



3 Political groups announce list of political, social, financial reforms



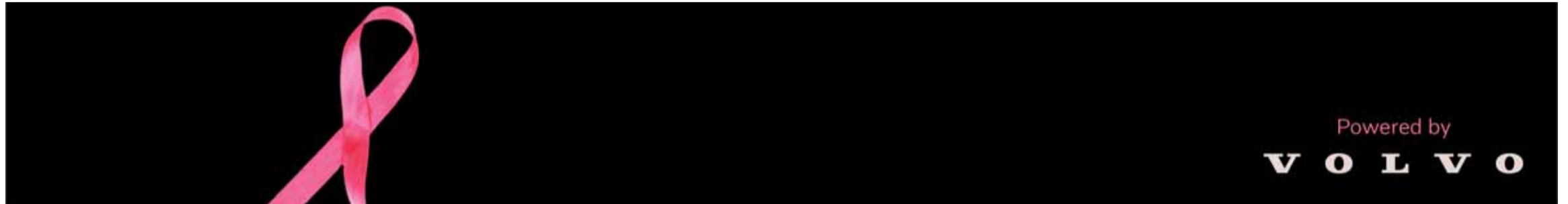
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Amir names Sheikh Mishal Kuwait's new Crown Prince

Al-Sabah family blesses Sheikh Mishal on taking office, wishes him success

Erdogan pays respects to Amir



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives yesterday Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who offered his condolences on the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

MPs pay tribute to Sheikh Sabah

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers yesterday paid tribute to late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who passed away last week after ruling the country for 14 years following a 40-year career as foreign minister and three years as prime minister. The lawmakers described Sheikh Sabah as an extraordinary leader for his great services to the nation.

Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said the late Amir was "righteous with his people, seeking to meet their needs, watching over their comfort and striving to achieve their aspirations for Kuwait". Regionally, he was a messenger of peace, working hard for issues of Arab and Islamic nations, especially those issues in which humans were victims of conflicts, and the Palestinian case was his priority, he added. Ghanem said the late Amir was the guardian of the constitution

and thus the nation is "crying for a great leader and wise skipper who steered the ship by weathering storms. He had a kind heart and was a source of safety".

MP Saleh Ashour described Sheikh Sabah as a great leader who loved Kuwait and its people who in turn loved him. MP Safa Al-Hashem said Kuwait lost in Sheikh Sabah a school of diplomacy that endorsed peace and neutrality. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said Sheikh Sabah made many initiatives and provided assistance to neighboring countries. He said the late Amir exerted great efforts to preserve Gulf unity.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi said Sheikh Sabah defended the Palestinian cause and resisted normalization of ties with the Zionist enemy. MP Abdullah Al-Kandari described Sheikh Sabah as the wise man of Arabs and a peacemaker who defused the Gulf crisis.

The Assembly then held a second special session to study a number of draft laws. The Assembly unanimously approved a law setting the financial allocations of the Amiri Diwan at KD 50 million. Head of the budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the sum also includes allocations to members of the ruling family.



This Feb 8, 2012 file photo shows (from left) HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the then Crown Prince and new Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of the National Guard and newly named Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attending a gathering of the Al-Sabah family at Azayez Farm in Abdaly. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday named Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the new Crown Prince, the Amiri Diwan announced. The Al-Sabah family blessed Sheikh Mishal on taking office, wishing him success. According to the constitution, Sheikh Mishal's appointment will be debated and endorsed by the National Assembly, which is highly expected to approve the move. The Assembly is meeting today to endorse the appointment and allow Sheikh Mishal to take the oath.

British-educated Sheikh Mishal, 80, has been the Deputy Chairman of the National Guard since 2004. He studied at Kuwait University and graduated with a degree from UK's Hendon Police College in 1960. He became the chief of the general investigations department in 1967 and continued in the post until 1980. The department was changed to the State Security Agency, of which Sheikh Mishal was the first chief.

Sheikh Mishal is the seventh son of the 10th Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Kuwait experts said he had in the past declined offers of senior positions, steering clear of political battles and public-facing roles. He had accompanied late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the United States in July where the late ruler was hospitalized until he passed away.

The appointment of a new crown prince eight days after HH the Amir ascended to power comes as Kuwait prepares to hold crucial parliamentary elections late next month or in early December. Ahead of the election, the Cabinet reviewed on Tuesday a draft law to create a higher election commission and asked its legal department to study the legislation before endorsing it. The government said the move aims to boost electoral transparency.

HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf is expected to uphold oil policy and a foreign policy shaped by Sheikh Sabah that strove for Arab detente and balanced ties between Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq. Kuwait has also played a mediatory role in a diplomatic divide between Qatar and its Gulf neighbors, after Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain cut ties with Doha in 2017 over accusations it supports extremists.

HH the Amir and the crown prince are also expected to focus on domestic issues at a time the government is trying to tackle a liquidity crunch. A pressing matter, diplomats and analysts say, is debt legislation that had met resistance in parliament and which would allow Kuwait to tap international debt markets to help it finance the budget deficit. Frequent clashes between Cabinet and the National Assembly, the Gulf's oldest and most powerful legislature, have led to successive government reshuffles and dissolution of parliament, hindering investment and reform efforts. (See Page 2)



Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

- Born in Kuwait in 1940 as the seventh son of Kuwait's 10th ruler Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.
- Received his education at Al-Mubarakiya School and then at Britain's Hendon Police College.
- Served in the interior ministry between 1967 and 1980, rising up the ranks until he became head of the general investigations department that was transformed during his tenure into the State Security Agency.
- Appointed by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the honorary president of the Nabati Poets Diwan in 1977.
- Appointed as Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard on April 13, 2004.
- Honorary president of Kuwait Aircraft Engineers and Pilots Association since 1973.
- Honorary president and founding member of Kuwait Amateur Radio Society.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh and MP Safa Al-Hashem mourn during a special session for late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

New crown prince Sheikh Mishal, a security czar who shunned limelight

Savvy veteran helped reform the Kuwait National Guard

KUWAIT: Kuwait's crown prince in waiting, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, is a forceful figure who steered clear of political battles and public roles and spent much of his career helping build the Gulf Arab state's security and defense apparatus.

Close to the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and new Amir His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait experts say, he is expected to help guide state affairs in the US-allied OPEC member state. "The Amir will listen to his views, he will have an impact in that way," said Kuwaiti political scientist and former UN envoy Ghanim Alnajjar. "His focus will be security, the judiciary and other domestic issues."

Sheikh Mishal has been deputy chief of the Kuwait National Guard since 2004 and was head of State Security for 13 years after joining the Interior Ministry in the 1960s. Sheikh Mishal, who attended Britain's Hendon Police College, was credited with helping to reform the Kuwait National Guard, and Kuwaiti journalist Faisal Al-Qanae once described him as the "biggest enemy" of cronyism and lawbreaking.

Reforms

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, who is seen upholding Kuwait's current oil, investment and foreign policies, takes the helm as the

country faces a liquidity crisis caused by low oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic, which the Kuwait National Guard has played a visible role in combating.

Diplomats and analysts say the immediate focus will be on domestic issues with perceived corruption, living standards and the economy the top priorities for most Kuwaitis in a country with a cradle-to-grave welfare system and where expatriates constitute a big part of the workforce. Deutsche Bank has estimated that Kuwait's nearly \$140 billion economy could shrink by 7.8 percent this year in what would be one of the worst economic crunches among Gulf oil exporters.

Key will be cooperation between cabinet and the outspoken assembly, the Gulf region's oldest legislature that wields power to block bills and question ministers. Clashes have led to successive government reshuffles or dissolution of parliament. Kuwaiti opposition figures have proposed electoral reforms and a pardon for dissidents in recent meetings with His Highness Sheikh Nawaf before he assumed power. "Reformers and independents are looking for reconciliation (with the government), enhancing freedom of speech, economic and political reforms, combating corruption, demographics," Alnajjar said. — Reuters



Head of State Security for 13 years



This March 15, 2020 file photo shows Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets as he arrives at the Kuwait National Guard headquarters building to attend a reception for newly-graduated officers.



In this February 24, 2020 file photo, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives singer Habib Al-Duwailah and poet Ali Musaed to honor them for their collaboration with the Kuwait National Guard to produce a patriotic song in celebration of Kuwait's national anniversaries.

US, Palestine ambassadors congratulate Sheikh Mishal

KUWAIT: The United States Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski and Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub released statements yesterday, congratulating Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on being nominated as Kuwait's crown prince.

"I congratulate Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on his nomination to serve as Kuwait's next Crown Prince. I wish him every success in his important new role under HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's

leadership," Ambassador Romanowski said in her statement. "The United States looks forward to strengthening its relationship with Kuwait under the country's new leadership."

"Our two nations share a longstanding history that goes back more than six decades," the US ambassador continued. "I am committed to developing our ties further through the US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, an important framework to set our shared vision and expand our cooperation across many fields including security, trade,

health, education, cultural exchange and more."

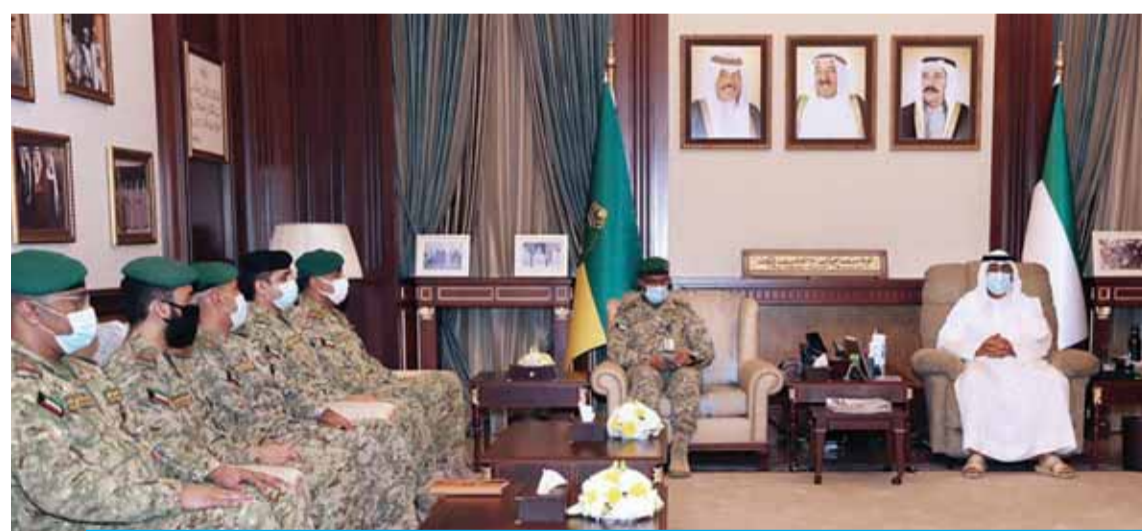
Meanwhile, Ambassador Tahboub prayed to guide Sheikh Mishal for the good of Kuwait and its prosperity. "On behalf of myself, the Palestinian Embassy's staff and members of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, it is my honor to congratulate HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the confidence entrusted in him by HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," the Palestinian Ambassador said in his statement.



KUWAIT: This December 29, 2007 photo shows His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left), Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) and His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Photos by Kuwait News Agency and Kuwait National Guard



In this November 13, 2016 file photo, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offers condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud over the passing of Prince Turki bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.



Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives condolences from Kuwait National Guard officials over the passing of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Kuwait National Guard headquarters building on October 6, 2020.



In this February 13, 2018 file photo, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with Kuwait National Guard officers who were honored for organizing training programs for new recruits.



This March 29, 2020 file photo shows Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah giving a word of appreciation to Ministry of Public Works engineers at a road's maintenance site.



This March 17, 2020 file photo shows Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) speaking during a high-level meeting with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the Kuwait National Guard headquarters building, to discuss preparations to handle the coronavirus crisis.



In this March 3, 2020 file photo, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with United States Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski and her accompanying delegation to discuss cooperation in the security and military fields.

Local

Political groups announce list of political, social, financial reforms

'Document of Reforms' to be presented to Amir

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Democratic Forum held a press conference on Tuesday to announce the joint 'Document of Reforms', which will be presented to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Eight political groups participated in the conference and signed this document. Jamal Al-Sayer, General Coordinator of the Rayat Al-Shaab Movement, said Kuwait is facing serious local and regional challenges, in addition to deterioration and decline in all areas as the government is not completely and properly applying the constitution.

