 election to study the restitution of African cultural treasures. France has since returned a ceremonial sword to Senegal and promised to return some two-dozen works to Benin. "The issue of restitution... deserves a serious debate," said Emmanuel Kasarherou, director of the Quai Branly, which is a civil party in the trial against Diyabanza. Kasarherou, a Kanak from the French overseas territory of New Caledonia, this year became the first

indigenous person ever to head a major French national museum.

His museum "is documenting the origins of its collections and how they were obtained, and using this work as a basis, we can move forward," he told AFP. Critics accuse the French state of not doing enough, citing for example the auction of sacred statues in Paris last summer despite requests by Nigeria to halt the sale. An expert report commissioned by Macron in 2018 counted some 90,000 African works in French museums, but suggested a "circulation" of some works between museums rather than an outright return, saying not all were pillaged or stolen. "Macron has acknowledged the pillaging, but he's the one who decides how many works are returned, and whether or not there should be a property transfer-it's an insult for us," Diyabanza said. — AFP



The Quai Branly museum in Paris houses priceless African artefacts that critics say should be returned to their homelands.

Classifieds

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Rather hot to fair and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for

BY DAY: Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 10 - 38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for scattered light rain.

WEATHER WATCH			Fog			
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 30/09/2020 1200 UTC			
KUWAIT CITY	39 °C	29 °C				
KUWAIT AIRPORT	40 °C	25 °C				
ABDALY	41 °C	26 °C				
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C				
JAHRA	41 °C	26 °C				
FAILAKA ISLAND	35 °C	- °C				
SALMIYAH	33 °C	31 °C				
AHMADI	- °C	- °C				
NUWAISIB	37 °C	26 °C				
WAFRA	42 °C	23 °C				
SALMY	40 °C	23 °C				

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	10/01	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance	40 °C	25 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 38 km/h
Friday	10/02	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for light fog forming at night	42 °C	26 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h
Saturday	10/03	Hot	43 °C	27 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Sunday	10/04	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	44 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:22
Sunrise	05:41
Zuhr	11:38
Asr	15:02
Sunset	17:34
Isha	18:51

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	25 °C
MAX. RH	64 %
MIN. RH	12 %
MAX. Wind	S 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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
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Models present creations by Dior during the Paris Fashion Week's Women Spring Summer 2021 ready-to-wear fashion show in Paris yesterday. — AFP photos



This picture shows a cotton-top tamarin at the Taipei Zoo.



A black-capped squirrel monkey waiting for food at the Taipei Zoo.

BABY BOOM AT TAIPEI ZOO LIGHTENS PANDEMIC BLUES

Taiwan's largest zoo has celebrated a flurry of births in recent months—including pandas and pangolins—in a welcome boost during a visitor slump due to the coronavirus. Human footfall to Taipei Zoo may have dropped this year but officials have been kept on their toes with an animal baby boom that has just kept coming. Formosan serows, Eurasian otters, jackass penguins, koalas, marmosets and black-capped squirrel monkeys have all added to their ranks since the beginning of 2020. "We are very lucky this year with successful breedings from many international cooperation projects with our partner zoos and aquariums in Europe and Southeast Asia," Taipei Zoo spokesman Eric Tsao told AFP.

Tsao said visitor arrivals are down 20-30 percent because of the virus—even though Taiwan has emerged largely unscathed from the pandemic thanks to a response that has won global recognition. The birth that has garnered the most excitement is Yuan Bao, the second female cub born to giant panda Yuan Yuan. Yuan Yuan and her partner Tuan Tuan have been star attractions at the zoo since their arrival from China in 2008 as a symbol of what were then warm relations between the



Two Asian small-clawed otters at the Taipei Zoo.

two sides. Three-month-old Yuan Bao—"round baby" in Mandarin—has grown into a robust cub currently weighing five kilograms, up from 186 grams at birth. The zoo has posted regular pictures of Yuan Bao on its social media platform and the public will likely be able to catch a glimpse of her in person by the end of the year.

Beijing usually only loans its critically endangered pandas and any progeny must be sent to China. But in a rare departure from that protocol, Taiwan was allowed to keep the cubs as their par-

ents were a gift, according to Taipei officials. Earlier this month another of the zoo's most popular animals added to the growing nursery. Mofen-a Malayan tapir who featured in director Ang Lee's Oscar-winning film "Life of Pi"—gave birth shortly after a Czech delegation visited Taiwan. The timing was fortuitous as Mofen's mate came from Prague Zoo. Taipei and Prague have grown closer in recent years, much to the annoyance of Beijing, which claims Taiwan and tries to keep the democratic island internationally isolated.

