



**5** Cities under fire as Armenia, Azerbaijan fighting intensifies



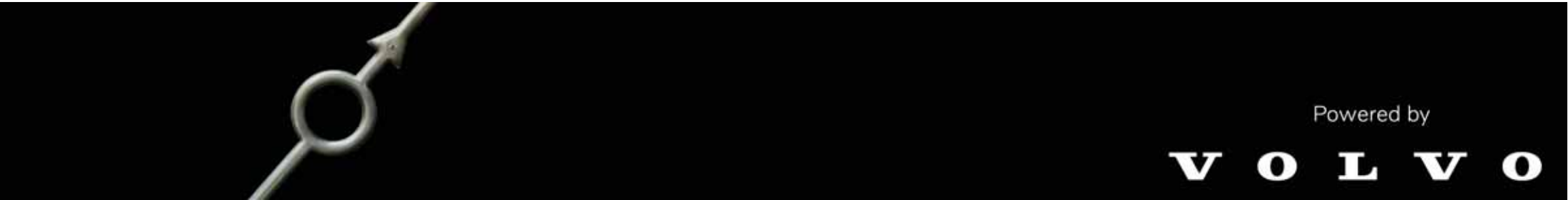
**10** Legacy of slavery endures in US Deep South county



**13** Teetotalers emerge from the shadows in Japan

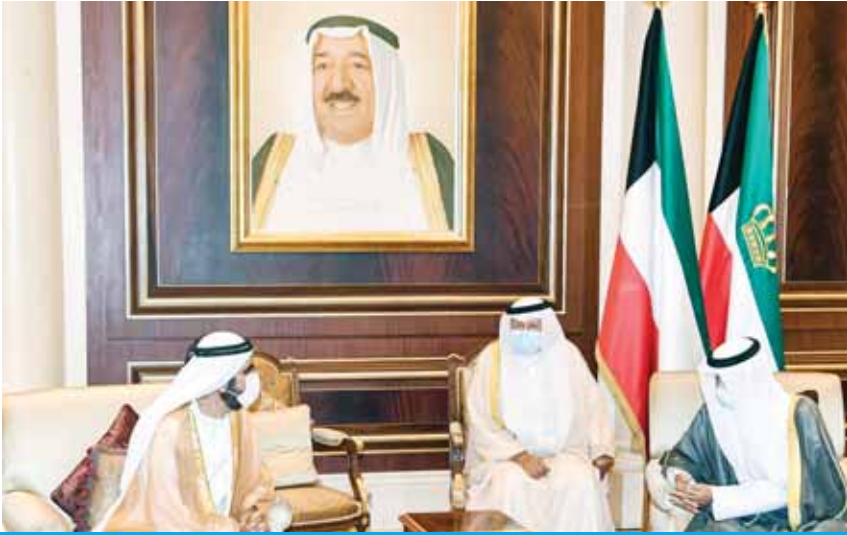


**16** Spurs hit 10-man Man Utd for six on Mourinho return



# World leaders, top officials meet Amir to pay respects

Prince of Wales, UAE VP, Qatari Father Amir, US and Iran ministers offer condolences



KUWAIT: (Left) Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, meets HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to offer condolences yesterday. (Right) UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum meets HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf to offer condolences yesterday. — Amiri Diwan

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met yesterday with world leaders and senior US, Iranian and Saudi officials, who separately paid respects over the passing of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf received late yesterday Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, who arrived in Kuwait to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir Sheikh Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum met HH the Amir to express his condolences. HH Sheikh Nawaf also received Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani yesterday, who offered condolences over the passing of late Amir Sheikh Sabah.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called Deputy Chief of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday to offer his condolences. Several Saudi regional governors travelled to Kuwait yesterday to do the same.

Continued on Page 2

## Trump makes calls, tweets from hospital



BETHESDA, Maryland: This White House hand-out photo released yesterday shows US President Donald Trump working in the Presidential Suite at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Saturday. — AFP

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has resumed making calls and tweeting from hospital, but doctors say his progress yesterday will be crucial to see if he develops a more severe form of COVID-19. Trump posted a video Saturday from the business suite in Walter Reed medical center near Washington, saying he was improving and would be "back soon" - but that the crucial coming days would be "the real test".

Yesterday, his deputy campaign manager Jason Miller told ABC he had spoken to Trump for a half-hour Saturday and that the president was eager for political news with the Nov 3 election less than a month away. He was even "cracking jokes," Miller said.

National security advisor Robert O'Brien also said Trump was doing well, telling CBS that any discussion of a potential transfer of power to Vice President Mike Pence - as has happened when other presidents underwent surgery or were sedated - was "not something that's on the table" for now.

Pence has been close to some of those testing positive but says he has regularly tested negative. As Trump has had to freeze or rework his campaign, the vice president is continuing a busy schedule of appearances. But serious questions linger over the timing and severity of the president's illness - and whether he might have exposed dozens of others to Covid-19 even after a close aide tested positive.

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## New academic year begins at Arabic schools

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The new 2020-2021 academic year began yesterday at public and private Arabic schools, with classes held remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic. At some schools, teachers conducted online classes from classrooms, while other teachers taught students from home. The new school year at non-Arabic private schools began weeks ago.

Many teachers, parents and students expressed their support for the new virtual learning system adopted

by the ministry of education, but there are concerns too, especially regarding primary and kindergarten students. "My feeling today is a mix of wariness and happiness because schools finally reopened. But I am not very convinced with online classes. I don't know whether my kids will be able to learn," said Mariam Al-Zankawi, a mother of four young children.

"I still prefer traditional schooling because kids are on the school campus and are instructed by teachers. They can learn quickly because they compete with their peers," she told Kuwait Times. "One of my children is in grade 1, so I know he will need help once in a while. I am working at a ministry, so that's a problem. But my eldest daughter is 21 and waiting to be employed, so she is supervising her brother during online classes."

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: Arham Al-Khateeb, an Arabic teacher at Fajr al-Sabah School in Salmiya, observes a moment of silence in memory of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah while conducting an online class in an empty classroom on the first day of school yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Pilgrims return to Makkah as umrah resumes

MAKKAH: Mask-clad Muslims circled Islam's holiest site along socially distanced paths yesterday, as Saudi authorities partially resumed the year-round umrah pilgrimage with extensive health precautions adopted after a seven-month coronavirus hiatus. Thousands of worshippers entered the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Makkah in batches to perform the ritual of circling the sacred

Kaaba, a cubic structure towards which Muslims around the world pray.

The umrah, the pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time, usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year but it was suspended in March due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is being revived in three phases, with Saudi Hajj Minister Mohammad Benten saying last week that 6,000 pilgrims per day would be allowed in the first stage to perform the umrah "meticulously and within a specified period of time".

"In an atmosphere of faith and with assured hearts... the first batch of pilgrims begin the pilgrimage in accordance with the precautionary measures"

Continued on Page 2



MAKKAH: Saudis and foreign residents circumambulate the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque complex as authorities partially resumed umrah for a limited number of pilgrims yesterday. — AFP

## Akshay admits Bollywood has drug 'problem'

NEW DELHI: Bollywood megastar Akshay Kumar acknowledged on Saturday a drug problem within India's film industry, following a growing narcotics probe surrounding the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Movie-obsessed India has been gripped by the saga around the death of Rajput, who

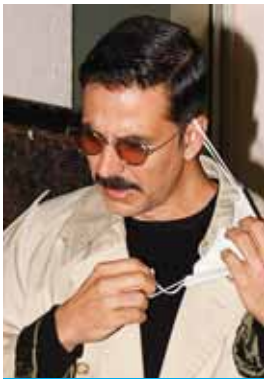
was found dead in June in his Mumbai apartment, with police saying he took his own life.

The investigation into the 34-year-old's death has expanded into a massive drugs probe, with his former girlfriend, actress Rhea Chakraborty, arrested earlier this month for allegedly buying cannabis for him. Indian media has also joined calls for a wider investigation into the multibillion-dollar film industry's so-called "drugs mafia".

In an almost four-minute video posted on his Twitter account on Saturday, Kumar called on the industry's fervent fans not to tar everyone in Bollywood with

the same brush. "With a hand on my heart, how can I lie and say that this (narcotics and drugs) problem doesn't exist in our industry," Kumar, 53, said in Hindi in a video watched more than 2.5 million times. "It exists in our profession the same way problems exist in every other profession. But to say that everyone in every profession is involved in all its problems would be wrong."

Several high-profile actresses including 34-year-old superstar Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh have been hauled in for questioning. — AFP



Akshay Kumar



## Local

# US administration's representative offers condolences to Kuwait Amir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets US Defense Secretary Mark Esper. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at the Amiri airport yesterday representative of the US administration and Defense Secretary Mark Esper who arrived in Kuwait to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Esper also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly

Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Kuwait Amir hosts Saudi officials offering condolences



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Prince Fahad bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Amir of Saudi Arabia's Tabuk Region. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a delegation of Saudi Amirs who arrived in the country to extend condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir hosted the Saudi officials at the Amiri Terminal. The entourage included Prince Fahad bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Amir of Tabuk Region, Prince Khaled bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Adviser of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Prince Meshal bin Majed bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Jeddah Governor, Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Ascer Amir, and Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Prince of Medina. The Saudi officials also expressed

consolations to National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as a number of Sheikhs. The delegation arrived shortly earlier to extend condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Upon their arrival at the Terminal, the Saudi officials were welcomed by the Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## World leaders, top officials...

Continued from Page 1

The late Amir balanced Kuwait's ties between large neighbors Saudi Arabia and Iran and kept a strong relationship with the United States, which led a coalition that ended Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait. "He will be remembered as a great man and a special friend to the United States," US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in comments tweeted by the US Embassy during his visit to extend condolences of the US administration. HH Sheikh Nawaf said he was glad that US President Donald Trump,

who has been hospitalized after being diagnosed with coronavirus, was "recovering and well". Esper thanked him for his "expression of concern".

In a divided region, Sheikh Sabah cultivated a role as a go-between and mediator, a status illustrated by yesterday's visitors. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf and his Kuwaiti counterpart to pay his respects. Zarif "congratulated them on the election of the new Amir of Kuwait and stressed the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran", the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement. Zarif also lauded the late Amir for fostering "moderation and balance". Iranian state media later carried a message by President Hassan Rouhani to HH the Amir: "I am confident that, as in the past, we will see a growing expansion of friendly and fraternal ties between the two countries." — Agencies

## Trump makes calls, tweets...

Continued from Page 1

A confusing timeline provided by Trump's advisors and doctors suggested that he met with more than 30 donors on Thursday in Bedminster, New Jersey even after learning that close aide Hope Hicks had tested positive - and just hours before he announced his own positive test.

All this came in a week when one poll - taken in the two days after a bruising presidential debate with Democratic rival Joe Biden but before news emerged of Trump's illness - showed his approval rating hitting a low point for the year. The Wall Street Journal/NBC survey gave Biden a significant 53-39 percent lead among registered voters. News of Trump's hospitalization has drawn

widespread sympathy but also fueled a sense among some that he was paying a price for months of consistently downplaying the severity of the pandemic. He mocked Biden's mask-wearing during their debate Tuesday, even as Trump family members in the audience violated rules requiring masks.

Miller said yesterday that Trump had urged him to convey a message to the American people about the importance of wearing masks and taking other precautions - a message many Democrats said rang hollow. "You can't just say we need to do something but we're going to let the virus run free. Now it has even run free in the White House," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told CBS.

In a video released Saturday, the 74-year-old Trump said: "I feel much better now," adding, "I think I'll be back soon." He has thanked those sending him get-well messages. Dozens of Trump supporters have gathered outside the hospital, many waving pro-Trump signs and banners. — AFP

## Qatar's Father Amir offers condolences to Kuwait Amir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Terminal Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and the accompanying delegation who offered condolences over the passing of late Amir Sheikh Sabah A-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Hamad also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq

Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Saudi CP condoles with Sheikh Mishal

KUWAIT: Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Deputy Chief of the National Guard, received on Saturday a phone call from

Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, expressing condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Saudi Crown Prince addressed prayers for Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's soul. Sheikh Mishal reciprocated, expressing deep gratitude to the Saudi Crown Prince for his brotherly sentiments, also voicing good wishes for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques (the Saudi King) and the Heir Apparent. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) and Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — KUNA



## New academic year begins at...

Continued from Page 1

Many families facing a similar problem have entrusted supervision of their children to their housemaids," Zankawi said.

"Before the start of classes today, the school conducted ample training for teachers and students, so I know everything will be okay. We are prepared, but we all have to understand the situation right now," she said. "We can use desktop computers, laptops or tablets for the online classes and must have a speedy Internet connection. So I bought devices for my three children. We were told to select a quiet and comfortable place and all distractions must be removed from the room. We were also told to guide our children if needed," added Zankawi.

Sarah Abdullah Al-Kandari, a single mother, said

her children are ready for online classes. She said since she is not working, she will be by the side of her students. "We are all experiencing a new and extraordinary era and things are not easy for parents, teachers and students, but we have to do what is right. My students are in high school and they know what to do," said Kandari, whose daughters are in grade 11 and 10 and son in grade 8.

"For me, it's a blessing, as I can help them because I will be at home all the time. It's also restful because usually I take them to school every day," she told Kuwait Times. Kandari's husband died a few years ago and she is raising her three children alone. "I am not working anymore, but all of my kids are supported by the Kuwaiti government," she added.

Classes for kindergarten will be held from 8 am to 9:30 am, with four classes daily of 15 minutes each. Elementary students will have four 30-minute classes for each subject from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Intermediate students will have four 30-minute classes daily from 8 am to 10:30 am, while secondary students will also have four classes daily from 10:40 am to 1:30 pm.

## Pilgrims return to Makkah as...

Continued from Page 1

laid out," the hajj ministry said on Twitter. A raft of precautions have been adopted to ward off any outbreaks, according to state media. The revered Black Stone in the eastern corner of the Kaaba - which it is customary but not mandatory to touch during the pilgrimage - will be out of reach, and the Grand Mosque is to be sterilized before and after each group of worshippers.

Each group of 20 or 25 pilgrims are to be accompanied by a health worker and medical teams will be on the ground in case of an emergency, Benteen said. Thermal sensors have been installed to measure the body temperature of the pilgrims, Makkah authorities said. The safety, comfort and health of the pilgrims is a priority for the kingdom, the general presidency for the affairs of the two holy mosques said, calling them the "guests of Allah".

Under the second stage from Oct 18, the num-

ber of umrah pilgrims will be increased to 15,000 per day. Visitors from abroad will be permitted in the third stage from Nov 1, when capacity will be raised to 20,000. A maximum of 40,000 people, including other worshippers, will be allowed to perform prayers at the mosque in the second stage and 60,000 in the third, according to the interior ministry.

The decision to resume the pilgrimage was taken in response to the "aspirations of Muslims home and abroad", the ministry said last month. It said the umrah will 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.