"We are facing political, economic and financial crises. Unfortunately, the government is clamping down on freedoms by issuing restrictive laws. This led to the spread of corruption in most institutions, the situation deteriorated and people no longer trust the government. This needs quick correction in the parliament and the government. Democratic political reform is the main gateway to all reforms and resolving the problems of citizens," noted Sayer.

The Document of Reforms consists of six main points.

- Changing the election system through a law issued by the parliament according to the proportional list or mixed system supervised by an independent electoral authority.
- Beginning a new phase of national reconciliation between various categories of the society and the government and reducing conflict between them, in addition to adopting a law for general amnesty according to article 75 of the constitution and abolishing all laws restricting freedoms.
- Resolving the problem of bedoons (stateless



KUWAIT: Representatives of eight political groups who participated in the conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

residents), returning citizenships from whom it was withdrawn for political reasons, allowing the court to review the withdrawal or granting of nationality, demographic reforms of the dangerous current situation caused by administrative corruption and human trafficking to protect national identity, and relying on citizens.

- Prosecuting violators of public money and recovering stolen funds, in addition to activating the role of audit and anticorruption organizations through an effective governance system, preserving transparency and allowing people to be in control. Reforms should also be made to the judicial system that should be independent and Kuwaitized.
- Rejecting the so-called 'economic document',

as it makes citizens pay for the defects of the national economy. This economic document stipulates reforms and suggestions for financing the public budget by employees, retired citizens and lower categories of the society, who make up a major part of reforming the budget deficit. Developing transformative industries to provide additional resources for the country.

- Developing and supporting political activity to allow founding and declaring of political entities, in addition to amending the law dealing with non-governmental organizations. Achieving complete constitutional rights of women and completely protecting and developing the educational, health and environmental infrastructure.

In my view

Sheikh Sabah, the unparalleled leader



By Abdullah Buwair

local@kuwaittimes.com

We received the news about the passing of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah - Baba Sabah - in shock. He made all Kuwaitis and expats cry as soon as they learned about the demise of the leader of humanity. If Aug 2, 1990 was a black day in Kuwait's history, Sept 29, 2020 was a strange and sad day at the same time, as Kuwait became morose with the absence of its Sabah.

Your Highness Sheikh Sabah - you ruled for nearly 14 years, but your history of giving is much longer. You gave much since your youth, and I did not hear once that you turned down anyone who requested something.

HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was the fourth son of the late 10th Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He proved to be competent in all posts he took dealing with Kuwait's domestic and foreign affairs, while education, health, housing, environment and oil issues were on top of his interests, which he placed in his list of priorities and achievements.

Many diplomats who knew him said he worked with high energy and exerted outstanding efforts in developing Kuwait's foreign relations, especially with the permanent members of the UN Security Council. He played an important role in mediating between many countries mired in disputes and was able to reduce Arab and regional tensions, until the mediatory role became one of the most important characteristics that distinguished Kuwait's foreign policy.

Sheikh Sabah became the face of Kuwaiti foreign policy since he took over the foreign ministry in 1963, and became the dean of diplomats at the global level. During his official and political career, he worked in harmony with HH the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, as well as with those who preceded them in the wise leadership of Kuwait, and they were enjoying the spirit of one family that loved the country and protected its independence.

Sheikh Sabah watched the hoisting of the Kuwaiti flag at the United Nations as Kuwait became its 111th member, and he was the one who roamed the six continents to get a decision or contain crises, solve a problem, support an Arab cause or register Kuwait's presence.

His Highness was known for his kindness and humbleness and was decisive in taking decisions, particularly during crises, and had the ability to manage them. He was known to place himself at risk many times to see things firsthand. Readers may remember well his courageous stand towards the Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque bombing on Friday, June 26, 2015, as Sheikh Sabah insisted on entering the mosque soon after the explosion and see the martyrs and the injured in the mosque's yard.

I still remember the words of the policemen who told him "this place is dangerous for you," and his answer was "these are my children," and what hits them hits me. We ask Allah to bestow His mercy on your soul and accept you in heaven.

National election higher committee draft bill submitted

KUWAIT: A draft law to establish a National Election Higher Committee was submitted to the Council of Ministers on Tuesday. The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said that such move was due to the imminence of holding new parliamentary elections, and to achieve more transparency, integrity and reassurance to society that the election results are accurate and transparent. The Council of Ministers also assigned the Ministerial Committee for Legal Affairs to quickly review the draft law. The Council of Ministers also assigned the Minister of Justice

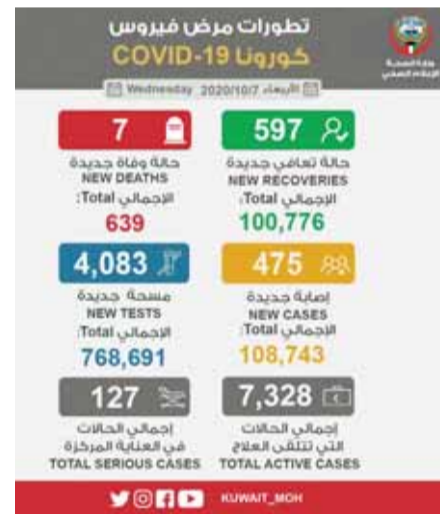


Anas Al-Saleh

and the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi to swiftly consult the opinion of the Supreme Judicial Council on the draft law in preparation for referring it to the National Assembly. — KUNA

Kuwait registers seven COVID-19 deaths in one day

KUWAIT: Kuwait's confirmed novel coronavirus cases increased by 475 to 108,743, while seven patients died in the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 639, the health ministry said yesterday. The figures include people who have come into contact with infected individuals, and others whose source of infection is currently being investigated, read a ministry statement. In terms of health zones, 115 cases were reported in Al-Ahmedi, 105 cases in Hawally, 89 in Farwaniya, 83 in Jahra and 83 in the Capital, the ministry's official spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad added. Earlier, the ministry said 597 people have recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 100,776. There are 127 people currently receiving intensive care for the virus out of a total 7,328 patients being



hospitalized. Some 4,083 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 768,691 so far, added the spokesman. The official reiterated the strict need to abide by health precautions, urging nationals and expatriates alike to follow social distancing rules as the only way to keep the virus at bay. —KUNA

News in brief

Benin President sends condolences

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolence yesterday from President of Benin Patrice Talon, expressing his deepest sorrow and condolences over the demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir replied with a cable, expressing his appreciation and gratitude over the sincere condolences. — KUNA

Greece's President expresses sorrow

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolence yesterday from President of Greece Katerina Sakellariopoulou, expressing her deepest sorrow and condolences over the demise of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir replied with a cable, expressing his appreciation and gratitude over the sincere condolences. — KUNA

Finnish President pays respects

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of condolence yesterday from President of Finland Sauli Niinisto, expressing his deepest sorrow and condolences over the death of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir replied with a cable, expressing his appreciation and gratitude over the sincere condolences. —KUNA

Belgium's king consoles Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a condolences cable on Tuesday from King Philippe of Belgium over the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. King Philippe expressed his heartfelt condolences and commiserations, praising the huge contributions of the late Amir in support of regional peace and humanitarian issues. In response, His Highness the Amir sent a message highlighting his gratitude and appreciation for the warm sentiments. — KUNA

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Zain partners with 14th edition of MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup competition

Today's innovators are tomorrow's differentiators

BEIRUT: MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) Pan Arab kicks-off the 14th edition of the Arab Startup Competition (ASC), with an online call for applications inviting entrepreneurs from all industries and sectors to apply to the MENA region's longest-running annual competition designed to support and celebrate innovations emanating from the Arab world. Over the course of 13 years, the competition has awarded over 1.28 million dollars in equity-free prizes to winning entrepreneurs and provided them with an avenue to exhibit and apply their ideas.

The competition is held in partnership with Community Jameel, a global philanthropy that operates a wide range of initiatives that promote and contribute towards positive social change and economic sustainability, and with Zain Group, a leading regional telecom operator as a Strategic Digital Partner.

Registration for the competition opened on 29 September 2020 on the competition's official website (www.mitarabcompetition.com). The deadline for applications is 15 December 2020. The organizers will be running a series of online roadshows to introduce entrepreneurs to the competition and support them in the application process. Interested candidates can sign up for the upcoming online roadshows once announced.

MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup Competition has evolved into an annual occurrence that is awaited by thousands of young Arab entrepreneurs, who see it as a platform that allows them to showcase, test and develop their creative and innovative ideas. Each year, the competition incorporates three tracks: The Ideas track, the Startups track and the Social Entrepreneurship track, each requiring a set of eligibility criteria. The teams who qualify for the semifinals will participate in a remote preparatory boot camp which includes training and mentorship that are designed and executed by MITEF Pan Arab partners. During the final stages of the competition, the judg-

ing committee will select six final winners (two for each of the tracks).

Commenting on the launch of the 14th edition of MITEF's Arab Startup Competition, Maya Rahal, Managing Director of MITEF Pan Arab said: "We are thrilled to be planning the 14th edition of MITEF Arab Startup Competition as a fully-digital program, designed to attract innovators from across the globe. This year, we are on the lookout for impact-driven entrepreneurs who have built businesses uplifting their surrounding communities and environment. As ecosystem enablers, we are convinced that joining hands with Community Jameel and Zain Group will help us raise awareness to the importance of sustainable innovation and ESG-aware entrepreneurship. The Arab Startup Competition has impacted the regional tech scene in ways that we continue to discover each day. This region has tremendous potential across the board, and today is when we seize the opportunity to rise up to the challenge and lead for a better world."

Malek Hammoud, Zain Group Chief Investment and Digital Officer, commented: "We have been supporting this competition since 2015 on the firm belief that today's innovators are tomorrow's differentiators. Through this partnership we look forward to encouraging opportunities that enhance the power of innovation through building up our future entrepreneurs and making the world a better place. Furthermore, supporting such events perfectly aligns to Zain's aspirations in becoming a leading digital lifestyle operator."

Fady Jameel, President, International of Community Jameel commented: "We continue to remain committed to supporting the Arab world entrepreneurial ecosystem, and eager to help our community of entrepreneurs, to get through the pandemic, together with us. The 14th edition of the competition held in a challenging atmosphere in light of the global health crisis, will be definitely great value to be gained as every year. We call every entrepreneur in the Arab world to consider



discovering their potential through this platform and bring value to their communities."

The 14th edition of MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup

Competition will culminate with a virtual conference and final award ceremony organized in March 2021 where the winners will be announced in an official awards ceremony.

The Arab Startup Competition's impact over the past 14 years :

- MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab trained and empowered more than 2,480 Arab entrepreneurs.
- A total of 450 startups were established across the MENA.
- Increase in percentage of submitted applications between 1st and 13th edition: 307 percent.
- Fifty percent of all the semi-finalists teams had at least 1 female leading member.
- Winners received a sum of \$1,285,000 in equity-free investment.

Kuwait's relief aid arrives in Sudan



KHARTOUM: Kuwait's sixth relief aid plane, organized by the Direct Aid Society, arrived in Khartoum yesterday loaded with around 40 tons of aid for those affected by rains and floods in Sudan. Charge d'Affairs of the Kuwaiti embassy in Khartoum Abdulkarim Al-Majim said that further dispatches are being planned over the upcoming days. Meanwhile, Director of the Kuwait-based Direct Aid Society Abdumajid Jali said that the aid is intended to be delivered to the state of Sennar, as it is one of the worst impacted in the country. He pointed out that the current shipment was preceded by three, all of which aim to meet the urgent needs of the victims. Kuwait has so far delivered over 200 tons of humanitarian aid to Khartoum in total. Authorities have declared a three-month nationwide state of emergency, considering Sudan a natural disaster area after increasing rains led to the inundation of the Nile to record levels. According to the state Humanitarian Aid Commission, over 770,000 people have been affected. The rains and floods have killed over 130 people and injured 45 others, destroying over 100,000 homes and two million hectares of farmland and killing around 6,000 livestock. — KUNA

Lights back in Shuwaikh Industrial

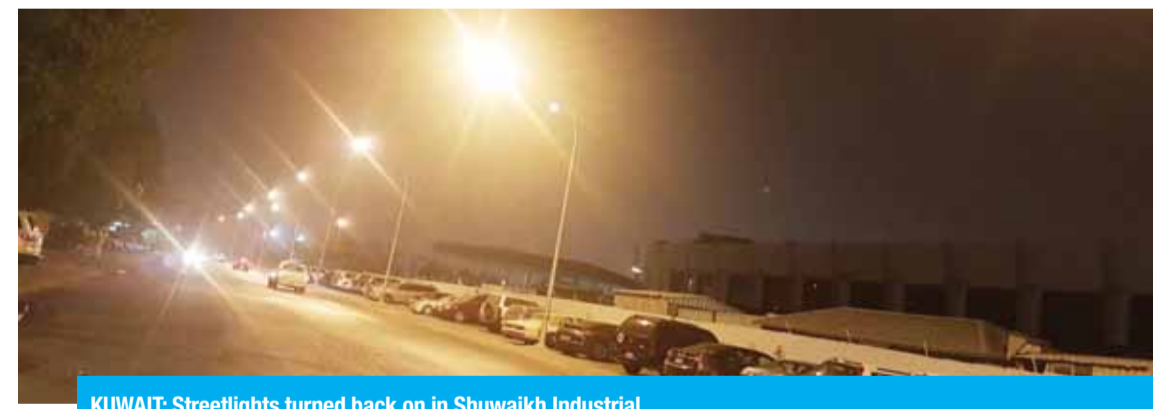
By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Shuwaikh Industrial is all lit up again. After repeated complaints by Kuwait Times to the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) and then to the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) regarding total darkness in Shuwaikh industrial area, the

lighting department of MEW finally fixed the streetlights.