Taipei is preparing to send two pangolins to Prague Zoo—including a male born in April—as part of an exchange agreement between the two sister cities. Tsao said he hoped the spate of new arrivals will help raise conservation awareness among the public. "The role of a zoo has evolved from collecting exotic animals in the last century to carrying the responsibility to help prevent the extinction of endangered animals," he said. "The zoo has to play an important part to maintain a safe population for the endangered species under its care... in the hope that one day they can return to their natural habitats." — AFP



This undated handout photograph released by the Taipei Zoo shows baby koala at the zoo.



Formosan serows at the Taipei Zoo.



This undated handout photograph shows a mother panda keeping her 36-day-old cub by her mouth at the zoo.



This undated handout photograph shows a recently born pangolin being fed by a staff member at the zoo.



This undated handout photograph shows a mother with her baby koala at the zoo.

Sports

Photo of the day



The Red Bull Racing team prepare for a pitstop in England. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

South Africa pull-out dooms Super Rugby after 25 years

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's rugby chief admitted the future of the club game in the southern hemisphere was unclear yesterday after South Africa pulled most of their teams out of Super Rugby, effectively ending the once-admired competition after 25 years. NZR chief executive Mark Robinson said the next step must be taken quickly after South Africa—whose national team won the World Cup last year—opted to explore joining Europe's PRO14.

South Africa's move, prompted by New Zealand's decision to push for a domestic or trans-Tasman Super Rugby competition, spells doom for the series which was first weakened by over-expansion and then plunged into crisis by the coronavirus pandemic. However, Robinson said it was impossible to predict what the future may hold for Super Rugby teams after the departure of South Africa's Bulls, Lions, Sharks and Stormers.

"There's far too much uncertainty at present around what the future might look like in different horizons. They're changing on a daily and weekly basis," Robinson said. "There's going to be a change... and it's something that we've simply got to work out quickly," he added. The All Blacks and Springboks are international rugby's most successful teams, with three World Cup titles each, and the loss of South African competition deprives Super Rugby of much of its quality. NZR earlier attempted to play down the pull-out, saying it was "no surprise". It follows months of turmoil since the pandemic halted Super Rugby in March, prompting New Zealand, Australia and South Africa to go it alone with temporary domestic tournaments.

On Tuesday, South Africa said it was seeking entry for four teams into Europe's PRO14, criticizing New Zealand's "unilateral decision" to pursue a domestic or trans-Tasman version of Super Rugby. Their withdrawal confirms that South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina Rugby (SANZAAR) will be unable to deliver the 14-team Super Rugby competition already promised to broadcasters in a five-year deal. —AFP

White Sox down A's in opener

Yankees thump Indians; Giolito flirts with perfect game in playoff openers



CLEVELAND: Third baseman Gio Urshela #29 of the New York Yankees throws out Franmil Reyes #32 of the Cleveland Indians during the fourth inning Game One of the American League Wild Card Series at Progressive Field on September 29, 2020. —AFP Photos



OAKLAND: Lucas Giolito #27 of the Chicago White Sox pitches against the Oakland Athletics in the sixth inning of game one of their American League wild card series on September 29, 2020.

NEW YORK: Lucas Giolito took a perfect game into the seventh inning and the Chicago White Sox used three home runs for a 4-1 victory over the host Oakland Athletics in Game 1 of their American League first-round playoff series on Tuesday. Making his postseason debut, Giolito retired the first 18 batters he faced until Tommy La Stella lashed a single up the middle to lead off the seventh inning and break up the perfect-game bid. Giolito (1-0), who threw a no-hitter against Pittsburgh on Aug 25, became just the fifth pitcher in major league history to take a perfect game into the seventh inning of a postseason game. He wound up allowing one run on two hits in seven-plus innings. Giolito walked one and struck out eight. Closer Alex Colome worked a 1-2-3 ninth for the save, closing a game in which the White Sox got solo homers from

Adam Engel and Yasmani Grandal as well as a two-run shot from Jose Abreu.

