



May God guide  
your path in leading  
and protecting our  
beloved Kuwait



## Local

# Kuwait's Amir receives cables of condolences on Sheikh Sabah's passing

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolences Thursday from US President Donald Trump on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Trump noted in the cable that His Highness late Amir was a friend and partner, underlining that he had honored him with the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander. His Highness the Amir replied in a cable expressing gratitude to the US President for his sincere condolences and praised the solid and historic relations that bind the two friendly countries.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a letter of condolences from Iranian President Dr Hassan Rouhani, who eulogized Sheikh Sabah for his role to create an atmosphere of moderation in the region. His Highness the Amir sent a cable in reply expressing gratitude for the solace.

His Highness the Amir also received a letter of condolences from King of Bahrain Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa on the demise of the late Amir. In the cable, King Hamad praised the late Amir's key contributions to developing the GCC, as well as noble efforts towards the promotion of Arab and Islamic causes. His Highness the Amir sent a cable in reply expressing gratitude for the heartfelt solace.



The late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

In the meantime, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un extended his condolences over the passing of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. In a cable he sent to His Highness

the Amir, the North Korean leader expressed his "deepest sympathies" over this immense loss, as he hoped the Kuwaiti people would find solace in this

time of grief. In reply, His Highness the Amir appreciated the North Korean leader's commiserations, wishing him health and wellbeing.

His Highness the Amir also received a cable of condolences from President of South Korea Moon Jae-in over the death of His Highness Sheikh Sabah, also praising the role of the late Amir in strengthening ties between the two countries. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent a cable to the Korean President thanking him for his kind feelings and wishing him a long healthy life and more development for his country.

Moreover, His Highness the Amir received a letter of condolences from Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who praised the late Amir's key contributions to developing his country in various fields and his ceaseless efforts to promote regional security and stability. South Sudan's President Salva Kiir sent a letter of condolences to His Highness the Amir, in which he praised the late Amir's key contributions to developing his country in various fields and promoting regional and international stability.

President of Mongolia Khaltmaagiin Battulga sent a similar letter in which he also praised the late Amir's key contributions to developing his country in various fields and promoting bilateral ties

between the two friendly nations. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa praised, in a cable to His Highness the Amir, the late Amir's key contributions to developing his country in various fields and efforts to promote bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. His Highness the Amir received similar letters from Hungarian President Janos Ader and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki who expressed deep sympathies on the demise of the late Amir, as well as Serbia's President Aleksander Vucic who hailed Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad for his key role in boosting development in Arab countries and relations between Kuwait and Serbia. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent cables in reply to the presidents, expressing gratitude for the heartfelt solace.

His Highness the Amir also received letters of condolences from Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi who praised the late Amir's key contributions to developing his country in various fields and his ceaseless efforts to promote regional security and stability, as well as Saudi Royal Advisor and Governor of Makkah Region Prince Khalid Al-Faisal Al Saud who expressed his deepest condolences on the passing of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. — KUNA

## News in brief

### Sheikh Sabah was rational leader: Erdogan

**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday paid tribute to the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He was a wise and rational leader in the Middle East region, Erdogan said, addressing a parliamentary session. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad had adopted a policy compatible with reason and justice in addressing crises, Erdogan stated. — KUNA

### Georgia embassy eulogizes Amir

**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of Georgia to Kuwait Konstantin Zhgenti expressed condolences on the passing of Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "With great sorrow and sadness, the Embassy of Georgia to Kuwait expresses its heartfelt condolences to Al-Sabah family and to the government and people of Kuwait for the passing of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," reads a statement released by the embassy. "His Highness was a great humanitarian leader and a friend to all nations." — KUNA

### UAE street named after late Amir

**DUBAI:** Member of the UAE supreme council and Umm Al-Quwain ruler, Sheikh Saud bin Rashed Al-Muallah, ordered on Thursday that the main cornice street be named after the late Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Official emirates news agency (WAM) said the gesture was intended to honor Sheikh Sabah for playing a major role in the region before establishing the UAE. He lauded the deceased Amir for bolstering the ties between the two countries. — KUNA

### India announces one-day mourning

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian government on Thursday announced a one-day state mourning as a mark of respect to late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement: "As a mark of respect to the departed dignitary, the Government of India has decided that there will be one day State Mourning on October 4, 2020 throughout India. The national flag will be flown at half-mast on all buildings throughout India where it is flown regularly and there will be no official entertainment on the day." — KUNA

### Bangladesh declares day of mourning

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh has declared Thursday a day of national mourning after the passing of Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, ordering flags on state buildings across the nation to be flown at half-mast. Prayers will be held at mosques and other places of worship to commemorate the life of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, said a government statement, quoting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "utter shock" over the Kuwaiti leader's death. The Bangladeshi premier extended her "deepest condolences" to the Kuwaiti people over this "unbearable loss," as she attributed the tremendous progress in bilateral ties over the years to the late Kuwaiti leader's shrewd diplomacy. "The Bangladeshi people will forever appreciate his profound contributions towards peace and stability in the region and beyond," she added. — KUNA

## Embassies abroad pay respects to Sheikh Sabah



Albanian President Liir Meta offers condolences at the Kuwaiti embassy in Tirana on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Morocco's Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita pays respect at Kuwait's embassy.



Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Dr Yousef Al-Othaimen offers his condolences at the Kuwaiti consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

**CAPITALS:** Albanian President Liir Meta led dignitaries who gathered at the Kuwaiti embassy in Tirana offering condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Albanian president stated during the sad ceremony that the world lost a wise leader who had given a lot for this homeland, people, his nation and the whole nation of the globe. The Albanian parliament speaker and prominent politicians attended the ceremony.

Morocco expressed its deepest condolences over the passing of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, remembering him as a 'great leader.' "He was a devout humanitarian known for his far-sighted leadership," Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita said of the late Kuwaiti Amir, paying his respects at Kuwait's embassy in the North African nation. Morocco's top diplomat went on to say that he was confident that Kuwait's new Amir His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah would be able to "steer the country towards growth and development," in the same way that his predecessor had done.

Djibouti Prime Minister Abdoulqader Kamil Mohamed offered his sincere condolences yesterday on the passing of Kuwait's late Amir at the headquarters of the Kuwaiti embassy in Djibouti Republic. Kuwait's embassy in Djibouti said, in a press statement, that Djibouti's Foreign Minister and the official spokesman of the country Mohammad Ali Yousef, Transport Minister Moussa Ahmed, heads of diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited to Djibouti expressed their condolences on the demise of late Sheikh Sabah. The mourners were received by the Charge affairs of the Kuwait embassy in Djibouti Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Askari.

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Dr Yousef A. Al-Othaimen offered his condolences yesterday at the Kuwaiti consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. OIC Secretary-General expressed profound sadness at the passing away of Sheikh Sabah, whose death is a great loss to Islamic world. Kuwait's Consul General in Jeddah and Representative to the OIC Wael Youssef Al-Enezi expressed his sincere condolences to Al-Sabah family and the Kuwaiti people on the death of His Highness the late Amir.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's embassy in Brunei announced that it had opened a condolences book over the death of Sheikh Sabah. Kuwaiti ambassador to Brunei Salah Al-Mutairi expressed his sincere condolences to the ruling family, the Kuwaiti government and people on the death of the late Amir. Among the first to attend to offer condolences were the representative of the Sultan of Brunei and second Foreign Minister Erwan bin Pehin Yusof, and a number of mission's heads accredited to Brunei, in addition to prominent personalities from the private sector and businessmen.

In the meantime, Kuwait's Embassy in Italy opened a condolence book to receive sympathies over the late Amir's demise. Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah received a number of dignitaries, including representative of the Italian government Enrico della Citta, who conveyed condolences of the Italian president to the Kuwaiti people and government. Also, a number of Arab



Representative of the Sultan of Brunei and second Foreign Minister Erwan bin Pehin Yusof offers condolences.



Representative of the Sultan of Brunei and second Foreign Minister Erwan bin Pehin Yusof offers condolences.



Djibouti Prime Minister Abdoulqader Kamil Mohamed offers condolences.



Indian External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar offers condolences.

ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions as well as audience extended condolences over the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. Sheikh Azzam expressed appreciation to those who were keen, despite exceptional conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, to come and offer condolences over the late Amir. As the late Amir made efforts to the world and humanity, people and the world were sad over his death in recognition of his great endeavors, he said, adding that Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad made great efforts towards peace and security. The embassy also receives sympathies via email, fax and telephone, in light of preventive measures taken to combat the pandemic.

Moreover, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar extended heartfelt condolences on the passing of Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, during a visit to Kuwait Embassy in New Delhi. "This is a very difficult day and I am here to express the condolences of the government and people of India on the passing away of the late Amir," Jaishankar said. "His Highness was exceptionally well regarded in India. He had contributed a lot to the building of this relationship. He had come here as a foreign minister, as a special envoy, and we were actually looking forward to his visit last year so his passing away was something which has also

shaken us and distressed us very deeply. At this time we express our fullest solidarity with the people of Kuwait," he said.

Jaishankar, who was received by Kuwait Ambassador Jassem Al Najem and the embassy officials, also discussed several issues of mutual interest. During the talks with the Indian External Affairs Minister, the Ambassador recalled the visit of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to India in 2006 soon after he assumed power in the same year. He also remembered the late Amir for his role in fostering international peace and security and his leading role in the global humanitarian fields. "In particular, because we have such a large community, I think the care under his leadership is something widely appreciated in India," Jaishankar also said. The Indian minister also applauded the good bilateral relations between the two countries and underlined the need of exchange of high level visits. He appreciated the Kuwaiti government for taking care of the Indian expatriates in Kuwait especially under the special care of the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. He also recalled the high level visits that the late Amir had paid to India in different capacities and his role in cementing the ties. Furthermore, he expressed his wish to visit Kuwait soon adding he is in constant touch with Kuwait foreign minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Local

# Sheikh Nawaf congratulated as Kuwait's new Amir

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a congratulatory cable from Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. In the cable, Sultan Haitham congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the occasion of taking the oath and assuming power, wishing him success in leading the country. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Sultan Haitham, expressing his gratitude and appreciation to him for these good sentiments. His Highness the Amir lauded the sisterly and historical ties between the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman, wishing him good health, and the Sultanate further progress and prosperity under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received a cable of congratulations from UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan on assuming the helm of power, wishing Sheikh Nawaf success in leading the country. In reply, Sheikh Nawaf sent a cable to him, expressing gratitude on the felicitations, praising the brotherly and historic relations between the two countries and expressing good wishes for the UAE.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable from Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to congratulate him on the assumption of office, wishing him success in his leadership of the country towards development. His Highness the Amir thanked King Hamad for his congratulatory remarks which reflected the deep-rooted relations between State of Kuwait and Kingdom of Bahrain. He prayed to

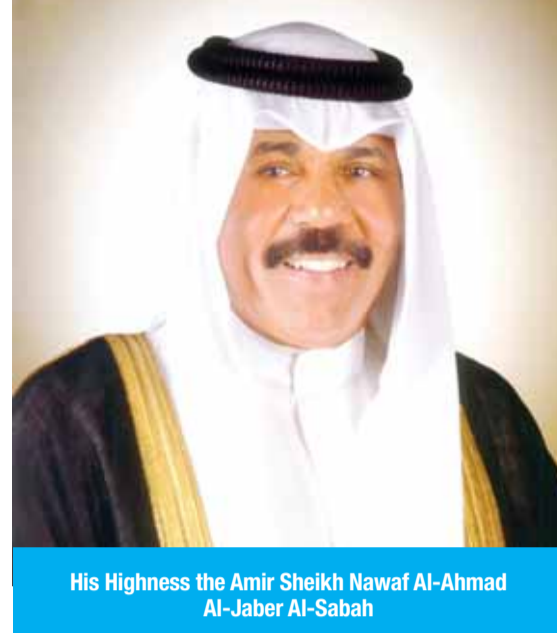
Allah the Almighty that King Hamad be in good health and for Bahrain to witness further progress and prosperity under his leadership.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of congratulations from Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on assuming the helm of power, wishing Sheikh Nawaf success in leading the country. In reply, Sheikh Nawaf sent a cable, expressing gratitude on the felicitations, praising relations between the two brotherly countries and peoples.

In addition, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of congratulations from Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on assuming the helm of power, wishing Sheikh Nawaf success in leading the country. In reply, Sheikh Nawaf sent a cable, expressing gratitude on the felicitations, praising relations between the two countries and expressing good wishes for the friendly Kingdom.

### Top officials congratulate Amir

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of congratulations from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem on taking the helm of power. The parliament speaker, in the cable, expressed sincere felicitations to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf "on taking the helm of power in our country; as Amir and leader, the best successor of the best predecessor," noting he and the MPs were honored to host him for the oath taking ceremony at



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

Abdullah Al-Salem Hall on Wednesday. Ghanem noted Sheikh Nawaf's traits as a wise, sincere and firm leader of substantial experience in the realms of politics. "Although we are deeply distressed over loss of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, we are certain you will follow his path and seek to attain aspirations of your faithful people," Ghanem wrote. He wished Kuwait would witness prosperity under "Your Highness' leader-

ship," invoking His Almighty to grant the Amir long life and good health.

Separately, His Highness the Amir received a cable of identical content from His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard, wishing Sheikh Nawaf heavenly guidance for achieving prosperity, security and distinguished status for Kuwait among nations. Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a similar cable to Sheikh Nawaf, expressing, in part, strong confidence in his capacity to "sail the ship to a brighter and more aloft future for our dear homeland and the faithful citizens, following footsteps of the late, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad."

Another identical cable was addressed to him from His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who expressed pride in the "march of giving and sacrifices" during era of the late Amir, wishing him success in leading the country toward more development and progress. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also cabled His Highness the Amir underscoring his devotion and sacrifices for serving Kuwait. Furthermore, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah lauded Sheikh Nawaf's accomplishments for laying foundations of Kuwait's development, wishing that his era would be blessed with peace. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf addressed cables in reply to the leaders and former leaders, expressing gratitude for their sincere sentiments that came on the occasion of his proclamation. — KUNA

## Arab diplomats remember late Amir

**TUNIS:** A bevy of Arab diplomats paid an emotional tribute to Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying the world has lost an "ultimate leader" whose humanitarian acts would forever live in the annals of history. "We have lost a great Arab leader with the passing of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad," Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Tunisia Mohammad Al-Ali said as he paid his respects to the late Kuwaiti leader. Echoing Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz's words, he said his country had lost a "dear brother," wishing for a more prosperous future ahead for Kuwait with its new Amir His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the helm. Grieving over the loss of a leader who "dedicated his life to the wellbeing of his people," Tunisia's former foreign minister Noureddine Eray said Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's passing is a "great loss to the world and humanity as a whole." Abdelfattah Mourou, the north African nation's former chief lawmaker, was confident of the "smooth transition of power (which took place) in Kuwait," saying the process would further reinforce the country's "growing presence" in the region. "Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was not only a Kuwaiti leader but an advocate of Arab unity and champion of human rights," said Morocco's ambassador to Tunisia Hassan Tariq. — KUNA



ANKARA: Children at a Syrian refugee camp in Sanliurfa, Turkey staged a stand of solidarity with the Kuwaiti people on the demise of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos

## Kuwaiti opposition optimistic for political breakthroughs

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti opposition figures proposed electoral reforms and a pardon for dissidents in recent meetings with His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who has since become Kuwait's new Amir, they said, seeking to improve stormy ties with the government that have sometimes flared into unrest.

The opposition figures, both liberals and Islamists, presented the proposals to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf last month while he was still crown prince and before the passing on Tuesday of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, they said. The Kuwaiti government did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf was sworn in as Amir in the parliament on Wednesday.

Political stability in the oil producing state traditionally depends on cooperation between the government and the outspoken parliament, the oldest legislature in the Gulf Arab states and one often

dominated in the past by opposition groups. It has the power to pass and block legislation, question ministers and submit no-confidence votes against senior government officials, actions that have in effect stalled economic reforms or led to cabinet reshuffles. While the government tolerates criticism to a degree rare among Gulf Arab states, the Amir has the last say in state affairs and criticizing him is a jailable offence.

"We look forward for a political detente with His Highness Sheikh Nawaf who has shown some positive signs, including by meeting with opposition leaders," said Ahmad Deyain, secretary general of the opposition group Kuwaiti Progressive Movement. "A pardon for the exiles would be a good start especially with the upcoming (parliamentary) elections," he added.

### Breakthroughs

Under the old electoral system that was amended in 2012, voters were allowed to cast ballots for up to four candidates, which the opposition has said allowed alliances that partly made up for the absence of political parties, which officially are barred.

The voting system introduced in 2012 allows votes for only a single candidate, which the opposition says makes alliances difficult. Among those in self-imposed exile are lawmakers who took part in

the storming of parliament by protesters and opposition MPs in 2011 over alleged government graft and mismanagement.

Opposition figures said they presented the new Amir with a proposal entitled 'Kuwait Document' that calls for a reformist government, the launch of an anti-corruption campaign, greater judicial independence and changes to the electoral law.