Mohammed Al-Sarraf, Supervisor of the Lighting Department for the Capital Governorate, told Kuwait Times that although this area is under the responsibility of PAI, which should fix the streetlights, yet his team came to fix them as Industrial Shuwaikh is a vital area and they have received repeated complaints about the nonworking lights.

"Since the 1990s, PAI was assigned to take care of industrial areas, including Industrial Shuwaikh, but they are not fixing any streetlights although they have a special department for this purpose. But due to the importance of this area, we came to fix them," stressed Sarraf. PAI hasn't responded to any complaints by Kuwait Times.



KUWAIT: Streetlights turned back on in Shuwaikh Industrial.

Kuwait says int'l community faces moral responsibility to challenges

GENEVA: Kuwait announced on Tuesday that the international community now faces a moral responsibility towards extremely complex challenges that threaten local and international security and stability, particularly in the Middle East. It was stated in Kuwait's speech before the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) program, delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim. The current situation requires everyone to strengthen joint cooperation in the areas of food and security, while addressing the situation of displaced people, the impacts of climate change and the negative repercussions of COVID-19, Ghunaim added.

The challenges require everyone to support the efforts of international and regional agencies and non-governmental organizations as part of their

comprehensive response to reduce the suffering of refugees and displaced people, also to support host countries, he mentioned. Ghunaim also pointed out that Kuwait underlines the importance of resolving disputes through political dialogue, supporting mediation efforts and confirming that exclusion will not lead to peace and lasting solutions. Kuwait is keen to continue supporting UNHCR's efforts and all other international agencies to alleviate the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, he explained.

Ghunaim referred to the financial contributions made by Kuwait since the beginning of COVID-19 with the amount of \$290 million, which comes within the framework of Kuwait assuming responsibilities in supporting the international community tackling the pandemic. Ghunaim explained that during the days of the global humanitarian leader, the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he dedicated his life to serving humanity, contributing through his preventive diplomacy and mediation to resolving conflicts for over five decades. He underscored the continuation of Kuwait's humanitarian and development approach to the international and local community, in addition to political support for various humanitarian crises. The total humanitarian and development aid provided by Kuwait during the past ten years reached \$434 million allocated to UNHCR, he noted. — KUNA

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Pandemic, protests, politics driving US gun sales

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Turkey eyes 'place in world order'

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Conflict could trigger regional war: Iran

Fighting rages around Nagorno-Karabakh

BAKU: Iran's president warned yesterday that fighting between Azeri and ethnic Armenian forces in the South Caucasus could trigger a regional war as the death toll rose on the 11th day of hostilities. More than 300 have now died in the renewed fighting in and around the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which under international law belongs to Azerbaijan but is populated and governed by ethnic Armenians.

Azerbaijan says Azeri cities outside the conflict zone have also been attacked in the deadliest fighting in more than 25 years, taking the fighting closer to territory from which pipelines carry Azeri gas and oil to Europe. Iran, which borders both Armenia and Azerbaijan, has been talking to both the former Soviet republics as concern mounts that Turkey, a close ally of Azerbaijan, and Russia, which has a defence pact with Armenia, could be sucked into the conflict.

"We must be attentive that the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan does not become a regional war," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in televised remarks. "Peace is the basis of our work and we hope to restore stability to the region in a peaceful way." He said Iran would not allow "states to send terrorists to our borders under various pretexts". In a new call for a

ceasefire, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a television interview that the events were a tragedy and Moscow was deeply concerned.

Sergei Naryshkin, the head of Russia's SVR Foreign Intelligence Service, said on Tuesday the conflict was attracting people he described as mercenaries and terrorists from the Middle East. Naryshkin said Nagorno-Karabakh could become a launchpad for Islamist militants to enter Russia and other states in the region. Turkey has denied involvement in the conflict and has dismissed accusations first levelled by French President Emmanuel Macron, and echoed by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, that Turkey has sent Syrian jihadists to fight in the conflict.

Concern mounts as over 300 killed



'Terrorist attack'
But reiterating the allegations in comments

to Sky News, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Wednesday that the actions of Turkey and Azerbaijan during the conflict amounted to a "terroristic attack". "To me there is no doubt that this is a policy of continuing the Armenian genocide and a policy of reinstating the Turkish empire," Pashinyan said. Some 1.5 million Armenians were killed under Ottoman rule between 1915 and 1923. Turkey accepts that many Armenians living in the empire were killed in clashes with Ottoman forces during World



STEPANAKERT, Azerbaijan: A police officer steps over debris in the yard of a destroyed house after shelling in the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region's main city yesterday. —AFP

War One, but contests the figures and denies that the killings were systematically orchestrated and constitute a genocide.

Nagorno-Karabakh said 40 more of its servicemen had been killed in the latest clashes, taking its overall military death toll to 280 since Sept 27. It says 19 civilians have also been killed and many wounded in fighting that has involved warplanes, drones, artillery and tanks, and has caused widespread damage. The Azeri prosecutor's office has said 28 Azeri civilians have been killed in the renewed fighting. Azerbaijan has not disclosed information about its military casualties.

Mediation efforts led by Russia, France and the United States have failed to prevent intermittent flare-ups of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, which broke away from Baku's control in a war in 1991-94 that killed about 30,000 people. Putin said he was in constant contact with Pashinyan, and Russia's TASS news agency said Azeri President Ilham Aliyev had also spoken by phone with Putin. In more diplomatic fallout from the conflict, Athens said it had recalled its ambassador to Azerbaijan after what it said were "unfounded and offensive" allegations by the Azeri government that Greece tolerated militants on its soil.—Reuters

Greece's Golden Dawn branded a 'criminal group'

ATHENS: Greece's neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was branded a criminal organization yesterday, its leaders facing heavy sentences in one of the most important trials in the country's political history. The judgment came as police and anti-fascist demonstrators clashed outside the courthouse, on the sidelines of a large protest of some 15,000 people.

Reading out the verdict in a trial that took place over five years, presiding judge Maria Lepenioti said Golden Dawn founder and leader Nikos Michaloliakos and other senior members were guilty of running a criminal organization. Among those convicted is independent Eurodeputy Yiannis Lagos, who defected from the party last year; the party's former spokesman Ilias Kassidiaris; and a dozen other senior party members elected to parliament in 2012 at the height of Golden Dawn's influence.

None of the party's senior members were present in court. Michaloliakos and other senior cadres convicted on the criminal organization charge face jail sentences of between five and 15 years. The sentences are to be announced in separate hearings. The crowd had started gathering two hours before the verdicts were handed down in response to a call from the anti-fascist movement, trade unions and parties on the left. "The people want the Nazis in jail", read some placards. Hundreds of police were deployed at the courthouse, a few kilometers from the historic centre of the capital, barring the entrance with police vans.



ATHENS: Magda Fyssa, the mother of murdered singer Pavlos Fyssas, reacts in court following the verdict in the trial of suspected members of neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn yesterday. —AFP

The prosecutions were sparked by the late-night murder of 34-year-old anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013. He was chased down by a mob of Golden Dawn thugs and stabbed to death in front of a cafe in the western Athens suburb of Keratsini. "Pavlos, you succeeded," the rapper's mother Magda shouted outside the courthouse after the verdict was announced, her hands raised in triumph. She had attended most of the hearings 453 sessions.

The killer, former truck driver Yiorgos Roupakias, confessed, but the attack sparked outrage and the charges that Golden Dawn was a paramilitary-style organization that used beatings, intimidation and murder as tactics—all with the knowledge of senior party members. Also convicted yesterday, Roupakias faces a life sentence. Main opposition leader Alexis Tsipras earlier yesterday had called for the conviction of a group that had "poisoned society with hatred". —AFP

Gathering the guns: After Sudan's peace deal, hard task begins

KHARTOUM: Sudan is celebrating a landmark agreement to end decades of war, but the first step to turn promises on paper into peace is also one of the most explosive - disarmament. Collecting weapons in a country left awash with guns after years of conflict in which hundreds of thousands died is one of most delicate parts of the October 3 peace agreement. "Gathering the weapons is a very difficult business," said Gibril Ibrahim, commander of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of rebel signatories to the historic deal.

"It involves a collective effort. People will not hand over their weapons until they judge that the government can ensure their safety," Ibrahim's JEM fighters battled Khartoum's government in the western region of Darfur, where fighting since 2003 left around 300,000 people dead. "If we have a democratic government that listens to the voice of the people, people will conclude that they no longer need to carry arms to protect themselves," Ibrahim said.

'Trust is key'

The historic deal signed by the government and an alliance of rebel groups, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), was hailed by the international community as a milestone. The rebels included groups from Darfur, as well as the southern states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. According to one rebel leader, it involves some 35,000 rebel fighters. Peace was made possible after mass protests ousted president Omar Al-Bashir from power in April 2019, and the transitional government has made ending the



Members of the Sudanese army stand as weapons that were collected from Sudanese citizens are destroyed at the Hajar al-Asal base in Nile River State on Sept 29, 2020. —AFP

conflicts a priority.

Bashir, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in Darfur, has already been convicted of corruption, and is currently on trial in the capital Khartoum for the 1989 coup that brought him to power. The government has also agreed that Bashir will face trial for his role in Darfur.

But after so long at war, many are wary of giving up their guns. "Trust is key to disarmament," said Jonas Horner of Brussels-based think tank the International Crisis Group (ICG). "The military - linked so closely with abuses during the Bashir government - simply has not had the time nor shown the will to address violence in the way that many rural Sudanese would need to see in order to put down their weapons." Warning of a "trust gap" between the ex-rebels and Khartoum, Horner said he feared some will keep a cache of weapons hidden as insurance. —AFP

CONDOLENCES

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The Management Extends their
heartfelt condolences to

Mr. Javed Memon

Assistant Vice President
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On the sad demise of his
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"May his soul rest in peace, and may the Almighty grant solace and strength to the bereaved family members during this time of grief,"

International

Obsessed by 'miracle' cures,
Trump lets virus run amok

'Don't let it dominate you. Don't be afraid of it'

WASHINGTON: Shortly after returning to the White House, President Donald Trump lavished praise on the COVID-19 care he'd received at hospital, without acknowledging the vital role that masks and distancing play in preventing infection. "Don't let it dominate you. Don't be afraid of it. You're gonna beat it - we have the best medical equipment, we have the best medicines, all developed recently," he said in a video released Monday evening.

Rather than acting as a chastening experience, Trump's own bout of the coronavirus seems to have reinforced his belief that vaccines, treatments and hospital care are together the panacea that will bring an end to the pandemic. Experts say that while all of these are crucial tools, so too are the public health measures advocated by Trump's own senior health officials, and the president missed a vital opportunity to correct course.

At the start of the crisis, when his predictions that the virus would soon disappear failed to materialize, Trump pulled out the check book - ordering 100,000 ventilators then spending billions on vaccine research under Operation Warp Speed. It turned out that survival rates on ventilators are in the region of 30-50 percent, and doctors use them now only as a last resort when less

invasive methods of oxygenation won't work.

Vaccines, if they're safe and effective, won't be available at a mass scale before 2021, and even then scientists are trying to moderate expectations about just how good they might be, given the nature of respiratory viruses. The minimum threshold for approval is an injection that prevents disease in half of all patients. Among treatments that authorities are recommending, the antiviral remdesivir has shown modest results in improving recovery time, while the steroid dexamethasone reduces death rates by a third in ventilated patients.