At midnight, tens of registered pilgrims wearing face masks prepared to enter the Grand Mosque in small groups. "This year has been heavy and full of tragedies. I am praying for God's forgiveness for all mankind," said Eman, a Pakistani national who resides in Saudi Arabia, accompanied by her daughter. Some enjoyed a respite from the usual crowding. "This is the easiest umrah I have ever made," said a Saudi who identified himself as Abu Fahd. — Agencies



## Local

# Iranian presidency's representative offers condolences to Kuwait Amir



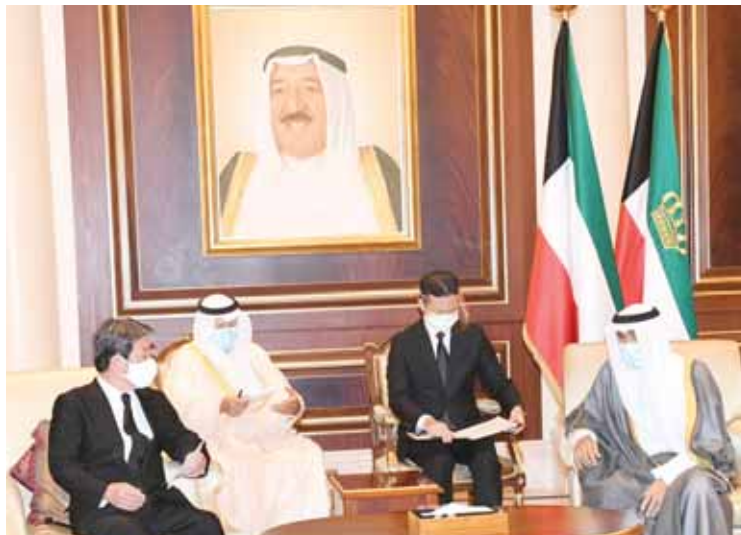
KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Iran's Foreign Minister Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at the Amiri Terminal yesterday Representative of the Iranian President Dr Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif who offered condolences on the passing of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Zarif also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-

Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Japan foreign minister offers condolences

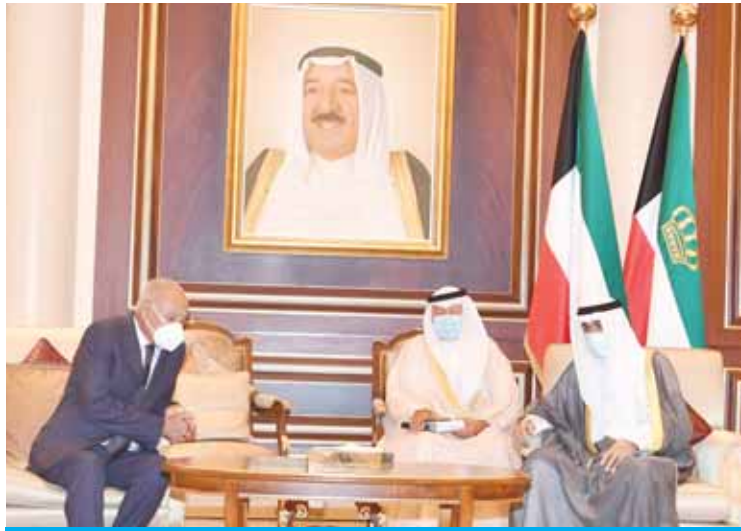
KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Terminal Representative of the Japanese government and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and the accompanying delegation. Motegi is in Kuwait to offer condolences over the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. — KUNA

## Arab League Secretary General offers condolences

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Terminal Secretary General of the Arab League Ahmad Aboul-Gheit. Aboul-Gheit and the accompanying delegation are here to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The top Arab League official also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Secretary General of the Arab League Ahmad Aboul-Gheit. — KUNA

## Sudanese figure offers condolences to Kuwait Amir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Head of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at the Amiri Terminal yesterday Head of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the accompanying delegation. Burhan is in Kuwait to offer condolences over the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Burhan also offered condolences to Speaker

of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Comoros president offers condolences



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets President of the Comoros Azali Assoumani. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Terminal President of the Comoros Azali Assoumani and the accompanying delegation who arrived to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. President Assoumani also offered condolences to Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Iraq parliament speaker offers condolences



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Iraq's Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mohammad Al-Halbousi. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at the Amiri Terminal yesterday Iraq's Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mohammad Al-Halbousi and the accompanying delegation. Halbousi offered condolences on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Iraqi official also offered condolences to Speaker of the National

Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Kuwait Amir receives former Lebanese Premier



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets former Prime Minister of Lebanon Saad Al-Hariri. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Amiri Terminal former Prime Minister of Lebanon Saad Al-Hariri and the accompanying delegation. Hariri was in Kuwait to convey his condolences over the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Hariri also offered condolences to Speaker of the National

Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA

## Palestinian PM offers condolences to Kuwait Amir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Palestinian Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Dr Mohammad Shtayyeh. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at the Amiri Terminal yesterday representative of the Palestinian Presidency, Prime Minister, and Minister of Interior Dr Mohammad Shtayyeh and the accompanying delegation. Shtayyeh is in Kuwait to offer condolences over the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Shtayyeh also offered condolences to Speaker of

the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other figures. — KUNA



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# Kuwait, Japan foreign ministers hold meeting

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Motegi Toshimitsu held a Kuwait-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuwait yesterday.

Minister Motegi expressed his condolences on the passing of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, noting that he had played an important role for the peace and stability of the Middle East and the international community and that his demise is a tremendous loss for the international community as well. In response, Minister Sheikh Ahmad expressed his appreciation to Minister Motegi for his words of condolence.

Minister Motegi stated that he hopes to develop a comprehensive partnership on the basis of the achievements of the two countries to date. Minister Sheikh Ahmad responded that Kuwait values its relationship with Japan and seeks to further develop relations.

Minister Motegi noted that Kuwait, as a country that values regional balance and contributes to regional stability, is an important partner for Japan. Also, Minister Motegi conveyed that Japan's policy to make proactive diplomatic efforts for easing tensions in the Middle East and stabilizing the situation is unflinching even under



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Motegi Toshimitsu. — KUNA

the Suga Cabinet. Minister Sheikh Ahmad appreciated the diplomatic efforts of Japan. Both ministers exchanged views regarding the situation of the Gulf and the Middle East including the Middle East Peace Process, and confirmed that they will continue to cooperate closely for the peace and stability in the Middle East.

The ministers also discussed the situation of East Asia including the East China Sea, the South China Sea and the situation regarding North Korea. In this context, Minister Motegi asked for understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue and obtained the support of Minister Sheikh Ahmad.

## Thailand's king offers condolences

**KUWAIT:** Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn extended his deepest condolences on Saturday over the passing of Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, remembering his "profound contributions" towards national development. In a cable the Thai monarch sent to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he praised the enduring legacy the late Kuwaiti leader has left behind. Replying to the Thai king, His Highness the Amir thanked him for his sincere sentiments, wishing him the best of health and prosperity.

### Duterte pays respects

His Highness the Amir also received a message of condolences from Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on the demise of the late Amir. The Philippine president praised the late Amir for boosting bilateral relations. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf sent him a message in reply, expressing deep gratitude for his solace on the grave event, also addressing good wishes for him and his nation.

### Chad sends condolences

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolences from Chad President Marshal Idriss Deby Itno over the demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In turn, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent a reply cable thanking the president for his kind words and sentiments.

### Ethiopia pays tribute

His Highness the Amir also received a cable of condolences from Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde on Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's demise. In the cable, the Ethiopian leader expressed heartfelt sympathies over the death of the late Amir, lauding his outstanding contributions to boosting peace and stability on both regional and international levels. She prayed to Allah Almighty to grant solace and patience to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people. In reply, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the Ethiopian leader, expressing appreciation for her sincere sympathies and wishing her everlasting good health.

### Consolation from Paraguay

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf received a cable of condolences from Paraguay President Mario Abdo Benitez on the demise of the late Amir. In turn, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf addressed in a cable to Paraguay leader his thanks, expressing gratitude for the sincere consolations on the painful event. — KUNA

## Foreign Minister receives UK defense secretary

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received UK Secretary of State for Defense Ben Wallace and the delegation accompanying him yesterday. Sheikh Ahmad hosted secretary Wallace and his entourage at the foreign Ministry's reception Diwan on the sidelines of their visit to the country to pay respects for the passing of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Ahmad expressed gratitude for Wallace's visit and paying homage for Kuwait's loss, reflecting the strong ties between both countries. Topics of common interests and the latest development of the region and the rest of the world were discussed during their meet. Present at the meeting was Deputy Chief of the General Staff Lt Gen Khaled Al-Sabah, the Foreign Minister's Assistant for European Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al-Khubaizi, Deputy Assistant for the Office of Foreign



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets UK Secretary of State for Defense Ben Wallace. — KUNA

Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Logani, and a number of high ranking MPs. Also attending were Britain's Ambassador Michael Davenport and the Embassy's Defense Attache, Captain Paul Mulvaney of the Royal Navy. — KUNA

## Kuwait FM hosts US Defense Secretary

**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah met yesterday US Administration's representative Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and his accompanying delegation. Esper and the delegation were in Kuwait to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the meeting, the US official expressed deepest sympathy and sorrow over the loss of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah. Esper and Sheikh Dr Ahmad also discussed issues of common concerns and latest regional and international developments. A number of Kuwaiti and American officials also attended the meeting. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper. — KUNA

## Kuwait FM hosts Iranian counterpart

**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah met yesterday the visiting Representative of the Iranian Presidency, Foreign Minister Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif. Zarif was in Kuwait to offer condolences on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the meeting, the Iranian envoy expressed deepest sympathy and sorrow over the loss of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah. Zarif and Sheikh Dr Ahmad also discussed issues of common concerns and latest regional and international developments. A number of Kuwaiti and Iranian officials also attended the meeting. — KUNA

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## Amir receives condolences from German Chancellor

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Saturday a condolence cable from German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In the cable, Merkel expressed sincere condolences to His Highness the Amir, noting Sheikh Sabah's prominent role in resolving many conflicts as well as praising the outstanding contributions with his wisdom for strengthening relations between Germany and Kuwait. In response to the cable, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf expressed his appreciation for the sincere condolences and wished her good health as well as for Germany to progress and prosper.

### Netherlands sends condolences

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a cable of condolences from King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander on the demise of the late Amir. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf addressed a cable in reply to the Dutch king, expressing gratitude for the sincere consolations on the painful event.

### Italy mourns

Italian President Sergio Mattarella expressed condolences on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah, saying that Kuwait has lost "a heedful and farsighted leader that has allowed the country, in all these years, to transform itself into a modern nation and increasingly focused on regional integration." He added that His Highness Sheikh Sabah was able "with wisdom and determination" to make Kuwait a central actor for the perseverance of dialogue and stability in the region and in our common neighborhood. Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Luigi Di Maio expressed "deep sadness" on the passing of His Highness

Sheikh Sabah, describing him as a "Head of State of rare personal and political characteristics." "The great wisdom and efforts made to lead the Gulf region towards a peaceful and stable future will remain in our memories, through a patient work of mediation," the minister said. "In our memories will remain also the contribution that he was keen to make to our bilateral relations politically, economically and culturally, consolidating the traditional relations of friendship and appreciation that bind our two countries."

### Swiss President consoles

His Highness the Amir also received a cable of consolation from President of the Swiss Confederation Simonetta Sommaruga on the demise of the late Amir. She praised the late Amir for his noticeable efforts in the Arabian Gulf and his prominent role for boosting peace in the region. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf addressed a cable in reply to the Swiss president voicing gratitude for her sincere sentiments of consolation and expressing good wishes for her and her nation.

### Bosnia offers tribute

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir received a cable of condolences from member of the Bosnian Presidency Zeliko Komsic on

the demise of the late Amir. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf addressed a cable in reply to Komsic, expressing gratitude for the sincere consolations on the sad event.

### Belarus sends cable

Moreover, His Highness the Amir got a cable of condolences from Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko over the passing of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. In the cable, President Lukashenko expressed sincere sympathies to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people over the late Amir's demise. His Highness the Amir sent a cable in reply, thanking President Lukashenko for the sincere sympathies and wishing him everlasting good health.

### Tatarstan pays tribute

In addition, His Highness the Amir received a cable of condolences from Tatarsatn's President Rustam Minikhanov on Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's passing. In the cable, President Minikhanov voiced heartfelt sympathies to His Highness the Amir over the death of the late Amir, extolling his path that was full of giving. In reply, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to President Minikhanov, expressing appreciation for sincere sympathies, and wishing him everlasting good health and his country further progress and prosperity. — KUNA

## Nepal President offers condolences

**KATHMANDU:** President of Nepal Bidya Devi Bhandari sent a message of condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the passing of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In the message, President Bhandari extended heartfelt condolences to the members of Al-Sabah family, the government and people of Kuwait. President Bhandari said that the late Amir was a visionary statesman who made significant contribution for peace, progress and pros-

perity of his people and played an important role in fostering understanding and cooperation in the region.

Separately, Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli also sent a message of condolences to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait, expressing deep sadness on the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. In the message, Prime Minister Oli stated that Nepal has lost a true friend and well-wisher with the demise of the late Amir.





Kyrgyzstan holds election marked by voter disillusion and party splits

Thousands protest coronavirus curbs in Germany over weekend

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# Armenia-Azerbaijan fighting intensifies

## Azerbaijan's second-largest city bombarded

**STEPANAKERT, Azerbaijan:** Armenian and Azerbaijani forces exchanged rocket fire as fighting intensified over Nagorno-Karabakh yesterday, with the breakaway region's capital and Azerbaijan's second-largest city bombarded.

Armenia said that Nagorno-Karabakh's main city Stepanakert, which has been under artillery fire since Friday, was hit again yesterday and AFP journalists said there were regular explosions and clouds of black smoke rising in parts of the city. Azerbaijan's defense ministry said Ganja, a city of more than 330,000 in western Azerbaijan, was also "under fire", while Armenian-backed separatist forces claimed to have destroyed an airbase there.

The two sides accused each other of targeting civilian areas, as the conflict appeared to be widening a week after heavy fighting broke out in the decades-old dispute over the ethnic-Armenian region.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have resisted international calls for a ceasefire and clashes have intensified in recent days, with both sides claiming victories on the front and saying they are inflicting heavy losses.

Sirens were sounding and explosions were heard at regular intervals in Stepanakert, where residents were taking shelter including several families in the basement of a church. Armenia's foreign ministry said Stepanakert and the Karabakh town of Martakert were under rocket attack and accused Azerbaijani forces of "the deliberate targeting of the civilian population".

It said the Azerbaijani air force was also involved. Drones could be heard flying over Stepanakert.

Azerbaijan said Ganja was under fire, including from areas outside of Karabakh. "Armenian forces struck Ganja with rockets from Armenian terri-

tory," said Hikmet Hajiyev, an advisor to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. He said Armenian forces had also used heavy artillery and rockets against the towns of Terter and Goradiz in Azerbaijan.

### 'Decisive moment'

Karabakh's separatist forces said they had targeted and destroyed an airbase in Ganja, but Baku denied this as a "provocation" and said civilian infrastructure and housing had been hit. Azerbaijan's ally Turkey accused Armenia of "targeting civilians" in Ganja and reiterated support for its fellow Turkic and Muslim country as "one nation, two states".

Karabakh leader Arayik Harutyunyan warned that it would now consider "military facilities in Azerbaijan's big cities" as legitimate targets. "I call on the residents of these cities to immediately leave," Harutyunyan said in a post on Facebook. Harutyunyan announced on Saturday that he was heading to the front to join the fighting. Azerbaijani officials claimed Sunday that he had been "seriously wounded" while in a bunker hit by bombing, but his office denied this.

Azerbaijan claims to have made gains in Karabakh in recent days, with its defense ministry saying that 14 settlements have been taken as well as a strategically important plateau.

In an address to the country on Saturday, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Armenians were facing a "decisive moment" and called for the nation to come together. Armenia on Saturday announced the deaths of 51 more separatist fighters, taking the number of reported fatalities on both sides above 240, including more than 30 civilians. Azerbaijan on Sunday said two more civilians had been killed in shelling on the southern town of Beylagan, where a journalist working



GANJA, Azerbaijan: Emergency personnel work in a damaged area of this city following a rocket strike yesterday during ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region. —AFP

with AFP saw residents picking through the rubble of destroyed homes. "I was baking bread when I heard explosions, I opened the door and saw that bombs were falling right into the yard," said one woman, showing journalists the blown-out windows and partially collapsed roof of her home.

### Praying for peace

In Armenia's majority-Christian capital Yerevan, residents gathered in churches for services Sunday to pray and light candles. "The situation in the country is very critical," Aytsemik Melikyan told AFP outside the church Saint Sarkis Church. "I came to ask God for peace, for our country and our soldiers."

Russia, the United States and France—who co-chair a mediation group that has failed to bring about a political resolution to the conflict—have called for an immediate halt to the fighting.

Armenia has said it is "ready to engage" with mediators but Azerbaijan—

which considers Karabakh under Armenian occupation—says Armenian forces must fully withdraw before a ceasefire can be brokered. Karabakh's declaration of independence from Azerbaijan during the collapse of the Soviet Union sparked a war in the early 1990s that claimed 30,000 lives.

Talks to resolve the conflict have made little progress since a 1994 ceasefire agreement.

The breakaway province is not acknowledged as independent by any country—including Armenia—and Karabakh said Saturday that international recognition was "the only way towards peace and security in the region". Armenia has accused Turkey of dispatching mercenaries from Syria and Libya to the fighting—an allegation confirmed and denounced by Russia and France.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group, says more than 70 Turkey-backed fighters have been killed in the

## New Caledonia rejects independence

**NOUMEA, France:** The French South Pacific territory of New Caledonia narrowly rejected independence in a referendum yesterday, the archipelago's high commission said after a partial count of the votes. The anti-independence vote fell to 53.3 percent, according to the 70 percent of ballots counted, down from 56.7 percent in a previous referendum two years ago, it said.

Turnout was high at 85.5 percent, the commission said, reflecting enthusiasm of voters who had formed long queues to cast their ballots. Yesterday's referendum was part of a carefully negotiated decolonization plan agreed in 1998, which ended a deadly conflict between the mostly pro-independence indigenous Kanak population and the descendants of European settlers.

Another referendum can be held by 2022 so long as the poll is requested by at least a third of the local legislature.

Enthusiasm was high and authorities said turnout was about 80 percent an hour before voting ended—a full six points higher than in its first independence referendum held in 2018 — leaving people to form long queues to cast their ballots.

"I waited 45 minutes. It's very important for me to vote," said retiree Germaine Le Demezet in the capital Noumea. "I have children and grandchildren here, the future needs to be clear and we need to know what's going to happen to us."

It will take several hours for the votes to be tallied and the result to be announced. Yesterday's referendum is part of a carefully negotiated de-colonization plan agreed in 1998, which ended a deadly conflict between the mostly pro-independence indigenous Kanak population and the descendants of European settlers in the 1980s. That violence culminated in a bloody, drawn-out hostage crisis in 1988 that saw 19 separatists killed on one side, and six police and special forces on the other.