"Starting the discussion is already a good step; I expect that we will continue on that path, which could lead to breakthroughs in several issues including reconciliation with some political blocs," Mohammad Al-Dallal, a current MP from the opposition Islamic Constitutional Movement, told Reuters.

Courtney Freer, research fellow at LSE Middle East Centre, said the new Amir would start with economic reforms, including an anti-corruption drive, as most Kuwaitis wanted that. "The big question for the opposition is whether the new Amir will change the electoral law," Freer told Reuters. Parliamentary elections are due this year.

Abdul Hameed Dashti, a Shiite MP in exile in Geneva since 2016, was sentenced to jail in absentia on in several cases, including charges of insulting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Dashti, who has accumulated sentences of 73 years in jail, told Reuters by telephone he hoped pardons would be issued. —Reuters

In my view

## Sheikh Sabah's legacy lives on



By Abdellatif Sharaa

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May Allah bestow His Mercy on the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and accept him in heaven".

We lived trying hours and days when HH Sheikh Sabah was admitted to hospital, then had to be flown to the US for further treatment. Many kept praying day and night for his recovery, as many people - citizens and expats - felt his care and compassion to the point that he was honored with the highest international body's recognition as a humanitarian leader.

Sheikh Sabah's legacy will always be that he never liked to see two brothers at odds and was always first to mediate and was successful to a great extent. He never backed down or gave up until the very last day of his eventful life. Sheikh Sabah's trademark smile by itself gave hope to those who longed for his guidance, be they heads of state or ordinary citizens, and he deservedly was described as the fireman because of his active involvement in resolving problems, be they domestic or abroad.

I personally will never forget when he was foreign minister and acting information minister back in 1971, when he attended a conference on the Palestinian cause held at the Hilton Hotel at the time. He noticed us sitting in the back of the hall - most of us were 11th and 12th graders. He said if you are really serious about serving your cause with justice, you first must pay attention to your book - read, study and learn, because your enemy is doing exactly that and you should not be lesser than the enemy. That is HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who cared for many and his death saddened the world! May Almighty Allah bless you Baba Sabah!

## Yemeni officials laud late Amir's wisdom

ADEN: A number of Yemeni officials and ministers have offered sincere condolences over the demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, lauding his eternal experiment, and wise national, humanitarian and political stances. Yemen's Vice-President Ali Mohsen Saleh said the late Amir made great efforts to his people, nation and the whole world, describing him as "wise and politician." The Yemeni leadership and people expressed their great appreciations to the noble efforts by the late Amir in all domains towards Yemen and Yemenis so as to achieve peace in "our country," he said. Speaker of Yemen's parliament Sultan Al-Borkani described the late Amir as a "wise leader and the Arab reference," saying his death was a great loss to Kuwait, and both Arab and Islamic nations. "The late Amir helped us in all steps and times. He was obsessed with Yemen's concern since 1962 when he visited Sanaa, congratulating Yemenis on the country's revolution on September 23," he added. Until the last minutes before his death, the late Amir made efforts and offered helping hands to save Yemen and help it enjoy peace, stability, security and development, he noted.

Meanwhile, Yemeni presidential advisor Ahmad Obeid bin Daghr said that the Arabs and whole world have lost a wise leader who left eternal marks in the international relations and made great accomplishments to his people. Bin Daghr, also former prime minister, added that the Arabs knew the late Amir as one of their great leaders who served firmly their national issues, topped with the Palestinian cause, noting that His Highness the late Amir was highly respected by the Arab nations while leading Kuwait's policy and ruling the country. He pointed out that there are several noble stances of Kuwait, as it supported the independence of southern Yemen, and backed its unity, security and stability. He stated that Kuwait has backed Yemen over the recent years and the Arab coalition to support legitimacy in the country.

Furthermore, Yemeni presidential advisor Abdulmalek Al-Mekhlafi said the late Amir was a "wise man" who loved his country, people, nation and humanity. He added that during Kuwait-hosted talks on Yemen the late Amir was very keen on the success of the negotiations and the return of peace to Yemen, noting that he made every effort and met with the two delegations several times for this purpose. "I can neither forget the late Amir's words, wisdom, nor pain when the talks failed. He was keen on Yemen and peace," he said. In addition, Yemeni presidential adviser Nasr Taha Mustafa said Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad left big marks on the regional level when he served as minister of foreign affairs and several others when he assumed power of the beloved Kuwait. He noted that Kuwait has been a great cultural beacon, and an important political one under the leadership of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. Yemen's former Vice-President and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah said history will preserve the late Amir's great endeavors to maintain the unity of the Arab nation and keep it away from wars as well as help its peoples enjoy security and peace.

Yemeni Minister of Local Administration in Yemen Abdul Raqeb Saif also said that His Highness the late Amir was named as a 'Humanitarian Leader' for his active role and support to all Arab, national and international organizations working in the humanitarian field across the world. Fateh, also chairman of the Higher Committee for Relief, stressed that the deeded backed Yemeni people in all phases and relief campaigns, including "Kuwait beside you" that has been carrying out several relief, health and education projects across the country. Yemeni Information Minister Moamer al-Iryani offered his condolences to the State of Kuwait, the government and people over the death of the late Amir. "With the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, we have lost one of the greatest Arab leaders whose names would be immortalized in history," he said. — KUNA

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Prayers and condolences on the demise of Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah are displayed on Kuwait Towers. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Pakistan parliamentarians condole late Kuwaiti Amir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani parliamentarians, renowned religious scholars, diplomats of different countries and senior officials offered condolence over the death of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during their presence in the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Islamabad. The Kuwait Ambassador to Pakistan, Nassar Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has opened up a condolences book for three days and continued to receive condolences until yesterday at the embassy in Islamabad. Pakistan's Chairman of the Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani was the first parliamentarian to arrive in Kuwait embassy to condole the late Amir's death.

Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi yesterday arrived in the embassy to grieve over the sad demise of the late Amir. In a statement

during his arrival, Qureshi said that we are deeply grieved over the death of the late Amir and extend our heartfelt condolences to the people of Kuwait and the family." He said, "Pakistan has exemplary, deep and brotherly relations with Kuwait and the late Amir has played a vital role in developing these relations. He has always taken care of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan living in Kuwait. I pray for the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah that he will continue the journey of development of the State of Kuwait."

Senators Shehzad Waseem and Sitara Ayaz also expressed their condolence over the death of late Amir. "The government and people of Pakistan stand with people of Kuwait at this difficult time and share the grief and loss with the people of Kuwait," Senator Sitara Ayaz said. On the occa-

sion, Kuwaiti envoy to Pakistan Nassar Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi expressed deep grief over the late Amir's demise. The envoy said that the late Amir had devoted his life for the service of the State of Kuwait, the other nations and all humanity. He has left this world with a history of achievements, pride for the nation and generosity. The late Amir has left an outstanding legacy that will always remain in the minds of the people of Kuwait. His Highness was keen on a vision to transform Kuwait into a regional and international commercial hub. The Ambassador thanked the senior parliamentarians, diplomats of different countries, religious scholars and other senior officials who took their time to condole the death of the late Amir and stood by the Kuwaiti people at this hard time. — KUNA



## Ceremonial prayers for Kuwait's late Amir in Hong Kong

KUWAIT: The absentee prayers for the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was held yesterday at Kowloon Mosque after Friday prayers in Hong Kong. Kuwait's General Consul in Hong Kong and Macau, Salah Al-Saif, said that Mohammed Rashid, Hong Kong's grand Mufti - jurist expert, cited the late Amir's exceptional political, economic, and humanitarian achievements during his Friday prayers discourse. He also pointed to the absentee prayer, which was held following Friday prayers. "As always Kuwait has upheld cases concerning the Arab world, region, Islam, and Muslims .. and gracefully donating to help support just causes," said Hong Kong's Mufti, while also thanking Kuwait and its people for their help which includes aiding the populace of Hong Kong and Macau. — KUNA

## Bhutan offers prayers in respect of Sheikh Sabah

KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Kuwait Tshering Gyaltshen Penjor released the following statement, expressing condolences on the passing of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"On behalf of the members of the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Kuwait, I express my personal sympathy, heartfelt and deepest condolences to the government and the people of Kuwait on the sad passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; an exemplary leader and the Amir of humanitarian known for his political wisdom, diplomacy and humanitarian effort.

"Under the wise leadership of His Highness, Kuwait has not only achieved peace, progress and prosperity but also a high international standing in the global community. His Highness leaves behind a legacy of outstanding contributions to the advancement of peace and stability. The demise of His Highness is a great loss not only to Kuwait but also to the international community. "Bhutan highly values its friendship with Kuwait which is based on mutual goodwill, trust and respect that has been fostered by our leaders at the highest political levels and nurtured by our people over the years. The people of Bhutan had the utmost love, respect and admiration for His Highness Sheikh Sabah.

"The late Amir Sheikh Sabah was a good friend of Bhutan and contributed greatly to strengthening relations between Bhutan and Kuwait. To honor His Highness, the Royal



Government of Bhutan has decided to fly the Bhutanese National flag at half-mast on September 30, 2020 across the country and in the Bhutanese embassies, missions and consulates abroad.

"His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, offered prayers and Karmi Tonchoe (thousand butter lamps) for His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait in Samdrupjonghar, as His Majesty is on a tour to the southeastern region of the country. Prayers were conducted by the people of Bhutan across the nation to pray for the departed soul to rest in peace in paradise. "In this hour of grief, we convey our deepest condolences, sympathy and deep sorrow to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, members of Al-Sabah family, government of Kuwait and to the friendly people of Kuwait. May the departed soul rest in peace and the people of Kuwait be granted fortitude and strength during this time of grief."

## OPEC chief: Sheikh Sabah's passing loss to whole humanity

VIENNA: The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo said that the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was a great loss not only to Kuwait but also to the whole world. Barkindo made that a statement made on the sidelines of a funeral ceremony OPEC held in Vienna Thursday for the late Amir. Barkindo lauded the late Amir's role in ensuring global peace and all matters related to the oil market and organization's stability to serve interests of both producers and consumers. He added that Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's life had been full of giving since the beginning of his political career as foreign minister, prime minister and

then Amir of the country since 2006. He extolled the late Amir's several achievements, steadfast positions and wise advice in guiding his country at home, and serving the Gulf region and the Arab world as well as contributions to resolving many regional and international disputes. He recalled that the State of Kuwait under the leadership of the late Amir has made tremendous and uninterrupted efforts to back the organization since its foundation. Barkindo stressed the importance of humanitarian acts by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad that gained him recognition of the world's leaders and honored by the UN as a 'Humanitarian Leader.' Concluding his speech, the OPEC chief expressed his happiness as His Highness the Amir



VIENNA: OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo eulogizes Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumed power in the country, voicing firm belief that His Highness the Amir will be the best successor to the best predecessor. He said that His Highness the Amir will steadfastly continue the approach of his late

brother in the triumphant march of the State of Kuwait. Barkindo, and on behalf of all the organization's employees, offered sympathies to the Kuwaiti government and people on the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



India gang-rape victim's family get protection

EU leaders back Belarus sanctions, warn Turkey

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## Trump, Melania test COVID positive

US president is in high risk age group • Close aide had earlier tested positive

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has tested positive for COVID-19, upending the already tense US election, but his doctor said on Friday he was "well" and able to perform his duties while quarantining. Trump, 74, first announced on Twitter that he and First Lady Melania Trump, 50, had tested positive. "We will get through this TOGETHER!" he wrote. The news dropped a political bombshell a month before election day.

The first immediate consequence was cancellation of a Trump campaign rally meant to take place in Florida later Friday. Badly behind in the polls against Democratic challenger Joe Biden ahead of November 3, Trump has been using large rallies - where most people go without masks - to try to change the subject from his much criticized response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Just Thursday he said in a speech to a New York charity event: "The end of the pandemic is in sight and next year will be one of the greatest years in the history of our country." But now the leader who has repeatedly cast doubt on the seriousness of the virus - despite more than 200,000 Americans already dying - has become the world's highest profile patient, proving that all the resources of the White House could not prevent the risk.

Biden, who has made criticism of the Republican's coronavirus response his key issue, made no immediate statement about the president's health. World leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel wished the president and first lady a speedy recovery, with Russian President Vladimir Putin saying Trump's "vitality, good spirits and optimism" would help him cope. Technically obese and in his 70s, Trump is in a higher-risk category for coronavirus patients.

Trump's official physician, Sean Conley,

said in a statement that the president and his wife "are both well at this time". "They plan to remain home at the White House during their convalescence," he said, adding he expected the president to continue carrying out his duties.

### Campaign upheaval

Trump's positive test was more than a PR disaster for a president who has staked everything on trying to persuade Americans that fears of the virus are overblown. There were instant impacts to his campaign strategy, particularly throwing into doubt the future of his signature rallies. The events, which Trump says prove his true political strength better than the dismal opinion polls, bring together thousands of people, often without masks and sometimes in contravention of local rules.

All that is now on hold, at least for the immediate future, and with the clock ticking on the election. In addition to canceling the Florida trip, it looked certain Trump would have to abandon a trip scheduled for this weekend in Wisconsin, another battleground. He had also been expected to travel frequently next week, including to western states. A second televised debate with Biden is scheduled for Oct 15.

### Close aide gets virus

The news came right after one of Trump's closest advisors, Hope Hicks, was reported Thursday to have come down with the virus. Hicks, 31, traveled with Trump to Cleveland for his first debate with Biden on Tuesday. She was with him again for a campaign rally in Minnesota on Wednesday. With Hicks sharing Trump's Air Force One plane and the even more cramped confines of the Marine One helicopter, speculation immediately erupted that Trump and possibly many others in his entourage were exposed.



This screen grab of the official Twitter page of US President Donald Trump shows a tweet from the US president early yesterday about he and the First Lady testing positive for COVID-19. —AFP

Despite Hicks' diagnosis, Trump took another Air Force One trip on Thursday to meet with donors in New Jersey. It was only late Thursday that Trump confirmed media reports about Hicks while giving an interview to Fox News. He announced that he had been tested but did not say whether he had received the results. Hicks is the most senior White House aide announced to have contracted COVID-19. In May Katie Miller, the spokeswoman of Vice President Mike Pence and wife of Trump's speech writer came down with the virus. National Security Adviser Robert

O'Brien contracted the virus in July.

### Masks controversy

For months, Trump has courted controversy with his insistence that the coronavirus pandemic is as good as over and that lockdowns ordered in an attempt to beat the virus back were too draconian. In what has become an overtly political gesture, Trump almost never wears a mask in public. He argues that he doesn't need to as he is frequently tested, but the example is followed by his supporters and many of his aides.

But Trump's own health experts have

often given less rosy assessments of the state of the pandemic in the world's richest country. And Trump has been especially criticized by Biden and at times also by local leaders for holding the rallies. Biden is running a deliberately low key campaign with social distancing at most events, no large gatherings, and conspicuous use of his mask wherever he goes. At their first debate on Tuesday, the candidates were tested and spent the angry, often chaotic 90 minutes standing close to each other. Trump's family and supporters in the audience did not wear masks. —AFP

## Makkah to open for umrah after 7-month pause

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will reopen the Muslim holy places for the year-round umrah pilgrimage tomorrow, scaled back and with extensive health precautions, seven months after coronavirus prompted its suspension. The umrah, the pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time, usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year. It will be revived in three stages, with the initial phase seeing just 6,000 citizens and residents already within the kingdom allowed to take part each day.

"In the first stage, the umrah will be performed meticulously and within a specified period of time," Hajj Minister Mohammad Benteen told state television last week. He said pilgrims will be divided into groups to ensure social distancing within

the Grand Mosque in Makkah. Worshippers will tomorrow be able to perform the ritual of circling the sacred Kaaba - a cubic structure inside the Grand Mosque towards which Muslims around the world pray - along socially distanced paths.

On Oct 18, the number of pilgrims will be increased to 15,000 per day, with a maximum of 40,000 people allowed to perform prayers at the mosque. Visitors from abroad will be permitted from Nov 1, when capacity will be raised to 20,000 pilgrims, with 60,000 people allowed into the mosque. The decision to resume the pilgrimage was in response to the "aspirations of Muslims home and abroad" to perform the ritual and visit the holy sites, the interior ministry said last month.

It added that the umrah would be allowed to return to full capacity once the threat of the pandemic has abated. Until then, the health ministry will vet countries from which pilgrims are allowed to enter based on the health risks. Those wishing to perform the umrah must apply through two mobile applications: One to register they are free from the virus, and another from which they can obtain a permit. —AFP

## COVID-19 test caused brain fluid leak in US patient

WASHINGTON: A COVID-19 nasal swab test punctured a US woman's brain lining, causing fluid to leak from her nose and putting her at risk of life-threatening infection, doctors reported in a medical journal Thursday. The patient, who is in her 40s, had an undiagnosed rare condition and the test she received may have been carried out improperly, a sequence of improbable events that means the risk from nasal tests remains very low.