"His whole shtick for a long time has been that this is overblown," Jeremy Konyndyk a researcher at the Center for Global Development, who oversees the Obama administration's response to Ebola in West Africa, told AFP. "He's not out of the woods yet, but if he survives this without any long term health impact, then that's what he will conclude based on the sample size of one, ignoring the fact

that it's killed 210,000 people." The virus continues to kill more than 700 people in America per day while more than 30,000 remain hospitalized.

'Beyond callous'

For Ali Nouri, president of the Federation of American Scientists, the White House Covid-19 outbreak - with over a dozen known infections and counting in Trump's close circle - was evidence that the administration had relied too heavily on testing alone. "By simply relying on these diagnostics to determine who gets to come in and out... and by not requiring other protections, like social distancing and masks, they created a false sense of comfort," he told AFP.

For months, experts have called for more rapid tests to stem the spread - with Trump initially resisting the idea before announcing last week his administration would distribute 150 million rapid tests. But rapid tests are less reliable than their lab-based counterparts, and neither can replace

other public health measures. Trump's macho posturing is "a really dangerous narrative to promulgate" to his followers, Gabe Kelen, a professor of emergency medicine at Johns Hopkins University told AFP.

"The best way to deal with coronavirus infection is to try not to get it all," he added. Ultimately, it is Trump's highly selective respect for science that most angers the scientific community. The president was administered a high dose of experimental synthetic antibodies which are seen as a promising if still unproven treatment. "The same reasoning and processes that were used to generate those antibodies were used to produce the guidance that says that everybody should be really careful," Holden Thorp, the editor-in-chief of the Science journals told AFP.

Instead, Trump's administration has seemed to be at war with its own scientists, repeatedly watering down guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for example. While Trump had warm words for the doctors and nurses who treated him, his actions speak to disregard for health care workers' lives, said Kellen. "When a large number of health care workers have died saving other people's lives who did get infected, it's beyond callous," he said. —AFP



Antiviral remdesivir has shown modest results

At heart of cultural divide, rural Wisconsin could tip US election

VIROQUA: In western Wisconsin, where family-run dairy farms dot the rolling green hills and eagle-watchers peer into the sparkling marshland, signs for Donald Trump and Joe Biden stand directly across each other on neighbors' yards. In a polarized United States where Democrats and Republicans increasingly self-segregate, this stretch of the Upper Midwest alongside the Mississippi River looks as close as regions get-and, if the November 3 vote is tight, it could prove pivotal for the whole election.

Hillary Clinton infamously never campaigned in Wisconsin in the main stretch of 2016, acknowledging later that Trump's victory in the state that had gone Democratic for three decades was her biggest election surprise. The two campaigns are taking no chances one month before the election. Trump had been planning his fourth trip to Wisconsin since August until being infected by Covid-19 and Biden-who leads in all published polls-has already visited twice in person despite curtailing travel due to the pandemic.

"Four years ago, we were told that Hillary Clinton

could even beat a loaf of bread," said Rikardo Jahnke as he sold apples in Viroqua, a growing haven for artists surrounded by Republican-leaning farmers and buggy-driving Amish. "Last time we felt ignored by the Democratic Party. It looks like they're paying more attention," said Jahnke, sporting a mask that read, "VOTE," over his bushy gray beard. Western Wisconsin and neighboring parts of Minnesota-where Trump made major inroads in 2016 but lost-are among the few rural US areas where substantial numbers still vote Democratic, a phenomenon some trace to the region's heavily Scandinavian roots.

On his organic dairy farm, Darin Von Ruden knows the names for all 50 of his cows as they roam in the field, the maple leaves on the surrounding trees beginning to turn vivid orange. Von Ruden, who leads the Wisconsin Farmers Union, said that a staggering 2,290 dairy farms have shuttered in the state since Trump took office, which he blamed on the growing power of big agricultural companies and overproduction.

"Do we want to get down to having only one or two entities controlling our food system?" Von Ruden said, voicing hope that a Biden administration would look into a Canadian-style system that manages dairy production. He scoffed at fellow farmers who backed Trump's anti-immigration agenda, noting that more than half of dairy workers are immigrants-often undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans. "Why would you vote for someone who



VIROQUA, Wisconsin: Apple vendor Rikardo Jahnke wears a facemask reading "vote" at the farmers market on Oct 3, 2020. —AFP

says he wants to get rid of all your help?"

Still, Von Ruden acknowledges that most farmers lean Republican, with the dairy industry praising Trump's efforts to open the Canadian market. At his 500-cow Morning Star Dairy, John Schaller said he wanted fewer regulations-and would worry about the direction of the United States under Biden. "They seem to be pushing more socialism on us than anything else. Instead of having people being accountable and working for their stuff, just giving out free this and free that," he said. "That's not what made the country great." —AFP

Trump defies COVID, polls - but Biden keeps gaining

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump defied the Covid-19 virus, disastrous opinion polls and new economic turmoil Tuesday in a stormy return from hospitalization, while surging challenger Joe Biden appealed for Americans to unite against the "forces of darkness." There have been few tougher days for Trump since he came to power after his shock 2016 election win. Still being treated with a powerful cocktail of drugs for the coronavirus after three nights in hospital, he was scrambling to get his reelection campaign back on track ahead of November 3 election day-just four weeks away.

Latest polls forecast a huge victory for Biden, with CNN giving the Democrat a national advantage of 57 percent to 41 percent among likely voters, with women voters going 66 to 32 percent in his favor. Biden's advance comes as Trump has been forced off the campaign trail after falling ill last Friday to the virus that has already killed some 210,000 Americans. With what White House doctors describe as his rapid recovery, Trump is doubling down on his controversial position that Covid-19 is taken too seriously, painting himself as a fighter who took on the virus and easily won.

After telling Americans in a speech from the White House balcony Monday that they should stop fearing Covid-19 and "don't let it dominate you," he attacked the media Tuesday for not paying more attention to what he said were his many successes. "The Fake News Media refuses to discuss how good the Economy and Stock Market, including JOBS under the Trump Administration, are doing. We will soon be in RECORD TERRITORY," he tweeted. "All they want to discuss is COVID 19, where they won't say it, but we beat the Dems all day long, also!!!"

But Trump is in trouble on almost every front and what used to be his strongest card-the economy-is not helping either. The huge shock caused by this year's coronavirus shutdown has yet to dissipate, and on Tuesday there was more turmoil when Trump halted negotiations in Congress on another stimulus package to save struggling businesses. Trump accused Democrats of seeking "to bailout poorly run, high crime, Democrat States" and said that negotiations could begin again only after the election-"after I win." The Republican's hardball tactics drew a furious response from Biden, who said Trump "turned his back" on Americans struggling due to the crisis.

Battlefield call for unity

Biden also stuck to his so-far successful strategy of appealing to a broad-based yearning for calm, with his visit to the Civil War battlefield of



This combination of file pictures shows former US Vice President and Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden and US President Donald Trump. —AFP

Gettysburg to discuss saving "the soul of America." "The forces of darkness, the forces of division, the forces of yesterday are pulling us apart, holding us down and holding us back," Biden said at the hallowed Pennsylvania grounds where Abraham Lincoln's Union forces won a decisive victory over Confederate troops in 1863. "We can end this era of division, we can end the hate and the fear. We can be what we are at our best-the United States of America," he said. —AFP

Pandemic, protests, politics driving US gun sales

JACKSON: From the countryside to the cities, Americans are engaged in a frenzy of gun-buying fueled by the pandemic, protests and politics. Brenda Dumas, wearing ear protectors and adopting a shooter's stance, takes aim at a cardboard target with her new gun. "Fight," commands the instructor at the Boondocks Firearms Academy in a suburb of Jackson, the largest city in the southern state of Mississippi.

"I want to be able to protect myself should the need arise," said Dumas, a white woman in her 60s. She persuaded her husband, David, to attend the gun safety course with her for their 36th anniversary. "I felt more unsafe," Dumas said, citing the "violence that is constantly on our televisions right now." The United States has been rocked by protests against racial injustice since the May killing of a Black man, George Floyd, by a white police

officer in Minneapolis. While most of the protests have been peaceful, some have been marked by looting and arson.

President Donald Trump has sought to blame the violence on the "radical left," and claims that only his reelection on November 3 can reestablish "law and order." An African-American man taking the same course as Dumas who asked not to be identified had a very different take. "Protest is a right. These people are not creating turmoil," he said. "We have a president who, instead of de-escalating, is escalating." He said he had purchased his first handgun "for personal security." "It's not necessarily that I feel unsafe, but we are living in some trying times now," he said. "There is a lot of turmoil in the nation."

'Protect my family'

About 1,200 miles to the north, on Long Island in New York state, customers patiently await their turn at Coliseum Gun Traders. Al Materazo, a white man in his 40s who was stocking up on ammunition, said guns were "never really part of my lifestyle until just recently." He said he bought his first gun "right at the very beginning of the pandemic, late February maybe." "When I heard about what was going on I



JACKSON, Mississippi: This aerial view shows students firing AR-15 semi-automatic rifles during a shooting course at Boondocks Firearms Academy on Sept 26, 2020. —AFP

figured a lot of people are going to be out of work," Materazo said. "It's possible that some people may resort to robbery and I want to be able to protect my family." Citing the "political climate and the riots," Materazo said he has since purchased a second weapon. —AFP

After White House, COVID-19 breaches Pentagon

WASHINGTON: The US commander-in-chief has Covid-19 and the top military brass are isolating as the coronavirus pandemic takes a toll on the national security establishment of the most powerful nation in the world. As Covid-19 breached the walls of the Pentagon, the Defense Department was quick to stress on Tuesday that there had been "no change to the operational readiness or mission capability of the US Armed Forces." President Donald Trump, custodian of the nuclear codes, tested positive for the coronavirus last week and was hospitalized for three days, returning to the White House on Monday.

No sooner had Trump returned to work than the Pentagon announced that members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, including General Mark Milley, the chairman, were self-quarantining. They all tested negative for Covid-19 but would isolate after coming into contact during meetings last week with the vice commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Charles Ray, who tested positive for the coronavirus. The list of those who attended meetings with Ray read like a Who's Who of the US military's top brass.

Besides Milley, they included General John Hyten, the Joint Chiefs vice chairman, Admiral Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations, General James McConville, the army chief of staff, and General Charles Brown, the air force chief of staff, a Pentagon official said. Also attending meetings with Ray were General Daniel Hokanson, the head of the National Guard, General John Raymond, chief of the Space Force, and General Paul Nakasone, the director of the National Security Agency and head of US Cyber Command, the official said. "All have been tested with no positive results to report and none are exhibiting any symptoms," the official said.

'Abundance of caution'

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said those who had come into contact with Ray would self-quarantine "out of an abundance of caution." "We are conducting additional contact tracing and taking appropriate precautions to protect the force and the mission," Hoffman said. "Senior military leaders are able to remain fully mission capable and perform their duties from an alternative work location."

The Coast Guard said Ray had tested positive on Monday after experiencing mild symptoms and was quarantining at home. Defense Secretary Mark Esper was on a foreign trip last week and was not among the Pentagon officials who are going into isolation. Esper took part in a conference on the future of the US Navy on Tuesday but did not make any comments about the quarantine situation at the Pentagon.

Senior officials said the US threat level had not been heightened last week following the announcement that the president had Covid-19 and no new threats had been detected. But former US officials said the administration needed to remain wary. "We have to look at whether or not any of our global adversaries want to take advantage of the distraction taking place right now," John Brennan, who served as CIA director under president Barack Obama, said on NPR radio. "A country like China might try to do something in Hong Kong now, or in the South China Sea, while Trump is focused on his health," Brennan said.

"(Or Russia) might decide to do something in Belarus or in another country, taking advantage of what they see as a possible opportunity," he said. Stephen Hadley, who served as national security advisor to former president George W. Bush, also warned that "adversaries may think that America may be distracted, so that they can get away with something." Representative Adam Smith, chairman of the Democratic-majority House Armed Services Committee, lashed out at Trump's handling of the coronavirus crisis and said it had endangered national security. —AFP

International

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Erdogan eyes Turkey's 'place in world order'

Turkey takes firm line as other powers call for ceasefire

ANKARA: President Tayyip Erdogan's strong backing for Azerbaijan in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has set Turkey apart from other big nations and alarmed NATO allies that are demanding a ceasefire. But for Erdogan, the resolute stance is a strategic priority and a costly necessity that reinforces his strategy of flexing military muscle abroad to retain support at home.