New Caledonians voted against independence in the referendum two years ago, with "no" securing about 57 percent. But the result marked a shift towards pro-independence sympathies, raising campaigners' hopes that this time it could manage to break free. —AFP

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## International

# Thousands protest coronavirus curbs in Germany over weekend

## India seeks up to 500 million virus vaccine doses by July

**BERLIN:** Thousands of demonstrators in southern Germany protested against coronavirus restrictions over the weekend, police said yesterday, although organizers failed to mobilize enough people for a planned human chain around Lake Constance.

Thousands of counter-demonstrators in Constance also turned out to show support for the government's measures to contain the coronavirus while also protesting against right-wing supporters in the other group, police said. Overall, police counted between 10,500 and 11,000 people taking part in the different demonstrations on Saturday and the two-day protests continued on Sunday with sunny weather likely to draw in further participants, a police spokesman said.

"So far, the situation is calm," the police spokesman added.

Organizers of the protests against coronavirus curbs had initially hoped to mobilize more than 200,000 people. Local authorities had imposed restrictions such as respecting social distancing to avoid further infections. They also banned the use of Germany's imperial Reichsflagge, a symbol used by neo-Nazis and other far-right groups as an alternative to the forbidden swastika flag.

The marches have attracted a mixed crowd of civil rights activists and people who oppose vaccinations, as well as neo-Nazis and members of far-right groups including the opposition party Alternative for Germany (AfD).

During mass marches against coronavirus curbs in Berlin in late August, protesters stormed the steps of

the Reichstag parliament building, some of them holding far-right Reichsflagge. The images went around the world and were condemned by leading German politicians. Germany so far has managed the COVID-19 pandemic relatively well by keeping infections and deaths low compared to other European countries during the first wave in spring. But infection numbers are rising again and authorities are mulling further restrictions which could limit public life and slow down the economic recovery after Germany suffered its worst recession on record in the first half of the year.

Meanwhile, India hopes to receive up to 500 million doses of coronavirus vaccine by July to inoculate about 250 million people, health minister Harsh Vardhan said yesterday, as infections in the world's second-worst affected country continue to surge.

India's has recorded some 6.55 million infections, with 75,829 in the past 24 hours, while

COVID-19-related deaths have totaled 101,782, health ministry data showed. "There is a high-level expert body going into all aspects of vaccines," Vardhan wrote on Twitter. "Our rough estimate and the target would be to receive and utilize 400 to 500 million doses covering (200 million-250 million) people by July 2021." Serum Institute of India and private companies have been teaming up with organizations from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to US drug developer Novavax Inc in a scramble to secure vaccines for the country of 1.3 billion people.

### India records 6.55 million infections



**KONSTANZ:** People take part in a protest against masks and virus restrictions during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic (novel coronavirus) in Konstanz, southern Germany yesterday. —AFP

India has set up committees to look into various aspects of the vaccine supply chain, including availability timelines for various vaccines, while obtaining commitments from manufacturers to ensure the maximum doses are available, Vardhan said. He said the federal government is committed to taking all measures to ensure "fair and equitable" distribution of vaccines once they are ready.

The South Asian nation, second only to the United States in caseload, has scope for higher infections as a large chunk of the population remains unexposed to the virus, a survey showed on Tuesday.

To prioritize the distribution of coronavirus vaccines, the health ministry aims to prepare a list of key personnel, such as frontline health workers, by the end of the month. —Reuters

## Sufi pilgrims begin to converge on Senegal's holy city

**DAKAR, Senegal:** Hordes of pilgrims in Senegal have begun to converge on the holy city of Touba, ahead of a giant traditional celebration tomorrow known as the Grand Magal, despite the threat of coronavirus.

The religious festival of the Mouride brotherhood, a powerful Sufi Muslim order, celebrates the date French colonial authorities exiled its leader Sheikh Amadou Bamba, known as Serigne Touba.

It is one of the most important dates on the religious calendar in Senegal, and usually attracts hundreds of thousands of worshippers from across the West African country. But this year's Magal marks the first mass festival of its kind in Senegal since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, raising fears of a potential superspreader event. Religious authorities are confident they have the situation in control, however.

"We can be reassured because Serigne Touba will erect a shield between the disease and us," the brotherhood's spokesman told local media this month.

## Suspected Russian hitman on trial over Berlin killing

**BERLIN:** A Russian man goes on trial Wednesday accused of assassinating a former Chechen commander in a Berlin park on Moscow's orders, a case that has cast a pall over ties between Russia and Germany. Vadim K, also known as Vadim S, stands accused of gunning down a Georgian national identified by German authorities as 40-year-old Tornike K, in Kleiner Tiergarten park on August 23 last year. German prosecutors, who do not release the full names of suspects ahead of criminal trials, have said the contract killing was carried out at the behest of Russia, prompting Berlin to expel two Russian diplomats. Moscow has denied the allegations, taking tit-for-tat action against Berlin.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said in May that the killing "disrupts a cooperation of trust" between Berlin and Moscow and some analysts have suggested the murder has led to a change in her approach towards Russia. The German leader has always stressed the importance of keeping dialogue open with her Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, but she has sharpened her tone in recent months. The trial comes at a time of European anger with Russia over the poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who is receiving treatment in the German capital. Germany has said that

In contrast to previous celebrations, the Mourides will hold no official ceremony this year, and will stream conferences online. Worshippers will also have to wear facemasks, and queue in single file to enter the lavish Great Mosque of Touba.

More than 90 percent of Senegal is Muslim and most of the faithful follow Sufi brotherhoods, which retain considerable economic and political clout in the nation of 16 million people.

### Holy city

The Magal-when means 'celebration' in the Wolof language-celebrates the life and teachings of Sheikh Amadou Bamba, the Mouride Brotherhood's founder who died in 1927. A peaceful opponent of colonialism, French authorities exiled him to Gabon from 1895 to 1902, and then to Mauritania from 1903 to 1907 before he was allowed to return to Senegal, where he was placed under house arrest at his home in the north of the country.

The religious leader founded the holy city of Touba, in the centre of Senegal, in 1888. It has since grown to be Senegal's second-largest after the capital Dakar, with some 1.5 million inhabitants.

As well as being a religious festival, the Magal has a political dimension too, with senior politicians often making an appearance. Health officials will be keeping a close eye on the huge crowds this year, but the government has endorsed the brotherhood's ability to manage the event.

tests it carried out found that the 44-year-old was poisoned with the Soviet-era deadly nerve agent Novichok. France and Sweden have corroborated the finding, which activists say puts responsibility for the murder attempt squarely on Moscow. Merkel's government has not ruled out pushing for sanctions from the European Union over the attack.

### FSB link?

With tensions running high, Wednesday's trial will likely be closely scrutinized for details about Moscow's involvement. Investigative website Bellingcat named the suspect as 54-year-old Vadim Krasikov, who grew up in Kazakhstan when it was part of the Soviet Union before moving to the Russian region of Siberia. He received training from Russian intelligence service FSB and was part of its elite squad, the website said. Days before the killing, he had posed as a tourist, visiting sights in Paris including the Eiffel Tower before travelling to Warsaw, according to a separate report in Der Spiegel weekly. He also toured the Polish capital before vanishing on August 22, without checking out from his hotel, the report said. A day later, riding a bicycle in Berlin's Kleiner Tiergarten park, the suspect approached the victim from behind, firing a Glock 26 pistol equipped with a silencer at the side of Tornike K's torso, German prosecutors said. After the victim fell to the ground, the accused fired another two shots at his head that killed the Georgian on the spot.

He was seen throwing a bag into the nearby Spree river from where police divers later recovered the Glock handgun, a wig and bicycle. The suspect was arrested after the killing, which took place just minutes

Biden is reportedly in relatively good health at 77 he is the oldest Democratic nominee ever. Here is a look at some of the potential scenarios in the event a nominee exits the race:

### Delay the presidential election?

Unlikely. Congress set the date for the election and this one has already been scheduled, as per US law for the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Both the Republican-controlled Senate and the Democratic-majority House of Representatives would have to agree on a postponement. "I don't see it happening," said Capri Cafaro, a former Democratic member of the Ohio state senate who teaches at American University. "It is unlikely a Democratic majority would want to postpone the elec-



**Hordes of pilgrims in Senegal have begun to converge on the holy city of Touba, ahead of a giant traditional celebration on Tuesday known as the Grand Magal, despite the threat of coronavirus.**

"If your recommendations are followed to the letter, we can hope for a risk-free Magal," local press reported Senegalese President Macky Sall as telling the current Mouride leader in Touba on Monday.

Health Minister Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr—who is due in Touba on Thursday—has also said he was "reassured," adding that he will deploy 5,000 ministry officials to the city. Senegal's Sufi brotherhoods initially cancelled gatherings in March, when the coronavirus pandemic reached the country. —AFP



**BERLIN:** This file photo taken on Aug 23, 2019 shows forensic experts of the police securing evidences at the site of a crime scene in Berlin's Moabit district, where a man of Georgian origin was shot dead. —AFP

away from the chancellery and the German parliament. Investigators later found his mobile phone and a return flight ticket for Moscow in August 25 in his hotel room in Warsaw, Spiegel reported.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had described the victim as a "fighter, very cruel and bloody" who had fought with separatists against Russian forces in the Caucasus and also been involved in bombing attacks on the Moscow metro. Moscow also said it had been seeking his extradition. Named as Zelimkhan Khangoshvili by German media, the victim had survived two assassination attempts in Georgia. Following that, he sought asylum in Germany and had spent the past years in the country. —AFP

tion." Even during the Civil War between the North and South, the 1864 election was held as scheduled with Abraham Lincoln winning another term.

### Can a candidate be replaced?

Trump's Republican Party and Biden's Democratic Party both have rules outlining how to fill a vacancy on the presidential ticket should one occur. In the case of Trump's GOP, the 168 members of the Republican National Committee could vote to select the replacement.

The RNC could also reconvene its national convention of more than 2,500 delegates to select a new candidate but time pressure probably makes this unworkable. A simple majority would be all that is needed to choose a new

## Ethiopia's Oromo celebrate tense thanksgiving

**BISHOFTU, Ethiopia:** Thousands of people from the Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, celebrated their thanksgiving festival in Bishoftu city amid tight security yesterday after the authorities said they had seized weapons and foiled attacks in previous days. The Irreecha festival has been the scene of violent protests before by the Oromo, who have long complained of political exclusion. Recent unrest, including the killing of a popular singer in June and the arrest of prominent Oromo politicians, heightened concern of violence at the two-day festival.

On the eve of the festival, forces from both regional and federal police, as well from the army, descended on Bishoftu in large numbers. There were at least 10 checkpoints by the main lakeside site of the celebrations, and only those with special badges could enter.

"Irreecha has been a platform used by people to express their anger and outrage...that is why this time around they deny people to celebrate this year," said Abdi Fikadu, 26, a health professional.

On the eve of celebrations, police officials in Bishoftu stopped a group of youths at a bar singing and dancing to songs by Haacaaluu Hundeesaa, the musician killed in June, a Reuters witness said. Others were prevented from attending the festival. Dawit Dugama, 25, came all the way from Addis Ababa along with nine friends to take part the festival. They were told they could not join the crowds without a badge. "We were told that we can't be part of the celebration because we don't have badge. This is the government's way to suppress peoples' voices," he said. At the festival in 2016, more than 50 people were killed in a stampede triggered when police used teargas and shot in the air to disperse anti-government protesters.

The festival passed without incident in the capital Addis Ababa on Saturday, again amid very tight security. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed thanked organizers and participants for celebrating peacefully in a Facebook post yesterday.

Police and intelligence services foiled what they said were plans to incite violence in Addis Ababa and other parts of Ethiopia ahead of the festival, state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting reported on Friday.

A day earlier, Oromiya's regional police arrested 503 people on accusations they planned to cause violence during the festival and seized guns and hand grenades. Dressed in traditional white costumes, some wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19, people marched chanting slogans while flashing the Oromo protest gesture. —Reuters

candidate in either scenario. In the case of the Democrats, a new presidential nominee would be selected by the nearly 450 members of the Democratic National Committee.

### Can a replacement candidate be on the ballot?

Probably not. "The problem at this point is that we are so far along in this 2020 election that not only have people cast ballots, ballots have already been printed," Cafaro said. "You really don't have enough time to reprint ballots which say Mike Pence or Kamala Harris," she said, referring to the Republican and Democratic vice presidential nominees respectively. More than 3.1 million Americans have already cast their ballots, according to a tally kept by the US Elections Project at the University of Florida. —AFP

## What happens if a US candidate exits the race?

**WASHINGTON:** A US presidential nominee has never died or had to withdraw from a White House race this close to an election. But President Donald Trump's hospitalization for coronavirus just a month from the November 3 vote has raised the question of what happens if such an event should occur. Trump is 74 years old and while his opponent Joe



## International

# Kyrgyzstan holds election marked by voter disillusion and party splits

## Coalition uncertain about president's ability to forge new alliances

**BISHKEK:** Kyrgyzstan held a parliamentary election yesterday with many voters disillusioned with the political elite and anxious about the worst economic crisis in two decades.

President Sooronbai Jeenbekov's supporters look likely to win a significant number of seats in the legislature in the Central Asian country, a close ally of Russia. But the current pro-presidential ruling coalition is certain to be upset due to internal splits in the two major political groups, testing the president's ability to forge new political alliances.



### Vote-buying charges mar campaigning

"There is less and less democracy, systemic opposition is virtually non-existent," Nasyrbek Attokulov, a 50-year-old university lecturer, said after casting his ballot in Bishkek.

The campaign was marred by allegations of vote-buying, and an August opinion poll ordered by the US-backed International Republican Institute showed that 15 percent of respondents favored the idea of voting against all parties. A total of 16 parties are contesting 120 seats in the single-chamber parliament. If none of them wins more votes than the "Against all" option, a new election would have to be called.

The economy and corruption topped voters' con-

cerns. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development expects Kyrgyzstan's gross domestic product to plunge 9.5 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic and take years to recover. "The economic situation is terrible," said a businessman, who identified himself only by his first name Kanat, speaking at a polling station where officials let in voters in small groups after measuring their temperature as a coronavirus precaution. "We need to establish the rule of law."

The country of 6.5 million people has a history of political turmoil: in the past 15 years, two presidents have been toppled by revolts and a third is in prison after falling out with his successor.

Further instability would be a concern to Russia. Moscow operates a military airbase in the former Soviet republic and is already dealing with major crises involving its allies Belarus and Armenia. Two parties that won more than a half of the seats in the 2015 election have split ahead of yesterday's vote, and some of their MPs including Jeenbekov's closest allies are seeking reelection under new banners.

The Birimdik (Unity) party is viewed as loyal to Jeenbekov and includes the president's brother and former parliamentary speaker Asylbek Jeenbekov among its candidates. Its main rival, Mekenim Kyrgyzstan (My Homeland Kyrgyzstan), is associated with a powerful clan whose figurehead Rayimbek Matraimov—a former customs service official—was the target of anti-corruption protests last year.

Both parties have spoken in favour of further integration with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union bloc, which has raised the status of hundreds of thousands of Kyrgyz migrants working in Russia since Bishkek joined in 2015.

But Birimdik's party chairman Marat Amankulov



**BISHKEK:** Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov wearing a face mask casts his ballot at a polling station during parliamentary election in Bishkek yesterday amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

sparked indignation after comments emerged from last year of him saying it was "time to return" to Moscow's fold. Rivals accused him of undervaluing Kyrgyz independence. In a meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin in Sochi ahead of the vote, Jeenbekov warned of "forces" that wanted to "drive a wedge into the (Kyrgyz-Russian) alliance"—an apparent reference to a pro-sovereignty rally held in opposition to Amankulov's comments in the capital Bishkek last Sunday.

On Friday, the state prosecutor said it was investigating a video widely distributed on messaging apps.

The video, which purported to show two male students from a top university secretly filmed in a hotel room, appeared to imply that opposition parties were

## 12-year 'rag picker' buried at Indian dump found dead

**AHMEDABAD:** Indian rescuers on Saturday found the body of a 12-year-old "rag picker" under a mountain of trash which collapsed on her last week. Neha Vasava was scavenging at the biggest garbage dump in Ahmedabad, Gujarat state, last Saturday when a huge wall of garbage collapsed on her and a seven-year-old boy who was with her.

The boy was saved by the locals and other so-called ragpickers, as his head was still visible. An estimated four million Indians—many of them children—work in filthy, dangerous conditions, sifting through trash for metal and other materials to sell. "We have found the body of the 12-year-old girl," a fire department official told AFP.

The official said the decomposed body had been sent for a postmortem to ascertain the cause of death. Rescuers had faced difficult conditions during the search, with packs of roaming feral dogs and tons of suffocating garbage. The Ahmedabad dump, which receives about 3,500 tons of garbage a day from the city of 5.6 million people, is home to several hundred impoverished families who work as rag pickers. According to UNICEF, well over 41 million children aged under 12 are forced to work in South Asia.