Yankees 12, Indians 3

Gerrit Cole struck out 13 batters over seven innings to lift visiting New York to a romp over Cleveland in Game 1 of their American League wild-card series. Gleyber Torres belted a two-run homer to highlight his four-hit, three-RBI performance. Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge also launched two-run shots and Giancarlo Stanton added a solo blast for the fifth-seeded Yankees. Cole (1-0) became the first pitcher in major league history to record three postseason performances with at least 12 strikeouts. AL Cy Young Award favorite Shane Bieber (0-1) was victimized for a career-high-tying seven runs on nine hits in 4 2/3

innings in his postseason debut. By comparison, Bieber surrendered a total of seven earned runs in his first eight starts this season.

Astros 4, Twins 1

Jose Altuve walked with the bases loaded in the ninth inning to force in the go-ahead run and Michael Brantley followed with a two-run single as Houston beat Minnesota in the opening game of an American League wild-card series in Minneapolis. It was a continuation of playoff misery for the Twins, who absorbed their major-league-record 17th consecutive postseason loss. Altuve's two-out walk against reliever Sergio Romo (0-1) came after shortstop Jorge Polanco threw wildly to second baseman Luis Arraez on what would have been a routine inning-ending forceout. Framer Valdez (1-0)

threw five innings of two-hit shutout relief for the win.

Rays 3, Blue Jays 1

Blake Snell took a no-hitter into the sixth inning and Manuel Margot homered as Tampa Bay held off Toronto to win Game 1 of their American League wild-card series in St. Petersburg, Fla. Tampa Bay scored a run on a fourth-inning wild pitch and got a two-run homer from Margot—who hit only one in the regular season—in the seventh to extend the advantage to 3-0. Snell (1-0) finished with 5 2/3 innings of scoreless, one-hit ball and tied the team's postseason record with nine strikeouts. Alejandro Kirk broke up the no-hit bid with a leadoff single in the sixth, and Snell exited after retiring the next two batters. He walked two. Pete Fairbanks pitched a scoreless ninth inning to earn the save. —Reuters

LeBron says 'bubble' season the toughest challenge of career

ORLANDO: LeBron James says leading the Los Angeles Lakers into the NBA Finals after nearly three months inside the league's "bubble" in Orlando ranks as the biggest challenge of his career. The 35-year-old superstar is readying for a 10th NBA Finals appearance on Wednesday when the Lakers face the Miami Heat in the championship round of an unprecedented season that began 11 months ago.

The coronavirus pandemic forced the NBA to shut down in mid-March, and anger over racism and police brutality almost prompted James and the Lakers to abandon the season in August. James, who is hoping to win a fourth championship ring with a third different team after previous victories with Miami and Cleveland, said Tuesday that this year's disjointed season ranked as the toughest of the lot. "It's probably been the most challenging thing I've ever done as far as a professional, as far as committing to something and actually making it through," James told reporters.

"But I knew when I was coming what we were coming here for. I would be lying if I sat up here and knew that everything inside the bubble, the toll that it would take on your mind and your body and everything else, because it's been extremely tough. "But I'm here for one reason and one reason only, and that's to compete for a championship. That was my mindset once I entered the bubble, once I entered the quarantine process the first two days. The main thing was for

us to finish the season and compete for a championship." James who in July jokingly compared entering the bubble in Orlando to starting a prison sentence, said he had lost track of time in Florida.

'Feels like five years'

"I don't even know how many days it is. However many days it is, it feels like five years," he said. "So it really doesn't matter. I've been as locked in as I've ever been in my career." James said until the Lakers departed Los Angeles for Orlando in July, he hadn't even been certain that the season would be completed. "I didn't know that this was a possibility until we actually got on the plane in LA to fly here to Orlando," he said.

"Until we landed here, actually got off the plane, got on the bus and pulled up here to the hotel, that's when it became a reality to me. This year's finals pits James against his old team and former coach Erik Spoelstra. James won back-to-back titles with Miami in 2012 and 2013, but departed the franchise in 2014 to return to Cleveland. James, who is reputed to have had a sometimes tense relationship with Spoelstra during his time with the franchise, said winning against Miami would carry no added satisfaction.