The president has described Ankara's support for Azerbaijan as part of Turkey's quest for its "deserved place in the world order." He sees an opportunity to alter the status quo over Nagorno-Karabakh - in which France, the United States and Russia have for decades led international mediation efforts and ethnic Armenians have retained control of the enclave even though it is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

"Turkey's logic in almost all corners of the map is disruption. Anything that undermines the status quo is good for it, because the previous status quo was seen to counter its interests," said Galip Dalay, fellow at Robert Bosch Academy. "In Nagorno-Karabakh there was a frozen conflict in which it remained in Armenia's hands. Turkey wants to undermine this game even if it cannot fully determine it" given Russia's traditional influence in the region, he said.

Turkey's stance - sending an implicit threat to Armenia and a message of caution to Russia, which has a defence pact with Armenia - reflects its confidence in drone warfare used in Syria, Libya and Iraq, political analysts said. Turkish-made drones are now spearheading Azeri attacks and one senior official in



Flexing military muscle in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Med

Ankara told Reuters that Turks were providing infrastructure and support for the weapons, though there are no troops in the field. Erdogan is also betting that, despite their differences over Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey and Russia get on well enough to prevent a wider conflict in the region.

Years of 'neglect'

Russia, the United States and France have led calls for a ceasefire over Nagorno-Karabakh but Erdogan

says they have neglected the crisis over the past three decades and should not lead peacemaking. Turkey says a lasting peace will depend on proposals being made for what happens after hostilities end.

Erdogan's stance had worsened a war of words with France, whose population includes many of Armenian origin, but it is accepted by Turkey's main opposition parties. Military successes and the flexing of military muscle in other parts of the world have helped his ruling AK Party, allied with nationalists, retain an edge in opinion polls despite a currency depreciation that has worsened economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Erdogan's job approval rose nearly 5% last month, according to MetroPoll research group, after a stand-off with the European Union over Mediterranean territorial rights. "All of these conflicts out there boost the perception that Turkey is a country under siege, right-ly or wrongly," said Sinan Ulgen, chairman of the Istanbul-based EDAM think tank. But he said that "ultimately it's the economy that determines the political contest."

Obligation and priority

Two economic contractions in as many years have halted the boom years under Erdogan, and Moody's

ratings agency says Turkey risks a balance-of-payments crisis after a nearly 25% drop in the lira this year. Ankara's reliance on gas imports from Azerbaijan, which jumped 23% in the first half of 2020, are also an incentive to take a firm position on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Defense spending jumped 16% this year to \$7 billion, or 5% of the overall budget, and the military budget has soared nearly 90% in a decade. But cross-border campaigns such as those waged by Turkey in northern Syria, Iraq and Libya are a priority for Erdogan, a second Turkish official said. "Neither the pandemic nor the deterioration of the budget will be an obstacle to defense spending," the official said. "It's not preferable but it's obligatory. Turkey is in the field with the United States and Russia. We cannot think or act small."

A diminished US presence in the region has left gaps that Turkey and Russia have sought to fill, using diplomacy to help contain conflicts in Syria's Idlib province and in Libya, two protracted proxy wars in which they are on opposing sides. Ankara has denied allegations - including by Russia - that it has sent Syrian mercenaries to support Azerbaijan. Close cooperation with Moscow in many areas means "there is no concern over being dragged into a conflict with Russia," the second official said. — Reuters



BOSTON: A man in a QAnon vest unfurls a US flag as demonstrators gather to protest a mandatory flu vaccine order for children and to protest government mandates when it comes to medical choices outside the John Joseph Moakley United States Federal Courthouse on Oct 5, 2020. — AFP

Facebook, Instagram ban QAnon conspiracy accounts

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook on Tuesday announced a ban on all accounts linked to the QAnon conspiracy group, as the social network tries to clamp down on misinformation ahead of the heated US presidential election. The move against QAnon at Facebook and its image-sharing platform Instagram comes as the online giant tries to avoid being used to deceive or confuse voters, as was the case during the 2016 election that put US President Donald Trump in the White House.

"We will remove any Facebook Pages, Groups and Instagram accounts representing QAnon, even if they contain no violent content," the internet titan said in a blog post. From an anonymous 2017 posting claiming bizarre child exploitation and political plots, the headless and bodiless movement has earned a place in Trump's Twitter stream. The FBI last year said in a report that QAnon was one of several movements that could drive "both groups and individual extremists to carry out criminal or violent acts."

The ban on QAnon accounts steps up Facebook's efforts to clamp down on misinformation campaigns sometimes endorsed by Trump, weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election. "Facebook's decision

to ban QAnon from all its platforms is a much needed, if belated, step to purge dangerous conspiracy theories from the platform," said Anti-Defamation league chief executive Jonathan Greenblatt. "We hope that this is a sincere effort to purge hate and antisemitism from their platform, and not another knee-jerk response to pressure from members of Congress and the public."

The moves made across Facebook and Instagram were against accounts tied to "offline anarchist groups that support violent acts amidst protests, US-based militia organizations and QAnon," according to the blog post. The leading social network recently prohibited ads that praise, support or represent militarized social movements and QAnon. Facebook in August removed hundreds of groups tied to QAnon and imposed restrictions on nearly 2,000 more as part of a crackdown on stoking violence. Critics have charged that inflammatory content from QAnon was spreading on Facebook despite the platform's proclaimed effort to contain it.

Facebook said it tightened its prohibition on QAnon after noticing that, despite taking down posts directly promoting violence, QAnon supporter messages adapted to avoid restrictions. For example, QAnon used the platform to claim deadly wildfires raging on the West Coast were started by certain groups, which diverted attention of police and firefighters. "QAnon messaging changes very quickly and we see networks of supporters build an audience with one message and then quickly pivot to another," Facebook said. The social network already bans content calling for violence and organizations that proclaim violent missions. —AFP

The Workers' Party of Korea, the banner of victory

The Korean People will celebrate the 75th anniversary of founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK, founded October 10, 1945). They say with one voice that all achievements and victories in their struggle to build a strong and prosperous Korea are results of wise leadership of the party.



Chairman Kim Jong Un at a meeting of the party

WPK is steadfastly advancing along the path of socialism despite all the storms and trials of history. Many people think that this relates to the three characteristics of the WPK. First, it relates to the guiding ideology of the party.

The guiding idea of party is Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism based on the Juche idea. The Juche

idea is that man is the master of everything and decides everything. In other words, the popular masses are the masters of revolution and construction, and the popular masses have the power to drive the revolution and construction. At the end of the last century, when socialism collapsed in various countries, socialist Korea with the Juche idea as its guiding ideology did not nod.

Second, it relates to the organization and discipline of the party. The Workers' Party of Korea has built itself into a party that all members constantly breathe and move as one body. The instructions of the leader were conveyed from the center to the lower end without hesitation, and the ethos of carrying out the party's line and policy unconditionally and thoroughly by all party organizations and members was established. No hardships and gusts in history could shake the Workers' Party of Korea with strong organizational and disciplined nature.

Third, it related to the party's popular ground. The Workers' Party of Korea has paid special attention to building the party into a mass party that encompasses a wide audience and to become a party like as mother that takes responsibility for and cares for their fate. Even if a line or policy was laid down, it accurately reflected the demands and interests of the popular masses, put the people's interests first and put all things for the people as the supreme principle of the Party's activities.

It is no coincidence that the Korean people absolutely support the Workers' Party and faithfully follow the leadership of the Party. President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il have built the Workers' Party of Korea as a strong party and now Chairman Kim Jong Un Chairman of the WPK is making great efforts to further strengthen the party as an invincible party.

As long as there is the wise leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Korean people's desire to build a powerful nation will surely come true.

PM for a day: Teenager fills Finland's top job

HELSINKI: Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin faced a quieter day than usual yesterday after handing power to a 16-year-old as part of a campaign to promote girls' rights. Aava Murto, from Vaasky in southern Finland, said she was having an "exciting day" as she faced media on the steps of parliament after meeting with the chancellor of justice. Murto added that she had "learnt some new things about legislation." In the afternoon, the student who actively campaigns on climate and human rights issues was to speak with MPs and the minister for development and foreign trade.

Her message to decision-makers has been that girls "need to realize more how important they are, and how they are just as good at technology as boys," she told AFP. "I think young people could teach adults to be more innovative and think more about the future," she added. The swap is part of a global "Girls Takeover" campaign by children's rights charity Plan International, which aims to raise awareness of girls' digital skills and opportunities in technological industries and highlight the problem of online harassment against women.

Although Finland scores highly in international gender equality comparisons, women are still heavily under-represented in technology firms and boardrooms, while the country's share of females starting technology-related studies is the lowest in the OECD. The global campaign coincides with the UN's International Day of the Girl Child on Sunday, and will also allow girls take on the jobs of ministers in Kenya, Peru, Sudan and Vietnam. Elsewhere, senior jobs at Microsoft, Samsung, Facebook and Twitter will go to teenage girls in countries including El Salvador, Guatemala, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

Finnish premier Marin, 34, became the world's youngest head of government when she took office in December, leading a coalition of five centre-left parties who were all led by women. Marin did not have yesterday completely free however, as she took part in budget negotiations in the morning. A planned working breakfast with Murto was cancelled at the last minute, but they were due to meet for a debrief in the evening. Asked if she would be interested in doing the job full-time in a few years, Murto told AFP: "It's not up to me to decide that, but possibly, yeah!" — AFP



HELSINKI: Sixteen-year-old Aava Murto took over the job of Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin for one day yesterday for the "Girls Takeover" campaign. — AFP

Kyrgyzstan PM resigns amid post-vote chaos

BISHKEK: Kyrgyzstan's prime minister Kubatbek Boronov resigned Tuesday after widespread unrest pushed the country's electoral body to cancel the results of Sunday's parliament elections. Boronov, an ally of pro-Russian President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, was replaced by a nationalist politician that protesters released from jail the day before.

Unrest over the vote left almost 700 hurt and one dead and appeared to be spreading Tuesday to other parts of the country, raising concerns from Russia which has a powerful influence in the ex-Soviet coun-

try wedged between China and Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan's Central Electoral Commission said that it had "invalidated the election results" which saw parties close to Jeenbekov dominate results amid accusations of mass vote-buying. The results sparked a tumultuous Monday night in the capital Bishkek, with protesters seizing government buildings and freeing high-profile politicians from prison, including former president Almazbek Atambayev.

The new prime minister, Sadyr Japarov, was elected during an extraordinary meeting in a hotel after protesters seized the parliament building, the parliamentary press service said. Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that the Kremlin was "certainly concerned" over the unrest. Russian military authorities said they had beefed up security at their base outside the capital. The United States meanwhile called on all sides to "refrain from violence and resolve the election dispute through peaceful means." —AFP

News in brief

Syria troops, IS clash; 90 die

BEIRUT: Clashes in the Syrian Desert between pro-government forces and holdouts of the Islamic State group have killed at least 90 combatants this month, a war monitor said yesterday. Russian aircraft carried out strikes in support of their Syrian regime ally, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The clashes broke out in two separate areas of the vast desert that separates the Orontes valley in the west from the Euphrates valley in the east. The government side lost 41 dead, the jihadists 49, the Britain-based war monitor said. At least 10 government loyalists and 13 IS jihadists were killed over the past 24 hours alone, Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman said. "IS is trying to prove that it is still strong," he added. Mobile IS units have remained active in the Syrian Desert, known in Arabic as the Badia, since the jihadists lost the last shred of its self-proclaimed caliphate in March last year. — AFP

Lebanon hunts for new premier

BEIRUT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun will begin parliamentary consultations to name a new prime minister next week, his office said yesterday. It will mark the third attempt to name a new premier in less than a year following a series of resignations in the face of a deepening economic crisis and a port explosion that ravaged entire districts of the capital. Outgoing prime minister Hassan Diab quit in the wake of the colossal August 4 explosion at Beirut port that killed more than 190 people, and wounded at least 6,500. His designated successor Mustapha Adib stepped down last month after he failed to forge a consensus around a new government line-up. "President Aoun has set Thursday, October 15 as the date for holding parliamentary consultations to assign a figure to form a new government," his office said on Twitter. — AFP

UN refugee chief tests positive

GENEVA: The UN refugee chief said Wednesday that he had tested positive for Covid-19 after leading the first day of the agency's main annual meeting in person. Filippo Grandi, who kicked off UNHCR's week-long Executive Committee meeting in Geneva on Monday, told participants via video-link that he would need to continue following the event from home. "I am engaging with UNHCR's Executive Committee from home as I have to isolate after testing positive to #COVID19," he said in a tweet. "I only have mild symptoms and hope to recover soon," he said, stressing with the help of emojis the importance of "washing hands", "keeping distances" and "wearing masks". Grandi had addressed delegates from the podium in the UN Assembly Hall in Geneva on the first day of the event, but participated remotely on Tuesday. Spokesman Andrej Mahecic told AFP that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had tested positive Tuesday evening. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020

Sole survivor? Aramco to boost oil output

Strengthening production capacity key to Aramco strategy

DUBAI/RIYADH: The slump in demand for crude during the coronavirus pandemic has forced oil companies to contemplate the possibility that the fossil fuel market has peaked and the time for a global energy transition has come.