India's coronavirus lockdown is thought to have pushed more children into work after their parents fell into poverty, experts say. — AFP



**An Indian woman weeps as rescuers on Saturday found the body of a 12-year-old "rag picker" under a mountain of trash which collapsed on her last week. — AFP**

## Cambodia razes US-funded defense facility

**PHNOM PENH, Cambodia:** Cambodia has razed a US-funded defense facility on its southern coast, the deputy prime minister confirmed yesterday, the latest move in the ongoing controversial expansion of a strategically crucial naval base being developed with Chinese aid. The Wall Street Journal reported last year on a secret draft deal allowing China to dock warships at the Ream naval base near the kingdom's coastal city of Sihanoukville.

But Cambodia—awash in recent years with Chinese investments—has strenuously denied the report, although strongman premier Hun Sen has said aid from Beijing will fund the naval base's development. Satellite images released by the Center for Strategic and International Studies this week showed a US-funded facility on Ream's naval base had been demolished, raising questions "about rumoured Chinese access", said the Washington-based think tank. But Tea Banh, Cambodia's deputy prime minister and defence minister, dismissed concerns yesterday. "We relocated the facility to a new spot. We cannot keep it anymore and the building is already old," he told AFP, confirming that it was knocked down last month. — AFP

supportive of homosexuality, which is deeply frowned on in the conservative country. The opposition parties targeted in the video said this was an attempt to smear them ahead of the vote.

### Political drama

Popular uprisings unseating two authoritarian presidents in the space of five years were seen as the driving force behind a fresh constitution to curb authoritarian excess and contain political in-fighting in 2010. Electoral laws dictate that no one party can take more than 65 seats in the legislature.

Presidents are limited to a single six-year term—a departure from the strongman trend seen in neighboring China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Tensions between the president and his predecessor Atambayev grew following Jeenbekov's electoral victory in 2017, peaking last year with a shootout at Atambayev's residence between the former president's armed supporters and state security forces trying to arrest him. Atambayev was detained on charges of illegally releasing a crime boss from jail and jailed for 11 years in June. He has also been charged in the murder of a special forces officer who died during the raid. — Agencies

### News in brief

#### Colombia rebel killings

**BOGOTA:** Former FARC rebels on Saturday took responsibility for six murders including that of Alvaro Gomez, a Colombian ex-presidential candidate killed in 1995, in a letter sent to a special court for peace. Justice for Peace (JEP), which is investigating crimes committed during the conflict between the ex-guerrillas and the government, said in a statement that the letter it received September 30 sought to "tell the truth, clarify the facts and take responsibility" for several killings. In addition to the murder of Alvaro Gomez, on November 2, 1995, they included the killing of a retired general, Fernando Landazabal, in 1998, and of former peace adviser Jesus Antonio Bejarano in 1999. — AFP

#### Solomon Islands virus case

**HONIARA, Solomon Islands:** The Solomon Islands announced they have lost the battle to stay free of the coronavirus, leaving just nine small, remote territories that have not reported a single case. Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare told the Pacific island nation in a televised address that a student who recently arrived from the Philippines on a repatriation flight carrying 96 passengers had returned a positive test. "It pains me to say that we have lost our Covid-19-free status despite our collective effort to prevent the pandemic from entering our country," Sogavare said Saturday. He urged the population of 600,000 in the archipelago to remain calm and said contact tracing and other measures to prevent the spread of the virus had been activated and there was no need for a lockdown. — Reuters

#### Widodo defends COVID record

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian President Joko Widodo defended his record of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, asking for no "polemics" or "commotion" amid criticism that he is putting the economy over public health. The video statement late on Saturday came as the world's fourth-most populous country's COVID-19 caseload rose to 299,506. Its 11,055 coronavirus-related death toll is among the highest in Asia. The government's handling of the pandemic since March has drawn criticism from some public health experts for prioritizing economic over public health concerns. — Reuters

#### Black woman to lead Canada party

**OTTAWA:** Toronto lawyer Annamie Paul was Saturday named head of the Green Party, becoming the first Black woman to lead a national political party in Canada. The 47-year-old mother of two, the daughter of immigrants from the Caribbean, described herself as a "descendant of slaves." Paul hailed her victory as a "historic moment" during her speech after the announcement of the results of the internal ballot in Ottawa. "We have done something that has never been done before in Canadian politics," said the Jewish lawyer, who has reported being the victim of anti-Semitic attacks on social media. — AFP

#### Outrage over Montreal death

**MONTREAL:** Thousands of demonstrators marched Saturday in Montreal to denounce what they said was systemic racism, after an indigenous woman filmed herself being insulted by nurses before dying in the hospital. Shouting "Justice for Joycel!" and "Racism is a virus," the protesters demonstrated peacefully in the city's downtown against a backdrop of drums and traditional song. Joycel Echaquan, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman and mother of seven, died earlier this week at Joliette Hospital in Montreal under controversial circumstances. In a video lasting several minutes, which she filmed from her hospital bed on her cell phone and posted to Facebook, Echaquan is heard calling for help and screaming in pain, as two hospital staff insult her. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** National Congress leader Rahul Gandhi (center) speaks to supporters before being allowed to move with his sister Priyanka Gandhi and other party leaders towards the Uttar Pradesh state to meet the relatives of the 19-year-old allegedly gang-raped victim, at the Delhi Noida Direct flyway toll plaza on Saturday. — AFP

## India's federal police to probe gang-rape of Dalit woman

**NEW DELHI:** India's federal investigators will take over the probe into the alleged gang-rape and murder of a low-caste teenaged woman that has sparked nationwide outrage and days of protests. The 19-year-old woman from the marginalized Dalit community was attacked in mid-September in northern Uttar Pradesh state and died on Tuesday, in the latest case highlighting India's epidemic of sexual violence. The Dalit woman died of her injuries earlier this week, triggering protests by both opposition political parties and the public in New Delhi and elsewhere against atrocities against a community often ostracized under India's centuries-old caste system. India is one of the world's most dangerous places for women, with a rape occurring on average every 15 minutes based on federal data. In December 2012, the gang rape of a 23-year-old woman sparked nationwide outrage and led to a tough new anti-rape law.

Five senior police officers have already been suspended over the investigation amid criticism of law enforcement's actions—including the cremation of the woman's body in the middle of the night against the wishes of her family. The chief minister of the state—India's most populous with 200 million people—announced the decision to transfer the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation late Saturday. "We are committed to giving the strictest punishment to the people responsible for this incident," Yogi Adityanath, who is from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), wrote on Twitter.

The police have arrested four high-caste men on the charges of gang-rape and murder. Local authorities barricaded the village after the cremation to block opposition politicians and media from meeting the victim's family. The decision was reversed Saturday after widespread criticism. The involvement of leaders of the opposition Congress party, Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi, in several demonstrations has sparked accusations from the BJP that they were politicizing the issue. 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 shook the nation. An average of nearly 90 rapes were reported in India every day last year, according to data by the National Crime Records Bureau, but large numbers are thought to go unreported.

India's 200 million low-caste Dalits have long faced discrimination, and campaigners say attacks have increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

The chief minister of Uttar Pradesh state, which is ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, has asked federal police, the Central Bureau of Investigation, to investigate the alleged rape, which occurred in its Hathras district, a government statement said. Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has faced criticism in recent days for not allowing media and opposition

parties to speak with the family of the dead woman. Public criticism grew after the family of the victim said her body had been cremated by police without their consent, an allegation officials deny.

On Saturday, hundreds of police officers barricaded a highway connecting the capital New Delhi to Hathras. Several opposition leaders also drove out to meet the victim's family. In India's eastern Kolkata and Bhubaneswar cities, political parties and women organizations marched in protest against the incident and demanded justice for the woman, video footage from ANI news agency showed.

### Reprisal fears

Meanwhile, a court in India has ordered police to protect the family of the Dalit woman gang-raped and killed by four high-caste men, as her brother said they feared reprisals over the accusations. 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." — Agencies

## Myanmar volunteers under strain as virus toll grows

**YANGON:** As Myanmar's coronavirus infections soar, the work never seems to stop for volunteers who have stepped in to help carry those suspected of symptoms to quarantine centers or hospitals. "The situation is not good. Our ambulances and crews can't even get a break," said Kyi Myint, 66, who leads a volunteer group in Yankin township, one of the worst hit in Myanmar's main city, Yangon.

Myanmar's thousands of volunteers are a crucial element of the COVID-19 response in a country with one of the world's weakest health systems. Myanmar appeared to have avoided the worst of the pandemic with only seven deaths a month ago — but a surge of infections has sent now the death toll to 371 from more than 16,500 cases. According to Reuters data, Myanmar's death toll has doubled in 7.8 days — faster than any other country recording more than five deaths. More than 45,000 people, including COVID-19 patients, those yet to be tested, their close contacts and returning migrant workers, are being housed in buildings from schools and monasteries to government offices and tower blocks. Most of those are run by volunteers, who generally get no compensation. — Reuters



MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2020

# Business

## Energy majors slash oil exploration

### Pandemic slams oil demand and prices

**LONDON:** The coronavirus pandemic that has slammed oil demand and prices is forcing energy majors to tighten their belts on exploration, even if finding new deposits remain essential to their existence.

While the sector is increasingly diversifying into greener energies such as electricity and wind power, its core business remains oil and gas. "Questions abound over whether it is still profitable to look for oil given subdued demand growth prospects and a low-price environment," Stephen Brennock, analyst at oil brokers PVM, told AFP.

"The answer seems not, judging by the recent spate of massive hydrocarbon asset writedowns.

"Set against this backdrop, I don't expect a rebound in drilling in the medium-term. "Instead, oil majors will be forced to beef up their green energy portfolios in order to survive," Brennock said.

#### Slashed projects

Compared to pre-virus plans, the energy sector has slashed exploration projects in UK North Sea waters by 70

percent and by 30 percent off the coast of Norway, according to research group Westwood. US oil giant ExxonMobil has cut its total exploration plans by 30 percent, or an investment reduction of \$10 billion (8.4 billion euros).

European rivals ENI, BP and Equinor have carried out similar moves, which have in turn hurt subcontractors including French oil services group CGG,



#### Focus now on green energy portfolios

which expects revenue to slump 40 percent this year. In the United States, more than 30 oil exploration and production companies have this year filed for bankruptcy, according to Texan law firm Haynes & Boone.

If oil prices remain stuck around the

current \$40 per barrel level, a further 150 such companies could be lost by 2022, estimates research group Rystad Energy. "Drilling programs will be hampered in the near-term, in particular in US shale areas but also elsewhere, because of immediate cost-cutting measures," said JBC Energy analyst Raphaela Hein.

"In the past, we have seen that massive capital expenditure cuts to majors' budgets did not really impact their future production. "As such, we think that they will continue to look for new fields-maybe to a slightly lesser extent... and keep production within their long-term plans.

"Of course this will contribute to ensuring their survival," she added.

Hein however said that Arctic projects appeared to be "economically unviable".

This despite the vast area forecast to have 13 percent of the world's oil reserves and 30 percent of its undiscovered natural gas. In July, Russia's Gazprom Neft and Anglo-Dutch giant Shell announced a partnership to explore in the Arctic.



Compared to pre-virus plans, the energy sector has slashed exploration projects in UK North Sea waters by 70 percent and by 30 percent off the coast of Norway, according to research group Westwood. — Reuters

#### 'Markets don't believe'

While oil prices rebounded strongly after briefly turning negative in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, the world's main oil contracts Brent North Sea and West Texas Intermediate have failed to build on those gains-and last week fell heavily to under \$40. "Markets right now do not believe there is a future for oil," said SEB analyst Bjarne Schieldrop.

"For how long we'll have reduced drilling depends on the oil price," he added. Even so, the administration of US President Donald Trump in August approved oil and gas drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, angering environmentalists in the process. While the oil price crisis is making the realization of such projects unlikely, "political will may still trump" that, said Hein of JBC energy. — AFP

## Washington, heart of US power, frozen by pandemic

**WASHINGTON:** Behind the giant bay windows of the World Bank, security guards remain at their posts, but idle. Outside, the sidewalks of Washington DC are largely empty.

The bank is open, ready to host but its twice annual meetings with international financial institutions. But the meetings are all virtual these days. Next door, at the HQ2 building of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a sign says "temporarily closed." It has been hanging there for six months.

With just a month to go before the presidential election, Washington, the hub of American politics, is still in the social and economic deep freeze it was plunged into by the COVID-19 outbreak that began six months ago. The 12,000 people due to take part in upcoming meets at the World Bank and IMF will not stroll the sidewalks of the spruced-up city center, which before the pandemic had been touted as example of the regeneration of US downtowns.

Instead, they will be sitting at home, in front of their laptops. As well as its political activities, the city had billed itself in the past two decades as a hub for international conventions and conferences. Before the pandemic, "we were experiencing record



A view of the White House on Friday evening after US President Donald Trump left the White House for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. —AFP

attendance and visitation to Washington, not only with congresses and meetings, but of course, also with the leisure market... and the international markets," said Elliott Ferguson, director of Destination DC.

And that activity all stoked the local economy. "We were on pace to do well over 25 million visitors to the city, over 42 large congresses," he said. Now the city is expecting some 11 million visitors.

#### Working from home

For sure, some of the trendier districts of the city have bounced back to life. Restaurants have opened up outdoor terraces and rooftop dining and have started to fill up in the late summer, thanks to local clientele. But in the downtown area, not far from the White House, the fast food restaur-

rants of K Street-the central artery where busy lobbyists and lawyers used to grab lunch-have not re-opened and struggle to attract local business.

That is because the thousands of government and institutional workers-including the 9,000 of the World Bank, excluding its consultants-are all working from home until the end of the year.

The white-collar workers who filled the offices of the nerve center of US and international politics have overwhelmingly chosen to carry on with remote work. And they have the backing of Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser, who has implemented one of the strictest regimes of restrictions in the country to keep the virus death toll down to 629 deaths and more than 12,250 infections. — AFP

## Trump, Biden outline competing visions for US economy

**WASHINGTON:** One US presidential candidate wants to raise taxes, the other lower them. One will pursue an ongoing trade war, the other may throttle back tensions. And neither will get much done without Congress's approval. The proposed economic policies of President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden offer starkly different views of the world's largest economy and its global role, ahead of the tense November 3 election.

Biden's agenda is aimed at poorer Americans and includes a number of policies that would mark a sharp departure from Trump's time in office, while building on the policies of Barack Obama, whom he served as vice president. Trump, by comparison, has offered what analysts complain are few details on his plan, other than a vow to bring back the comparatively good economy and the record low employment Americans experienced until March, when the coronavirus pandemic ended that.

"I would categorize the Biden plan as really being about an expansion of existing social programs," said John Ricco, a senior analyst at the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Wharton Budget Model. "In contrast, the Trump plan, to the extent that such a plan exists, is... sort of taking the same themes that the administration pursued in the last four years."

The extent to which either candidate can get what they want will depend on which party controls Congress, which is currently split

between the Republican-controlled Senate and the Democrat-controlled House. With polls showing the former vice president ahead and many key Senate races leaning toward the Democrats, analysts are cautiously warming to the possibilities offered by a Biden victory-assuming Democrats win the Senate.

"Democratic control of the House, Senate and White House would produce the largest changes in policy, but if Republicans retain the Senate or White House, we expect limited new federal policies, fiscal or otherwise," JP Morgan said in a note.

#### The race upended

Biden's economic platform has centered on the slogan of "build back better," with promises of creating jobs via infrastructure and clean-energy improvements funded by \$4.1 trillion in taxes over the next decade, most of it levied on big business and the rich. Trump has vowed to restore what he calls "the greatest economy in history," the period from his 2017 inauguration up until March: after a decade of economic expansion, unemployment was at a 50-year low.

Polls have shown voters thus far siding with Biden as the United States grapples with the world's worst coronavirus outbreak. Then on Friday the race was upended when Trump reported he had contracted the virus. The two men's platforms appear aimed at benefiting different sectors of the economy, said Mark Zandi and Bernard Yaros, economists at Moody's Analytics.

Biden's platform is targeted at the poor and middle class, whose "tax bill will remain roughly the same as it is today, but they are significant beneficiaries of increased government spending on education, healthcare, hous-



President Donald Trump (left) and former vice president Joe Biden (right) have competing visions for the US economy if they win the November elections, but controlling Congress is seen as key to their success.

ing, a plethora of other social programs and a larger economy," Zandi and Yaros wrote. A Trump presidency would likely see the extension of tax cuts passed by Congress in 2017, and "the benefits largely go to higher-income households and businesses, while government spending is scaled back on healthcare and a range of social programs," they wrote.

If the Democrats manage to take Congress and the White House, Moody's predicts that full employment, as seen before the pandemic, could return as soon as the second quarter of 2022. If Republicans get the same control, full employment would be restored only in early 2024. However, Moody's most likely scenario is that neither Trump nor Biden wins the White House and Congress, and employment isn't restored until sometime in 2023. While much of their economic policies are aimed at winning individual Americans, businesses are eyeing the two candidates' differing approaches to trade and in particular to China, with which Trump has pursued a trade war. — AFP

## UK 'can prosper mightily' under no-deal Brexit: PM

**LONDON:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday that Britain "can prosper mightily" without a post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union, the day after agreeing to extend stalled talks with Brussels. Johnson, who accepted prolonging negotiations in a video-call Saturday with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, told the BBC he believed a deal is "there to be done" before Britain leaves the bloc's regulatory regime in 2021.