"Absolutely not," James said. "It's no extra meaning to winning a championship, no matter who you're playing against. It's already hard enough to even reach the Finals, to be in this position. "If you're able to become victorious out of the Finals, it doesn't matter who it's against. I'm just happy that I'm here with the opportunity to represent not only myself but represent our fans, our fan base, our organization, my teammates, our coaching staff, our training staff and so many others that represent this organization to the utmost respect." —AFP

The rise and fall of Super Rugby, in six stages

WELLINGTON: South Africa's decision to pull its teams out of Super Rugby and head north to the PRO14 effectively ended the competition to a close after 25 years. AFP looks at the journey of a tournament that was the breeding ground of the New Zealand, South Africa and Australia sides that have won five of the past six World Cups.

Uncomplicated start

In 1996, a year after rugby turned professional, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (SANZAR) launched the inaugural Super 12 season with much fanfare, packed stadiums and lucrative contracts to keep players from the clutches of rival codes. It was an uncomplicated system, and the first season culminated with the Auckland Blues defeating the Sharks of South Africa in the final.

Conference system

In 2011, the simple round-robin format was replaced by a complicated conference system and although it proved frustrating for the die-hard fans, as weaker teams could more easily reach the final stages, it took nine years before an agreement was reached to end it.

16 time zones

Staging a multinational tournament stretching from South Africa to New Zealand became unwieldy and problems arose with the decision to expand. By 2016

SANZAR had become SANZAAR with the failed experiment to include teams from Japan and Argentina in an 18-team competition. Matches were spread across 16 time zones in three conferences.

Pacific shut-out

Throughout its 25-year history, Super Rugby bosses turned a deaf ear to public calls to include the flair of a Pacific islands team, after Fiji and Western Samoa had featured in the Super Six and Super 10 competitions of the amateur era. Extra South African and Australian sides were added in 2006 and another Australian club joined in 2011, giving each of the three foundation countries five clubs each. A push for a predominantly Pacific team to join Super 18 in 2016 was rejected in favor of Japan and Argentina.

Dwindling crowds

With a cumbersome 18 teams in three conferences and some lop-sided scorelines, crowds began to dwindle. South Africa's Golden Lions entered the 2017 playoffs despite having not faced a New Zealand team and when it came to the crunch they lost the final at home to the Canterbury Crusaders.

Axe falls

Another rethink saw two South African and one Australian side cut in 2018, before Japan's Sunwolves were kicked out in 2020. The widely criticized conference system was to be scrapped for 2021. But the constant tinkering had done its damage and when the coronavirus pandemic made international play impossible the founding countries looked for a system that suited them best. With New Zealand and Australia discussing a trans-Tasman competition, South Africa decided their future lies in the northern hemisphere. —AFP

Sports

Mourinho bemoans 'dangerous' schedule as Spurs see off Chelsea

Tottenham beat Chelsea 5-4 on penalties

LONDON: Jose Mourinho believes players are being put in danger by the football authorities after Tottenham beat Chelsea 5-4 on penalties to progress to the quarter-finals of the League Cup after a 1-1 draw. Mourinho's men were playing the second of four games in eight days in three different competitions.

Eric Dier was the only outfield player retained in the Tottenham team that started Sunday's 1-1 draw in the Premier League against Newcastle and the England defender had to dash from the field for a comfort break in the second-half. "The number of minutes played is dangerous. What I did today with I Eric Dier today is very dangerous," said Mourinho, suggesting that dehydration could have led to the defender's problem.

"It should be forbidden to play two matches in 48 hours. What Eric Dier did is not human." Timo Werner's first goal for Chelsea compounded Mourinho's woes in a dominant start from Frank Lampard's men. But Erik Lamela deservedly levelled for Spurs seven minutes from time and new Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy was unable to stop Dier. Lamela, Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, Lucas Moura and Harry Kane scoring from the spot.

Tammy Abraham, Cesar Azpilicueta, Jorginho and Emerson also converted their penalties as the first nine of the shootout were successful. But Mason Mount's effort clipped the post to the delight of the watching Gareth Bale, who could be fit to feature in the last eight with the quarter-finals not till late December. "Anything can happen on penalties," said Lampard. "You want to stay in these competitions of course but there's lots to like. We

dominated the first half but the game changed (in the second-half)."