But her case showed health care professionals should take care to follow testing protocols closely, Jarrett Walsh, senior author of the paper that appeared in JAMA Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery, told AFP. People who've had extensive sinus or skull base surgery should consider requesting oral testing if available, he added. "It underscores the necessity of adequate training of those performing the test and the need for vigilance after the test has been performed," added ear, nose and throat specialist Dennis Kraus of Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, who wasn't involved in the paper.

Walsh, who practices at the University of Iowa Hospital, said the woman had gone for a nasal test ahead of an elective hernia surgery, and afterward noticed clear fluid coming out of one side of her nose. She subsequently developed headache, vomiting, neck stiffness, and aversion to light, and was transferred to Walsh's care.

"She had been swabbed previously for another procedure, same side, no problems at all. She feels like maybe the second swab was not using the best technique, and that the entry was a little bit high," he said. In fact, the woman had been treated years earlier for intracranial hypertension - meaning that



MUSCAT: A medical worker collects a swab sample from a passenger for a RT-PCR coronavirus test at Muscat international airport on Thursday. —AFP

the pressure from cerebrospinal fluid that protects and nourishes the brain was too high. Doctors at the time used a shunt to drain some of the fluid and the condition resolved.

But it caused her to develop what's called an encephalocele, or a defect at the base of the skull which made the brain's lining protrude into the nose where it was susceptible to rupture. This went unnoticed until old scans were reviewed by her new doctors, who carried out surgery to repair the defect in July. She has since fully recovered.

Walsh said he believes the symptoms she developed were a result of irritation to the lining of the brain. If the problem hadn't been treated, she could have developed a potentially life-threatening brain infection from bacteria that traveled up the nose. Or, air could have entered the skull and placed excess pressure on the brain.

Most testing protocols call for clinicians to follow the path of the floor of the nose, which lies above the roof of the mouth, rather than pointing the swab up - or if they point it up, to do so with great care. Walsh said that though this was likely a very rare occurrence, it was a reminder of the need for high-quality training, given that hundreds of millions more tests will be performed before the pandemic is over. —AFP

## CONDOLENCES

The Chairman, Board Members,  
 Management and Staff of

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 K.S.C.P.**

The Management Extends their  
 heartfelt condolences to

**Mr. Rajiv Vayyat Ramachandran**

Assistant Vice President  
 Accounts & Maagement Reporting Department  
 Finance & Accounts Sector

*On the sad demise of his*  
**MOTHER**

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*"May his soul rest in peace, and may the Almighty  
 grant solace and strength to the bereaved family  
 members during this time of grief,"*

## International

# EU leaders back Belarus sanctions, warn Turkey

## Turkey, Greece set up military hotline at NATO

**BRUSSELS:** EU leaders agreed to impose sanctions against members of the Belarus regime on Friday and fired a warning at Turkey over its gas drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean. In a summit statement hammered out over more than six hours of haggling, the 27 leaders warned Ankara it could face "immediate" sanctions if it persists with gas exploration in Cypriot waters. The statement was enough for Nicosia to lift its veto on separate, long-delayed sanctions over the crisis in Belarus, which officials say will now come into effect on Friday.

But EU leaders voted against imposing restrictions on President Lukashenko himself, instead issuing travel bans and freezing the assets of some 40 Belarusian officials. The first night of the two-day European Union summit was dominated by the bloc's fraught ties with Ankara, which is embroiled in a dangerous maritime stand-off with Greece and Cyprus.

Adopting a carrot and stick approach, the leaders' statement offers Ankara the prospect of closer ties and better trade if it commits to "pursuing dialogue in good faith and abstaining from unilateral actions". But it warns that the EU is prepared to use sanctions - possibly including broad-based economic measures - if Turkey persists with what Brussels sees as the illegal infringement of Cypriot waters.

"In case of such renewed actions by Ankara the EU will use all its instruments and options available. We have a toolbox that we can apply immediately," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters after the summit. But previous EU warnings, and sanctions on individuals involved

in the drilling, have done little to deter Ankara and the final statement falls some way short of the immediate action Nicosia had pushed for.

### Erdogan defiant

Before the summit, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan struck a defiant note, telling his parliament that the EU had made itself a "hostage" of the "spoiled Greeks and the Greek Cypriot administration". He vowed to maintain his "determined approach". The EU leaders have agreed to "closely monitor developments" in the eastern Mediterranean and revert to the matter at another summit in December.

Despite the growing tensions with Erdogan's government, the EU is wary of alienating an important neighbor and NATO member which played a crucial role in ending the continent's 2015-16 migrant crisis. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has led a diplomatic outreach, was keen to stress that the potential remains for improved relations. "We also want to take this positive agenda forward, because we are

aware of the importance of strategic relations with Turkey, despite all the differences," she said.

Turkey-Greece tensions have eased slightly, with the two sides agreeing to resume long-stalled talks and on Thursday they set up a military hotline at NATO to avoid any accidental clashes in the area. The EU leaders welcomed these steps and called for the efforts to be "sustained and broadened". Further complicating the Turkey talks are allegations of meddling by Ankara in the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, where nearly 130 people have been killed in a

France," he insisted, but added that there was no sense in stigmatizing all Muslim believers.

The law permits people to belong to any faith of their choosing, Macron said, but outward displays of religious affiliation can under no circumstances be allowed in schools or the public service. He announced that France would seek to "liberate" Islam in France from foreign influences by improving oversight of the financing of mosques. There would also be closer scrutiny of schools and associations exclusively serving religious communities.

France has in recent years been forced to take a hard look at its core republican values, perceived by many to be threatened by Islam in the wake of a string of terror attacks since 2015 targeting secular liberties such as freedom of expression. Macron was speaking one week after a man wounded two people in a meat cleaver attack outside the former Paris offices of the Charlie Hebdo satirical weekly which was condemned by the government as an act of "Islamist terrorism".

Staff at Charlie Hebdo were massacred in Jan 2015 by Islamist gunmen seeking to avenge its publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In January, a renewed debate about free-

An unprecedented protest movement, known as "Hirak", mobilised from Feb 2019 and in April that year people massed in their hundreds of thousands to force veteran ruler Abdelaziz Bouteflika to resign after two decades in power. Tebboune won a presidential election in December, but the protest movement boycotted a vote it derided as a sham and even the official turnout was less than 40 percent.

Tebboune served as prime minister under Bouteflika and is seen by protesters as emblematic of an old regime that they want to dismantle. Peaceful demonstrations continued, until the need to social distance brought a curtain down on street mobilisations earlier this year.

### 'Radical change'

In a bid to shore up his mandate, Tebboune pledged to revise the constitution - which Bouteflika modified for his needs - and allow people to approve or reject proposals in a referendum. In January, the president appointed a commission of constitutional experts, who held consultations with political parties and civil society leaders. The commission submitted its proposals in March, and the draft changes were adopted without debate by parliament in early September.

mate son Philippe, the country's current monarch. Boel, a sculptor, had been reported to be Albert's illegitimate daughter since the 1990s - or as she once put it his "dirty laundry" - but it was only last year that a court obliged him to submit a DNA sample.

"She is delighted with this court decision, which puts an end to a lengthy procedure that was particularly painful for her and her family," the lawyer said. "A judicial victory will never replace a father's love, but it does offer a sense of justice, which is further strengthened by the fact that many more children who have gone through similar ordeals may be able to find the strength to face them." The lawyer said that Boel would address the media next week, when she had gathered her strength. Albert, now 86, acknowledged in January that he was Boel's father after a DNA test came back positive, ending a paternity battle that had dragged on for seven years. But the court case continued, as she sought recognition as "Her Royal Highness Delphine de Saxe-Cobourg".

The judicial source told AFP that her children will now become known as prince and princess of Belgium. In August, she gave an interview with AFP at



### Erdogan strikes a defiant note



**BRUSSELS:** Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel gives a press conference on the second day of a European Union summit at the European Council building yesterday. —AFP

flare-up between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

French President Emmanuel Macron demanded Turkey explain what he said was the arrival of Syrian jihadist fighters in Azerbaijan. "A red line has been crossed, which is unacceptable," he said. "I urge all NATO partners to face up to the behavior of a NATO member."

### Belarus blockage cleared

The agreement on Turkey persuaded Cyprus to lift the veto which it had imposed on sanc-

tions over the Belarus political crisis to try to get more EU measures against Ankara over its drilling activity. The EU will now impose asset freezes and travel bans on around 40 members of President Alexander Lukashenko's regime whom it blames for rigging the August 9 election and cracking down on protests afterwards. But, unlike Britain and Canada, which have already sanctioned Belarus officials, the EU will not be imposing measures on Lukashenko himself. —AFP

## Macron says Islam 'in crisis', unveils anti-radicalism plan

**LES MUREAUX, France:** President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a plan yesterday to defend France's secular values against Islamist radicalism, describing Islam as a religion "in crisis" all over the world. In a long-awaited address, Macron insisted "no concessions" would be made in a new drive to push religion out of education and the public sector in France. "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world today, we are not just seeing this in our country," he said.

He announced that the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and state in France. The measures, Macron said, were aimed at addressing a problem of growing Islamic radicalization in France and improving "our ability to live together". "Secularism is the cement of a united

## Constitutional vote for 'New Republic' splits Algeria

**ALGIERS:** Algeria is readying for a constitutional referendum that the establishment says will usher in a "New Republic" and boost freedoms, but the opposition dismisses as window-dressing by a repressive regime. With a month to go before the Nov 1 vote, many ordinary Algerians - struggling during a deep economic crisis that has seen unemployment soar - appear unaware of the technical details of the government's proposals.

And opposition leaders say President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's flagship initiative fails to provide meaningful political change in the North African nation. "It is yet another coup against popular sovereignty," said Djamel Bahloul, of the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS), Algeria's oldest opposition party. "The authorities continue to concoct constitutions through technical commissions or experts - while ignoring the people."

## Belgian king's daughter wins fight to be princess

**BRUSSELS:** A Belgian artist has won a seven-year legal battle to be confirmed as a princess and the official daughter of former king Albert II, her lawyer said Thursday. Delphine Boel, 52, becomes Delphine Saxe-Cobourg after a Brussels appeal court endorsed the results of a DNA test, lawyer Marc Uyttendaele told AFP. "The court affirms that King Albert II is her father," the lawyer said, a claim confirmed by a judicial source. "She will henceforth bear the patronym of Saxe-Cobourg. Her other requests that she be treated on the same footing as her brothers and sister were also granted," he said.

Albert II, King of the Belgians, reigned between 1993 and 2013 before abdicating in favor of his legiti-



**LES MUREAUX, France:** French President Emmanuel Macron speaks to youngsters standing in line outside the 'la Maison des habitants' (MDH) northwest of Paris yesterday. —AFP

dom of expression erupted when a teenager received death threats for attacking Islam in an expletive-laden Instagram rant. And earlier this month, divisions were highlighted when MPs walked out when a university student entered parliament in a headscarf. —AFP



**ALGIERS:** A file photo taken on April 19, 2019 shows Algerians, waving national flags and anti-corruption placards, marching during an anti-government demonstration. —AFP

The government claims it offers "radical change in the mode of governance" by better separating powers and boosting transparency. Critics point out that parliament remains dominated by two allied parties who held power under the old regime. They are the National Liberation Front (FLN), Bouteflika's party, and the Democratic National Rally (RND). —AFP



Delphine Boel

King Albert II

a retrospective of her work in the upmarket Belgian seaside resort of Knokke. After living in London from the age of eight with her mother Baroness Sybille de Selys Longchamps, Boel considers herself "Anglo-Belgian" and speaks English with almost no trace of an accent. —AFP

## Dutch finally don masks amid second wave

**THE HAGUE:** A rare sight has begun to appear in Dutch cities: people wearing masks. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the famously liberal Netherlands has held out against the strict measures imposed by its European neighbors. But with the country gripped by a second wave of infections, the Dutch government has made an abrupt U-turn, advising people to wear face coverings in all indoor spaces.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte this week "urgently recommended" that masks be worn in supermarkets, museums and railway stations. "I find it uncomfortable, but I'm wearing one because I don't want to be quarantined," teacher Maria Houweling said in one of The Hague's main shopping streets. Houweling, 48, said she thought mask-wearing should be compulsory as it is in many countries including France, Spain and Italy. That is a step the Dutch government has yet to take, except on public transport, fearing the economic consequences as well as a public backlash ahead of elections next March.

### Second wave

The Dutch government has been widely accused of dragging its feet over the measures, long opting instead for what Rutte dubbed an "intelligent lockdown" and insisting there was no scientific basis for ordering people to wear masks. But as new infections pass 3,000 a day, and with several European countries imposing travel restrictions on people coming from the Netherlands, the government was forced to act.

On Monday, Rutte announced that all bars and restaurants must close from 10 pm for three weeks, and said fans would be banned from sports matches. He also advised people to wear masks in supermarkets in the country's three biggest cities. Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Then, in a shambolic turnaround under pressure from parliament just two days later, Rutte called on people to don masks "anywhere you can't see the sky".

Rutte however stopped short of ordering people to wear masks, leaving it to shops to bar entry to people without them - which most supermarkets promptly said they would not do. The Liberal premier himself remained sceptical, saying that it was "not as if that (obliging people to wear masks) worked well in France and Spain." Experts say, however, that action was needed to curb the trend of rising infections.

"In the last month, we have seen a steep rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in The Netherlands," said Susan van den Hof, head of the center for epidemiology and surveillance of infectious diseases at the RIVM, the Dutch public health authority. "We're really at the start of the second wave now, especially since we do see an increase in hospitalizations and number of people admitted to the intensive care," she told AFP.

The Netherlands has recorded 117,551 cases since the pandemic began, with 6,393 deaths, according to official figures. Van den Hof said the relaxation of rules over the summer across Europe had led to an earlier-than-expected new surge, and that they now expected a "busy period" in hospitals over the winter. But she added that it was "never too late to curb the trend that we see". "If people start taking measures seriously and more severe measures will be put in place for everyone... there is still time to change," she added. —AFP

## International

# Karabakh main city struck as Armenia 'ready' for mediation

## Macron warns Turkey against deployment of militants from Syria

STEPANAKERT, Azerbaijan: Armenia accused Azerbaijani forces of striking the main city in the disputed Nagorno Karabakh region yesterday as fighting raged for a sixth day. Yerevan said it was ready to work with mediators for a ceasefire but Azerbaijan fired back that Armenia must first withdraw its troops. International calls for the two neighbors to halt fire and begin talks are intensifying as fears grow that the clashes could expand into a multi-front war sucking in regional powers Turkey and Russia.



### Azerbaijan says Armenia must first pull troops

French President Emmanuel Macron has warned NATO member Turkey - which backs Azerbaijan - against the alleged deployment of militants from Syria to the Karabakh conflict. Baku and Yerevan have for decades been locked in a simmering conflict over the ethnic Armenian province that broke away from Azerbaijan in a bitterly fought war in the 1990s. New fighting that erupted on Sunday has been the heaviest in decades and has claimed nearly 200 lives, including more than 30 civilians. Armenia said Azerbaijani forces yesterday struck Stepanakert, the main city in Karabakh, wounding "many" people and damaging civilian infrastructure. Ambulance sirens were heard following loud explosions. The separatist government in Stepanakert said Azerbaijani forces had destroyed a bridge linking Armenia to Karabakh.

### 'Why should we be afraid?'

Local residents said they were getting used to the

shelling and fierce clashes nearby. "Life is okay," Arkady, a 66-year-old resident, told AFP. "We are Soviet people. Why should we be afraid? These drones are like toys to us." He said he did not want the two sides to enter talks, describing negotiations with Azerbaijan as "nonsense" and insisting the enemy should be crushed. In Azerbaijan, too, some expressed little appetite for talks. "We are not afraid. We do not have a lot of wounded," Anvar Aliyev, a 55-year-old taxi driver, told AFP in the country's Fizulinsky district. "We have to return to our lands."

### 'Ready to engage'

Yerevan on Friday expressed its readiness to work with international mediators to bring a halt to the fighting. Armenia "stands ready to engage" with France, Russia, and the United States - which co-chair the OSCE group of mediators - "to re-establish a ceasefire regime," the foreign ministry in Yerevan said. But it said that talks could not begin unless fighting is halted. "The immediate priority is to cease hostilities and restore a ceasefire regime established in 1994-1995," foreign ministry spokeswoman Anna Nagdalyan told AFP.

But Azerbaijan retorted that Armenia must first withdraw its troops. "If Armenia wants to see an end of this escalation of the situation... Armenia must end its occupation" of Karabakh, presidential aide Hikmet Hajiyev told reporters. At an EU summit on Thursday, Macron issued a warning to Ankara, urging "all NATO partners to face up to the behavior of a NATO member".

Macron said intelligence reports had established that 300 fighters from "jihadist groups" in Syria had passed through Turkey en route to Azerbaijan, saying "a red line has been crossed" and demanding an explanation.

The defense ministry of Karabakh's separatist government yesterday reported the deaths of 54 more of its troops. It said there was fighting all along the frontline after "a relatively calmer night". Armenian defense ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan accused Azerbaijan of using "cluster munitions" prohibited by



STEPANAKERT, Azerbaijan: A woman collects drinking water from a spring on a street in the breakaway Nagorno Karabakh's main city yesterday. — AFP

international law. "Turkish military are fighting alongside Azerbaijani forces," foreign ministry spokeswoman Nagdalyan told reporters. "Azerbaijan is using Turkish weaponry, drones and fighter jets."