But Saudi Aramco plans to boost its production capacity so it can pump as much of Saudi Arabia's vast oil reserves when demand picks up - before a shift to cleaner energy makes crude all but worthless, industry sources and analysts told Reuters. With almost 20 percent of the world's proven reserves and production costs of just \$4 a barrel, Aramco believes it can undercut competitors and carry on making money even when lower oil prices make it unprofitable for rivals, the sources said.

Riyadh now plans to follow through on its apparent threat in March during an oil price war with Russia to raise its capacity to 13 million barrels a day (bpd) from 12 million bpd, officials and sources have said. Aramco's approach is in stark contrast to Western rivals such as BP and Shell which plan to curb spending on oil production so they can invest in renewable and green energy as they prepare for a low-carbon world.

With a renewed focus on oil, the state-run oil giant is also revising ambitious downstream expansion plans and now aims to grab assets in established projects in key markets such as India and China, rather than building expensive mega plants from scratch, the sources said. "We expect oil demand growth to continue in the long term, driven by rising populations and economic growth. Fuels and petrochemicals will support demand growth ... speculation about an

imminent peak in oil demand is simply not consistent with the realities of oil consumption," Aramco said in a statement to Reuters.

'Take the money'

The possibility that demand for crude has peaked makes it more pressing for the world's top oil exporter to exploit its reserves while it can to generate cash to fund Saudi Arabia's economic reforms, sources familiar with Saudi policymaking say. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is trying to develop new industries to reduce the kingdom's dependen-

cy wean a giant economy like Saudi off oil, it will require at least 50 years more. So as long as oil is with us, make more money out of it if you can." Aramco is also focused on how to pump more, cleaner fuel while cutting greenhouse gas emissions to give it a better chance to compete as governments tighten carbon regulations, analysts and sources briefed on the company's plans said.

Aramco's oil production already has a so-called carbon intensity of 10.1 kg of carbon dioxide (CO₂) for each barrel produced (CO₂e/boe) - the lowest among its rivals - and it wants to push that down even further by the end of this year. "Our priorities are to sustain our low carbon intensity and low cost of production, while delivering the energy supplies the world needs," Aramco told Reuters.

"(Aramco) is researching ways to reduce emissions through technology, such as making engines more efficient, better fuel formulations, carbon capture and sequestration, and turning CO₂ and hydrocarbons into useful products," the company said.

One example of the potential for hydrocarbon in hydrogen supply was a recent shipment of blue ammonia to Japan for use in zero-emissions power generation, Aramco said, saying it was the first in the world. "In this example, 50 tons of CO₂ captured during the process was reused in methanol production and enhanced oil recovery," the company said. Aramco will also continue to develop its gas resources due to both rising domestic needs and the kingdom's ambitions to become a gas exporter, and plans to sell stakes in some of its assets such as



Saudi Aramco plans to boost its production capacity so it can pump as much of Saudi Arabia's vast oil reserves when demand picks up - before a shift to cleaner energy makes crude all but worthless. — Reuters



Downstream expansion being reviewed

cy on oil under his ambitious Vision 2030 plan to diversify the economy. But for the plan to succeed, Prince Mohammed needs lots of cash - and Aramco's oil sales are his main source of revenue.

"The crown prince said he will diversify but he didn't say he will kill the oil industry. As long as it can make more money why not? Take the money and invest it somewhere else," one of the sources told Reuters.

"Let's agree that given the global economic situation, full diversification won't happen by 2030," he said. "To complete-

its domestic pipeline business, the sources said.

"There is always going to be space for oil and the lowest carbon emitter will win," said Amrita Sen, co-founder of the think-tank, Energy Aspects. "OPEC market power will return, especially for those who can produce oil in the cleanest way possible, and Saudi Aramco fits that bill."

Lowest cost

Aramco's plan to boost its capacity to 13 million barrels a day is central to its strategy as it wants to be ready to grab a bigger market share when demand recovers, sources briefed on Saudi Arabia's oil thinking said. Saudi Arabia, also needs to be ready for the uncertainty in oil prices expected post COVID-19

to ensure it can keep spending plans and economic reforms largely unaffected with crude priced at \$40 a barrel, or \$60, sources and analysts said.

The thinking within Saudi Arabia is that as oil prices are expected to stay depressed - and may hover around \$50-\$60 for several years - shutdowns in places such as the United States, where shale oil is costly to produce, should support prices. "Saudi Arabia, being the lowest cost producer, could see an increase in volumes and market share in the years to come even if global oil demand and prices do not recover as a lack of investment naturally leads to production declines elsewhere," said Krisjanis Krustins, a director in the Middle East and Africa team at Fitch Ratings. — Reuters

AirAsia X wants \$15bn debt restructuring to avert liquidation

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's AirAsia X Bhd, the long-haul arm of AirAsia Group Bhd, said it wants to restructure \$15.3 billion of debt and slash its share capital by 90 percent to continue as a going concern. Hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic as closed borders have left most of its planes grounded, the budget airline said it has severe liquidity constraints and, with no return to normalcy in sight, "imminent default of contractual commitments will precipitate a potential liquidation."

Its statement late on Tuesday came just days after Malaysia Airlines, the country's other major carrier, said it was very low on cash and had reached out to lessors, creditors and suppliers for urgent restructuring. AirAsia X is seeking to reconstitute 63.5

billion ringgit (\$15.3 billion) of debt into a principal amount of 200 million ringgit and for the balance to be waived.

That debt restructuring as well as a revamp of its business model would be needed to raise fresh equity and debt, which in turn would be required to restart the airline, it said. The statement did not break down the liabilities or name the airline's creditors. The hefty debt figure could include aircraft orders, potentially spelling cancellations, said an aviation analyst who declined to be identified as he no longer covers the company. "A lot of that may be aircraft orders. The real haircut may not be that huge if it's purely on actual debt and lease commitments," he said.

AirAsia X last year finalized



orders with Airbus SE for 78 A330neo and 30 A321XLR planes but said in February this year it would defer delivery of the A330neo planes and consider other changes to reduce its fleet. The airline is Airbus' biggest customer for the A330neo. It also proposed reducing its issued share capital by 90 percent and consolidating every 10 existing ordinary shares into one share. Long a penny stock, its shares fell 10 percent to 4.5 percent yesterday. The airline, which

reported a record net loss of 650.3 million ringgit in the 2019 financial year, said unaudited records as of June 30 showed it had a shareholder equity deficit of 960 million ringgit.

Liabilities of 3.38 billion ringgit exceeded assets of 1.39 billion ringgit. It has appointed board member Lim Kian Onn, a chartered accountant and former banker, as deputy chairman to lead the restructuring which will involve overhauling its route network, fleet size, cost base and workforce. — Reuters

Trump calls off stimulus talks

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Tuesday called off talks on a new stimulus plan to boost the COVID-ravaged US economy until after the election, sending Wall Street plunging and upending recent progress made in the long-delayed negotiations.

The afternoon tweet undid optimism that had developed in recent days after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin resumed talks on a follow-up measure to the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act passed to blunt the coronavirus downturn. But Trump struck a more conciliatory tone that night, tweeting he would immediately sign a Congressional bill guaranteeing a second round of \$1,200 stimulus checks and \$135 billion for small businesses - two elements that were already included in the negotiations.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell had hours before repeated his call for additional spending to help the world's top economy weather a downturn that has left tens of millions unemployed and caused a historic contraction in the second quarter. But Trump accused the Democratic House leader of negotiating in bad faith, and said he had asked Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to instead focus on confirming his appointed judge to an opening on the Supreme Court.

"Nancy Pelosi is asking for \$2.4 trillion to bailout poorly run, high crime, Democrat States, money that is in no way related to COVID-19," Trump tweeted, citing an incorrect figure for the Democrats' latest proposal. "We made a very generous offer of \$1.6 trillion and, as usual, she is not negotiating in good faith. I am rejecting their request, and looking to the future of our country."

He added that after the election, which he said he would win, "we will pass a major Stimulus Bill that focuses on hardworking Americans and Small Business". The president's tweet sucked the enthusiasm from Wall Street traders who had been hoping for another injection of congressional cash, sending the Dow and S&P 500 tumbling more than one percent each.

Trump's rival for the White House Joe Biden said the president had "turned his back on every single worker whose job hasn't come back yet.... He turned his back on families strugg-



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Tuesday called off talks on a new stimulus plan to boost the COVID-ravaged US economy.

gling to pay rent, put food on their table, and take care of their kids."

Support needed

The president said he told McConnell to focus the Republican-controlled chamber on confirming Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court seat vacated last month by the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, which would give conservatives a solid six-to-three majority. Earlier in the day, Powell told an economics conference the US recovery from Covid-19 would be "stronger and faster" with more government aid to protect against the possibility of accelerating job losses.

"Too little support would lead to a weak recovery, creating unnecessary hardship for households and businesses," Powell said. "Even if policy actions ultimately prove to be greater than needed, they will not go to waste."

The CARES Act passed as the pandemic struck in March included extra \$600 weekly payments to the unemployed as well as a program of loans and grants for small businesses.

However, both expired around the end of July and despite weeks of talks, Pelosi, Mnuchin and other top officials remained far apart on how much more to spend in another bill.

Any measure was expected to partially restore the weekly payments to the unemployed and the program of small business aid. It also could have given additional funds to hard-hit airlines that laid off more than 30,000 people at the start of October after funds budgeted under the CARES Act expired.

In his late-night tweet, Trump also called on Congress to approve \$25 billion to support the floundering aviation industry. — AFP

Globalization revised but not reversed by COVID

CHICAGO/BRUSSELS: New York-based Delta Children, which makes cribs in China for retailers such as Walmart, briefly studied moving production to the United States as supply shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic added to its hefty bill from US import tariffs.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross predicted in January the pandemic would "help accelerate" this type of re-shoring of jobs to the United States, while some policymakers even spoke of a wider retreat of globalization as companies retrenched to deal with severed supply chains.

But Delta chief executive Joe Shamie finally ruled out the move due to higher labor costs and a lack of suppliers. The company still plans to diversify its supply chain - but by moving some production to South East Asia. "The Made-in-USA tag will work if the products are of the same quality and competitively priced, which is not case at the moment," Shamie told Reuters. "I would diversify, not totally leave China."

While global trade volumes have inevitably fallen as the world plunged into recession and travel restrictions and social distancing curtailed the movement of peo-



SEOUL: Dealers monitor exchange rates in a currency trading room at KB Kookmin Bank in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

ple, the economic ties built up by successive waves of globalization are proving more resilient than some thought. Trade in goods is set to decline by 9 percent this year, the World Trade Organization forecast on Tuesday, less severe than its April prediction of a 13-32 percent plunge. China's industrial sector is steadily recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with exports up 9.5 percent year-on-year in August, their sharpest rise in 18 months. Optimism among German exporters hit a two-year high in September.

Protectionist rhetoric

From Washington to Wellington, politicians this year have preached self-sufficiency, urging firms to bring production home,

particularly of "essential" products. The pandemic has led to a record 235 export restrictions as countries hoarded protective equipment and medical supplies, according to monitoring service Global Trade Alert. The impact of trillions of dollars of subsidies is still unclear.

But despite the drum beat of protectionist rhetoric, there have been far fewer new import tariffs than in the past two peak years, and Pascal Lamy, who led the WTO from 2005 to 2013, believes re-shoring will be marginal. "The reason there will be more talk than walk is simple - it's costly," said Lamy. "Globalization is efficient and painful. De-globalization is inefficient and painful." — Reuters

Business

Decline in German industrial output casts doubt on strength of recovery

German debt price up on weaker data

BERLIN: German industrial output edged down in August following three months of relatively strong increases, suggesting the recovery in Europe's largest economy from the coronavirus shock is starting to lose steam. Industrial output fell by 0.2 percent on the month after an upwardly revised rise of 1.4 percent in July and a jump of 9.3 percent in June, figures released by the Federal Statistics Office yesterday showed. A Reuters poll had forecast an increase of 1.5 percent for August.

Factories churned out fewer capital goods and consumer goods, with the slump particularly deep in vehicle production. "At least a part of the fall in car output was due to more companies implementing their summer shutdowns in August this year," Andrew Kenningham from Capital Economics said.