But he cautioned the EU needed to understand that his government is "utterly serious about needing to control our own laws and our own regulations", including its fisheries policy.

Britain formally left the bloc in January but remains bound by most of its rules until the end of the year under the terms of its Brexit divorce. The current 11-month transition phase was intended to allow the two sides to agree their future trading relationship after nearly five decades of economic and political integration. However, nine scheduled rounds of negotiations ended Friday with both parties saying significant obstacles to an agreement remain, prompting Johnson and von der Leyen's intervention.

The two leaders, who last held Brexit talks in June, asked their negotiators to "work intensively in order to try to bridge those gaps".

But fears are growing of travel and trade chaos if progress is not made and a so-called no-deal Brexit ensues. "I don't want the Australian, WTO (World Trade Organization)-type outcome particularly, but we can more than live with it,"

Johnson said of the scenario.

"I think that we can prosper mightily under those circumstances," he said.

#### Entrenched positions

London and Brussels had pinpointed a European summit on October 15 as the latest an agreement could be reached for it to be ratified in time to take effect by 2021. Reports suggest the talks could now continue for the rest of October, but British officials are stressing the need for clarity on whether a deal is feasible by the summit.

Neither side appears ready to make a big shift in their entrenched positions. Johnson-a key figure in the lengthy and divisive process to take Britain out of the bloc-said Sunday he hoped the EU would "agree to the deal that we've set out". Following his call with von der Leyen, an EU source told AFP the bloc was waiting for London "to really start negotiating on the big issues".

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who meets the bloc's chief negotiator Michel Barnier on Monday, said Friday she believed a deal was still possible, though warned the coming days were crucial.

Britain and Europe have so far found no way to overcome fundamental disagreements over how to assign future fishing rights in UK waters and how to maintain a level playing field in business and state subsidy regulations. Meanwhile the atmosphere has been soured by London taking steps to overturn parts of the divorce agreement struck last year, prompting Brussels to launched legal action this week. —AFP



LONDON: In a handout picture released by the BBC shows Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson gesturing as he appears on the BBC political program The Andrew Marr Show in London yesterday. — AFP



## Business

# Markaz: Most GCC markets positive despite mounting concerns on economic recovery

## The S&P GCC composite index gained 2.5% in September 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" recently released its Monthly Markets Review report for the month of September 2020. Markaz report stated that, most GCC equity markets ended the month in green despite concerns of economic recovery amid threat of second wave of COVID-19 and fall in oil prices.

The report stated that Kuwait markets were positive, with the Kuwait All Share index registering a gain of 2.9 percent in September. On 29th September 2020, the Kuwait All Share index fell by as much as 3.4 percent during trading but trimmed the losses to 2.2 percent at trade close. The fall was due to concerns over the condition of the Emir's health, whose demise was confirmed later in the day. Regionally, the S&P GCC composite index gained 2.5 percent, with all markets except Abu Dhabi and Oman ending the month in positive territory.

Among Kuwait sectors, insurance was the top gainer, rising 8.3 percent, while consumer goods index saw the biggest decline, down 3.6 percent for the month. Among blue chips, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) gained the most at 5.6 percent, followed by Agility Public Warehousing gaining 5.3 percent, while Mobile Telecommunications (Zain) lost 2.7 percent for the month. Fitch has affirmed KFH's ratings at A+ with stable outlook. Agility has signed a PPP agreement for an investment project in Sabah Al-Ahmed City. Kuwait All Share Index's PE ratio was at 13.1 by the end of the month. Market liquidity in September as indicated by the average daily traded value has increased by 44 percent over previous month to \$165 million.

Boursa Kuwait, following its successful IPO, surged more than 10 times in its trading debut this month, as it became the third publicly traded exchange in the Middle East after the Dubai Financial Market and Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, respectively. Moody's has downgraded Kuwait's sovereign ratings by two notches from Aa2 to A1, citing liquidity risk on back of fast depleting liquid reserves and weak institutional strength due to its inability to adjust fiscal policy as the expenditure structure remains rigid. S&P rating agency estimates Kuwait's GDP to fall by 7.0 percent in 2020 and economic recovery to gain momentum in 2022.

Saudi Arabian equity market gained 4.5 percent in September followed by Bahrain, which gained 3.9 percent. Saudi Arabia has partially lifted travel bans since mid-September and plans to scrap all travel restrictions for citizens on January 1, 2021. The country's economy contracted by 7 percent in Q2 2020, with the non-oil sector contracting by 8.2 percent and oil sector contracting by 5.3 percent. Moody's has affirmed Qatar's ratings at Aa3 citing exceptionally high per-capita income and proved hydrocarbon reserves. S&P has opined that Bahrain's property prices would fall at an accelerated pace while banks will face pressure on profits towards the end of 2020, but the deterioration would remain broadly manageable. GCC governments have issued bonds amounting to \$42 billion so far in 2020, as they try to raise funds in the market to plug record deficits due to the oil price crash and the COVID-19 crisis.

Markaz report also stated that

Equity	Last close	September, %	2020 %
S&P GCC	108	2.5	-7.2
Saudi Arabia (TASI)	8,299	4.5	-1.1
Qatar (QE Index)	9,990	1.5	-4.2
Abu Dhabi (ADI)	4,518	0.0	-11.0
Kuwait (All Share PR Index)	5,445	2.9	-13.3
Dubai (DFMGI)	2,273	1.3	-17.8
Bahrain (BAX)	1,434	3.9	-10.9
Oman (Muscat SM)	3,615	-4.2	-9.2
Commodities			
IPE Brent(\$)	41	-9.6	-38.0
Gold(\$)	1,885	-4.3	24.3

Source: Refinitiv

among the GCC blue chip companies, Ezdan Holding (Qatar) increased by 38.4 percent in September. FTSE Russell has upgraded the company from its midcap index to large cap index. Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (UAE) decreased by 6.1 percent in September.

The performance of global equity markets was negative, with the MSCI World Index losing 3.6 percent in September on the back of concerns over economic recovery due to threat of second wave of COVID-19 and fading stimulus measures. US market (S&P 500) declined by 3.9 percent in September, led by losses in tech stocks. US sought to ban two Chinese apps - TikTok and WeChat, renewing US China tensions. While TikTok is in discussion with US investors and other stakeholders, the

ban is yet to be implemented as it faces legal hurdles. The UK (FTSE 100) markets lost 1.6 percent for the month. Eurozone economies have renewed some lockdown restrictions due to spike in COVID-19 cases. Emerging markets decreased by 1.8 percent for the month.

Oil prices closed at \$41.0 per barrel at the end of September 2020, posting a monthly loss of 9.6 percent. Persisting COVID-19 fears, renewal of some lockdown restrictions in the Eurozone and expectation of lower oil imports by China have led to fall in prices. OPEC and IEA have also revised their demand forecast for 2020 downwards. Saudi Arabia's energy minister has said that OPEC+ will complete all compensations for oil overproduction before the end of the year.

## A Biden victory could weigh on market's winners

NEW YORK: Investors on Wall Street can add another layer of uncertainty to a market already unnerved by last month's sell-off, stalled fiscal stimulus, and by President Donald Trump's COVID-19 diagnosis, which weighed on stocks on Friday. A higher capital gains tax that could accompany a win by Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is also emerging as a potential counterweight to this year's powerful rally in stocks.

Biden has proposed taxing capital gains and dividends as ordinary income, which would increase the tax rate from 20 percent to 39.6 percent for individuals and couples earning over \$1 million, the highest tax bracket. That policy - which would likely be easier to enact if Democrats also win the Senate and retain control of the House - may push some investors to lock in gains ahead of December if Biden emerges the winner in the Nov. 3 vote, fund managers said.

Tax-motivated selling would likely be most pronounced in technology and other momentum stocks and could push the broad S&P 500 index lower between November and the end of the year, said Eddie Perkin, chief equity investment officer at Eaton Vance. "If you have enough people looking to harvest gains, that has an impact on the stocks that have led the market, and the big tech stocks could be where people choose to sell at the end of the year," he said. — Reuters

## Mughal Mahal honors frontline workers in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Popular Indian Restaurant Mughal Mahal held a ceremony recently to honor the frontline workers in Kuwait. In a first of its kind commemoration, Mughal Mahal painted the entire facade of its restaurant in Sharq with images of frontline workers. The mural, painted by a prominent Kuwaiti artist, is a tribute and a mark of gratitude to all those who risked their lives and served both Kuwaitis and expatriates during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic in Kuwait.

A small ceremony held at the restaurant included some of the frontline workers, as well as Mughal Mahal management. The chief guest on the occasion was Indian Ambassador Sibi George and Guest of Honor was Dr Hussain Al-Dashti, Head of Surgery at the Faculty of Medicine.

Addressing the gathering, Ashok Kalra, Managing Partner of Mughal Mahal, extended a warm welcome to the guests and expressed immense gratitude to all the frontline warriors who served the country during the crises. He said this significant but small gesture was an attempt to honor and thank them.

Mughal Mahal, which is situated in the heart of the city and located right next to the tallest building in Kuwait, Al-Hamra Towers, is currently adorned by beautiful images of frontline workers, all designed and painted by Kuwaiti artist Dr Reham Al-Raghaib and her team. Kalra also thanked the government of Kuwait for



Indian Ambassador Sibi George



Ashok Kalra presenting a memento



their wholehearted support to all the communities during the pandemic, and for rising to the occasion in one of the most difficult periods faced by the people in the country.

Elaborating, Kalra noted that credit for the genesis of this entire Art from the Heart project went to his partner, Jatinder Suri. "What began as a concept in his mind steadily evolved through his enthusiastic efforts into the marvelous mural that will leave our facade resplendent. He was ably supported in this venture by the Mughal Mahal team especially Gaurav, Prashish and Shivang.

Ambassador George, in his address to the gathering, also expressed his appreciation for the gesture and congratulated Mughal Mahal for taking such an innovative initiative in expressing gratitude on behalf of the entire expatriate community. Pointing at Mughal Mahal's long-standing reputation for serving authentic Indian cuisine, which is well loved by locals and expatriates, Ambassador George added that Mughal Mahal had also indulged in food diplomacy by bringing people and communities closer with the love for their food.

For his part, Dr Dashti was quick to

acknowledge and thank the entire Mughal Mahal team for their gesture of gratitude. He appreciated the role of Mughal Mahal over the past 35 years in bringing people closer through their delicious food.

Mughal Mahal, which opened its first branch in Sharq almost 35 years ago has become a household name for quality Indian food over the years. Having introduced Mughalai cuisine in Kuwait the restaurant has over the past several years expanded to 10 branches all over Kuwait and gained a reputation for being the most popular Indian restaurant in the country.

Khalid Jumiyan, former minister of social affairs and telecommunication, and chairman of Mughal Mahal Group, emphasized in his address that Mughal Mahal would always be at the forefront of community service and this was one such gesture of support. Artist Al-Raghaib, who transformed the Mughal Mahal management's idea into reality, said she was extremely happy to be part

of the project and was honored to be associated with Mughal Mahal. She personally thanked managing partners Ashok Kalra and Jatinder Suri for their encouragement. Dr. Alia Hussein, from Jaber Hospital, which was at the center of treating COVID patients, said this was in fact a surprise that she never anticipated and expressed her sincere thanks for the kind consideration and recognition that has been given to frontline workers in such a beautiful way.

Dr Brookes from Al-Jahra hospital was also overwhelmed with the show of gratitude and said he was thankful for the recognition and wished Mughal Mahal all the very best. The event, which was held in line with social distancing norms and adhering to all health protocols, was attended by select businessmen, ministry representatives and doctors who were honored by the recognition and gratitude bestowed on them. Plaques of appreciation were given to some of the frontline warriors by managing partners Ashok Kalra and Mukesh Kumar.





# Huawei unveils new most elegant, thin and light Huawei MateBook X in Kuwait

## New laptop provides a smarter way to work with multi-screen collaboration

KUWAIT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) yesterday announced in Kuwait the Huawei MateBook X, the latest addition to the Huawei MateBook lineup, transforming how consumers can work in this new era of mobile productivity. Featuring the series' signature aesthetics, the Huawei MateBook X launches with significant enhancements to portability due to its Ultra-light and thin body that weight just 1kg, innovations for an immersive experience like the 3K Infinite FullView display with full touch screen and latest 10th generation processors and an overall smart experience with Multi-Screen Collaboration as a part of Huawei Share.

Jason Jiang, the General Manager of Huawei (CBG) Kuwait, said: "Under the All-scenario Seamless AI Life strategy, Huawei focuses on offering the most intelligent experiences in five major scenarios: smart home, smart travel, smart productivity, smart health and multimedia. In the PC category, Huawei is taking the lead to steer the industry towards intelligent solutions."

The new Huawei MateBook X will be available from 15th October 2020 for a price of KD 439.900 with bundle of free gifts of worth KD 78.90. Pre-orders will begin from 08th October 2020.



**Stay mobile and productive, artistically**

The ultra-portable experience is redefined by the compact laptop, which packs everything in a light-weight body that is as light as 1kg and measures just 13.6mm at the thickest part . Every interaction is a joy with the lightweight laptop, and with a 13-inch body, it fits easily in any backpack like a magazine, always at the ready for the next adventure.

The latest Huawei laptop's slim form factor comes at no expense to durability. Featuring a lightweight aluminium unibody, it is built with robustness in mind. An advanced spraying process is also employed to produce a smooth finish on the surface, adding elegant style to function. Inspired by the iridescent mother-of-

pearl and glitter powder, Huawei MateBook X elevates CMF design to an artform with two glitter-infused colorways: Silver Frost and Forest Green.

**3K Infinite FullView Display provides an expansive canvas for limitless creative expressions**

The new Huawei MateBook X is the first laptop to feature the Infinite FullView Display , realized with a borderless design that offers a 90 percent screen-to-body ratio. The unobstructed screen delivers an immersive experience whether the user is working, creating content or bingeing on movies.

The display is also multi-touch-enabled with gesture support, such as Fingers Gesture Screenshot, which lets users quickly take a screenshot by swiping downwards on the screen with three fingers, as easy as it is on a smartphone. Huawei offers two eye care features on the HUAWEI MateBook X: Eye Comfort mode effectively filters out blue light emissions to provide eye strain relief during long sessions of use, and Brightness adjustment algorithms ensure a consistent viewing experience no matter the device is used indoors or under direct sunlight.



**An immersive viewing experience**

**Smarter cross-device experiences**

The multi-screen Collaboration feature in Huawei Share enables seamless collaboration between smartphones and PCs. Once a smartphone is connected to Huawei MateBook X, the smartphone screen is integrated into the laptop with a picture-in-picture window. In addition to easy drag-and-drop file transfer, this feature allows the PC to directly open and edit files on the smartphone. Instant Hotspot provides one-step access to Internet via tethering . And during break-time at work, users can catch up with family and friends by video or audio calling them conveniently from the laptop. To facilitate a smarter mobile office experience, Huawei introduces new upgrades to Multi-Screen Collaboration. The improved Multi-Screen Collaboration not only allows you to mirror your smartphone screen to your laptop's display, but also lets you open up to three mobile apps at the same time for multitasking, resulting in greater efficiency and productivity.



Featuring a wide range of innovative technology, Huawei MateBook X is designed to inspire creativity on all fronts, anytime and anywhere. Huawei MateBook X is the first to feature a clickpad with Huawei Free Touch. The improved clickpad offers a more expansive space for navigation and creative expressions, and supports haptic feedback for a more tactile experience. The Huawei Share tag is now incorporated within the clickpad, providing easy access to the Multi-Screen Collaboration feature.

**Stay creative and productive anytime, anywhere**

Inside, the sleek and portable Huawei MateBook X delivers the performance that consumers need to smoothly tackle day-to-day tasks. Featuring a 10th Generation Intel(r) Core(tm) i5 processor and up to 16GB RAM, the Huawei MateBook X delivers the essential performance to support a smooth experience across typical productivity and multimedia use cases. Wi-Fi 6 support ensures Internet connection stays fast and stable even in crowded locations, with speeds up to three times of Wi-Fi 5.

While staying incredibly compact, Huawei MateBook X still offers incredible battery life with its 42Wh (rated capacity) battery working together with Huawei's smart battery management solution to support up to 9 hours of local media playback or typical productivity scenarios.

**Improved innovations offer smarter experiences**

Transform any location into a personal cinema with the powerful quad-speaker system with split-frequency setup delivering rich 3D audio directly from under the keyboard. The sound system synergizes with

advanced audio algorithms to virtualize surround sound, delivering an immersive experience with any music, movie or game. A dual-microphone array on the edge incorporates algorithms to support long distance sound pickup for better voice capture that improves the user experience in video calls and virtual conference meetings. User privacy is protected by the Fingerprint Power Button, which combines the fingerprint reader with the power button to securely authenticate user identity when the device is switched on, effectively replacing the login password on the Windows Welcome screen. Further on privacy, the unique recessed camera design affords peace of mind for users by embedding the camera into a key cap that is easily accessible and pops up only when the users have a need for it.