Both sides claimed to have killed more than 2,000 enemy troops but it has not been possible to verify the statements. Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said local and foreign journalists came under Armenian shelling in the village of Gapanly. Two journalists working for the French daily Le Monde were injured in a rocket strike and were being evacuated after undergoing surgery in Karabakh on Thursday.

### 'Close coordination'

In a joint appeal Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin, US President Donald Trump and

Macron urged the two sides to return to negotiations aimed at resolving their longstanding territorial dispute. Russia also suggested it was making progress in diplomatic efforts with Turkey. It said Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu had confirmed they were ready for "close coordination" to try to stabilize the situation.

Yerevan is in a military alliance of ex-Soviet countries led by Moscow and has accused Turkey of directly supporting Azerbaijan in the fighting by deploying aircraft in support of Baku and sending mercenaries from northern Syria to join the fighting. Armenia has recorded 158 military deaths and 13 civilian casualties since Sunday. Azerbaijan has not reported any military deaths but said 19 civilians were killed after Armenian shelling.—AFP

## US repatriates dozens of IS 'foreign fighters'

WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department said Thursday that it brought home 27 Americans who went to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State group, as Washington again urged other nations to do the same. A day after filing charges against a Trinidadian-American father and son who enlisted in the Islamic State in 2015, the department said it had brought criminal terrorism support cases against some of those returning Americans.

Washington has said it is setting an example for other countries, notably Britain and France, who have resisted repatriating perhaps hundreds of their nationals from Iraq and Syria. "This was our moral responsibility to the American people and to the people of the countries to which these terrorists traveled," said Assistant Attorney General John Demers in a statement.

The 27 represent only a portion of the hundreds of Americans and thousands of citizens of other countries who, often with their families, enlisted in the Islamic State as it undertook a bloody campaign to establish its "caliphate" across Syria and Iraq six years ago. Many remain in camps in Syria under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces. Demers said that they had repatriated all 27 "against whom we have charges," suggesting there could still be more, as cases are built against them. He did not offer details on the accusations.

### Foreign fighters problem

After wrestling with whether to abandon US "foreign fighters" for Islamic State in the region or to move them to the US military's Guantanamo prison camp, Washington decided two years ago to try them in federal courts. Those charged with "material support of a designated terrorist group" include Kazakhstan-born, naturalized US citizen Ruslan Maratovich Asainov, 44, who was called an IS sniper and weapons trainer. Also charged was Texas-born Omer Kuzu, who as a 17-year-old went to Syria with his brother in 2014 and worked as an IS communications specialist before his capture last year.

Some US allies have balked at bringing home their nationals. London has refused to try El Shafee Elsheikh and Alexandra Kotey, two men from Britain who are tied to murders of US and British journalists and aid workers as part of a notorious Islamic State kidnapping cell dubbed The Beales.

Instead, Washington is now preparing the transfer them to the United States for trial. Washington has been pressing hard the repatriation issue, vetoing on Aug 31 UN resolution pushed by Indonesia on handling foreign fighters because it didn't demand countries act to take back their own. On Thursday the State Department praised Italy for repatriating one of its citizens to stand trial for supporting Islamic State. "Repatriating and prosecuting terrorists is the most effective way to keep them from returning to the battlefield," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

"The United States should get credit for practicing what it preaches in regards to bringing back citizens to face justice," said Seamus Hughes of the George Washington University Program on Extremism. But he added that the "material support" statute used by US authorities has a "comparatively easier threshold" for charges and convictions that laws in Europe.—AFP

## India gang-rape victim's family get protection

NEW DELHI: A court in India has ordered police to protect the family of a woman allegedly gang-raped and killed by four high-caste men, as her brother said they feared reprisals over the accusations. The 19-year-old woman was attacked in mid-September and died this week, sparking outrage and shaming the spotlight again on sexual violence in India, particularly attacks against women of a lower caste. With her home village in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh barricaded by hundreds of police, the victim's brother on Thursday told Indian television they were frightened. "We're not safe in this village. They can do anything to us. We don't trust the police or the administration. Our fears have increased now," he said. "We're on their radar more than ever before. They won't let us live. We might have to leave the village. We don't trust politicians."

The state's high court on Thursday ordered authorities to "ensure that no coercion, influence or pressure is exerted upon the family members of the deceased in any manner, by anyone". It sharply criticized police for reportedly cremating the young woman in the middle of the night - against the family's wishes and religious cus-

## Some Latinos feel ignored by Biden

MILWAUKEE: Cesar Hernandez says he has made thousands of phone calls since June urging Latinos in the battleground state of Wisconsin to support Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. It's a tough sell, admits Hernandez, especially where he lives on the South Side of Milwaukee, the heart of Wisconsin's Latino community. He said Biden's Spanish-language ads on Hulu and Facebook aren't connecting with the neighborhood's voters, many of whom would prefer a more personal touch.

"Latinos have seen almost nothing from Biden here," said Hernandez, 25, who works for the Progressive Turnout Project, a national group working to mobilize Democratic voters. "There is very little enthusiasm for him." As the race to the Nov 3 election enters the home stretch, appeals to Latino voters have taken on new urgency for Biden and incumbent Republican President Donald Trump. Both campaigns are pouring resources into the battleground states of Florida and Arizona, as well as increasingly competitive Nevada, whose large Latino populations could determine the outcome in those states.

Even in Wisconsin, where 87 percent of the population is white, the state's 230,000 eligible Latino voters could prove critical. Trump won the state by just



HYDERABAD: Students hold placards yesterday to condemn the gang-rape of a 19-year-old woman by four men in Bool Garhi village of Uttar Pradesh state. — AFP

tom - after her body was brought back from the New Delhi hospital where she died from her injuries on Tuesday. "As it is, the deceased victim was treated with extreme brutality by the perpetrators of the crime, and what is alleged to have happened thereafter, if true, amounts to perpetuating the misery of the family and rubbing salt in their wounds," the judges said. They set a hearing for Oct 12, summoning both police and the victim's family.

### 'Not rape'

The late-night cremation further stoked accusations that local police were protecting the alleged culprits - who have been arrested on charges of gang-rape and

murder - and their well-connected, high-caste families. On Thursday the local police issued a statement saying that according to a forensic report "no rape was committed". The findings, confirming those of a preliminary medical report and a postmortem, "exposed the conspiracy of those who tried to push the state into a caste turmoil", the statement quoted local police official Prashant Kumar as saying.

This contradicts statements from both the victim and her mother, and also findings from the Delhi hospital when she was admitted, media reports said. Experts cast doubt on the forensic test cited by the police, saying it was conducted too long - eight days - after the attack. Mishika Singh, a lawyer and activist, told AFP that the findings were "in no way conclusive proof to say rape was not committed". "Ignoring the dying declaration of the victim on the basis of a non-conclusive forensic report goes to show the murky investigation being done by the police," Singh said. The young woman's death comes months after four men were hanged for the 2012 gang-rape and murder of a student on a bus in New Delhi, in a case that came to symbolize India's problems with sexual violence. The latest incident - and another gang-rape and murder this week in the same area - has sparked days of protests and candle-lit marches as well as condemnation from politicians, activists and Bollywood stars. An average of 87 rapes were reported in India every day last year, according to data released Tuesday by the National Crime Records Bureau, but large numbers are thought to go unreported. — AFP

## As lockdown eases, Kenyan docs warn COVID still lurking

NAIROBI: Kenya is reporting a decline in coronavirus cases, and hospital admissions for COVID-19 have fallen sharply, but some frontline health workers say infections are going undetected and could even be rising. For several weeks, the health ministry has been recording between about 50 and 250 new infections every day, a sudden and considerable slump from highs approaching 900 in just late July. The government has responded by easing some of the strictest measures imposed to contain the pandemic.

This week, President Uhuru Kenyatta announced the reopening of bars, increased capacity for weddings, funerals and religious services, and relaxed an evening curfew in force since March. In Nairobi, which has recorded more than half of Kenya's nearly 39,000 official cases, intensive care units bracing for the worst just weeks ago are operating below capacity.

Elijah Onger, director of nursing at the private Metropolitan Hospital, said the isolation unit was "almost closed" and the ICU had just two patients. "From the first week of August, it went down sharply. Everyone experienced the same (thing), it was so sudden. July was so sharp, and suddenly people were not showing up," he told AFP. Demand for tests has also plunged, said Ahmed Kalebi, director of one of Nairobi's main private laboratories, Lancet. "At the peak, at the beginning of July, we had 1,700 requests per day. Today it's between 200 and 400," he said.

Doctors and frontline health workers interviewed by AFP said the rate of transmission could very well be slowing, reflected in less cases and hospital admissions - but warned that other factors could be at play. The government no longer requires positive patients to be hospitalized but instead encourages them to stay at home. It also stopped covering treatment costs for lower-income families, discouraging many from going to hospital. A pervasive stigma, too, around COVID-19 dissuades many from getting tested or requesting medical assistance, health professionals say. "People have realised you don't die, so are not coming out if (they have) symptoms.—AFP



MANITOWOC, Wisconsin: In this photo taken on Sept 21, 2020, Democratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden visits an aluminum manufacturing facility. — AFP

# Business

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020

## Online barter trade booms in Philippines

### Gadgets for groceries: Filipinos join barter groups

**MANILA:** In the middle of a coronavirus lockdown in the Philippine capital, Grace Lagaday was struggling to breastfeed her newborn without milk storage bottles and nursing pads.

With shopping centers shut and public movement restricted, Lagaday turned to a centuries-old method of trade with a new tech twist: online bartering. A search of Facebook barter trade groups found the supplies she needed for her baby girl and they were in Lagaday's hands the next day, in return for bags of M&Ms chocolates and a jar of Nutella spread.

"I really needed breastfeeding stuff but very limited goods were available," Lagaday told Reuters. "For a mom who gave birth during this pandemic season, bartering helped me find good deals for my baby." Lagaday, who has since traded clothes hangers for five kilograms of rice and an electric mosquito killer for two liters of cooking oil, is among hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who have joined Facebook barter groups in recent months.

Reuters has identified just over 100 barter groups, some with as many as a quarter of a million members, have sprung up since the Philippines' main

island of Luzon, home to half its 107 million population, entered a hard lockdown in mid-March that lasted two months. Among the extreme exchanges: a 36-year-old man from Cebu province in central Philippines traded a 1993 Mitsubishi Lancer for 125,000 pesos (\$2,574) in cash and canned goods, noodles, and sacks of rice that he distributed to the poor, while a 20-year-old college student, also from Cebu, swapped two buckets of fried chicken for a live gamefowl.

Barter trade has a long tradition in the Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,600 islands that can make transportation of goods difficult at the best of times.

Shifting the practice online was a natural progression in a country that is the most internet-dependent in the world. Filipinos spend almost 10 hours on the internet each day, compared with a global average of nearly seven hours, according to 2020 data from social media managers Hootsuite and We Are Social. Social media browsing accounts for almost four hours of that daily use, the highest in the world, compared to an average of almost 2.5 hours.

Google searches for "barter trade"

surged 203% over April and May and with Manila and nearby provinces still subjected to some movement restrictions, the Facebook groups continue to buzz with activity. Thousands of posts a day vie for attention for swaps of books, clothes, gadgets and accessories, glassware, appliances, cars, groceries and animals.

An hour after offering her father's gamefowl for a trade, Karly Jan Tañola went home with 16 pieces of fried chicken. "I made a deal with the first person who commented and because of his excitement to get the fighting cock, he hurriedly left work and met me," she told Reuters.

#### Policy backflip

The resurgence of barter trade online is causing some headaches for the government. Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez performed an embarrassing backflip in July to reassure people that swaps for personal gain were fine just a day after he warned that barter trade was a tax-dodging illegal practice. That stance had drawn the ire of thousands of social media users who lambasted the government for finding new ways to impose taxes even in amid the pandemic.



**MANILA:** Grace Lagaday, 31, is photographed with her husband and children at a relative's home, in Rizal province, east of Manila, Philippines. — Reuters

With the economy entering its first recession in almost three decades and unemployment spiking to a record high of 17.7% as a result of the pandemic, people expect to be relying on online barter trade for some time. "I sorted

through old stuff to trade with people in need of it," said Josefa Amadure, who was looking for a baby rocker as she plans for the arrival of her second child. "Bartering is popular and safe because no cash is involved." — Reuters

## Saudi imposes new, lower property tax to shore up sector

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's king on Friday issued an order exempting real estate deals from a 15 percent value-added tax (VAT) and imposed a new 5 percent tax on transactions as the Gulf state moves to revitalize an economy hit by low oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The finance minister said on Twitter that the order, carried on state media, also aimed to support Saudi citizens who want to buy homes. The world's largest oil exporter is facing a deep recession, with the economy shrinking by 7 percent in the second quarter and unemployment hitting a record high of 15.4 percent.

The government had in July tripled VAT to 15 percent to boost non-oil

revenues, but the move has limited domestic demand. "The royal order aims to support citizens and ease their burden ... and enable them to own homes, and helps develop the kingdom's economy by spurring the residential and commercial property sector," Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan tweeted.

De facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has launched an ambitious plan to diversify the economy and create jobs for millions of Saudis. The government has said it is committed to the plan but that programs would undergo "structural improvements" and be reprioritized to spur growth.

The royal order said the government would bear the cost of the new



**RIYADH:** View shows the King Abdullah Financial District, north of Riyadh. — Reuters

Real Estate Transaction Tax "for up to 1 million riyals (\$266,616)" for Saudi citizens purchasing their first home. The housing minister said the move would help achieve a target of boosting housing ownership by Saudis to 70 percent by 2030 in a country with

an overwhelmingly young population.

Saudi Arabia plans to cut spending by 7.5 percent in next year's budget, according to a preliminary budget statement that forecast a 12 percent budget deficit for 2020 and a 5.1 percent deficit next year. — Reuters

## France rakes in 2.8bn euros from 5G sale

**PARIS:** France's mobile operators paid the state nearly 2.8 billion euros for the first block of 5G radio frequencies auctioned off this week, with former state monopoly Orange winning the biggest share, the Arcep telecoms regulator said Thursday. The agency put 11 unused frequency "blocks" on sale, with the aim of making the ultrafast technology available in some French cities by the end of this year.

Arcep said the country's four operators—Orange, SFR, Bouygues Telecom and Free—paid a total of 2.786 billion euros (\$3.3 billion) for the radio frequencies that will now be reserved for 5G services. The fifth-generation successor to 4G technology promises radically quicker transfers of data, heralding major changes to an array of products and services from self-driving cars to

remote surgery.

Operators had already paid 350 million euros each for 50 megahertz of spectrum on the available frequency bands, and could bid for bigger slices that would improve network performance and coverage. Orange won an additional 90 MHz and SFR obtained 80 MHz, while Bouygues and Free got 70 MHz each. Another auction will be held this month for "positioning," since slots closer to the center of the frequency band are less susceptible to interference from other devices.

"This was a successful auction, and we have to commend the very strong commitment by the operators to invest significantly in France," the Arcep president Sebastien Soriano said at a press conference. The conference was held at the French headquarters of Ericsson, the Swedish mobile network equipment maker. Ericsson and Finland's Nokia stand to benefit from heavy spending on the 5G network rollouts, after France placed heavy restrictions on the use of gear from the Chinese giant Huawei. Several governments, in particular the US, suspect the company could help China eavesdrop on western networks. —AFP



**PARIS:** The President of the French agency in charge of regulating telecommunications ARCEP Sebastien Soriano (right) speaks as French Junior Minister for Digital Transition and Electronic Communication Cedric O (left) listens during their visit at the Swedish telecommunications equipment provider Ericsson's research and development center on Thursday in Massy, near Paris. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Donald Trump speaks with Frank Zarb, former CEO of the Nasdaq Stock Market, in this file photo. —AFP

## Stocks slide after Trump diagnosed with coronavirus

**LONDON:** Stocks sold off and investors quit riskier assets yesterday after US President Donald Trump said he and his wife had tested positive for the coronavirus and would isolate, four weeks before US elections. Investors sought safer assets such as gold, US Treasuries and the Japanese yen. US stock futures fell and European shares opened lower, although they recovered some losses in early London trading after the initial overnight move. The STOXX 600 was down 0.3 percent and London's FTSE 100 was down 0.7 percent at 0930 GMT.

Shortly before 0500 GMT, Trump said on Twitter that he and his wife had been tested for coronavirus after Hope Hicks, a senior advisor who recently traveled with the president, tested positive. He later tweeted he and the first lady had tested positive: "We will begin our quaran-

time and recovery process immediately," he said.

S&P 500 futures — which fell sharply on Trump's tweet — stabilized somewhat and were down 1.4 percent at 0931 GMT. Futures for the tech-heavy Nasdaq were down 2.1 percent. The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 49 countries, was down 0.2 percent. Trump's exposure could cause a new wave of market volatility as investors braced for the presidential election in November.