This one-off effect coupled with rising orders and upbeat sentiment surveys could suggest that industrial output will rise again in coming months, albeit at a probably slower pace.

The economy ministry said industrial output now stood at almost 90 percent of pre-crisis levels in the fourth quarter of 2019. "Since the easing of lockdown measures in April, there has been an ongoing recovery since May, even if there was a slight decline in August," the ministry said.

The catch-up process is likely to continue in light of improved business sentiment, rising orders and a decline in the use of job protection schemes among manufacturers, it added.

The German economy contracted by a record 9.7 percent in the second quarter as household spending, company investments and trade collapsed at the height of the pandemic. However, surprisingly strong retail sales and higher-than-expected industrial orders so far had suggested a

relatively robust recovery over the summer months. The Ifo institute expects 6.6 percent output growth in the third quarter and a slowdown to 2.8 percent in the fourth quarter.

The government forecast the economy to shrink by a calendar-adjusted 6.1 percent this year and to grow by 4.4 percent next year. This means output will not reach pre-crisis levels before 2022.

Berlin has unleashed an unprecedented array of rescue and stimulus measures to help companies and consumers recover as quickly as possible from Germany's deepest recession on record. The packages include unlimited liquidity aid for struggling



Industrial output edges down 0.2%

companies, a massive job protection scheme to shield workers from sudden unemployment as well as cash handouts for parents and a temporary value added tax cut to boost domestic demand.

The price for benchmark German debt increased yesterday after German industrial output unexpectedly slipped in August, suggesting the recovery in Europe's largest economy from the coronavirus shock could be weaker than hoped. German 10-year yields fell 1.6 basis points to -0.52 percent after



BERLIN: German Economy Minister, Peter Altmaier (left) and European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson (On screen) address the media after a virtual meeting of the European energy ministers on Tuesday. — AFP

inching to a two-week high on Tuesday.

The day before, the gap between German and US 10-year yields widened to its largest since March as US yields rose. They gave back those gains after President Donald Trump on Tuesday abruptly cancelled talks in Washington over coronavirus aid. For the Italian 10-year government bond, the yield fell to its lowest in more than a year at 0.765 percent as traders expected more monetary policy stimulus from eurozone's central bank. It last traded down 1.6 bps. On Friday, the Italian 10-year BTP yield fell to a record low of 0.751 percent,

Tradeweb said. "People think it's a little bit of a one-way bet on more stimulus being required from the ECB," said Lyn Graham-Taylor, fixed income strategist at Rabobank.

On Tuesday, dovish comments from the European Central Bank chief raised expectations for further stimulus. If the euro strengthened, that would increase the likelihood of ECB easing, Graham-Taylor said. "If the dollar is stronger, it is probably due to some risk-off factors and this is probably also going to encourage the ECB to have to do more easing," he added. — Reuters

Green shoots growing on the debt market

PARIS: Green bonds—debt taken on to finance projects with environmental benefits—hit a record last month with \$50 billion issued, as more and more companies and governments turn to the instruments. Adidas, French electricity firm EDF and telecoms firm Orange, along with the nations of Germany, Egypt and Sweden all issued green bonds in September, helping the volume jump by five times from August.

The value of green bonds issued so far this year climbed to more than \$176 billion, a 26-percent increase from the same period in 2019. The total includes instruments that meet the principles set out by the International Capital Market Association, the professional association that unites the global bond market and information compiled by Bloomberg.

The ICMA defines green bonds as those which finance renewable energy, energy efficiency, biodiversity, pollution reduction and other similar projects. But as ECB executive board member Isabel Schnabel recently pointed out, green bonds remain a small fraction of the overall debt market, accounting for just five percent last year.

Germany arrives

The September boom in green bonds is due in part to the fact that many operations were postponed earlier in the year due to the coronavirus pandemic. The volume of green bonds issued in the first half of 2020 dipped compared to the same



More than \$176 billion worth of green bonds have been issued in 2020, a significant increase from last year.

period in 2019. "This month, the volume of corporate green debt was more important than the volume of state green debt," said Jovita Razauskaitė, an expert on green bonds at asset manager NN Investment Partners.

The arrival of a major sovereign emitter has energized the market, with Germany making its first issue. The placement of 6.5 billion euros in September is to be followed by another of 5.0 billion before the end of the year.

"We expect a more diversified issuer base," said Razauskaitė. "In particular, we expect more industrials to come to the market while the supranational space will be enlarged when the EU starts to finance almost a third of the recovery fund with green debt," she added.

Risk of 'greenwashing'

The sector still has to improve the evaluation of

projects that receive the green label, however. "Environmental ratings for green bonds or other financial instruments—if available—are often inconsistent, incomparable and, at times, unreliable," Schnabel noted.

The possibility that green bonds could end up simply being "greenwashing"—providing more benefit to corporate image than the environment—has been a persistent concern. And the emergence of additional labels that muddy the waters, such as "transition bonds," makes matters worse.

These are aimed at helping industries with high greenhouse gas emissions shift to greener activities, but there are worries that vague rules could allow the financing of switching to natural gas, which is cleaner than coal but not a renewable resource. There are also concerns that green bonds, even the best of them, are not leading to much tangible improvement. — AFP

Hyundai delivers first fuel cell trucks to Switzerland

LUCERNE, Switzerland:

South Korean carmaker Hyundai yesterday presented the first seven hydrogen-powered trucks to customers in Switzerland, out of 50 such vehicles scheduled this year to bring zero-emission commercial vehicles to European roads. For long haul, proponents say hydrogen-powered trucks have an advantage over electric rivals as they have a greater range and require less charging times but their uptake and mass production has been slow because they are expensive.

However, a McKinsey study in January said that once relative efficiencies of the power sources and lifetime costs of a truck are factored in, green hydrogen could reach cost parity with diesel by 2030.

Hyundai has been partnering with Swiss companies to build a value chain covering the production of green hydrogen from hydropower, hydrogen charging stations and the service and maintenance of the trucks. The customers, which include supermarket chain Migros, will be leasing the trucks from Hyundai Hydrogen Mobility (HHM) to transport goods around the country, backed by the new

hydrogen infrastructure.

Leases are on a pay-per-use basis that does not require an initial investment. Hyundai plans to put 1,600 trucks on Swiss roads by 2025. Its H2 Xcient trucks have a 190 kilowatt fuel cell stack and seven high-pressure tanks holding 32 kg of hydrogen, giving them a range further than comparable vehicles powered by electric batteries on the market now. HHM was set up by Hyundai and Swiss startup H2 Energy last year to partner with Hydrosponder, a joint venture of H2 Energy, industrial gas maker Linde and Swiss power utility Alpiq.



LUCERNE, Switzerland: South Korean carmaker Hyundai yesterday presented the first seven hydrogen-powered trucks to customers in Switzerland, out of 50 such vehicles scheduled this year to bring zero-emission commercial vehicles to European roads.

Hyundai plans for production capacity of 2,000 units of Xcient fuel cells per year by 2021 to support its expansion plans as demand for clean transport grows.

It views Switzerland as a test case for hydrogen fuel cells in heavy goods transport, said In Cheol Lee, executive vice president and head of the commercial vehicle division at Hyundai Motor Company.

"With successful delivery of the first H2 Xcient fuel cell trucks, we proudly announce our plan to expand beyond Europe to North America and China, where we are already making great progress," he said. As for Europe, Hyundai has said it will next target Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. — Reuters

US lawmakers call for shake-up of Big Tech 'monopolies'

WASHINGTON: A House of Representatives panel in a report Tuesday accused four Big Tech firms of acting as "monopolies," calling for sweeping changes to antitrust laws and enforcement that could potentially lead to breakups of the giant firms. But the report by the House Judiciary Committee failed to win the endorsement of Republican members, highlighting a partisan divide despite widespread criticism of the tech giants.

The 449-page document concluded that Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google "engage in a form of their own private quasi regulation that is unaccountable to anyone but themselves." "Companies that once were scrappy, underdog startups that challenged the status quo have become the kinds of monopolies we last saw in the era of oil barons and railroad tycoons," the report said.

The report follows an investigation of more than 15 months and hearings this year with the top executives of the four firms, in parallel to antitrust probes being led by federal and state enforcers.

Judiciary Committee chairman Jerrold Nadler and antitrust subcommittee chairman David Cicilline said in a joint statement that the tech firms "each possess significant market power over large swaths of our economy" and have "exploited their power of the marketplace in anticompetitive ways." The report suggests moves which could lead to breakups of the big firms, calling for "structural separations" to prohibit companies from competing on platforms they operate. — AFP

News in brief

Iceland CB keeps rates steady

COPENHAGEN: Iceland's central bank yesterday left its key interest rate unchanged at 1.00 percent despite a worsened economic outlook as demand was dented by an increase in coronavirus cases. "Because of increased spread of the coronavirus in the recent past, the economic outlook has deteriorated relative to the August forecast," the central bank said in a statement. Iceland has seen COVID-19 infections rise since early September, prompting the government to reinstate some restrictions to curb the spread. Some 3,081 confirmed COVID-19 infections have been registered so far in the Atlantic nation of around 360,000 people, out of which 10 have died. Inflation rose to 3.2 percent in the third quarter, slightly above the central bank's August forecast, it said. — Reuters

Spanish public investment

MADRID: Spain will increase state investment spending by 27 billion euros (\$31.74 billion) in 2021 thanks to emergency European Union funds for recovery from the coronavirus crisis, the prime minister said yesterday. Between 2021 and 2023, the government will spend 72 billion euros from the EU funds and an additional 800,000 jobs will be created, Pedro Sanchez added during an address on economic plans in front of a screen showing slogans including "Resistance" and "Advance." "It's not just about recovering the GDP that the pandemic took from us, it's about growing in a different way, with a more robust, fairer and more sustainable way of growing," Sanchez said in the televised speech. Spain is due to receive 140 billion euros until 2026 from the EU fund; 77 billion euros in grants and the rest in loans. — Reuters

Singapore's unemployment rate

SINGAPORE: Singapore's overall unemployment rate rose to 3.4 percent in August, official data showed, the highest since the middle of 2004 as businesses shed jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic. The rate nudged above a 3.3 percent peak hit during the global financial crisis in September 2009, the data showed. The city-state last month began releasing jobless data on a monthly basis, on top of quarterly numbers which hit a decade high in the second quarter of this year. Provisional third quarter data is due later this month. — Reuters

Norway cuts fund spending

OSLO: Norway plans to reduce spending from its \$1.1 trillion sovereign wealth fund next year as the economy rebounds from the COVID-19 pandemic, the center-right minority coalition told parliament yesterday. The government proposed withdrawing 313.4 billion Norwegian crowns (\$33.56 billion) from the wealth fund in what will be an election-year budget, down from 404.3 billion crowns in 2020. The so-called structural non-oil deficit for 2021 corresponds to 3.0 percent of the fund's expected value at the end of 2020, the Finance Ministry said, exactly in line with parliament's cap on spending. The projected spending for 2020 corresponded to 3.9 percent of the fund's value under a rule that allows extra withdrawals in times of economic hardship, but was still below the 4.2 percent projected in May. — Reuters

Business

New Tesco boss sticks with strategy despite profit slide

H1 group core profit down 15.6%; retail operating profit up 4.4%

LONDON: The new boss of Tesco, Britain's biggest retailer by sales, backed the strategy of his predecessor yesterday, despite a drop in first-half core profit as COVID-19 costs and losses at Tesco bank outweighed a surge in sales. Ken Murphy, formerly at healthcare group Walgreens Boots Alliance, succeeded Dave Lewis on Oct. 1.

"I think you can take it that I'm really happy with the strategy and direction of the company, unless you actually see it changing in the stores," he told reporters.



Ken Murphy started as CEO last week

"My job is to maintain momentum in the business and keep us focused on delivering a brilliant Christmas," he said. Murphy said it was too early to talk about longer term strategic opportunities. But he said he had no plans to exit any more overseas markets or sell Tesco Bank, which swung to a first half loss



LIVERPOOL: Dedicated parking bays for Tesco customers who ordered their shopping via the company's online "Click and collect" service, opting to collect their online purchases from a store, are pictured outside the entrance to a Tesco supermarket in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

as it braces for a surge in virus-related bad debts. In his six years at the helm, Lewis put Tesco back on track after an accounting scandal and refocused the group on its home market. Tesco still faces major challenges, most notably the economic impact of the pan-

dem and potential disruption when Britain's Brexit transition period finishes at the end of 2020. Shares in Tesco, which has a 27 percent share of Britain's grocery market, went sideways during Lewis' tenure and last week the group briefly lost its position as Britain's

most valuable food retailer to online specialist Ocado.