The Huawei MateBook X is also joined by the Huawei MateBook X Pro, which boasts an Ultra FullView Display in a sleek and elegant unibody design. The Huawei MateBook X Pro also comes in an elegant color of Emerald Green and packs innovative features like Multi-screen collaboration as a part of Huawei Share. In addition to this, it also comes with 10th generation CPUs for professional performance and an all-day long battery life with a portable charger. The power button also doubles as a fingerprint sensor for easy login while the recessed camera provides privacy protection when not in use. This is all topped off with a Quad-speaker setup for immersive audio along with 4 mics for a better listening experience. The Huawei MateBook X Pro on the other hand, will be available from 15th October 2020 for a price of KD 549.900 with Bundle of Free Gifts of worth KD 78.90.

## Best opportunity to invest in gold at MG&D

KUWAIT: Gold continues to reaffirm its prominence as an investment, asset and adornment even during the unprecedented situation we continue to face globally. Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of over 250 outlets spread across 10 countries, is providing customers with the best opportunity to invest in gold, through the Gold Rate Protection offer, be it for personal use or as an investment, at the best rates.

Customers can just pay 10 percent advance for their favorite jewellery and block the gold rate until November 15th protecting themselves from the increase in gold rate during this period. If gold rate increases at the time of purchase, customers can avail the booked rate and if it reduces they can still draw mileage of the reduced rate i.e. a customer intending to buy gold jewellery worth KD 1000 just needs to pay KWD 100 to avail the advance booking offer and in turn get protected from the increasing gold rates. This offer will be valid until 15th November across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets in GCC, Far East and USA.

"Gold prices typically rise at times of uncertainty as it is considered as the safe haven by investors across the globe. Hence, this offer has been designed in such a way that our customers are not affected by the increase in gold rates, by providing them with an option to block the rate, by just paying just 10 percent of the value, and get gold rate protection until November 15th. The main attractiveness of this campaign is that the customer always gets the benefit of lower gold rate, during purchase", said Shamlal Ahamed, MD - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Gold being a reliable investment is one of the intrinsic reasons for people buying gold jewellery while also serving as an adornment. It is the ease to liquidate the metal for cash without losing much value during these difficult times that further increases its dependability. While all other assets like currency, oil, stock markets, real estate etc. have steeply declined in value, gold value has appreciated in the last one year. This consistent performance of gold as an appreciating and moveable asset has led to individuals with excess cash reserves beginning to acquire gold. Being the only investment to offer all these benefits, while also being a prestigious lifestyle article, gold jewellery is expected to attract new buyers in the immediate future.

## Jazeera Airways launches direct flights to Dhaka

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways yesterday announced the launch of service to the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka, offering direct flights between Kuwait and Dhaka as well as transit flights to cities in the Middle East. Served on the A320neo aircraft, the airline will land at

Flight Number	Frequency	From	To	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
J9 531	Tuesday	Kuwait	Dhaka	03:15 pm	11:50 pm
J9 532	Wednesday	Dhaka	Kuwait	00:50 am	04:00 am
J9 531	Thursday	Kuwait	Dhaka	05:05 am	01:40 pm
J9 532	Thursday	Dhaka	Kuwait	2:40 pm	5:50 pm

## Legacy of slavery endures in US Deep South county

FAYETTE, US: All that remains of what was once a Civil War-era cotton plantation is a crumbling building overgrown by weeds. But the legacy of slavery in Jefferson County in the Deep South US state of Mississippi remains clearly visible. Eighty-five percent of the population of Jefferson County is African-American, making it the county with the largest Black population in the entire United States.

It is also one of the poorest with average household income of just over \$20,000, one-third of the national average. Following the deaths of a number of Black Americans at the hands of the police, a national reckoning on racism has become a fixture of the November election campaign.

While large US cities have been rocked by protests for racial justice, the debate has a different flavor in Jefferson County. "Racism, we all know it exists, but we don't feel a major impact because of our area being a predominantly Black area," said Bruce Walton, who heads the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County.

"Unless it's economic," Walton said. "Economic impact." Jefferson County is a Democratic enclave in Mississippi, a largely Republican state, and only 12 percent of its 7,000 residents voted for Donald Trump in 2016. Walton said people mostly just feel abandoned by the federal government. "We don't receive a whole lot of funding," he said. "I haven't got anything"

The needs in Jefferson County are readily apparent. Farming has been declining for decades and no industry has taken root to replace it other than a lumber

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and will operate flights on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Kuwait and Wednesdays and Thursdays from Dhaka:

Rohit Ramachandran, CEO Jazeera Airways said, "We are extremely pleased to be able to open up a route to Dhaka as we climb back out of the difficult times we have all been through. It shows the strength of our airline that we are able to expand our network at this time. We are now able to serve the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait with a direct service and look forward to increasing our frequencies in the future."

Jazeera Airways appointed the Galaxy Group in Bangladesh to handle local sales. Managing Director Ahmed Yusuf Walid said, "We are delighted to partner



with Jazeera Airways. We see a huge opportunity for flights to Kuwait but also connecting our customers to Saudi Arabia and other destinations in the region."

Jazeera Airways has taken every safety and precautionary measure on its aircraft and at Jazeera Terminal T5 in Kuwait to ensure passengers fly safely. All passengers are required to wear face masks and gloves throughout their journey. The airline also offers the 'Duo Seat' feature that enables passengers to book the middle seat next to them in addition to their seat when travelling, giving passengers more comfort and security on their flight.

not been accompanied by economic progress. A stone's throw from his house is a cotton field where the buds are just starting to flower, giving it the appearance of a woolly white blanket. Like other large-scale operations, it is owned by a white family. "It's hard for Blacks to have this magnitude of crop-growing because of the lack of space, the lack of equipment to work the farm, the lack of the finance to purchase the fertilizer, the seed and all of that," Cruel said. "So you don't have Black farmers of this magnitude here now in Jefferson County. As a matter of fact, I don't know of any Black people that farm cotton here in Jefferson County at this time," he added.

**'Never really went away'**

Jessica Crawford of the non-profit Archeological Conservancy, said "it was never easy for African-Americans to own their own land." The Archeological Conservancy has purchased the former cotton plantation in Jefferson County in a bid to learn more about the slaves who once worked there.

After the Confederacy was defeated in the 1861-1865 Civil War, the slaves of "Prospect Hills"-as the plantation was called-were freed. "But the system of slavery never really went away," Crawford said. "It just evolved and changed. They simply shifted to tenant farming. "Someone who was formerly a planter would lease out or rent a little bit of land to someone who had usually been enslaved on that plantation," she said.

"This person would have to produce a certain amount of cotton to pay for his rent."

As agriculture became less profitable, many whites left the county but a statue honoring Confederate soldiers still stands outside the courthouse in Fayette, the county seat. In June, a group of young people held a march demanding it be taken down. "It was awesome," said Walton, and the Board of Supervisors has since begun the process of having it dismantled.—AFP



A deserted gas station in Fayette, Mississippi. —AFP



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Models present creations by designer Alexandre Mattiussi as part of his Spring/Summer 2021 ready-to-wear collection show for his brand AMI, during Paris Fashion Week, in Paris, France. — Reuters



## Parisian label AMI parades models by the Seine for fashion week

**F**rench fashion label AMI pushed the boat out for its latest fashion show in Paris on Saturday - hosting its catwalk display on the banks of the Seine river at dusk. The brand, founded just under 10 years ago by designer Alexandre Mattiussi, is one of a reduced number presenting collections with physical events this season, after some labels opted for digital displays and videos for Paris Fashion Week. Models, including some regular Parisians, paraded AMI's latest looks on the quay by the river, as guests looked on from a barge, surrounded by Paris's romantic bridges where passersby stopped to watch. Multiple screens inside the boat allowed the audience to have a closer look at the runway.

The collection was the first major womenswear one for the brand, which first erupted on the scene with men's clothing. Looks included long black dresses, beige suit ensembles, checkered shorts and pencil skirts, while several models wore ruffled pastel dresses with a Pierrot-style collar. "We need to celebrate a little bit, when you have this kind of crisis, it's very easy to fall into a kind of depression," Mattiussi said in an interview before the show, adding he was keen to return to the catwalk despite the coronavirus pandemic. "I feel like there is a challenge and responsibility to look up and look at the light and maybe to participate in this kind of 'beginning again'."

Masked guests, who were offered alcohol gel upon arrival - with 140 in attendance compared to the 600 or AMI

might usually invite - included "Game of Thrones" actress Maisie Williams, who also watched Christian Dior's show earlier in the week. French actress Emmanuelle Beart also attended. — Reuters



Models present creation by Hermes during the Womenswear Spring Summer 2021 as part of the Fashion Week in Paris on Saturday. — AFP photos





## Lifestyle | Features



This picture shows a bartender making a cocktail in a non-alcoholic bar in Tokyo. — AFP photos



A bartender making a cocktail in a non-alcoholic bar in Tokyo.



A non-alcoholic drink placed on a table as Rei Azezaki, 21, visits a bar in Tokyo.



A bartender (right) making a cocktail in a non-alcoholic bar in Tokyo.

# TEETOTALLERS EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS IN HARD-DRINKING JAPAN

**A**t a trendy Tokyo cocktail bar, customers sip brightly coloured beverages with sophisticated flavor profiles, designed for a small but growing market in hard-drinking Japan: teetotalers. At "0%", all the cocktails are non-alcoholic, but the bar is still something of an anomaly in Japan, where drinking is popular and considered an important part of business culture. With alcohol as a lubricant, the formality that can govern the Japanese workplace slips away, and drinking-often heavily-with colleagues is seen as important to career advancement for some.

There's even a word for drinking with colleagues: "nominication", a portmanteau of the word for drink-nomi-in Japanese and the English word communication. That has long put non-drinkers like Hideto Fujino, a 54-year-old fund manager, at a disadvantage, but he and others like him are speaking out-and finding they are not alone. "There are many times that non-drinkers feel uncomfortable," he told AFP. "You sometimes hear statements like 'you can't get promoted if you can't drink alcohol'," said Fujino, who started a Facebook group for non-drinkers. Fujino doesn't drink because he cannot process alcohol well-like about five percent of Japanese, and many other east Asians, he lacks some of the enzymes that break down the toxic byproducts of alcohol.

Those with the genetic disposition suffer various side effects including flushed cheeks and feeling sick when they drink. But there are plenty of other reasons that people don't drink, said Fujino, whose Facebook group attracted

over 4,000 members within months of him creating it. Some cite health reasons, or pregnancy, while others dislike alcohol or its effects on them, and some like drinking but have decided to cut back-a group that is growing in other parts of the world and is sometimes termed "sober curious".

### 'Lonely and discriminated against'

For centuries, alcohol has played an important social role in Japan-feudal lords used it to bond with subordinates and sake was brewed in some temples. More recently, it has been seen as a way for co-workers to speak more freely than is sometimes possible in often deeply hierarchical workplaces. This means that non-drinkers can struggle, said Fujino, with many feeling their career progression may in part depend on drinking. "In the office, sometimes senior staff only take out those who can drink," he said. "You're told 'we didn't ask you to come because you can't drink'-this makes you feel lonely and discriminated against."

Fujino coined the term "gekonomist" for people like him-combining the word for people allergic to alcohol "geko" with "nomi" and the English suffix "ist". On his Facebook group, fellow gekonomists swap recipes for non-alcoholic drinks they enjoy and share stories about their experiences. "Today, I tasted this," one member commented with a photo of a glass of a drink resembling whisky. "Of course, it's non-alcoholic, with the scent of a cypress tree!"

The group also exploded with comments on the election of Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, a rare

high-profile teetotaler. "Congratulations on the birth of a geko prime minister!" one user wrote, while another speculated about the pressure Suga must have faced to join drinking parties while rising up the ranks. "Overcoming this to become a prime minister is impressive."

tails infused with ingredients including basil, mascarpone cheese, seaweed, and berries.

Among the customers one Saturday evening was Rei Azezaki, 21, who is allergic to alcohol and had brought along her boyfriend, who is a drinker.

their 30s drank the equivalent of two or more glasses of wine, at least three days a week-half the number in both age groups from a decade earlier. Naoko Kuga, a senior researcher at NLI Research Institute, has studied the changing alcohol market in Japan and



Customers Rei Azezaki, 21, (left) and Yuto Takahashi, 24, (right) drinking in a non-alcoholic bar in Tokyo.

### Drop in young drinkers

Mayumi Yamamoto, who started 0%, said she was inspired to offer better non-alcoholic drinks by her own experience as a teetotaler. "I thought it would be great if there were drink menu options other than tea and carbonated water for people like me who can't drink much alcohol," the 31-year-old told AFP. The bar in the popular nightlife area of Roppongi, famous for clubs and drinking holes, offers vegan food alongside cock-

"Usually I drink a lot of alcohol," said Yuto Takahashi, 24. "But here I enjoy drinks more slowly, it's like I'm appreciating the atmosphere more. I like it very much." Similar booze-free bars are cropping up elsewhere in Japan, with their locations enthusiastically shared on Fujino's Facebook group, and health ministry data suggests heavy drinking is falling among young people.

In 2017, just 16 percent of men in their 20s and 25 percent of those in

says young people increasingly have a different relationship with alcohol, particularly around colleagues. "Young people don't want that old 'nominication' with superiors that lasts hours," she told AFP. "They'll choose what they want as the first glass, and it might well be non-alcoholic." — AFP

## BON JOVI ALBUM '2020' ASKS 'QUESTIONS' ABOUT PANDEMIC,

**J**on Bon Jovi hits the hot-button social issues of America in "2020", his 15th studio album - the coronavirus pandemic, race relations, and police violence - but he says he's asking questions, not taking sides. "I say it's topical instead of political... that I don't take sides," he told Reuters TV. But he added: "I tried to consider myself a witness to history. And if I was just witnessing history, I could write down the facts and maybe I could pose a question. But that's where I wanted to leave it." The rock group Bon Jovi, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2018, was formed in 1983 and remains one of the biggest acts in the US music industry.



The band recorded the album in March of 2019 in Nashville, with plans to release it in May 2020. But it was postponed to Oct 2 and two new songs were added, "Do What You Can," which features a masked Bon Jovi celebrating workers on the frontline of the pandemic, and "American Reckoning," about the death of George Floyd, a Black man, under the knee of a Minneapolis policeman. The song "Brothers in Arms" nods to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who sparked a national debate when he protested against racial injustice by kneeling as the US national anthem played before games.

Asked if he was concerned about backlash from singing about issues that have divided Americans, especially ahead of the Nov 3 election, Bon Jovi said he was "aware" but not afraid. "I've definitely opened myself up to criticism," he said. "But there are moments in my day, to be honest with you, that I sit around and I think I'm afraid of what the reaction to the record is going to be and what are people going to think of me.—Reuters

# America's Black farmers work to uproot racism

**I**n the sweltering heat of a greenhouse, Brooke Bridges inspects long rows of tomato plants, pleased to see a bountiful harvest growing. Once ripe, the crop will be picked and packed, then delivered mainly to poor Black and minority families around Albany, the capital of New York state. "A beautiful box of produce can spark something in them and remind them of who they are as a Black person in America," said the 29-year-old Bridges, who gave up an acting career in California to move to the New York countryside. This young Black woman is one of seven employees working for Soul Fire Farm, which calls itself a "BIPOC-centered community farm"-the acronym standing for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

The 80-acre (32-hectare) farm was founded in 2011 by an African-American activist, Leah Penniman, and her husband Jonah Vitale-Wolff. It specializes in medicinal herbs, such as mint, bee balm, St John's wort and calendula, and vegetables, with the goal of helping fight racial injustice. That cause gained urgency and became a focus of the presidential election campaign after nationwide protests that followed the death in May of the African-American George Floyd, who was asphyxiated under the knee of a white police officer.

### An economic 'knee'

While the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to police vio-



Brooke Bridges, who works at the Black-owned Soul Fire Farm near Albany, New York, inspects an abundant crop of tomatoes. — AFP photos

lence and racism in American cities, racial injustice in the farming sector remains less well-known. Blacks are clearly under-represented on US farms. There are only 45,000 Black farmers — 1.3 percent of all agricultural producers. Black people are about 13 percent of the population, according to census data. And yet, a century ago nearly 15 percent of American farmers were black, reflecting reforms that followed the end of slavery in the 1860s. But during the 20th century, racial segregation, discriminatory Jim Crow laws and the many obstacles to farm ownership forced many Black people to leave the rural South in search of work-often in factories-in the North.

One of the most common discriminato-

ry practices was that of "redlining"-refusing credit to poor people, many of them Black, living in certain defined areas. It remains difficult even today for African-Americans in many parts of the country to obtain the bank loans they need to buy and develop a farm. "We all realize that while we don't have a physical knee on our neck, Black farmers have had an economic knee on their neck since the end of slavery," said Dewayne Goldman, executive director of the National Black Growers Council, a group advocating for black farmers. "What makes it worse in rural America, and certainly in the farming community, is that that knee that was on the neck of my grandfather still impacts me today," said Goldman, who runs a family farm in Arkansas.