How long the risk-averse moves will last depends on the extent of the infection within the White House, said Francois Savary, chief investment officer at Swiss wealth manager Prime Partners. "We may have to wait until the end of the weekend for more clarity on the situation," he said. "The reaction has been a bit excessive with US stock futures. It doesn't mean the US administration is not able to function."

"It will weigh on the market today and early next week but will not induce a long-lasting correction if the infection is contained to Trump," he added. Immediately after the news, the US dollar index rose and the safe-haven yen made its biggest jump in more than a month, reaching 104.95. — Reuters

## UK expats count Brexit impact as banks shut accounts

**LONDON:** For Roger Morton and his wife living in France—and many other UK expats across the European Union—Brexit is causing the closure of their British banking services.

Morton, a 78-year-old retired photographer, laments a letter from Barclaycard, informing him that their credit account will no longer be accessible, as Britain prepares for the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31.

"It was a surprise and something draconian," he told AFP of the letter, which he says comes on top of "an already stressful time" amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Their current account with Barclays, where they have banked for about 40 years, is not affected. One of the first direct consequences of Brexit, the move by UK lenders to shut expat services is said to affect tens of thousands of people across Europe.

From January 1 following the end of the transition period, UK banks will be deprived of their "passporting" rights that have allowed them to offer services across the European Union. To continue exercising these rights, they must have a legal entity in the countries of operation.

"This will obviously incur additional costs so banks will need to make decisions about which markets are likely to be cost-effective and profitable for them," noted Sarah Hall, professor of economic geography at the University of Nottingham, central England.

"This would mean that they choose to operate in some EU countries but not others," she told AFP. For major UK bank Lloyds, the choice has been made. It is closing 13,000 accounts belonging to British expats spread across six EU countries—Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovakia.

#### Alternative solutions

Banks are advising customers on their next steps. Coutts, the bank of British monarch Queen Elizabeth II, has set up a dedicated team after warning its expat clients in July. Expat newspapers, such as The Connexion in France, informs readers of their options such as changing banks so for example they can continue to receive UK state pensions.

HSBC and Santander have decided against closing accounts. "HSBC has a legal entity in France and is planning on using that to service UK expats in France," added professor Hall.

Concerned that other banks are not taking the same measures, British parliament's Treasury Committee made up of cross-party lawmakers has written to the UK's financial regulator for clarification.

"Many British expats in the EU are being told that their UK bank accounts will be terminated at the end of the year," said Mel Stride, an MP in the ruling Conservative party headed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "It's vital that they're given sufficient warning so that they have time to make alternative arrangements," added Stride, who chairs the committee. — AFP



## Business

# Volkswagen draws up plans to carve out Lamborghini

## VW approaches bankers, investors about possible IPO

FRANKFURT: Volkswagen is drawing up plans to carve out Lamborghini and has sounded out bankers and potential investors about listing the Italian sports car maker on the stock market, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. They said the German carmaker is looking to make Lamborghini a more independent unit within its stable of car brands and is discussing long-term supply deals, both steps which would make it easier to carry out an initial public offering (IPO).

"This is a first step which gives VW the option to list the unit further down the line," one of the sources familiar with the discussions about the future of Lamborghini told Reuters. The source said there was no formal decision to divest Lamborghini and the timetable of any deal remained unclear. A second source familiar with the talks about Lamborghini, which is currently part of Audi, said Volkswagen would retain a controlling stake in the supercar brand if it were to list.

Volkswagen declined to comment. Reuters reported on Tuesday that Volkswagen was reviewing the future of its high-performance brands Lamborghini, Bugatti and Ducati as part of broader quest for more economies of scale as it shifts to mass producing electric cars.

Two company executives told Reuters

the review could lead to technology partnerships for the sports car and superbike brands, restructuring, or other options including a listing or sale. The value of Italian supercar manufacturer Ferrari has more than trebled since Fiat Chrysler listed it in 2016 though shares in rival Aston Martin have slumped since its IPO in 2018.

Volkswagen's management and supervisory board will host a five-year planning round in mid-November and preparations to carve out Lamborghini could



### Partnerships or listing seen options

help executives make a decision on a sale or partial listing at short notice. A third source familiar with the discussions said the future of all three brands was discussed at a supervisory board meeting last Friday, including how to electrify the Lamborghini and Bugatti brands through partnerships and investors.

Lamborghini's Chief Executive Stefano Domenicali announced this week

his departure from the sports car maker to take on a new job as president of Formula One.

### 'Important steps'

Volkswagen Group's Chief Executive Herbert Diess said on Wednesday the carmaker would announce "important steps" about the company's future before the end of the year. A global clampdown on vehicles powered by combustion engines to curb carbon emissions has forced carmakers to accelerate the development of low-emission technology for their mainstream models.

California, for example, which accounts for 11 percent of US car sales, plans to ban the sale of new gasoline-powered passenger cars and trucks from 2035, the State's Governor Gavin Newsom said last week. Volkswagen managers, however, are struggling to find the resources needed to electrify low volume sports car models such as Lamborghini and Bugatti, which sold 4,554 and 82 cars respectively last year.

By reviewing VW's portfolio, Diess is slowly unwinding an empire built by his mentor, Ferdinand Piech, Volkswagen's former chairman and chief executive who died in 2019. Piech, who hired Diess in 2015, turned Volkswagen around by betting on modular construction techniques which allowed Audi, Seat, Skoda, VW



Volkswagen is looking to make Lamborghini a more independent unit within its stable of car brands and is discussing long-term supply deals.

and to use common parts for up to 65 percent of their construction.

Diess is taking a similar approach with electrification to boost economies of scale, developing a modular electric vehicle platform known as MEB, which will fit its mainstream compact and medium-sized vehicles - but not supercars. Piech bought the Bugatti, Bentley and Lamborghini brands as part of an aggressive expansion push in 1998 which eventually turned Volkswagen into the

biggest car company in the world by sales ahead of Toyota.

Diess told Reuters last month he had abandoned VW's decades-old obsession with empire building and no-expense-spared engineering to free up resources for the development and mass production of electric cars. "The product experience needs to be right. But you need to keep an eye on cost. You cannot run the business by focusing only on product," Diess said. — Reuters

## ECB asks citizens to weigh in on digital euro

FRANKFURT: The European Central bank "should be prepared" to possibly launch a digital currency, president Christine Lagarde said yesterday, adding that the public will be asked to weigh in on the issue. The Frankfurt institution will carry out a series of experiments with a digital euro over the next six months and launch a three-month public consultation from October 12.

A decision on whether to move ahead with a virtual currency project is expected around mid-2021, the ECB said. "Our role is to secure trust in money... We should be prepared to issue a digital euro, should the need arise," Lagarde said in a statement.

This digital currency would "complement cash, not replace it", the statement added.

The move comes as consumers increasingly pivot towards cashless payments, and the ECB is wary of falling behind so-called cryptocurrencies issued by private players like Bitcoin and Facebook's yet-to-be-launched Libra. A digital currency would allow individuals as well as companies to have deposits directly with a central bank, potentially safer than

with commercial banks, which could go bust, or cash that could be stolen.

The ECB's deliberations echo those of the US Federal Reserve, which has been researching a digital dollar. The Chinese central bank started experimenting with digital currency in four cities in April.

Proponents of cryptocurrencies say they allow for faster and cheaper payments, especially across borders, as they cut out the staff, administration and the high costs needed in traditional banking and investment. Governments in Europe have insisted that any digital currency would require careful supervision.

"A digital euro would support Europe's drive towards continued innovation. It would also contribute to its financial sovereignty and strengthen the international role of the euro," ECB executive board member Fabio Panetta said. He warned that many hurdles remained, including concerns about privacy and the impact on traditional banking and financial stability. "But a properly designed digital euro could address these risks," Panetta said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards electronic payments, as customers avoid notes and coins over fears that they might spread the coronavirus. The ECB applied to trademark the term "digital euro" late last month, according to Bloomberg News.

Meanwhile, eurozone inflation fell deeper into negative territory in September, official data said yesterday, amid plummeting demand due to the coronavirus crisis. The EU's Eurostat data agency said



The move comes as consumers increasingly pivot towards cashless payments, and the ECB is wary of falling behind so-called cryptocurrencies issued by private players like Bitcoin and Facebook's yet-to-be-launched Libra. — Reuters

inflation fell to -0.3 percent last month, a drop from -0.2 percent in August and way off the official target of just under two percent.

The descent into deflationary territory will put pressure on the European Central Bank to draw up further stimulus measures, already at 1.35 trillion euros (\$1.58 trillion), and should encourage governments to spend more. — AFP



TOKYO: A general view shows the Tokyo Stock Exchange building in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## Unemployment highest in Japan since 2017

TOKYO: Japan's unemployment rate rose to 3.0 percent in August, the highest figure since mid-2017, official data showed yesterday, illustrating the pandemic's effect on the country's tight labor market.

The figure, up 0.1 percentage points from July, is the first time since May 2017 that the rate has stood at three percent or higher, according to the internal affairs ministry data. Separate data compiled by the labor ministry showed there were only 104 job openings for every 100 job-seekers in August, worsening from 108 to 100 in the previous month.

Japan was already struggling with

the effects of natural disasters and a hike in consumption tax before the coronavirus pandemic crippled the global economy.

Once it hit, there were no mandatory lockdowns in the country, with the government instead asking people to stay at home—a request that was largely heeded.

But that, coupled with a shuttering of the country's borders, battered tourism and consumer spending, with the hospitality industry hit particularly hard.

Japan's labor market is notoriously tight, with employers struggling to hire and the working-age population shrinking in a rapidly ageing society.

Former prime minister Shinzo Abe sought to address that by bringing more women and older people into the workforce, as well as slightly loosening the country's strict immigration policy. His successor Yoshihide Suga, who took office last month, has pledged to continue Abe's policies. — AFP

## IMF mission to reach Argentina next week

BUENOS AIRES: Argentine Economy Minister Martin Guzman said on Thursday that a mission from the International Monetary Fund would arrive in the country next week as the two sides look to negotiate a new program to replace a failed \$57 billion facility. "There is a constant, constructive dialogue. This week, we have been working in a virtual way together with a mission. On Tuesday, a mission will be arriving," Guzman said, speaking in a televised interview with local publication Ambito.

Argentina needs a new deal with the

IMF after the previous program struck in 2018 failed to stave off an economic crisis that saw the country fall into default earlier this year, since resolved with a major debt restructuring.

Guzman said that economic policy "fine-tuning" was needed to bolster growth, including harmonizing interest rates, although he added there were signs of economic recovery. Argentina is headed for an economic contraction of about 12 percent this year, which would be the third straight year of recession, while investors have been rattled recently by moves to tighten capital controls to protect dwindling reserves. The country's central bank said in a statement on Thursday that the controls were a "necessary instrument" while the country improved its fiscal, external and monetary situation. It added the current exchange rate was competitive. — Reuters

## Spain's labor market improves despite COVID

MADRID: More than three quarters of Spain's furloughed workers have returned to work since April, social security data showed yesterday as employment data in the euro zone's fourth-largest economy improved.

Some 83,529 people left the ERTE furlough scheme in September, leaving 728,909 workers still enrolled, the data showed. That is 76 percent lower than the April peak, when more than 3 million people were supported by the program.

A total of 84,013 net jobs were created in September, up by 0.45 percent from August and marking the fifth consecutive month of job creation.

Increased hiring in education, agriculture and in the civil service more than offset the loss of 67,000 jobs in hospitality and commerce. And the loss of employment that usually accompanies the end of Spain's peak tourism season was less severe this year, as many would-be Spanish holidaymakers stayed at home - and spent money in Spain - because of coronavirus travel restrictions.

Even so, with 450,000 fewer net jobs than in September 2019, the job market has yet to return to its pre-pandemic levels. Across Spain, the number of people registering as jobless fell by 0.69 percent, or 26,329 people, between August and September, leaving 3.8 million people out of work, according to the Labour Ministry. Labour Minister Yolanda Diaz said it was the largest drop in jobless numbers recorded in any September since 1996. — Reuters

## Big investors fail to halt Amazon deforestation

ROME: Many of the world's biggest financial institutions, managing trillions of dollars in assets, are "fuelling" deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon by failing to set clear policies to stop the damage, a forest conservation group said on Thursday.

Major institutional investors that lack zero-deforestation policies include Aberdeen Standard Investments, Legal and General Investment Management, Amundi Asset Management and Candriam Investors Group, UK-based nonprofit Global Canopy said in a report. "The financial sector is fuelling deforestation in Brazil through their investments in companies in beef and soy supply chains," Global Canopy executive director Niki Mardas said in a statement.

In September 2019, after wildfires hit global headlines, 251 investors, collectively managing nearly \$18 trillion in assets, signed a statement urging companies to do their part in halting destruction of the world's largest tropical rainforest. A year on, however, only a handful of the financial institutions that called on businesses to act have introduced their own policies against deforestation, Global Canopy said.

Meanwhile, the Amazon rainforest in Brazil is experiencing its worst rash of fires in 10 years, even though preliminary government data showed deforestation dropped by 5% in the first eight months of 2020. "Investors should assess the companies in their portfolio for exposure to deforestation risks, and they should develop and publish a clear policy setting out their approach to (this)," Mardas told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by email.

"The critical thing is that investors engage with companies to address the issue. Investors should consider divestment in cases where engagement has failed," he added. Just 21 of the investors who signed the 2019 statement have their own zero-deforestation policies for all the forest-risk commodities in their portfolios, Global Canopy said.

They include BNP Paribas, DNB Asset Management, HSBC and Storebrand Group. Storebrand, which has an asset management arm, states on its website it "does not wish to finance negative environmental and social impacts in this potentially high-risk sector", adding it would end relationships with companies that do not meet its standards.

A further 12 investment firms, including Aviva Investors, have policies for timber, palm oil or both but not for soy and cattle, despite these being the main drivers of deforestation in Brazil, according to the Global Canopy assessment.

A spokeswoman for Aviva Investors, the fund management arm of insurer Aviva, said it had stepped up engagement around cattle-related deforestation in Brazil. It had pushed cattle exporter Minerva Foods for more traceability in its indirect supply chain and joined an investor initiative lobbying Brazil's government on the issue, she added. Among those named in the report as lacking policies, global asset manager Candriam told the Thomson Reuters Foundation it was working with the same investor initiative and added that deforestation and biodiversity loss were among "the many issues" it looks at when reviewing companies' policies. — Reuters

## Business

# US labor market, income data point to drawn-out recovery

## Weekly jobless claims fall 36,000 to 837,000

WASHINGTON: The number of Americans filing new claims for jobless benefits fell last week but remained at recession levels, while personal income dropped in August, underscoring the need for another government rescue package for businesses and the unemployed.

The decline in initial claims reported by the Labor Department on Thursday likely reflected a decision by California, the most populous state in the nation, to suspend the processing of new applications for two weeks to combat fraud. Factory activity slowed in September, other data showed.



**Personal income falls 2.7%**

Economists are warning that the economy and labor market recovery from the COVID-19 slump could sputter without an infusion of new money from the government. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin are working toward a bipartisan agreement for another fiscal package.

"The recovery's wheels are spinning in the sand," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York. "It's going to be a slow return to normal for the economy."

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits decreased 36,000 to a seasonally adjusted 837,000 for the week ended Sept. 26. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 850,000 applications in the latest week. California is using the two-week pause to reduce its claims processing backlog and implement fraud prevention measures. The Labor Department acknowledged the suspension could result in "significant" week-to-week swings in initial claims "unrelated to any changes in economic conditions."

Including a government-funded program for the self-employed, gig workers and others who do not

qualify for the regular state unemployment programs, 1.4 million claims were filed last week.

Though filings have dropped from a record 6.867 million at the end of March, they remain well above their 665,000 peak during the 2007-2009 Great Recession. Labor market gains from the reopening of businesses are fading and economists are predicting a slowdown in hiring through the rest of this year and into 2021.

New coronavirus cases are rising, with a surge expected in the fall, which could lead to some restrictions being imposed on businesses in the services sector. In addition, political uncertainty is rising and could extend beyond the Nov. 3 presidential election, and make businesses reluctant to hire.

Several months after operations resumed, demand has remained poor, especially in the services sector, leading some establishments to permanently shut down and keeping job cuts elevated. Walt Disney Co. said this week it would lay off roughly 28,000 employees in its theme parks division.

American Airlines and United Airlines, two of the largest U.S. carriers, said they were beginning furloughs of more than 32,000 workers on Thursday, without government funding. "Likely more than one in three initial claims being filed are among people reopening a claim after initially going back to work and off of unemployment," said Andrew Stettner, senior fellow at The Century Foundation in New York.

"The other two-thirds represent the continued undertow of layoffs." Stocks on Wall Street were trading higher as investors remained hopeful of fiscal stimulus. The dollar dipped against a basket of currencies. US Treasury prices fell.