Mourinho claimed the fixture pile up gave him no choice but to prioritize Thursday's Europa League tie against Maccabi Haifa given the financial incentive on offer for the club. "I told the players they should only think about this game, but I have to think about three games," added Mourinho, who faces another of his former clubs Manchester United in the Premier League on Sunday. "I cannot believe in 48 hours we are playing a European game. The boys were absolutely phenomenal."

Lampard made eight changes, but Werner was one of those retained from the 3-3 draw at West Brom on Saturday and he took the opportunity to get his first goal for the club after a big money move from RB Leipzig. Tottenham debutant Sergio Reguilon was twice at fault in the build up as he gifted possession to Azpilicueta and then dived in trying to block the Spaniard's cross, which allowed the Chelsea captain to pick out Werner at the edge of the box to arrow a shot into the bottom corner.

Lampard had won his previous three meetings against his former manager Mourinho and the tensions between the two flared during the first-half as they exchanged angry words on the touchline. On the field, Spurs were the better side as Mendy made important saves from Lamela and Reguilon either side of half-time. Mourinho showed his intent by introducing Kane from the bench with 20 minutes to go. Moments later the Portuguese was marching down the tunnel after Dier as the defender made a dash to the dressing room before quickly returning.

Chelsea did not make the most of a brief peri-



LONDON: Chelsea's French goalkeeper Edouard Mendy makes a save during the English League Cup fourth round football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, on September 29, 2020. —AFP

od with an extra man as Callum Hudson-Odoi fired over and Werner's fierce effort was saved by Lloris. "He wasn't happy but there was nothing I could do about it, nature was calling," said Dier of being pursued by Mourinho. "I heard there

was a chance, but thankfully they didn't score." Chelsea were punished when Lamela slotted home at the far post from Reguilon's cross to send the game to a shootout and ultimately Spurs into the last eight. —AFP

Getafe grab top spot in La Liga as Angel strikes twice

MADRID: Getafe jumped to the top of La Liga on Tuesday night with a 3-0 victory at home to Betis, dislodging Valencia who had moved into first earlier in the evening. Both Getafe and Valencia have seven points after the opening games in the fourth round of the Liga season. Two teams that played

yesterday, include Real Madrid who welcomed Valladolid, could also reach seven. Celta Vigo, who end the midweek fixtures at home to Barcelona today, can reach eight points.

Getafe had only scored once in their opening two games but struck three times in the first half against Betis, who started the day as league leaders. Angel Rodriguez put the visitors ahead with an overhead kick after 13 minutes. Marc Cucurella added a second in the 39th minute and two minutes later Angel added a third with a cross shot. Betis ended the match with 10 men after Aissa Mandi received a second yellow card in the 83rd minute. In the early match, Valencia

won 1-0 at Real Sociedad in a match the home team dominated.

Real Sociedad could also have gone top with a victory and dominated play but were frustrated by an impressive display from the visiting goalkeeper Jaume Domenech. The hosts lost their fluency after changing four attacking players in a mass switch in the 67th minute. Maxi Gomez finished off a rare Valencia counter-attack to score the winning goal from close range after 75 minutes. "They had one chance and they won, while we did things right, playing football, but we didn't succeed," said Real Sociedad coach, Imanol Alguacil. —AFP

Man City seal £62m deal for Ruben Dias

LONDON: Manchester City announced the signing of Portuguese international centre-back Ruben Dias on a six-year deal from Benfica on Tuesday in the hope of solving the defensive problems that have dogged Pep Guardiola's side over the past year. Benfica on Sunday confirmed they had reached an agreement to sell Dias for 68 million euros (£62 million, \$79 million) plus an extra 3.6 million euros in potential bonuses, with Nicolas Otamendi heading in the opposite direction for 15 million euros.

"To have the opportunity to join a club like Manchester City is a fantastic opportunity for me and one I couldn't turn down," said Dias, who has 19 international caps, in a City statement. "Their success speaks for itself. They have been the dominant team in England over the last few years, playing an attacking brand of football which I feel suits my own game." "It is really exciting to be part of such a talented squad and to play

for a world-class manager like Pep Guardiola, who has a proven track record of developing young players like myself.

"I believe I can improve here, at a club whose ambitions match my own, and I will give everything to be successful and win titles." Benfica coach Jorge Jesus said at the weekend that selling Dias was necessary for the club to balance their accounts after a defeat by Greek side PAOK in the third qualifying round of the Champions League ended their hopes of reaching the group stage. Dias becomes City's third signing of the summer after centre-back Nathan Ake from Bournemouth and Spanish winger Ferran Torres.