### Ancestral techniques

Adding to the economic inequities are persistent prejudices. Justin Butts, who is in charge of sheep, pigs and fowl at Soul Fire Farm, faced the skepticism of white colleagues in Pennsylvania when he took up farming. "Other farmers didn't believe that I was a farmer and was legitimate," said Butts, a former naval officer. "Or they would tell me that Black people don't farm-when I was a young person just beginning the farm. And it was very insulting." The issue has drawn little political attention, though Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has promised to support the rights of indigenous farmers and those of color.

As they work to build a healthier relationship to the earth, the members of Soul Fire Farm have embraced farming traditions used by their ancestors-techniques like no-till farming, intercropping and mulching. The farm also holds training seminars and history talks that draw thousands of budding farmers each year. "It's not something that we've gotten to experience in centuries because of how our ancestors were brought here, how they were stripped of their land," said Brooke Bridges. "It was extremely traumatic, but our ancestors made it. Their Black lives really mattered." — AFP



Justin Butts, livestock manager at Soul Fire Farm, checks on the animals in his charge.



African-American farmers like those who operate the Soul Fire Farm account for only 1.3 percent of the rural US population.



## Sports

## Photo of the day



Sean Garnier is seen in front of the Kuwait Towers in Kuwait. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Kitata sprints to London Marathon win as Kipchoge suffers rare defeat

## Favorite Kipchoge fades to eighth after suffering cramp

**LONDON:** Ethiopian Shura Kitata outsprinted Kenya's Vincent Kipchumba to win a thrilling London Marathon yesterday as a stunned world record holder Eliud Kipchoge faded late in the race to suffer his first defeat since 2013. In cold, wet conditions, 24-year-old Kitata edged clear in the final metres to win by one second over Kipchumba in a relatively slow two hours, 05:41 minutes.

Sisay Lemma of Ethiopia was third in 2:53.35, with Kipchoge, the hot favorite, who in his last race a year ago became the only man to break the two hour mark for the distance, eighth in 2:06.49 having suffered cramp and a blocked ear. In the absence of injured Kenenisa Bekele, Kipchoge was widely expected to lift a fifth London crown but was never able to impose his usual speed in the relentless cold rain. He was in a pack who went through halfway in just under 63 minutes – very pedestrian in relation to his recent races, not least his official world record of 2:01.39 set in Berlin two years ago.

Ethiopians Lemma and Tamirat Tola, both sporting woollen hats to stave off the cold, took up the

running as the field began to realize that, perhaps, Kipchoge was struggling. They were right. The favorite, whose face never usually gives any indication of suffering, was showing the occasional grimace and he lacked his usual smoothness. At one point the leaders clocked a five minute mile, a virtual jog at elite level. Then, as never previously seen during his all-conquering career, Kipchoge, 35, broke, dropping back from a pack of six with just over three miles to go.

As the pace eventually picked up it was down to three, shoulder to shoulder, as they entered The Mall in a finish more like an 800m race than a marathon. The tall Kipchumba looked as if he would do it as he edged ahead, but Kitata fought back magnificently to take the tape. Kitata, who finished second in London in 2018, thanked his missing compatriot for his victory. "Kenenisa Bekele was helping me for this race and he advised me how to run," he said. "I trained for the same course, I am very happy to win."

Kipchoge had won 12 of his 13 previous

marathons – the blip being a second place behind a then-world record in his second outing over the distance in Berlin in 2013. "I'm really disappointed, I had a problem with my right ear after it blocked, and then I really cramped and had problems with my hip from about the last 15 km," he said. "It's really cold but I don't blame the conditions and I'm still there to come back again."

Earlier, Kenyan world record holder Brigid Kosgei was a comfortable winner of the women's race in 2:18.58 as American Sara Hall produced a great finish to snatch second from Ruth Chepngetich. The races, originally postponed from April because of the COVID-19 pandemic, were run over almost 20 laps of a fenced-off course in a "controlled secure biosphere" around St James's Park. Although there was no mass field this year, around 40,000 people are running the distance at venues of their choice through the day. They will receive official finisher's medals and raise millions of pounds for charities hard hit by the cancellation of the April race. —Reuters



LONDON: Winner, Ethiopia's Shura Kitata poses with his trophy in front of Buckingham Palace after the elite men's race of the 2020 London Marathon in central London yesterday. —AFP

## Patriots-Chiefs NFL game postponed after COVID tests

**NEW YORK:** Yesterday's scheduled NFL game between the New England Patriots and Kansas City Chiefs was postponed by the league on Saturday after positive COVID-19 tests by Patriots quarterback Cam Newton and Chiefs reserve Jordan Ta'amu. The NFL postponed the contest to Monday or Tuesday in the wake of the positive tests for the reigning Super Bowl champion Chiefs, who closed their facility according to the NFL Network, and Patriots, who altered plans to travel to Kansas City for the game.

"In consultation with infectious disease experts, both clubs are working closely with the NFL and the NFLPA to evaluate multiple close contacts, perform additional testing and monitor developments," the league said in a statement. "All decisions will be made with the health and safety of players, team and game-day personnel as our primary consideration." The Chiefs-Patriots clash marks the second game originally set for this weekend postponed by COVID-19 positive tests. The Tennessee Titans and Pittsburgh Steelers contest was moved to October 25 after first being delayed to Monday or Tuesday by the NFL before additional positive results were returned.

If the Chiefs (3-0) are forced to play Tuesday, the Patrick Mahomes-led squad would be looking at three games in nine days with their next contests set for October 11 at home against Las Vegas and four days later at Buffalo. The first sign of trouble came when the Patriots announced a player had tested positive, his identity later confirmed as star run-pass threat Newton when he was placed on COVID-19 reserve, ensuring he would not play this weekend. Newton replaced Tom Brady as the signal caller for the Patriots (2-1) this season after Brady spent 20 years with New England, winning six Super Bowl titles.

"Late last night, we received notice that a Patriots player tested positive for COVID-19," the Patriots said in a statement. "The player immediately entered self-quarantine. Several additional players, coaches and staff who have been in close contact with the player received point of care tests this morning and all were negative for COVID-19. "We are in close consultation with the NFL as well as our team of independent doctors and specialists and will follow their guidance regarding our scheduled trip to Kansas City and game against the Chiefs.—AFP

## Enable bids for Arc history, O'Brien withdraws runners

**PARIS:** Enable bids to become the first horse to win the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe three times on Sunday, boosted by the shock withdrawal of Aidan O'Brien's four runners. Frankie Dettori and Enable will now face just 10 rivals with the rain-affected ground at Longchamp racecourse the main obstacle to her making history. O'Brien withdrew his quartet – which included the fancied Mogul and Epsom Derby champion Serpentine – late on Saturday after they tested positive for a banned substance.

It is believed the substance may have been in contaminated horse feed. Leading English trainer Roger Varian withdrew all seven runners he had racing in England on Saturday due to using the same feed. Various batches of Gain Equine Nutrition feeds have been found to be contaminated with a prohibited substance. "Unfortunately the results of the urine samples taken from the horses yesterday have come back positive from the French laboratory," read a tweet from O'Brien's Ballydoyle Stables account. "There is a possibility that the contaminant may have left their system by the time of racing tomorrow."

"However we have no guarantee of this, and in order to protect the integrity of racing we have decided to withdraw all our horses from racing tomorrow (Sunday)." Enable may be unaffected by the feed furor but the heavy

rain throughout the week in Paris has turned the ground at Longchamp into a real challenge for her. Dettori described the going as "heavy" after riding there on Saturday with fellow jockey Christophe Soumillon going further and saying it was the "most gruelling" he had ever experienced at the track.

### 'A very calm horse'

Enable's trainer John Gosden mused it was "Nature's way of getting back at us (humans)" after years of neglecting it. The 69-year-old Englishman, who along with Dettori is bidding for their fourth win in six editions of the Arc, fears the race is going to turn into a grim test of endurance. "She (Enable) doesn't much like that ground. She prefers the easy side of good, so she can show her class, but it is going to be a bit of a slog," said Gosden. "It is drying up now and it is tacky, but you might get another shower or two. "It is Longchamp, by the River Seine – it is deep." Enable would not have been running but for seeing her hopes of a third successive Arc triumph last year dashed when runner-up having been collared by Waldgeist in the dying strides. "I think Prince Khalid (Abdullah her owner and breeder) was brave in saying we'll try again," Gosden told English broadcaster ITV. "We're here and we're trying. We care about the filly in every way, she's a gorgeous filly to be around and she's been with us for five years."

"Let's hope she gets a great run round – and if she wins, marvellous, if she doesn't, she couldn't have done more for racing." She reminds me of the great jumping legends who had tremendous popular appeal Denman, Arkle, Desert Orchids – she's that kind of feeling," Gosden is two-handed as he runs his legendary three-time Ascot Gold Cup winner

ed, when the Heat trailed by as many as 32 points. Jimmy Butler led the way with 25 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds in playing 45 minutes, and Kelly Olynyk was a surprise off the bench with 24 points and nine rebounds. The Heat may need that again and more Sunday as Adebayo and Dragic-two of the team's top three scorers these playoffs—are both listed as doubtful.

"We're never giving up," said Butler. "We're going to fight, and we're going to ride with this thing 'til the wheels fall off. It's not over. We're just down 0-2; we got to do something special." For the Lakers, the key is doing more of the same. Los Angeles has been dominant the first two games, outscoring and outrebounding Miami. The Western Conference champs have been potent both in the paint and from long range, and they show little sign of slowing down with LeBron James and Anthony Davis leading the way. "Those guys are playing at an extremely high level, and hopefully we can get two more wins," said coach Frank Vogel.

Davis is averaging 33 points and 11.5 rebounds

## Eagle lifts England's Reid to LPGA lead in New Jersey

**NEW YORK:** Mel Reid fired an eagle and three birdies in a five-under par 66 on Saturday to seize a one-shot lead going into the final round of the LPGA ShopRite Classic. England's Reid, who was one off the pace heading into the round, had 15-under par total at the Seaview resort in Galloway New Jersey, and was one in front of Americans Jennifer Song and Jennifer Kupcho, who both shot 65. It's the second straight event that Reid, a six-time winner on the Ladies European Tour, has held the 54-hole lead in search of a first LPGA Tour title. She was two-up through three rounds in Portland but finished tied for fifth in a tournament won by compatriot Georgia Hall in a playoff.

"Another great opportunity this week to get it done," Reid said. "Tomorrow I'm going to take my time a little bit more, and hopefully it will make a bit of a difference." Reid put herself in position again with a quick start at Seaview, where she birdied the first and third. She was on the green in two at the par-five ninth and two-putted for birdie and a birdie at the 10th put her alone atop the leaderboard. "I knew it was always in me to do this," Reid said. "I wasn't sure how to get there. It has just taken me a lot more years than I expected it to."

Kupcho and Song both birdied the par-five 18th to close the gap. Kupcho's four-foot birdie attempt wobbled a bit but dropped in the right side as she capped a bogey-free round. The 23-year-old had drained a dazzling birdie putt at the 13th, her effort from the tier above the pin breaking wide and curling back toward the hole, finally dropping in the back side of the cup. "It was just curling and it just back-doored in," Kupcho said. Song also played without a bogey, grabbing three birdies on each side for her share of second. —AFP



PARIS: Italian jockey Frankie Dettori riding horse 'Enable' - reacts after finishing second during the 2019 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe flat race at the ParisLongchamp race track in Paris. —AFP

Stradivarius but he dislikes the 'bottomless ground' even more than Enable. Winning the Arc has been the dream of Japanese turfists for decades but their one runner Deirdre has been in poor form this year. Enable's greatest dangers appear to be the Jean Claude Rouget-trained duo Sotsass and Raabihah and Francis-Henri Graffard's German Derby winner In Swoop. Graffard says those who back In Swoop should not be unduly alarmed if he is trailing behind the other runners early on. "He's by nature a very calm horse, which can almost give the impression that he's not engaged mentally in his race," said Graffard. "He only really hit full stride in the final 200 metres of the race (the German Derby) before going on to win." —AFP

through the first two games, and James is just behind at 29 and 11. The dynamic duo has elicited comparisons to Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal, who combined to win three consecutive championships for the Lakers from 2000-02. "To be in the conversation with those two guys, myself and AD, is just very humbling, because I grew up watching those guys," James said. "... It's very humbling that we can be even mentioned with those greats."

Prior to the Finals, the Heat hadn't lost two consecutive games all postseason. Miami entered the series 12-3 after powering through the Eastern Conference. The last time a team came back from 0-2 to win the Finals was in 2016, when James' Cleveland Cavaliers accomplished the feat against the Golden State Warriors. As such, Los Angeles isn't ruling out Miami yet. "Until we win four games, we haven't accomplished our goal," Lakers guard Alex Caruso said. "It's been over a year together, and we've talked about the same goal from Day 1. We're still here chasing that same goal. Until we get four wins, we're staying hungry." —Reuters



## Sports

# Skipper Kohli hits form in Bangalore's big IPL victory

## IPL info leak attempt sparks corruption probe

**DUBAI:** Skipper Virat Kohli hit form with his first half-century of this Indian Premier League season as he led Royal Challengers Bangalore to a comfortable win over Rajasthan Royals on Saturday. Kohli, who came into the match with scores of 14, one and three, remained unbeaten on 72 as Bangalore chased down a target of 155 to win by eight wickets in Abu Dhabi.

He put on a key second-wicket partnership of 99 with in-form opener Devdutt Padikkal, who made 63 - his third IPL fifty in four matches for last years wooden spooners. Kohli, 31, started cautiously before finding his touch to smash seven fours and two sixes in his 53-ball stay in this year's first afternoon game of the Twenty20 tournament. The players had to deal with temperatures that hit 34 celsius.

"Virat Kohli's fitness is second to none. And the way he controlled that innings in the chase was great to see," Bangalore's head coach Simon Katich told reporters. "The way we see it, we don't look at Virat being out of form at all. We thought he looked magnificent in the first game, unfortunately he holed out, and then missed out a

couple of times and that can happen. "But what helped was that he got us over the line in the super over to finish the game against Mumbai Indians (on Monday). It was only a matter of time before he gets runs in the middle."

Bangalore lost Aaron Finch - trapped lbw off Shreyas Gopal for eight - but the left-handed Padikkal and Kohli made sure their team recorded their third win. Padikkal was bowled by Royals' England paceman Jofra Archer. South African veteran AB de Villiers hit the winning boundary as Bangalore won in 19.1 overs. "It's a different feeling (batting with Kohli), I've watched him from home so much since I was young and to bat with him is an unreal feeling," said the 20-year-old Padikkal.

"I was getting tired, cramping up, but he pushed me. He said I need to see the team through. That's how he bats and he was conveying that to me too." Kohli's knock took him past 5,500 IPL runs to extend his lead at the top of the scoring chart in the absence of second-placed Suresh Raina (Chennai Super Kings) who pulled out of the tournament in the United Arab

Emirates. Earlier, leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal returned impressive bowling figures of 3-24 from his four overs to restrict Steve-Smith's Royals to 154 for six while batting first.

In the second game of the day, Delhi Capitals outplayed Kolkata Knight Riders by 18 runs after posting a mammoth 228 for four at the short-boundary Sharjah cricket ground. Skipper Shreyas Iyer hit an unbeaten 38-ball 88 before England's limited-overs captain import Eoin Morgan gave Delhi a scare with his 44 off 18 deliveries for Kolkata. South African quick Anrich Nortje claimed three wickets including the prized scalp of Morgan to help Delhi take top spot in the eight-team table.

### IPL info leak attempt

Meanwhile, a player taking part in the ongoing Indian Premier League tournament said he was asked to leak information about his team, the country's cricket anti-corruption chief said yesterday. The world's richest cricket league, long plagued by corruption, is in its third week and is being played behind closed doors in the United Arab Emirates

because of the coronavirus pandemic.

All eight teams are confined to separate "bio-bubbles". "A player has been approached. He himself immediately reported it," anti-corruption chief of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Ajit Singh told AFP. "We know who has approached... We are on the case." Singh said the "relatively unknown" player, whose identity was not released, was asked to leak some information about his team. He did not release further details about the incident. Singh told AFP before the tournament started that the bio-bubbles would make it easy for any illicit approaches to be noticed.

The BCCI last month struck a deal with Sportradar, a technology company that tracks online betting. The money-spinning IPL has a long history of corruption and match-fixing since it started in 2008. Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was suspended last year for failing to report corrupt approaches, one of them involving the IPL. A 2013 scandal caused the Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals to be suspended in 2015 for two seasons. The matches are being played in Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with the 53-day league ending on November 10. —Agencies

## Lak penalty save sends Persepolis into Asian final

**DOHA:** Hamed Lak produced a diving save off Maicon Roque as Persepolis beat Al Nassr 5-3 on penalties to reach the final of the Asian Champions League for the second time in three years on Saturday. Both teams had played out a tense 1-1 draw after 120 minutes of action forcing the match into the tie-breaker at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium.