### Millions unemployed

The claims report also showed the number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid dropped 980,000 to 11.767 million in the week ending Sept. 19. But economists cautioned that part of the decline was probably due to people exhausting their 26-week eligibility for benefits. At least 1.8 million workers filed for extended unemployment benefits in the week ending Sept. 12, up 196,725 from the prior week. There were 26.5 million people receiving unem-



A help wanted sign is posted at a taco stand in Solana Beach, California. — Reuters

ployment benefits during that period.

The government will publish its closely followed employment report on Friday. Nonfarm payrolls likely increased by 850,000 jobs in September after rising by 1.371 million in August, according to a Reuters survey of economists. 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. A separate report on Thursday from the Commerce Department showed personal income dropped 2.7 percent in August, reflecting a decrease in unemployment insurance benefits. A \$600 unemployment subsidy ended in July and was replaced by a \$300 supplement, whose funding is running out. Income increased 0.5 percent in July. The unemployment subsidy has helped to anchor consumer spend-

ing, which accounts for more than two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, putting the economy on track for record growth in the third quarter after a historic plunge in the April-June period.

Consumer spending increased 1.0 percent in August after rising 1.5 percent in July. Consumption remains 4 percent below its pre-pandemic level. Economists saw little boost from savings, which totaled \$2.43 trillion in August.

"There is enormous potential for economic growth in savings, but the fact Americans saved 14 percent of their income in August despite the loss of pandemic aid suggests the kind of caution that can limit an economic rebound," said Chris Low, chief economist at FHN Financial in New York. "Those who have income to save are in no rush to spend it." — Reuters



The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) is pictured at Wall Street in New York City. — AFP

## How year 2020 confounded Wall Street strategists

NEW YORK: Bank of America Corp's strategists cut their year-end forecasts for the S&P 500 index twice this year, trailing the US stock market as it plummeted in a coronavirus-induced panic. Then, as the market rallied past those revised targets in the ensuing months, the strategists followed by increasing their estimates.

Now, the bank's researchers, led by head of US equity strategy Savita Subramanian, say of their year-end price target for the index that the "range is wide." They currently are forecasting that the S&P 500 will end the year at 3,250 - a level that is just 50 points below what they had been predicting in January. But the index could end up somewhere between 2,200 and 4,000, depending on the course of the virus and the economy, wrote Subramanian and colleagues in a Sept. 3 note.

The S&P 500 on Wednesday closed at around 3,360, which is around 4 percent higher than where it started the year. The business of forecasting markets is fraught in the best of times. But the year 2020 has left many Wall Street strategists scrambling to make sense of the market, with forecasters surprised by the spectacular crash in late February and March and subsequent rally, according to their research notes and interviews.

As the coronavirus spread early this year, Wall Street researchers generally did not anticipate the scale of the disruption it would cause, according to data from market information provider Refinitiv and a Reuters review of S&P 500 earnings and price forecasts by the six largest US banks by assets. That left them chasing the market decline with cuts in their S&P 500 earnings-per-share forecasts or price targets—or both. When the downturn in the S&P 500 reversed in late March, several strategists struggled to predict how far and long the rally could go, the review shows. In a June email to Reuters, Subramanian defended her team's record and highlighted the unprecedented nature of the crisis. "It is precisely during moments of uncertainty that we should

strive to provide investors with our best guess as well as a range of scenarios around that framework," she wrote.

She did not respond to requests for further comment last week. Bank of America declined to comment for this article. Of the other five largest banks, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Citigroup Inc, Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo & Co also declined.

Goldman Sachs Group Inc, in a response to Reuters in May, said its forecasts are made with the best information it has available at the time and that it noted in research early in the year that a significant change in circumstances relating to coronavirus would alter its forecasts. In response to additional questions from Reuters in late September, the bank declined further comment.

### They missed it

The market's rebound this year comes as the economy and public health continue to feel the devastating effects of the pandemic. The resulting disconnect between Wall Street and Main Street has investors trying to understand market behavior. Wall Street research has long been a staple input in investment theses for all stripes of investors, but some say they are relying less on it now. Rob Christian, co-head of research and investment management at Franklin Templeton's hedge fund solutions group K2 Advisors, said while he pays attention to sell-side research, his group is putting "less weight on it as there are so many unknowns."

"In general, they missed it as a group," Christian said, referring to the pandemic. "We think it is really hard to predict anything now."

Some of the strategists' predictions have proved to be correct. JPMorgan's chief US equity strategist Dubravko Lakos-Bujas, for example, did not cut his initial year-end S&P 500 target of 3,400 during the crash, arguing that the selloff was temporary and policy response would outlast the impact of COVID-19. The target was raised to 3,600 on September 11.—Reuters

## Boeing plans to consolidate 787 production

NEW YORK: Boeing will consolidate manufacturing of the 787 Dreamliner plane to one plant in the US, ending production of the wide-body jet in Washington state, the company announced Thursday. The move follows earlier announcements by Boeing that it would slash production of the jets to six per month in 2021 from 14 due to weak demand for airline travel because of the coronavirus. The US aviation giant has not announced staffing cuts as a result of change, but made clear production for several models would continue in Washington.

The company needs to "look at every opportunity to adapt, preserve our liquidity and be more competitive in a very different commercial market," Stan Deal, head of Boeing's commercial plane division, said in an email to staff. "To ensure we can be effective in a market that will be smaller in the near-term, and one that will have different demands from our customers long-term, we made a decision earlier this morning to consolidate 787 production in South Carolina after months of detailed and thorough study."

Boeing said it had not yet determined how the shift would affect staffing in Everett, Washington and North Charleston, South Carolina. About 900 employees work on the 787 at the Everett site, which as a whole has 30,000 workers—although the current number is lower because some staff is working from home.

Headcount in South Carolina at the start of 2020 was 6,869, a Boeing spokeswoman said.

Boeing began manufacturing the 787 in Everett in 2007 before starting production in South Carolina in 2019. Only the South Carolina plant is equipped to build the current Dreamliner models, which are bigger than the initial versions, the company said.

"Our team in Puget Sound will continue to focus on efficiently building our 737, 747, 767 and 777 airplane families, and both sites will drive Boeing initiatives to further enhance safety, quality, and operational excellence," Deal said. In July, Boeing reported a loss of \$2.4 billion through the first half of 2020, the result of an airline industry downturn and the hit from the grounding of its 737 MAX following two deadly crashes.—AFP



The Boeing Company logo is seen on a building in Annapolis Junction, Maryland. —AFP

## British WTO candidate woos Europe

GENEVA: A Briton seeking to lead the World Trade Organization vowed Thursday to hand a top WTO post to a European, even though lingering Brexit resentment is likely to deny him much EU support. Liam Fox, Britain's first post-Brexit international trade secretary and one of five candidates remaining in the race to head the WTO, told reporters that if he wins he would appoint a European as his main advisor.

"If I become director-general, my chef de cabinet will be a European," he told a virtual briefing.

This, he said, was because if he, as a European, were to win, Europe would automatically lose one of the four deputy director-general positions that it currently holds due to regional balance requirements. He stressed the need to ensure an "inclusive" cabinet at the top of the global trade body, adding that "we need to be clear from the outset that we will have to act as a global team if we are to deal with some of the very profound issues that face us today."

Fox meanwhile acknowledged that some European Union countries were unlikely to back a pro-Brexit British candidate amid continued anger over Britain's decision to leave the bloc.

"For some, the issue of Brexit is hugely important, with a very small number believing that the United

Kingdom should be punished for leaving the EU by not getting backing for any international job," he said.

The EU, which on Thursday launched legal proceedings in response to the British government's attempt to overturn parts of the Brexit withdrawal agreement, has yet to say who it backs in the WTO race.

### Five become two

Besides Fox, there is one other man, Mohammed Al-Tuwajri of Saudi Arabia, and three women—Amina Mohamed of Kenya, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria, and Yoo Myung-hee of South Korea—still in the running. But next week, the initial pool of eight candidates to replace Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down as the WTO director-general last month a year ahead of schedule, will be whittled down again, with just two remaining after a second elimination round. It remains unclear whether the WTO members will ultimately agree on another leader from Europe. There is no requirement for a regional rotation of the WTO chief position. But there have been calls for an African to finally get a shot at running the organisation, which has counted three director-generals from Europe, and one each from Oceania, Asia and South America since its creation in 1995.

The WTO aims to select a winner in November, but some have voiced fear that increasing politicization of the WTO, which relies on consensus to reach decisions, could draw out the process. Whoever is handed the job in the end will be taking over an organisation mired in multiple crises, and struggling to help members navigate a severe global economic slump triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.—AFP

## UK business group wants race targets in boardrooms

LONDON: Britain's leading business trade organization on Thursday announced it was to launch a campaign calling for each large firm to have at least one person from an ethnic minority on its board.

The CBI (Confederation of British Industry) will launch the "Change the Race Ratio" campaign alongside large companies such as the insurer Aviva, the audit firm Deloitte and tech giant Microsoft at the end of the month, according to CBI President Karan Bilimoria. "We believe that the time for change is now: business needs to take urgent action on black and ethnic minority participation at senior leadership levels," he said in a statement posted on CBI's website.

The campaign urges all businesses to set targets for greater racial and ethnic diversity at senior leadership levels. Its ambition is to have at least one "racially and ethnically diverse" board member at each of the top 100 firms listed on the

London Stock Exchange by the end of 2021, and one at each of the top 250 by 2024.

A review in early 2020 found that 37 percent of FTSE 100 companies did not have any ethnic minority representation on boards, rising to 69 percent for FTSE 250 companies. "Our campaign will foster a community that works together and shares good practice—because we know that real change will take time, and a dedicated, concerted and collaborative effort," said Bilimoria. "We must challenge and inspire each other to push harder and do better."

He cited a 2019 study by McKinsey that suggested firms with racial and ethnic diverse boardrooms tended to perform better. Rating agency Moody's recently said that the British bank Lloyds' promise to hire more black executives was good news for its risk profile, linking diversity and the evaluation of a company's debt for the first time.—AFP

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## Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo Chrissy Teigen (left) and musician John Legend attend The Daily Front Row's 4th Annual Fashion Los Angeles Awards at Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP photos

## Teigen, Legend reveal 'deep pain' over losing baby

Model Chrissy Teigen and her award-winning singer husband John Legend—one of Hollywood's hottest supercouples—have disclosed that they are in "deep pain" after losing their baby following a difficult pregnancy. Teigen, who was expecting her third child with Legend, was hospitalized over the weekend for excessive bleeding. The couple's frank posts about their personal tragedy triggered an outpouring of messages of support on Thursday. "Driving home from the hospital with no baby. How can this be real," Teigen wrote on Twitter. "We are shocked and in the kind of deep pain you only hear about, the kind of pain we've never felt before," Teigen wrote in a separate post on Instagram.



The singer John Legend and his wife, the model Chrissy Teigen, have posted on Instagram about the loss of their third child.

The post included a black and white picture of her in the hospital, crying with her hands clasped and her head bowed. Another picture shows her in a hospital bed, holding the child as Legend kisses her shoulder. "We were never able to stop the bleeding and give our baby the fluids he needed, despite

bags and bags of blood transfusions. It just wasn't enough." Teigen, 34, said that she and Legend had chosen until now not to name their children before leaving the hospital but that she had started to call this baby Jack. "To our Jack—I'm so sorry that the first few moments of your life were met with so many complications, that we couldn't give you the home you needed to survive. We will always love you," Teigen wrote.

Legend, 41, retweeted her Instagram post with a message, "We love you, Jack." This was followed by five black hearts. Celebrity friends—from Oscar winner Viola Davis to rapper LL Cool J, who works with Teigen on reality show "Lip Sync Battle"—joined fans in offering sympathy and support. "We're always here for you and love you guys so much," Kim Kardashian West wrote on Instagram. While some criticized Teigen for oversharing, others praised her for lifting the lid on the painful issue of pregnancy loss. "You just made so many women feel seen by sharing this intimate grief," said "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" actress Melissa Fumero.

The couple have a robust presence on social media, sharing details about everything from their political views to their home life. Teigen has shared a video of an ultrasound exam, celebrated the removal of her breast implants by sharing pictures of her scars, and often features images of children Luna and Miles. The entertainment power couple wed in 2013, after meeting years before on the set of one of Legend's music videos. They had announced in August they were expecting a third child. — AFP

## Mississippi barbershop offers haircut and 'shoulder to lean on'

As an icebreaker, Antonio Wiggins often begins by talking sports. But the conversations between the Jackson, Mississippi, barber and his customers, African-American men, tend to turn very quickly to more weighty subjects. Wiggins, who is also Black, caters not only to his patrons' hair but also to their well-being. He plies his trade at Trendsetters Barber College in Jackson, which is the largest city in the southern state and has a population that is 80 percent African-American. Wiggins said he tends to the grooming needs of people from all walks of life. "Everybody sits in this chair," he said.

"I have a guy who comes that is a doctor. I've got the pastor. We get the drug dealer," Wiggins said. "I cut a guy on a Friday. He went on to kill someone on the Saturday." Anthony Kelley, who runs Trendsetters, which also serves as a teaching school, said barbers in the American South are "like pillars in our community." Wiggins and Kelley recently joined "The Confess Project," a coalition of Black barbers seeking to cater to the mental health needs of African-American men in a region of the country scarred by decades of racism.

"We, as barbers, we try to offer them, you know, shoulders to lean on," Kelley said. "A place where they can come to and open up and talk. "Because, you know, really a lot of people they can't afford to go to a psychiatrist or psychologist," he said. "In the Black community, there's not a lot of alternatives that we can turn to. So we try to help them," Kelley said. The barbers meet regularly to discuss best practices and the topic of their latest meeting was suicide prevention. "A lot of people, during these critical times, start thinking about suicide," Kelley said. "These are some depressing times."

### 'You don't feel judged'

Robert White, 49, awaits his turn in the unpretentious shop where the walls are decorated with pictures and posters, including one advertising a hot-

line for those suffering from depression. White said that he has been coming to Trendsetters once a month for years and feels "comfortable." "We talk about just everything in life," he said. "You don't feel judged. "Sometimes you just want to be heard."

That is particularly important during a year in which the coronavirus pandemic has exacted a heavy toll on the African-American population, and cost millions of jobs. Two customers of Darius Campbell, a Black barber in the town of Terry, south of Jackson, have lost five

members of their family to Covid-19 while others are having a hard time making ends meet. "The main thing that I see, the worst, is struggling to pay bills," Campbell said. "I deal with a lot of family men," he said. Their biggest fear? "Can I take care of my family tomorrow?" he said. "Are they going to come take my house from me in three, four, five, six months?" Another frequent topic of discussion is police brutality against the African-American community, which came to a head in the United States in May with the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis. "We know people who've been bru-



Antonio Wiggins (center) cuts the hair of James Bennett (right) as Robert White (left) waits for his turn, inside his barber shop. — AFP photos

talized by police," Wiggins said. "We are in Mississippi so we are so used to racism." With the November 3 presidential election on the horizon, talk has also turned to politics, said James Bennett, a 34-year-old municipal worker who gets his hair cut by Wiggins every Saturday. "It's one of the key subjects," Bennett said. "You can join the conversation anytime you want." Campbell said his customers are in agreement on one thing—"we need to get (Donald Trump) out of office." Wiggins said the Republican president lacks "integrity"

and is insensitive to the problems of Black Americans.

"We're looking for someone showing love to us because we feel so unloved," he said. Wiggins said he was encouraging young patrons to register to vote. He said he'll cast his ballot on November 3 even if Trump is expected to easily beat Democrat Joe Biden in Mississippi, a Republican stronghold. So will Robert White and he said he'll be back in the barber's chair to discuss the results. — AFP



Darius Campbell looks on as he sits inside his barber shop in Terry.



James Bennett speaks as he gets a haircut and free counseling by Antonio Wiggins (left) at a barber shop in Jackson, Mississippi.

## Rescue operation for Bulgaria's communist-era 'flying saucer'

Nestled in Bulgaria's central Balkan Mountains, an international team of art experts and architects is hard at work trying to preserve one of the country's most striking monuments, a communist-era "flying saucer" perched on a hillside. The monument on Buzludzha Peak was dedicated to the glory of communism but since the collapse of that regime, it has fallen into disrepair. An operation is now underway to save its striking series of mosaics as a debate rages on about the site's long-term future. "It's a race against time," said architect Dora Ivanova, who launched the campaign to save the monument.

"We have to act fast because there won't be any mosaics left if we wait for a plan" from the authorities, she told AFP. Erected in 1981 at an altitude of 1,400 meters (4,600 feet), the monument comprises a circle in concrete and steel alongside two 70-metre-high pillars dominated by a red star. It contained no fewer than 937 square meters of mosaics, a third of which have already been lost. Among the panels are depictions of the entry of the Red Army in September 1944 as well as glorifications of workers, peasants and the role of women in socialist society.

### 'Sign of the time'

A representation of the hammer and sickle emblem still adorns the center of the ceiling, but parts of the roof around it have fallen in. The mosaic portrait of former dictator Todor Zhivkov, meanwhile, has been replaced by a scruffy graffiti version. However, the marble adorning the floor and the walls has survived. "The aim is not to restore the monument in its old splendor," said Thomas Danzl from Munich's Technical University, one of the team working at the monument. "We will also keep the graffiti as a sign of the current time, of the past 30 years," he said.