The need for more defensive reinforcements was evident as City were thrashed 5-2 at home to Leicester on Sunday - the first time a Guardiola side has ever conceded five in his distinguished managerial career. "Ruben is a player we have admired for some time and we have been impressed with how he has progressed at Benfica," City director of football Txiki Begiristain said. "He has developed into a real leader and as a defender, he has all the attributes we are looking for. He is strong in the air, good in one-v-one situations and



Ruben Dias

technically he is very good, so we are confident he can thrive in our system."

However, Dias becomes just the latest in a string of expensive defensive signings, totalling over 450 million euros, since Guardiola was appointed in 2016. Despite huge price tags, John Stones, Joao Cancelo and Benjamin Mendy are not first-team regulars, while Ake has been signed as back-

up to Aymeric Laporte. Otamendi, 32, won several major honors during his time at the Etihad, including two Premier League titles, and made more than 200 appearances in all competitions in five seasons. The Argentine international has previously played in Portugal, turning out for Benfica's bitter rivals Porto between 2010 and 2014. —AFP

Bayern, rivals await draw as pandemic riddle remains

PARIS: Less than six weeks Bayern Munich won last season's delayed final behind closed doors, the draw for the group stage of the next Champions League takes place today with the threat of the coronavirus pandemic again hanging over the competition. Bayern were crowned European champions for the sixth time after beating Paris Saint-Germain at an empty Estadio da Luz in Lisbon in August.

The surreal occasion represented a triumph of sorts for UEFA, European football's governing body succeeded in playing its flagship competition to a conclusion despite the long shutdown caused by the health crisis, but the final rounds were not the same as with packed stadiums. "A game like this without supporters is not the football that we know," lamented Bayern coach Hansi Flick. "Perhaps they can be back again in the future."

Today's draw is part of a ceremony which will also see the best men's and women's player of last season crowned. UEFA had to ditch plans to stage the event in Athens and instead moved it to its own headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, where the draw will go ahead without guests. It is further evidence that, after the battle to get last season finished, things are not about to return to normal in Europe

yet, and virus cases are exploding again. But this time the football, it seems, will go on.

Both Bayern and PSG will be in the first pot of seeds along with Liverpool, Real Madrid, Juventus, Porto, Zenit Saint-Petersburg and Sevilla, the Europa League winners. There is the prospect of plenty of enticing match-ups, with Barcelona, Atletico Madrid, Chelsea, Borussia Dortmund and both Manchester clubs all in the second pot, and Inter Milan, Atalanta, RB Leipzig and Marseille among the lower seeds. But the excitement of the draw will be quickly tempered. First, there is the realisation that almost all the leading clubs will make it through to the last 16 anyway, as they always do, removing much of the jeopardy from the early games.

Pitfalls ahead

As the pandemic continues to cast a shadow, it seems hard to imagine the final going ahead as scheduled in Istanbul next May in a full stadium. UEFA experimented with the return of fans when around 15,500 attended last week's Super Cup between Bayern and Sevilla in Budapest. "Health is the number one priority but we want to bring hope," said UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin. He added: "Fans and players are the essential part of football."

But with rules on large gatherings varying considerably from country to country, UEFA must decide how to approach the issue of crowds attending games in the Champions League and Europa League, the draw for which is on Friday. UEFA's cur-



SINSHEIM: Hoffenheim's Croatian forward Andrej Kramaric (left) and Bayern Munich's German midfielder Serge Gnabry vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match TSG 1899 Hoffenheim v FC Bayern Munich on September 27, 2020. —AFP

rent stance is that games will be behind closed doors "until further notice".

It has adapted its rules. In the face of travel restrictions, it will allow matches on neutral territory. If a club suffers a Covid-19 outbreak, a game can go ahead as long as each team has at least 13 fit players including one goalkeeper. The group

stage starts on October 20, more than a month later than usual, and all six rounds of games will be packed into eight weeks. However, in the event of more delays, UEFA has set January 28 as the deadline to complete the group stage. Pitfalls lie ahead, but the draw offers a brief return to something like normality. —AFP

'King' Harris takes tennis message to townships

PARIS: Having supplanted Kevin Anderson as South Africa's number one, Lloyd Harris is a man on a mission - to take tennis to the football strongholds of his country's townships. Harris, now at 90 in the world, won his opening match at Roland Garros for the second successive year on Tuesday, a comfortable 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (9/7) victory over Alexei Popyrin of Australia.