But it was the Iranians who emerged as the top team in Asia's west zone as they scored off all their five penalties, while Saudi giants Al Nassr watched in agony from the sidelines as their Brazilian defender Roque's shot, his team's fourth, was saved by Lak, leaping to his right. A few hours before the match Persepolis were dealt a blow when the Asian Football Confederation banned their star striker Issa Alekassir for six months for a "discriminatory gesture" while celebrating his goal against Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the quarter-finals on Wednesday.

In addition to the ban, the 30-year-old, who scored four times in his side's last three matches in Doha and was

chiefly instrumental to their progress to the semis, was also fined \$10,000 for his slant-eyed gesture, considered a serious racial offence. "The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has banned Issa Alekassir, of Persepolis FC, from taking part in any kind of football-related activity for six months for violating Article 58.1 of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code (2019 Edition)," the AFC said in a statement. "The ban will take effect immediately," the continental body added

Article 58.1 states "anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, skin color, gender, disability, language, age, physical appearance, religion, political opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation, or ethnic, national, or social origin has committed an offence." On Saturday, however, Al Nassr, who were hoping to reach the final for the first time, couldn't make the most of Alekassir's absence or the fact that Persepolis had lost Ehsan Pehlevan just before half-time after he received his second yellow card.

The Saudis were first to score though, Abderrazzak Hamdallah foxing goalkeeper Lak with a 'Panenka'



**DOHA:** Persepolis's goalkeeper Hamed Lak saves a shot in the shoot-out during the AFC Champions League semi-finals match between Saudi's Al-Nassr and Iran's Persepolis on October 3, 2020. —AFP

goal in the 36th minute following Bashar Resan's foul on Khalid al-Ghamam. But Persepolis needed only six minute to draw level, Abdi Mehdi producing an excellent header past Al Nassr goalkeeper Brad Jones off a cross from Resan. Luck came to Lak's rescue immediately after the break as Hamdallah produced a brilliant free-kick only for the ball to thud into the crossbar after the goalkeeper was thoroughly beaten.

Both teams had their share of

chances before Lak came up with his decisive save in the shootout to put his team against a team from Asia's east, who are yet to be determined. The event, which was halted in February following the coronavirus outbreak, resumed in a bio-secure bubble in Doha last month with the matches packed into a tight schedule and the knockout phase doing away with the double-legged format. The tournament's matches in the east are yet to be announced. —AFP

## Bahrain royal team in season's first Nepal Himalayan summit

**KATHMANDU:** A team of climbers including a Bahrain prince has completed the first summit of a Nepal Himalayan peak this season after being given permission despite a coronavirus ban on tourist arrivals. The group, which includes members of the Bahrain Royal Guard and three Britons, climbed the 6,119-metre (20,075-foot) Lobuche, expedition organiser Seven Summits Treks told AFP.

It was not revealed if all 18 members of the team reached the summit, a precursor to them next tackling the 8,163-metre Manaslu, the world's eighth-highest mountain. Tourists and climbers are officially barred from the country until mid-October. The team arrived in Nepal in mid-September and quarantined in the capital Kathmandu for a week before heading to Everest base camp and on to Lobuche.

More than 50 Sherpas are part of the expedition, but the identity of the royal climber was not disclosed. The group plans to climb Everest next year. Nepal closed its borders in March and grounded international flights just ahead of the busy spring climbing season, devastating the local tourism sector. The country of 28 million people has recorded an average of 1,300 daily infections since August, for a total of more than 86,000 cases and 535 deaths. Limited international flights resumed last month, but only for citizens and foreign diplomats. —AFP



**LOBUCHE, Nepal:** An 18-member party of the Bahrain Royal Guard mountaineering team including a Bahraini prince and three Britons pose as they head to summit Mount Lobuche East, 6,119-metre high northeast of Kathmandu. - AFP

## Swiatek shocks Halep; Nadal eases into 14th quarter-final

**PARIS:** Polish teenager Iga Swiatek shocked top seed and title favorite Simona Halep to reach the Roland Garros last eight yesterday as 12-time champion Rafael Nadal breezed into the quarter-finals for the 14th time. Swiatek, just 19 and ranked 54 in the world, triumphed 6-1, 6-2 on the back of 30 winners and not allowing 2018 champion Halep a single break point. "I am surprised I could do this," admitted Swiatek after ending the 17-match winning streak of Halep, the overwhelming favorite in the absence of 2019 champion Ashleigh Barty and US Open winner Naomi Osaka and following the injury-enforced withdrawal of Serena Williams.

It was a stunning turnaround for the Pole who won just

one game against the Romanian at the same stage in Paris last year, swept off court in just 45 minutes. "Last year I wasn't experienced enough, it was my first match in a big stadium so I was a little stressed, but now I can handle the pressure." Halep had arrived in Paris with claycourt titles from Prague and Rome and had demolished Amanda Anisimova, who shocked her in Paris last year, for the loss of one game in 54 minutes in the third round.

"She played really well, it was her match today," admitted Halep who said she'll quickly get over her disappointment with her season now at an end. "I will have a chocolate and I will be better tomorrow." Swiatek will face Italian qualifier Martina Trevisan for a place in the semi-finals after the 26-year-old, world number 159, registered a 6-4, 6-4 victory over fifth seed Kiki Bertens, a semi-finalist in 2016. Trevisan is the first qualifier to make the last eight since Yaroslava Shvedova in 2012. Trevisan had saved two match points in her win over Greek 20th seed Maria Sakkari. "I'm living in a dream," said the Italian whose other appearance in the main draw of a major came at the Australian Open in

January. Yesterday's early shocks mean that only four seeds remain in the women's draw-third seed Elina Svitolina, fourth-seeded Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova, seeded at seven, and Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, the 30th seed. Nadal defeated American qualifier Sebastian Korda 6-1, 6-1, 6-2, staying comfortably on course for a 13th French Open title and record-equalling 20th Grand Slam crown. Second seed Nadal racked up his 97th win at the tournament against just two defeats since his title-winning debut in 2005.

He goes on to face either German sixth seed Alexander Zverev or Italian teenager Jannik Sinner in what will be his 42nd career appearance in the last eight of a Grand Slam. Korda, the world number 213 and son of 1998 Australian Open champion and 1992 Roland Garros runner-up Petr Korda, never really recovered from slipping quickly to a 5-0 deficit in the first set. The 20-year-old, who was so in awe of Nadal when he was growing up that he named his cat after the Spaniard, had the consolation of breaking serve once in the third set. —AFP



**PARIS:** Poland's Iga Swiatek serves the ball to Romania's Simona Halep during their women's singles fourth round tennis match on Day 8 of The Roland Garros 2020 French Open tennis tournament yesterday. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Atalanta on scoring spree

**BERGAMO:** Irrepressible Atalanta kept up their record of scoring at least four goals in every game this season as they dispatched Cagliari 5-2 on Sunday to maintain their 100 percent record in Serie A. Luis Muriel, Alejandro Gomez, Mario Pasalic, Duvan Zapata and Sam Lammers shared the goals in another hugely entertaining Atalanta performance while Diego Godin and Joao Pedro replied for the Sardinians, whose goalkeeper Alessio Cragno spared them further damage. The Bergamo side, Serie A's top scorers with 98 goals last season, have nine points from three games after previously winning 4-2 at Torino and 4-1 at Lazio. Muriel ran on to Jose Luis Palomino's through ball to score the first after seven minutes, but Cagliari replied when Uruguay captain Godin headed in from a corner on his debut after joining the club from Inter Milan. —Reuters

#### Doubt on Serie A fixtures

**MILAN:** Confusion reigned over one of the top Serie A fixtures of the season on Sunday as Juventus prepared as usual to host Napoli, while local media reported that the visitors had been unable to travel due to an order from their local health authority. Juventus, who said on Saturday that they would take the field, wrote simply "Matchday" in a post on Twitter accompanied by a photograph of forward Cristiano Ronaldo and the time and venue of the match. However, Sky Sport Italia and other media said that Napoli, where two players have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last four days, had not left for Turin and were preparing to go into a team quarantine. The reports said that the local health authority in Naples had not allowed Napoli to travel as a precaution following the positive cases. There was no official comment from either the team or the health authority, however. —Reuters

#### Lens beat Saint Etienne 2-0

**PARIS:** Lens secured a 2-0 win over nine-man Saint Etienne and moved up to second place in Ligue 1 thanks to goals from Gael Kakuta and Florian Sotoca after the visitors were hit with red cards for Timothee Kolodziejczak and Wahbi Khazri on Saturday. Kolo was the first to be sent off after conceding an early penalty with a clumsy tackle that injured Ignatius Ganago. Referee Bastien Dechepy viewed a replay of the incident before brandishing the red card at the 29-year-old defender, with Kakuta firing Lens into the lead with the spot kick. Saint Etienne sent Khazri on in the second-half but his first appearance of the season was a short-lived affair as he was dismissed in the 64th minute for a lunging tackle on Jonathan Gradiat as the two raced for a long ball. —Reuters



**14** Kitata sprints to London Marathon win as Kipchoge suffers rare defeat



**15** Lak penalty save sends Persepolis into Asian Champions League final



**15** Swiatek shocks Halep; Nadal eases into 14th quarter-final



## Tottenham thrash Man United 6-1

Mourinho humiliates former club Man U; Arsenal edge Blades



**MANCHESTER:** Tottenham Hotspur's French midfielder Tanguy Ndombele (left) shoots to score his team's first goal past Manchester United's Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea (right) to equalize during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Jose Mourinho humiliated his former club Manchester United as Tottenham swept to a stunning 6-1 win at Old Trafford, while Arsenal moved into the Premier League's top four with a 2-1 victory against Sheffield United yesterday. Tottenham boss Mourinho was sacked by United in 2018 after a turbulent reign, but it was his successor Ole Gunnar Solskjaer who was left red faced after a shambolic display from the hosts. Despite taking the lead through Bruno Fernandes' second minute penalty, United collapsed as they conceded four goals in the first half of a league match for the first time since 1957.

Tanguy Ndombele equalized in the fourth minute after dismal defending from Harry Maguire and South Korea forward Son Heung-min made it two from Harry Kane's seventh minute quick free-kick. United were reduced to 10 men when Anthony Martial was harshly sent off in the 28th minute for his reaction to a push from Erik Lamela. That opened the floodgates as United surrendered, with

Kane grabbing Tottenham's third in the 31st minute after stealing Eric Bailly's weak pass. United were in disarray and Serge Aurier crossed for Son's close-range finish in the 37th minute.

Aurier drilled home in the 51st minute and Kane made it six with a 79th minute penalty. It was just the third time United had conceded six goals in the Premier League era started in 1992. Solskjaer's team have lost their first two home games for the first time since 1986 and sit just two places above the relegation zone after their heaviest home defeat since Manchester City beat them 6-1 in 2011. Tottenham are up to fifth place after their second league win this term, ending a run of four games in eight days that included knocking Chelsea, another of Mourinho's old clubs, out of the League Cup on Tuesday.

### Saka shines

Arsenal have taken nine points from their opening four

games as they look to return to Champions League football for the first time in five years next season. But the Gunners were fortunate to take all three points at the Emirates as they had an early escape when David Luiz escaped a red card for a pull on Oli Burke. Mikel Arteta's men got going after the break and a fine team move opened the scoring on the hour mark when Bukayo Saka headed home Hector Bellerin's cross at the far post. Bellerin was the provider again moments later as Nicolas Pepe drove forward to curl the ball in off the far post. David McGoldrick halved the deficit seven minutes from time with the Blades first league goal of the season, but they remain without a point.

### Leicester rocked

Leicester's perfect start came to a shuddering halt with a 3-0 defeat at home to West Ham, just a week after the Foxes thrashed Manchester City 5-2. Liverpool can now

leapfrog Leicester to move joint top of the table alongside Merseyside rivals Everton if they win at Aston Villa later. West Ham manager David Moyes was again taking charge from home after testing positive for coronavirus. But just as in a 4-0 win over Wolves last weekend, the Hammers did not miss his presence as goals from Michael Antonio, Pablo Fornals and Jarrod Bowen gave the visitors a full deserved three points.

At St Mary's, Southampton won their second successive game by seeing off lowly West Brom 2-0. Ralph Hasenhuttl's side dominated throughout but had to wait until the 41st minute to open the scoring when Moussa Djenepo's clever drag-back eluded Jake Livermore before the winger stroked his finish into the bottom corner. Oriol Romeu met Stuart Armstrong's cross with a brilliant volley from the edge of the area in the 69th minute. Wolves beat Fulham 1-0 at Molineux as Pedro Neto's 56th minute goal clinched their second league win of the season. — AFP

## Atalanta cruise and Inter held in Serie A

**MILAN:** Papu Gomez extended his scoring streak to give high-flying Atalanta a third consecutive win 5-2 against Cagliari yesterday as title rivals Inter Milan were stalled 1-1 in a bad-tempered game against Lazio in Rome where both teams finished a man down. Champions Juventus's clash against Napoli later was in doubt with the southerners having not travelled to Turin because of two coronavirus cases. "No, everything is like Saturday," a Napoli spokesman told AFP asked about a possible departure for Turin, hours before kickoff. The Lega Serie A insisted all the health protocols were in place for the match to safely go ahead as scheduled for Turin at 1845 GMT.

In Bergamo, Atalanta struck hard in their first home game this season, bringing their tally to 13 goals in three games played, to sit top of the Serie A table. But Inter dropped points for the first time this campaign despite playing 20 minutes with a player more after Lazio's Ciro Immobile was sent off. "The score could have been much bigger," said Atalanta Gian Piero Gasperini. "Now the (international) break interrupts this momentum. Hopefully we'll pick up where we left off."

Gasperini's side were four goals up at the break with Luis Muriel opening after seven minute. Gomez blasted in the second from a distance just before the half hour

mark, five minutes after Uruguayan defender Diego Godin had pulled Cagliari level on his debut since moving from Inter Milan. Mario Pasalic and Duvan Zapata also scored in a five-minute spell before the break. Joao Pedro reduced the deficit for the Sardinians after the break but Sam Lammers marked his first home game with an impressive solo effort with nine minutes to go.

Atalanta have the maximum nine points, two ahead of Sassuolo and Inter. In Rome, Lautaro Martinez gave Antonio Conte's side the advantage after half an hour off a deflected Ivan Perisic effort but Sergej Milinkovic-Savic headed in the equalizer ten minutes into the second half. Immobile was sent off after 69 minutes for hitting out at Arturo Vidal with Inter's Stefano Sensi also seeing red with minutes to go. Hellas Verona fell to their first defeat of the season with Jasmin Kurtic scoring after just one minute to give Parma a first win this campaign.

### Napoli risk forfeit

In Turin, confusion reigned over whether Napoli would line out, after midfielder Eljif Elmas and Poland international Piotr Zielinski contracted the virus. The team have not left Naples because of measures of regional health authorities, despite the Lega Serie A insisting conditions were safe. "The protocol provides... rules, which allow the playing of league matches even in the event of a positive tests, fielding the players who tested negative," Serie A said. These measures are "applicable to the situation of Napoli, which has two positive players for Covid-19," the Liga Serie A added. — AFP

## Real Madrid gather momentum after Levante victory

**MADRID:** Real Madrid moved to the top of La Liga yesterday as Vinicius Junior and Karim Benzama both scored in a 2-0 win over Levante. Vinicius, who had proved decisive in Madrid's win over Real Valladolid on Wednesday, looked set to see off Levante as well, before Benzama notched his first goal of the season late on. Madrid have now recorded three clean sheets from their four opening games, although a draw away at Real Sociedad has given an early advantage to Barcelona, who played away at Sevilla later.

Madrid and Barca had earlier played out the first ever women's Clasico after Madrid finally launched their female team this season. Yet Barcelona showed their superiority in a 4-0 rout. But the men's team have become something of a defensive juggernaut under Zidane after their solidity and resilience formed the basis of their successful title bid last term. They have 10 points from 12 available, after three consecutive wins. Levante, meanwhile, have managed only one victory from first four matches and this defeat means they drop into the relegation places. Vinicius gave Madrid the lead after 16 minutes when Levante failed to clear a corner and the Brazilian calmly curled in for his second



**VILA-REAL:** Real Madrid's Spanish defender Sergio Ramos (right) vies with Levante's Portuguese defender Ruben Vezo (2nd left) during the Spanish League football match between Levante UD and Real Madrid CF yesterday. — AFP

goal in two games.

He could have made it two but overhit a pass intended for Benzama and then Levante hit the crossbar. Nikola Vuckevic at the back post almost capitalizing on some hesitation from Thibaut Courtois. Levante found it difficult to cope with Madrid's pressing and Benzama and Vinicius both should scored when twice they won the ball back in dangerous positions. Sergio Ramos also had a headed goal ruled out for offside but Levante went close to a late equaliser as Clerc and Enis Bardhi both tested Courtois. But Benzama tore away on the break in injury-time and finished to complete a convincing win. — AFP