The restoration mission has received a \$185,000 (157,000 euros) grant from the American Getty Foundation, enough to focus on conserving the fragile mosaics while gaps in the roof are covered with wood and sheet metal to protect them from the elements. In total 18 experts and students from Germany, Switzerland, Greece and Bulgaria are working on the project. Danzl says that the works in the monument show traces of Byzantine tradition but also material and technique that attests to their own time. "We are working on the critical areas while using the least invasive materials possible" for



An expert work on a mosaic in the House of the Bulgarian Communist Party on Buzludzha peak in central Bulgaria.

the mosaics while the authorities come up with a plan for the rest of the site, said the technical head of the team, Nikifor Haralampiev from Sofia's Academy of Fine Arts.

### 'Preserving memory'

The authorities have dragged their feet in awarding Buzludzha the status of an official cultural site, which would unlock further funds for its restoration. They are



A picture shows the House of the Bulgarian Communist Party on Buzludzha peak in central Bulgaria.

mindful of how the site, and its role as an emblem of a dictatorship, divides opinion. A monument to the Soviet Army in central Sofia is for example frequently covered in graffiti and critical slogans. "It's society as a whole which has to decide on the function of this monument," said the president of the regional council Gergana Mihova, as austere mosaics of Marx, Engels and Lenin stare down at her.

She carefully avoided expressing a view as she admitted that there "have always been voices for and against". In Kazanlak, a town at the foot of Buzludzha mountain, 52-year-old teacher Stoyanka Dimova said she has her doubts about saving the monument. "This money from abroad should first help the people, it's the poorest country in the European Union," she said. Haralampiev—who was born the same year the monument went up—said it's "an exceptional work of architecture" and while he "understands the reasons of those who want to destroy it, it's not the right approach".

Ivanova, who launched the campaign to save the monument, admits that the monument was used by the communist regime as an instrument of propaganda, for example by organizing group visits to the site. Her own proposal is to make the site relevant to the modern era by using it to commemorate all of Bulgarian history, but it remains to be seen if this will be realized. For Danzl, "preserving the mosaics is preserving a sort of memory". "You have to know the past in order to have a better future," he said. — AFP



A picture shows the House of the Bulgarian Communist Party on Buzludzha peak in central Bulgaria. — AFP photos



A construction expert works on a mosaic inside the House of the Bulgarian Communist Party on Buzludzha peak in central Bulgaria.



A construction expert walks near a mosaic inside the House of the Bulgarian Communist Party.



Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein, 60, works on a piece for a cathedral under construction in Jordan, her main project before the Beirut port blast, in her basement workshop on the outskirts of the capital Beirut.



Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein, shows a work in progress for a cathedral under construction in Jordan.—AFP photos

# LEBANESE ARTISTS IN OVERDRIVE TO RESTORE BEIRUT'S BEAUTY



Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein, examines red glass to be used on one of her works in progress.



Gaby Maamary examines a 19th-century painting, damaged in the Beirut port blast.

Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein had hoped to retire after decades spent designing colorful windows, but she has been flooded with work since the blast that ripped through Beirut. "I can't possibly not try to restore what is gone," said the 60-year-old woman, her bright red curly hair in a short bob. The massive explosion at the capital's port on August 4 killed more than 190 people and wounded thousands more as it sent lethal shockwaves pummeling through the city. But it also ravaged dozens of Beirut's most cherished heritage buildings. Hussein is one of several artists slowly starting to restore artworks devastated in the disaster.

In her basement workshop on the outskirts of Beirut, she gestured at what remained of windows of a 19th-century church she had restored after the 1975-1990 civil war. A gaping mess of mangled metal, dotted by a few surviving pieces of orange and blue glass, lay in a cardboard box. "At least seven projects I had worked on were blown away," Hussein said. They included one of her first projects designing biblical scenes on glass for a church, and the dazzling yellow and orange windows she had crafted for the famed Sursock Museum. Before the blast, she had planned to retire after completing glass windows for a last cathedral in Jordan. "But now I won't allow myself to stop," she said.

### Glass dust

On her work table, she picked a green piece of glass and lodged it between curving lengths of soft lead to



A collaborator of Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein (right), works on a piece in her basement workshop on the outskirts of the capital Beirut.

rebuild a window of flowers and leaves for a private home. Even if she has now taken on apprentices, she said there is still a lot of work ahead. "For some people who have asked me, I won't be able to start anything for at least two years," she said. In neighborhoods near the port, the race is on to cover up 100 heritage buildings before the autumn rain. The United Nations culture and education fund, UNESCO, has said it will hold a conference to try to drum up hundreds of millions of dollars for restorations.

But until that aid arrives, Lebanese are doing what they can on their own.

Among them, artwork conservation specialist Gaby Maamary has decided to offer to restore damaged paintings for free. He says he was inspired after seeing Lebanese youths sweeping away seas of rubble and glass after the blast, and decided to channel his skills towards preserving Beirut's heritage. "It's something that you can lose easily if you don't pay attention," the 58-year-old artist and university lecturer said. In his Beirut studio, he carefully held up a 17th-century nature morte by Italian artist Elena Recco, depicting a cat greedily eyeing up some dead fish.

been slashed by flying shards of glass. Wearing white gloves, he turned over the back of another canvas he had started cleaning, the untreated part a shade darker and shimmering with fine glass dust. Nearby, he pointed to a work by late Lebanese artist Sophie Yeramian whose dried paint had been cracked by the blast.

### Saved from the trash

"We did not expect that amount of calls," he said. The initiative has taken him to assess damage in art galleries, but also private homes. In one, he pulled a painting worth tens of thousands of dollars out of the trash. To his horror, he found another bound up in sticky tape. The owner had rushed to hospital with her severely injured son after the explosion, and someone helping to clean up the mess had not realized their worth. But even without sticky tape to complicate matters, Maamary said conservation is a complex process that involves hours of planning before even touching the artwork.

"Sometimes the same step has to be done several times, simply because we don't have the museum equipment," he said. Bringing in specialized materials from abroad is also tricky, with bank transfers blocked from Lebanon's crisis-hit banks. But drawing on the help of friends and using what is locally available, Maamary is determined to carry on. "We're going to continue doing that on a daily basis until we run out of materials or means," he said. — AFP



What remains of a church's stained-glass windows after Beirut's massive August 4 explosion lie in cardboard boxes in Lebanese artist Maya Hussein's basement workshop.



Gaby Maamary examines a 17th-century painting by Italian painter Elena Recco.



Gaby Maamary, a Lebanese artwork conservation specialist, examines a painting by late Lebanese artist Sophie Yeramian, damaged in the Beirut port blast, at his studio in the capital Beirut.



Gaby Maamary checks an image scan during an interview at his studio.



Lebanese stained glass artist Maya Hussein, works on a piece for a cathedral under construction in Jordan.

## Crocs share price jumps on Justin Bieber speculation

All it took was a photo on Justin Bieber's Instagram of Crocs shoes and the caption "Soon", to send the company's stock jumping Thursday on speculation of a future collaboration with the Canadian pop star. Bieber is regularly seen wearing the plastic clogs in public. But after a post showing

a pair afloat in a pool to his 148 million followers, and a dose of online speculation, the markets appeared to take notice. Crocs, Inc jumped over 12 percent over the day's trading, before finishing nearly six percent up on Wall Street.

The shoemaking company has not made any

announcements regarding Bieber and did not immediately reply to a request for comment. That said, the brand has worked with celebrities before, including the release this week of a pair done in collaboration with Puerto Rican singer Bad Bunny. — AFP



Justin Bieber

## Sports

## Photo of the day



Brad Binder performs during the tenth stop of Moto GP Championship in Brno, Czech Republic on August 5, 2018. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Jealousy-free Lakers thriving with James, Davis double act

ORLANDO: LeBron James believes an absence of locker-room jealousy is the key to his successful partnership with Anthony Davis as the Los Angeles Lakers bear down on a record-equaling 17th NBA championship. Davis joined the Lakers last year from the New Orleans Pelicans, and has played a crucial role in guiding the team back to the NBA Finals for the first time in 10 years after missing the playoffs in 2018-2019.

On Wednesday, Davis excelled with 34 points, nine rebounds and five assists as the Lakers demolished the Miami Heat 116-98 in a game-one blowout. James, meanwhile, added 25 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists in a dominant performance against his former team to open the best-of-seven series. The James-Davis double act has provided the Lakers with the team's most potent axis since Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal were leading the team to three consecutive NBA titles between 2000 and 2002.

But while Bryant and O'Neal's relationship was undercut with tension, James says his partnership with Davis couldn't be more different. "We're not jealous of each other," James said on Thursday. "I think that's the best thing. In professional sports, you have guys that join forces to become alpha males. That's what they call them. Two guys that have been dominant in a specific sport on their own respective teams, and they get together and they talk about how dominant they can be and they talk about this is going to be this and that."

"I believe jealousy creeps in a lot. And that is the absolute contrary of what we are. We know who we are. We know what we're about. We want the best, seriously, every single day, both on and off the floor, for one another." Davis, 27, agreed, saying he had never once considered the possibility that locker room envy could destabilize the Lakers locker room. "The thought never crossed my mind when the trade happened," Davis said. "I'm not jealous of him. He's not jealous of me. I think it shows on the court." —AFP

## A's, Braves, Dodgers advance

## Kershaw dominates as Dodgers sweep away Brewers

CALIFORNIA: The Oakland Athletics rallied from an early deficit and used eight pitchers Thursday to post a 6-4 victory over the visiting Chicago White Sox in the decisive Game 3 of their American League wild-card series. Oakland's first postseason series win since 2006 advances the second-seeded AL West champion into the AL Division Series against the sixth-seeded Houston Astros. The White Sox were trying to advance in the postseason for the first time since winning the 2005 World Series.

Chicago's Luis Robert opened the scoring with a 487-foot home run, the longest at Oakland Coliseum in the Statcast era (since 2015). The White Sox pushed the lead to 3-0 after Robert's RBI single and Nomar Mazara's run-scoring double in the third inning. The A's rallied from the three-run deficit, using a four-run fourth and seizing the upper hand for good with a two-run fifth. Oakland starter Mike Fiers allowed five hits in 1 2/3 innings, and seven A's relievers worked in and out of trouble until Liam Hendriks struck out the side in the ninth inning.

## Dodgers 3, Brewers 0

Clayton Kershaw dominated over eight innings and Mookie Betts had a key two-run double as Los Angeles earned a spot in the National League Division Series with a victory over visiting Milwaukee. Austin Barnes had an RBI single among his two hits as the Dodgers swept the best-of-three wild-card series at Dodger Stadium. Chris Taylor also had a pair of hits for the Dodgers. With Kershaw's rocky playoff history looming over the proceedings, the veteran left-hander was in complete control, giving up just three hits with 13 strikeouts. Brewers

starter Brandon Woodruff (0-1) gave up three runs on five hits over 4 2/3 innings with nine strikeouts.

## Braves 5, Reds 0

Marcell Ozuna and Adam Duvall each hit eighth-inning, two-run homers as host Atlanta swept Cincinnati in their best-of-three National League wild-card series. Ronald Acuna Jr had three hits and rookie Ian Anderson struck out nine over six strong frames for the Braves. Atlanta snapped a 10-series playoff losing streak by winning its first since 2001 after Ozuna and Duvall both went deep late off Raisel Iglesias to put the game out of reach. This was a brief but historic set that opened Wednesday with a 1-0, 13-inning win by Atlanta. The Reds set a major league record by going scoreless in their first 22 innings of a playoff series.

## Padres 11, Cardinals 9

Fernando Tatis and Wil Myers hit two homers apiece and Manny Machado added a game-tying homer as host San Diego overcame a pair of four-run St. Louis leads to force a winner-take-all third game Friday in their National League wild-card series. Tatis (five RBIs) and Myers (four RBIs) became the first pair of teammates to hit two home runs apiece in a postseason game since Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in the 1932 World Series. The Padres also became the first team in postseason history to hit five homers from the sixth inning on. Padres starter Zach Davies yielded four runs in two innings while Cardinals starter Adam Wainwright allowed two runs in 3 1/3 innings. St. Louis used eight pitchers and San Diego used nine. —Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Austin Barnes #15 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a single in front of Jacob Nottingham #26 of the Milwaukee Brewers, to score Chris Taylor #3 and take a 1-0 lead, during the fifth inning in game two of the National League Wild Card Series on October 01, 2020. —AFP

## Belichick looks to solve the Mahomes riddle

LOS ANGELES: The greatest tactical brain in the NFL goes up against the league's hottest quarterback on Sunday when Bill Belichick's New England Patriots attempt to put the brakes on Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs. Just three weeks into the NFL season, Mahomes and the Chiefs have already lit up the league, establishing themselves as early favorites to successfully retain their Super Bowl crown. In a 34-20 rout of the Baltimore Ravens on Monday that was more one-sided than the final scoreline suggests, Mahomes was borderline unplayable as he unleashed the full range of his talents in a five-touchdown performance.

The prolific 25-year-old gunslinger is on track to shatter a range of records if he maintains the pace set during his first three full seasons in the NFL. In his first three games of the 2020 campaign, Mahomes has completed 67.8% of his passes, averaged just under 300 yards a game and accumulated nine touchdowns with no interceptions. In 34 regular season games since his debut as a rookie in 2017, Mahomes has amassed 10,310 passing yards and 85 passing touchdowns, more than any other quarterback in NFL history at the same stage.

It means that Belichick, the unparalleled master of designing gameplans capable of containing potent offenses, will have his work cut out for him at Arrowhead Stadium on Sunday. The famously taciturn Patriots coach was left impressed after studying the Chiefs quarterback's latest masterclass against the Ravens. "All the superlatives that have been said about him, I'd just be repeating them all," Belichick said this week when asked to assess Mahomes' display.

## 'A lot to stop'

"I mean they're really good," Belichick added. "It starts with an MVP quarterback and great offensive coordinator and head coach. They've got a lot of good skill players, a lot of experienced players. I think the backs are a big weapon for them, both in the running game and in the passing game. So, yeah, there's a lot to stop. We're going to have to play well collectively as a team." The Chiefs, one of seven teams remaining with a 100% record after three rounds, are



Quarterback Patrick Mahomes

meanwhile focusing on the dual threat posed by rejuvenated Patriots quarterback Cam Newton.

Newton, the 2015 NFL MVP, has been a revelation in the opening weeks of the season after replacing the departed Tom Brady. Chiefs head coach Andy Reid says Newton's formidable rushing and solid passing will cause problems for his defense. "Cam can do anything. Cam, he's been the passer, he's been the runner, he's been the whole deal," Reid said. "They have the run game that's tremendous. You also have a guy that can throw the football."

"I've played against Cam enough and seen him enough to know how explosive he is doing both," Reid is also expecting Belichick to have devised a plan to stymie the Chiefs' free-scoring offense. "Any Bill Belichick team is going to be well-coached in having answers," Reid said. In other games on Sunday, Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks take their unbeaten 3-0 record on the road against the Miami Dolphins while another surprise 3-0 team, the Buffalo Bills travel to Nevada to face the Las Vegas Raiders.

On Monday, Aaron Rodgers will look to extend Green Bay's unbeaten start to the season when the Packers host the Atlanta Falcons (0-3) at Lambeau Field. Rodgers has enjoyed a blistering start to the campaign so far, with 887 passing yards in three games where the Packers' offense has averaged just over 40 points per game. Week four is taking place after the season's first outbreak of coronavirus, with 11 members of the Tennessee Titans testing positive for COVID-19. The Titans game against the Pittsburgh Steelers scheduled for Sunday has been postponed until later in the season following the cluster of cases. —AFP

## Trio matches defending Champion Munoz for PGA Sanderson lead

WASHINGTON: Defending champion Sebastian Munoz of Colombia shared the lead with Americans Jimmy Walker, Charley Hoffman and Kevin Chappell after Thursday's opening round of the US PGA Sanderson Farms Championship. All four fired eight-under par 64s in the opening round at the Country Club of Jackson (Mississippi) to share the lead. Canada's Michael Gilgic and South African M.J. Daffue were on 65. Munoz won his first PGA title last year in Jackson with a par on the first playoff hole to defeat South Korea's Im Sung-jae.

The South American, trying to become the event's first repeat winner, birdied four of his first five holes, made his lone bogey at the ninth, then ran off four birdies in a row starting at the par-3 13th. "I just kind of tricked myself into thinking I was not the defending champion, just thinking it was another tournament at a course that I really like," Munoz said. "It has been working so far, so I'll keep doing that." Hoffman, a four-time PGA winner but never after leading or sharing the lead in any round, reeled off four birdies in a row starting at the par-5 third.

Chasing a fifth PGA title and first since 2016, Hoffman birdied the odd-numbered holes on the back nine, including a 13-foot birdie putt at the par-3 13th and a birdie putt from just inside 22 feet at the par-4 17th. "A few under par on this tract, I'm happy," Hoffman said. "To get 8-under is really good. I did everything well. I made some putts and that's a really good formula." Walker hasn't won since taking the 2016 PGA Championship for his sixth tour victory, having battled Lyme disease since 2017 and nagging elbow and shoulder pain this year, missing six of his past seven cuts.