Now the 23-year-old, fondly nicknamed 'The King' by his Davis Cup teammates, wants to use his higher profile for good in South Africa. Recently, he and Anderson played a weekend exhibition in Soweto in front of a "couple of hundred of kids" most of whom are more acquainted with football, cricket or rugby.

"We made a weekend of it. They had their national school championships taking place and there were some top players there," said Cape Town-based Harris. "We are trying to make an impact but it's a real challenge. The biggest part is that it's easy to get a football or a rugby ball. "But these are under-privileged kids and a tennis racket is expensive so there's a lot of work to do." Harris is 11 years younger than Anderson whose career has been hit in the last 12 months by having to undergo two knee surgeries.

As a result, the former world number five, and two-time Grand Slam finalist, has seen his ranking plummet to 118. "Kevin's a great guy, we talk most weeks, we are good friends now," said Harris. "He has reached the pinnacle of the sport and has been a great influence." Harris got his nickname for his precocious talents when he joined South Africa's Davis Cup team. "The other guys saw that even at 18 I was beating players who were 27, 28, so they called me 'The King'." "All the guys in the team have nicknames." Tucker Vortser was 'Dragon', Nicolaas Scholtz is 'Shark' and Ray Klaasen was 'Fox'. —AFP

18 White Sox down AAs in opener as Yankees overpower Indians



19 Getafe grab top spot in La Liga as Angel strikes twice



19 Mourinho bemoans 'dangerous' schedule as Spurs see off Chelsea



DOHA: Al-Nassr players carry a placard of the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the AFC Champions League quarterfinals match between Saudi Al-Nassr and Saudi Al-Ahli yesterday at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in the Qatari capital. — AFP

Serena suffers another blow

Injured Serena withdraws from French Open as Nadal cruises



Serena Williams

PARIS: Serena Williams suffered another blow in her bid for a 24th Grand Slam title as the American withdrew from the French Open yesterday with an Achilles injury, while 12-time champion Rafael Nadal raced into the third round. The 39-year-old Williams, a three-time winner at Roland Garros, pulled out ahead of her second round match against Tsvetana Pironkova citing the injury that prompted her to skip the Rome tune-up event.

"The Achilles didn't have enough time to heal after the US Open," said Williams, who admitted last week she was not fully fit after her run to the semi-finals in New York. "I'm struggling to walk, so that's kind of a telltale sign that I should try to recover." The injury likely means she will miss the rest of 2020, leaving the Australian Open in 2021 as her next chance to equal Margaret Court's all-time majors record. "I need four to six weeks of sitting and doing nothing," she said. "It's more than likely that I won't play another tournament this year."

Her decision to pull out handed Pironkova a walkover and left Williams searching for a first major

since the last of her 23 titles at Melbourne in 2017. "I always give 100 percent, everyone knows that. Maybe even more than 100 if that's possible. I take solace in that," she told reporters. "I think the Achilles is a real injury that you don't want to play with because that is not good if it gets worse."

Nadal looked in ominous form as he stepped up his pursuit of Roger Federer's 20 major titles with a crushing win over 236th-ranked American Mackenzie McDonald. The Spaniard batted aside McDonald 6-1, 6-0, 6-3 in exactly 100 minutes and will meet Japan's Kei Nishikori or Stefano Travaglia of Italy for a spot in the last 16. "The aim was to play as well as possible. I'm very happy. I have another difficult match next," said Nadal.

The 34-year-old needs one more major to pull level with long-time rival Federer and owns an astonishing 95-2 record in Paris going back to his triumph on debut in 2005. Top seed and women's favorite Simona Halep goes up against compatriot Irina-Camelia Begu as she targets a second French Open crown in three years.

Azarenka thrashed

PARIS: Victoria Azarenka's unhappy French Open campaign ended yesterday as the former world number one was beaten 6-2 6-2 by Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova in the second round. The Belarusian, who moaned about the cold and damp conditions in her opening round win, capitulated in feeble fashion against her 161st-ranked opponent.