"I haven't been playing very well, but I feel good. It just hasn't clicked yet," Walker said after a bogey-free day. "I'm seeing some putts go in." Chappell, whose only tour title came at



MISSISSIPPI: Sebastian Munoz of Colombia plays his shot from the 18th tee during the first round of the Sanderson Farms Championship at The Country Club of Jackson on October 01, 2020. —AFP

the 2017 Texas Open, started on the back nine and birdied four of his first six holes, then finished with back-to-back birdies. "I'm just out there trying to play good golf. Good golf from me is good enough to play at the highest levels out here," Chappell said. "The focus is just on enjoying it and playing good golf. The results will come." India's Anirban Lahiri and Australian Cameron Davis were in a pack sharing seventh on 66. —AFP

## Sports

# AC Milan survive in Europa after marathon shootout

## Tottenham romp to a 7-2 victory



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane (right) scores his team's sixth goal, his third, during the UEFA Europa League qualifying round football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Maccabi Haifa at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on October 1, 2020. — AFP

PARIS: AC Milan avoided being eliminated in a preliminary round in Europe for the first time on Thursday by equalizing with a penalty in the last seconds of extra time and then winning a 24-kick shootout 9-8. The seven-times European champions trailed going into added time in extra time but Toni Borekovic handled in the penalty area, earning his second yellow card and Hakan Calhanoglu converted from the spot to give Milan a 2-2 draw and set up an agonizing shootout. "You can't win without suffering," said Milan manager Stefano Pioli. Elsewhere, former European champions Red Star Belgrade, Celtic and PSV Eindhoven all advanced with away victories.

Tottenham romped to a 7-2 victory over Maccabi Haifa, Granada, competing in Europe for the first time, won 3-1 in Malmo but Basel let in

three goals in the last 18 minutes and lost 3-1 at home to CSKA Sofia while Bundesliga club Wolfsburg also blew a lead and went down 2-1 to AEK in Athens. In Northern Portugal, Belgian attacker Alexis Saelemaekers put Milan ahead with a low shot from the edge of the penalty area after 51 minutes. Francisco Gerdles leveled after 71 minutes with a first-time shot. In the first minute of extra time, Gelson put the home team ahead.

Milan had 24 strikes on goal but only leveled when Berokovic jumped to head a harmless lob, missed the ball and was struck on the arm. Calhanoglu drilled the spot kick in off the base of the post. Milan went first in the shootout. Both teams converted their first six attempts. In the next four rounds, Rio Ave spurned three chances to win; following a Milan miss with one of their own. In that

sequence, Nelson Monte hit both posts before his shot rolled away from goal, the two goalkeepers took consecutive kicks and both blasted over and Gerdles also hit a post.

### 'We were strong'

The sequence was broken when defender Simon Kjær converted for the second time in the shootout and then Gianluigi Donnarumma hurled himself high to his right to push away Nuno Santos' penalty. The Milan players celebrated with extraordinary energy. "It's difficult to control emotions," said Pioli. "We went from winning to losing in a moment and vice versa."

Milan were without a host of experienced players including Zlatan Ibrahimovic. "We were strong, especially mentally, with a very young team," said

Pioli. In London, Harry Kane scored a hat-trick for the hosts. Giovanni Lo Celso tripled his total of goals for the club with two in three minutes, Lucas Moura and Dele Alli, with his first goal since March, also scored. Celtic squeezed through 1-0 after Odsone Edouard prodded home a rebound midway through the second half away to FK in Sarajevo.

In Basel, the home team took the lead after 54 minutes when Arthur Cabral converted a penalty but Portuguese midfielder Tiago Rodrigues leveled after 72 minutes and then put CSKA ahead in the 88th minute. Ahmed Ahmedov added a third deep into added time. In Athens, Swiss striker Adir Mehmedi gave Wolfsburg the lead in first-half stoppage time but Portuguese midfielder Andre Simoes replied after 64 minutes and Iranian attacker Karim Ansarifard hit the winner four minutes into added time.—AFP

### News in brief

#### Barca sign 'fearless' Dest

MADRID: Barcelona have completed the signing of Ajax defender Sergino Dest, the clubs announced on Thursday. The deal will include Barca paying 21 million euros for the 19-year-old, with a further five million euros in variables. "The player will sign a contract for the next five seasons, through to the end of the 2024/25 season, with a buyout clause set at 400 million euros," Barca added in a statement. Dest will offer competition at right-back after Nelson Semedo was sold to Wolves. He made 35 appearances for Ajax last season, after making his debut in July. The United States international becomes Barcelona's fifth arrival of the transfer window, joining Miralem Pjanic, Trincao, Pedri and Matheus Fernandes in moving to Camp Nou. — AFP

#### Controversial Marathon shoes

LONDON: Kenyan duo Brigid Kosgei and Ruth Chepngetich will use controversial shoes worn by Eliud Kipchoge in the London Marathon on Sunday, Kenya's Kipchoge broke the two-hour barrier in an unofficial event in Vienna last October when he wore the platform Alphafly Next% shoes. While the shoes allowed by World Athletics' regulations, they are estimated to improve running economy by up to eight per cent. Kipchoge's record led to calls for the Nike shoes to be banned, but women's marathon world record holder Kosgei is adamant the runner makes the difference rather than the footwear. Asked which shoes she would be wearing in the her London Marathon title defence, 2019 champion Kosgei said: "The ones Kipchoge will use. —AFP

#### Carter wins NBA Award

NEW YORK: Vince Carter is still collecting hardware from the NBA, even after announcing his retirement in June. Carter, 43, was named as the recipient of the 2019-20 NBA Sportsmanship Award on Thursday. The award is designed to honor a player who best represents the ideals of sportsmanship on the court. Now an analyst, Carter received 143 first-place votes and 2,520 points in voting by NBA players. Brooklyn's Garrett Temple (1,746) and Oklahoma City's Steven Adams (1,632) finished second and third in the voting. Sacramento's Harrison Barnes (1,418), Detroit's Langston Galloway (1,244) and Memphis' Tyus Jones (1,016) were also finalists for the award. The six finalists were awarded 11 points for each first-place vote, nine for each second-place vote, seven for each third-place vote, five for each fourth-place vote, three for each fifth-place vote and one for each sixth-place vote. — Reuters

## Pirlo v Gattuso: World Cup-winners face off; Napoli test Juventus

MILAN: In a highly-anticipated first clash between two former stars of Italy and AC Milan now chasing coaching glory, Gennaro Gattuso's Napoli test their 'Scudetto' ambitions at Andrea Pirlo's Juventus on Sunday. Both won the 2006 World Cup for Italy and spent a decade as AC Milan teammates, winning two Serie A titles and two Champions League crowns together. It is a clash which Inter Milan coach Antonio Conte can't wait to see. "Juve v Napoli? I'll enjoy watching it," said Conte, who coached Pirlo as a player to the first three of Juventus's current run of nine Serie A titles.

"Napoli are underestimated a lot," continued Conte. "They are an excellent team, they are among the favorites for the Scudetto. They have a staff and a very good coach who will make life difficult for everyone." Gattuso begins his second season on the Napoli bench having taken over from Carlo Ancelotti

last December. The club finished seventh but qualified for the Europa League after winning the Italian Cup, their first trophy in six years.

Former Glasgow Rangers defensive midfielder Gattuso has been coaching since he hung up his boots in 2013, with the bulk of his footballing career spent at AC Milan. He had stints at Sion, Palermo, Crete and Pisa before returning to Milan where he trained the youth team before coaching the first-team for 18 months. The 42-year-old left Milan after the team missed the Champions League by just one point.

By contrast, Pirlo, 41, had no coaching experience before taking over from Maurizio Sarri, receiving his coaching diploma days before the season kicked off. "Well he's stuck now! That's the job," quipped Gattuso on hearing Pirlo's appointment. "He's lucky to be starting at Juventus, but this profession is one where a great playing career is not



ROME: Juventus' Italian coach Andrea Pirlo (right) embraces Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo at the end of the Italian Serie A football match Roma vs Juventus on September 27, 2020. — AFP

enough. You have to study, to work hard, and you don't get much sleep."

This season Gattuso has the ambitious task of winning a first Serie A title since the days of Napoli legend Diego Maradona in 1990. Pirlo is counting on extending Juventus's winning streak to 10 consecutive Serie A titles. Napoli are top of the Italian league table after two games with a win over Parma, and a 6-0 hammering of Genoa last time out.

Pirlo's Juventus is a team "under construction". They were held 2-2 by Roma last weekend.

As Napoli sit equal on maximum points with Inter Milan, Atalanta, Hellas Verona and AC Milan, Juve have four points. Napoli are awaiting the results of a second round of coronavirus tests as last week's opponents Genoa had 16 positive tests this week, including 12 players. — AFP

## Relentless Liverpool raise bar for rivals

LONDON: Liverpool are only three games into their Premier League title defense but their stuttering rivals must get their acts together if they are going to prevent an Anfield procession. Jurgen Klopp's side have answered any questions about their appetite for more success after winning the club's first English title for 30 years. Following their chaotic opening win against Leeds, Liverpool have reeled off a pair of impressive victories against Chelsea and Arsenal to extend their perfect start to the season.

A slightly below-par defensive effort against Leeds seems to have sharpened Liverpool's focus. They were back to their ruthless best as they dispatched big-spending Chelsea at Stamford Bridge before brushing aside Arsenal after the Gunners had the temerity to take the lead at Anfield. The additions of Thiago Alcantara and Diogo Jota have given Liverpool even more thrust and poise in midfield and attack—an ominous thought given the Reds scored 85 goals in 38 league games last season.

Ahead of their trip to Aston Villa on Sunday, Klopp insisted he expects Liverpool to be pushed



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's English midfielder Curtis Jones (left) and Arsenal's Swiss midfielder Granit Xhaka compete during the English League Cup fourth round football match between Liverpool and Arsenal at Anfield on October 1, 2020. — AFP

all the way to the finish line. "It's an open race, Chelsea will be there, United will be there, Arsenal, Tottenham, these teams will always be there," said Klopp. "There are tough moments for us and other teams and it's about how you react and are you doing it in the right way? — AFP

## Genoa's Serie A game postponed after 16 cases

MILAN: Italy's football league has again been hit by coronavirus with Genoa's today Serie A game postponed after 16 positive cases were detected at the club. The third-round match against Torino is the first in Serie A to be suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic since the championship started on September 19. "This postponement is logical. If it hadn't been decided who would have gone onto the pitch, myself and (sporting director Daniele) Faggiano?" said Genoa president Enrico Preziosi. "This virus has an insane spreading capacity. Unfortunately, it cannot be controlled."

In Italy, the first European country affected by the coronavirus, Serie A was first suspended in early March, returning mid-June to conclude the season. After Genoa's most recent tests, 12 players and four staff members are positive for COVID-19, two more than announced on Monday. Goalkeeper Mattia Perin and midfielder Lasse Schoene both missed Genoa's 6-0 Serie A loss at Napoli on Sunday, and 14 others have returned positive tests since the game, including Italian international striker Mattia Destro on Thursday. — AFP

**14** Dodgers sweep away Brewers; Athletics and Braves advance



**15** 'Insane spreading capacity:' Genoa's game postponed after 16 virus cases



**15** Tottenham romp to a 7-2 victory; AC Milan survive



## Messi, Fati inspire 10-man Barca

Barcelona earn big win at Celta despite first-half red card



VIGO: Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi (bottom) shoots during the Spanish league football match RC Celta de Vigo against FC Barcelona on October 1, 2020. — AFP

MADRID: Barcelona's new double-act delivered again as Lionel Messi and Ansu Fati led them to a 3-0 victory at Celta Vigo in La Liga on Thursday, despite Clement Lenglet being sent off in the first half. After scoring twice in Barca's opening game of the season, Fati struck early at a blustery Balaidos, only for Lenglet to collect a second yellow card in the 42nd minute for pulling back Denis Suarez.

But even down to 10, Ronald Koeman's side were undeterred and Messi made the lead more comfortable shortly after half-time, his weaving run and shot diverted in for an own-goal by Lucas Olaza. Celta hit the crossbar but never really threatened a comeback and when the ball spilled loose after another Messi dash in injury-time, Sergi Roberto made sure of the points.

"We did a great job," said Koeman. "I'm very proud

of this team, we worked hard, played with a lot of discipline with a man less and even then we made the best chances. I'm very, very happy." Victory makes it two wins out of two for Barcelona, who began by thrashing Villarreal 4-0 on Sunday yet this was arguably a more impressive performance, and not just because of the numerical disadvantage. Fati dazzled again. The 17-year-old continued his brilliant start to the season with another smart finish and he offered the kind of pace and penetration that this team so often lacked last term.

Philippe Coutinho, meanwhile, looked back to the Coutinho of old. Deployed in a more central attacking position in Koeman's 4-2-3-1 system, the Brazilian was aggressive without the ball and adventurous with it. He was unlucky not to score in the second half when his shot cannoned back off the post. Perhaps most

encouraging for Koeman was seeing the likes of Fati and Coutinho shine on a night when, in truth, Messi was not at his best, even if his display included two superb runs, both of which led to goals.

### Red card

Koeman welcomed Messi saying this week he wanted to put an end to his "disagreements" with the club while good performances like these are perhaps most likely to convince the Argentinean the club is moving forward. Celta, who only just escaped relegation last season, may not have offered the stiffest examination but they have an excellent record at home against Barca, who could easily have caved after Lenglet's red card.

Lenglet will be suspended for the game against his former club Sevilla on Sunday. Fati opened the scoring in

the 11th minute after Coutinho played a quick pass following a poor clearance from Jeison Murillo. Allowing the ball to roll across his body, Fati manoeuvred it away from Joseph Aidoo and with the outside of his right foot, steered inside the corner.

Gerard Pique was lucky not to be sent off, spared because Suarez was offside, but Lenglet paid the price for planting a hand on Suarez's shoulder as he looked to pull away. Messi helped to make it two after half-time, darting away from three Celta defenders before his shot took a cruel deflection off Olaza and crept inside the post. He thought he had scored again after Coutinho's shot came back to him off the woodwork and in the 95th minute, it was the 33-year-old's run and shot that fell to the feet of Sergi, who smashed in for a third. — AFP

## Somali women's basketball team defy prejudice

MOGADISHU: Whistles screech on the sea breeze as three female Somali coaches inspect a line of women in black and blue headscarves dribbling basketballs. It's not just the heat that makes it hard: the women are also braving the scorn of their families and the threat of attack by gunmen who think women should not play sport publicly.

"We cannot openly say we are going to play. We put our playing clothes and shoes in school bags and carry them that way to the field and we pretend we are going to school or university," said Fardawsa Omar Ahmed, 20, a university graduate who also plays volleyball and football. Her family used to discourage her from playing, but now they

accept it, she said. The women only play in compounds behind high concrete walls, which shield them from the gaze of the curious or those who might attack them.

One of the coaches, Suham Hassan Sobran, 40, played as a child before civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991. She restarted in 2009, when the Islamist Al Shabaab insurgency still controlled large swathes of the city. Now, Sobran and her two friends train some 30 other women on a court enclosed in Mogadishu's Hamar Jajab district office. A police checkpoint lies nearby - such checkpoints are often a target for al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab, which was driven out of Mogadishu in 2011, but still mounts frequent attacks. — Reuters

## Arsenal reach League Cup quarter-finals

LONDON: Mikel Arteta praised Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno for repaying his faith after the German's two penalty saves clinched a 5-4 shoot-out win over Liverpool that sent the Gunners into the League Cup quarter-finals. Arteta's side had already beaten Liverpool on penalties in the Community Shield earlier this season and they repeated the trick in the fourth round tie. Joe Willock scored the winning penalty after Leno saved from Divock Origi and Harry Wilson.

Adrian kept out Arsenal's third spot-kick from Mohamed Elneny, but Alexandre Lacazette, Cedric Soares, Ainsley Maitland-Niles and Nicolas Pepe all netted before Willock set up a last eight clash with Manchester City. Asked about facing City, where he worked as Pep Guardiola's assistant until December, Arteta said: "I was waiting and enjoying the victory and then we have to play Manchester City. "It is what is. There are



LIVERPOOL: Arsenal's German goalkeeper Bernd Leno saves a shot from Liverpool's Portuguese striker Diogo Jota during the English League Cup fourth round football match between Liverpool and Arsenal on October 1, 2020. — AFP

a lot of tough teams left in the competition." Arsenal, who haven't lifted the League Cup since 1993, have won three of their last four meetings with Liverpool in the space of just 11 weeks. Liverpool beat the Gunners 3-1 in the Premier League at Anfield on Monday,

but Arsenal took the spoils against the champions in the league in July and the Community Shield in August. Arsenal's disciplined display was another sign that the FA Cup winners are heading in the right direction under Arteta's astute leadership. — AFP