Schmiedlova, who is playing with a protected ranking after knee surgery in 2019, has enjoyed a stunning return to form in Paris, having beaten Venus Williams in round one. That win over Williams ended a run of 12 consecutive first-round losses in Grand Slams and she backed that up with a commanding display against an error-prone Azarenka.

Tenth seed Azarenka, runner-up at the US Open this month, double-faulted to drop serve in the opening game when play finally started on Court Simonne-Mathieu after yet another rain delay and it did not get much better for the 31-year-old. The 26-year-old Schmiedlova's one real moment of alarm came at 1-1 in the second set when she slipped and landed heavily on her left knee and required treatment. But she showed no ill-effects as she moved into a 5-2 lead with a couple of breaks of serve. Schmiedlova brought up match point with a forehand winner and sealed victory as Azarenka fired a 37th unforced error.

Djokovic eases through

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic was described as a "snake killing its prey" by vanquished Roland



PARIS: Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Mackenzie McDonald of the US during their men's singles second round tennis match on Day 4 of The Roland Garros 2020 French Open tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP

Bertens wins stormy Errani tussle

US Open champion Dominic Thiem swept into the third round with a 6-1, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) victory over American qualifier Jack Sock, saving three set points to close out the match. The Austrian third seed will play Norway's Casper Ruud, seeded 28th, or American Tommy Paul for a place in the last 16. "I'm very happy with my game in the first two rounds. It was not an easy draw at all and I'm very happy not to drop a set," said Thiem, who defeated 2014 US Open winner Marin Cilic in round one. Dutch fifth seed Kiki Bertens had to be taken off court in a wheelchair after a fiery win over former finalist Sara Errani.

Bertens triumphed 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 9-7 in a three-hour 11-minute clash which left her in cramps and Italian Errani screaming an obscenity as she left the court. "After one hour, she's injured but then she's running around like never before," said Errani. "She leaves the court in a chair and now she's in the locker room and eating in the restaurant, perfect. She exaggerated." "It made me very angry, so well done to her but she

can win without doing that."

Bertens is due to meet Katerina Siniakova next while Elina Svitolina overcame Mexican qualifier Renata Zarazua 6-3, 0-6, 6-2. The Ukrainian third seed is coming off a title at Strasbourg last week and will next play Russian 27th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova, but was briefly taken aback by a sonic boom. The thunderous noise that panicked residents of Paris was caused by a French fighter jet that broke the sound barrier. "I was a bit worried because I thought something bad happened," said Svitolina.

The military said the plane had been scrambled to go to the aid of another aircraft that had lost radio contact, and was authorized to travel at supersonic speed. Stan Wawrinka, the 2015 French Open winner, followed up his demolition of Andy Murray with a 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 defeat of Germany's Dominik Koepfer. Sebastian Korda, the son of 1992 Roland Garros runner-up and 1998 Australian Open champion Petr Korda, also progressed after a four-sets victory over fellow American John Isner. — AFP

Garros opponent Mikael Ymer on Tuesday as the world number one's bid to become the first man in half a century to win all four Grand Slam titles twice got off to a convincing start. Djokovic eased to a 6-0, 6-2, 6-3 victory, reaching the second round in Paris for a record-equalling 16th time. It was also his 32nd win in 33 matches in 2020, his only loss coming when he was defaulted from the US Open.

"It felt like when a snake kills its prey," was the blunt verdict of 23-year-old Ymer who never recovered from dropping the first set in just 20 minutes under the roof of Court Philippe Chatrier. "He hits it pretty big. I had chances to rally but then I got suffocated. It was corner to corner and he rarely misses. "At the beginning, it was just surreal. The court felt big and I was nervous because I was

facing the best on the other side." Tuesday's demolition was the not the first time Ymer, the world number 80 from Sweden, had faced Djokovic who is chasing a second French Open title and 18th career major.

The two hit together at Wimbledon in 2015 on the morning of the men's final when Djokovic went on to beat Roger Federer for the title and Ymer was readying for the boys championship match which he lost to Reilly Opelka of the United States. Meanwhile, Djokovic insisted his New York disqualification, handed out when he swiped a ball which felled a line judge, was definitely a thing of the past. In the immediate aftermath of his US Open retreat, he went to Rome where he captured a record 36th Masters title. "I have not had any traces of New York in my mind. I'm over it," he said. — Agencies