The stock was up 2.2 percent at 0855 GMT, paring 2020 losses to 14.3 percent after the group forecast that retail operating profit in the full 2020-21 year would be at least the same level as 2019-20 - a slight upgrade from its June forecast. Tesco made group operating profit before one-off items of 1.04 billion pounds (\$1.34 billion) in the 26 weeks to Aug. 29, down from 1.23 billion pounds in the same period last year. Retail operating profit rose 4.4 percent.

UK like-for-like sales jumped 7.6 percent as shoppers continued to eat more at home due to coronavirus-related restrictions on socializing, having been up 8.7 percent in the first quarter.

However, the cost of coping with the pandemic - including extra staff - amounted to 533 million pounds. Tesco Bank made a loss of 155 million pounds, driven by a provision for potential bad debts and reduced income. A loss of 175-200 million pounds is still expected for the full year.

The 8.2 billion pound sale of Tesco's Thailand and Malaysia businesses, agreed in March, is expected to complete in the second half, allowing Tesco to return 5 billion pounds to shareholders via a special dividend. Tesco also named Tate & Lyle's Imran Nawaz as its new finance chief. He will succeed Alan Stewart who retires in April. An interim dividend of 3.2 pence is being paid. — Reuters

The most elegant, thin and light Huawei MateBook X

KUWAIT: With numerous laptops available in the market, choosing the right one to buy is surely a daunting task. Selecting your next laptop depends on your needs and workload. Are you looking for a big-screen laptop or do you prefer a small and light one? Do you opt for one with regular features? On the other hand, do you go with one that comes packed with innovative smart features? This article here explains how the Most Elegant Thin & Light Laptop - Huawei MateBook X is the perfect all-rounder with top seven features to lookout for when buying your next laptop!



Ultra-light, thin and stylish

No one wants a big and heavy laptop that will drag and slow you down. Light and portable laptops have become the norm, and if you add in elegance to that then you are referring to the Huawei MateBook X. Huawei's latest laptop comes in an Ultra-light and thin body weighing just 1kg and measuring 13.6mm2 in thickness. The aesthetics of the Huawei MateBook X is clearly visible with beautiful color variants - Silver Frost and Forest Green.

3K infinite fullview touch screen

Whether your next laptop is going to be used mainly for work or personal use and entertainment, having a big, clear display is necessary. As such, the Huawei MateBook X comes with a 3K Huawei Infinite FullView Display. With a borderless design, that offers a 90-percent screen-to-body ratio. The spotless screen delivers an immersive experience together with vibrant colors whether for work, content creation or media entertainment. The display is also mul-

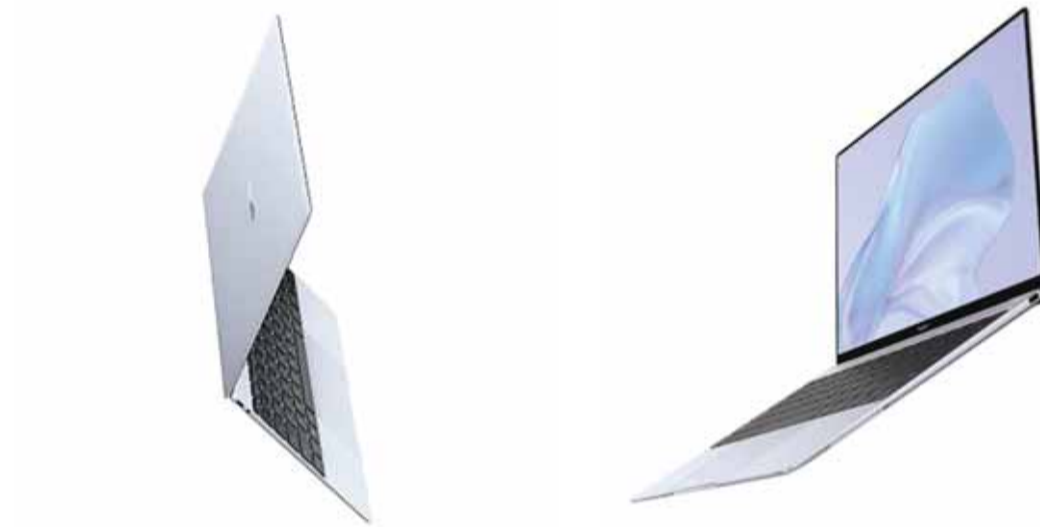
Tuna value dropping, industry must plan ahead: Report

PARIS: Tuna is holding steady as a \$40 billion-a-year business, but commercial fisheries worldwide are hauling in bigger catches of dwindling value, threatening the long-term survival of some species, according to a new report. "Fisheries caught 500,000 more metric tons in 2018 than in 2012, but were paid \$500 million less in dock value," study co-author Grantly Galland, an officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts' international fisheries group, told AFP.

Unless governments that regulate the industry through regional management bodies adopt long-term strategies, everything from supermarket tuna to \$100-a-portion sashimi could wind up in short supply, the report warned. Crashing populations of skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin and bluefin would also jeopardise livelihoods and disrupt ecosystems in which the top-level predators play a critical role.

Only a long-term, science-based approach, the report suggests, can keep revenue high without depleting stocks past the threshold of sustainability.

The new assessment pulls together global data-total catch, along with value from dock to diner table for the seven main species of tuna found in the world's oceans. Skipjack, a staple of supermarket tuna, accounted for 58 percent of all tuna landed in 2018 by



ti-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, no, this is not a smartphone, this is a laptop!

Efficient multitasking

Your laptop should be able to provide you with smart solutions such as cross-platform sharing. Like seriously, cable sharing is somewhat outdated! Moreover, it is time consuming as well. The Huawei MateBook X comes with Multi-Screen Collaboration feature that is part of Huawei Share. Multi-Screen Collaboration links mirrors your smartphone onto your laptop's screen. Sharing files is easy as dragging and dropping from one device to another! You can also use this feature to accomplish task on your phone using the laptops peripherals such as keyboard and mouse!

Huawei FreeTouch: New possibilities for interaction.

Don't you sometimes wish if your laptop's clickpad had a larger surface area? And could be clicked from both the top and bottom? Huawei MateBook X is the first to feature a clickpad with Huawei FreeTouch. The improved clickpad offers a more expansive space for navigation and creative expressions, and supports haptic feedback for a more tactile experience. Additionally, Huawei Share tag is embedded into the touchpad, improving the aesthetics and greatly enlarging the induction area to deliver a truly integrated experience.

Power and reliability

Your new laptop should be able to process all your task, whatsoever it maybe, efficiently. Thankfully, with the Huawei MateBook X you get the 10th Generation Intel Core i5 processor and up to 16GB RAM for

smooth processing. The Huawei MateBook X delivers powerful performance to support a smooth experience. The laptop also supports Wi-Fi 6, which ensures fast and stable Internet connections.

Sound that vibrates your eardrums

Whether you are on a video call or watching a movie you need sound that will make you feel as if you are actually there, physically not virtually. The Huawei MateBook X offers excellent audio with a 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.

Authenticated user privacy

In terms of user privacy and security, the Huawei MateBook X Pro, which comes with the 2-in-1 Fingerprint Power Button, which combines the fingerprint reader with the power button to securely authenticate user identity when the device is switched on. Additionally, the unique recessed camera design provides you with peace of mind by embedding the camera into a key cap that is easily accessible and pops up only when you want to use it.

The Huawei MateBook X is joined by the Huawei MateBook X Pro, which comes with an Ultra FullView Display in a sleek and elegant unibody design and elegant Emerald Green colour. Huawei MateBook X is loaded with innovative features like Multi-screen collaboration and Huawei Free Touch. It also features the 10th generation CPUs for professional performance and an all-day long battery life with a portable charger. The laptop also sports a two-in-one power button together with the fingerprint sensor for easy login while the recessed camera provides privacy protection when not in use.



A man wearing a protective mask carries tuna fish in a fish market in Istanbul. — AFP

weight, and 40 percent of value at the final point of sale. The three million tons harvested that year was 20 percent more than in 2012.

But it ultimately only brought in only six percent more in sales. Yellowfin-the second most important tuna species, both by total weight and revenue-saw a similar pattern, with a 15 percent increase in catch from 2012 to 2018, but only a two percent hike in earnings. For Atlantic bluefin tuna — 25 times more valuable by weight than skipjack, and especially prized by connoisseurs in Japan-the gap grew even larger, with catches increasing over that six-year period by 200 percent, but total revenue up only 22 percent.

The same gleaming, fatty bluefin fish that fetched nearly \$70,000 a tonne in 2012 sold for only half that in 2018. "The tuna business is incredibly valuable," said Amanda Nickson, who directs Pew's international fisheries work. "But now we can conclusively see that

catching more fish does not necessarily result in greater economic value."

'Maximum sustainable yield'

Bigeye tuna catches declined from 2012 to 2018 by 20 percent, but end value sales went down even more. Commercial tuna fleets are overseen by RFMOs, or regional fisheries management organizations, that solicit assessments from scientific committees on fish stock and, when they are needed, advice on quota levels. But historically, RFMOs have tended to ignore this advice, setting quotas above what scientists have deemed the maximum sustainable yield.

Only after stocks of eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin fell so low as to trigger a vote in 2010 under a UN treaty on whether to restrict trade did the relevant RFMO, afraid it would lose control of their \$2 billion industry, take decisive action. In less than a decade, stock levels improved significantly. This time RFMOs should get out ahead of the problem, if only out of self-interest, the report said.

"Implementing a modernized fisheries management system, known as harvest strategies, would eliminate an ineffective cycle of managers prioritizing short-term profits over the long-term value," Nickson said. It would also ensure more economic security for the millions of people who rely on the tuna industry for jobs and food, she added. The world's top tuna fishing nations are Indonesia, which landed more than 550,000 tons in 2018, followed by Japan (370,000 tons) and five nations that caught around 300,000 tons each: Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, Spain, Ecuador and South Korea. The United States is in eighth place, with about 240,000 tons. — AFP

LuLu Exchange launches mega draw

KUWAIT: LuLu Exchange - one of the largest financial services providers in the country, has launched a 3-month mega draw for customers availing its in-branch or digital remittance service. The campaign, under the banner of Send Smart, Win Smart, will run from Oct 1st-Dec 30th, 2020, and will include 13 weekly draws.

The company has not placed any minimum limit on the transfer amount to be eligible for the weekly draws, thus allowing every customer to participate in the draw. 133 winners will be selected over the period and will receive a plethora of electronic devices and shopping vouchers as prizes.

The draw is open to all customers in Kuwait who transact either via the company's branches or its digital offering, LuLu Money. Customers who transact via the LuLu Money app will have double the chance to win (Two tickets will be generated per LuLu Money transaction).

Prizes include:

- 3 MacBook Pro
 - 13 iPhone 11 Pro
 - 26 Apple Watches
 - 91 LuLu Shopping Vouchers worth KD 10
- Customers can access more information about the ongoing campaign on LuLu Exchange's social media handles.



This file photo shows a road sign directing traffic towards the Nord Stream 2 gas line landfall facility entrance in Lubmin, north eastern Germany. — AFP

Poland slaps \$7.58bn fine on Gazprom over Nord Stream 2

WARSAW: Poland's anti-monopoly watchdog on Wednesday said it was demanding Russian gas giant Gazprom pay a 6.45 billion euro (\$7.58 billion) fine over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline linking Russia to Germany. The regulator said it was also imposing a 52 million euro fine on five other companies, including British-Dutch giant Shell, involved in building the controversial link.

UOKiK warned in 2016 that, if built, Nord Stream 2 could hamper competition and so refused to approve the consortium. UOKiK then launched an antitrust procedure against the companies in 2018.

"Tomasz Chrostny, President of UOKiK, has imposed a penalty of over PLN 29 bn on Gazprom, and of over PLN 234 mln on 5 remaining companies participating in the construction of the gas pipeline-as a result of the lack of approval for the Nord Stream 2 transaction," UOKiK said in a statement on its website.

Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states and the US fiercely oppose Nord Stream 2, fearing it will increase Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies which Moscow could then use to exert political pressure.

The controversial multi-billion euro energy link between Russia and Germany is to run under the Baltic Sea and is set to double Russian gas shipments to Germany, the EU's biggest economy. UOKiK's move comes just days after Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki cited the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to urge Germany and other EU partners not to turn a blind eye to human rights when doing business with Moscow.—AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, October 8, 2020

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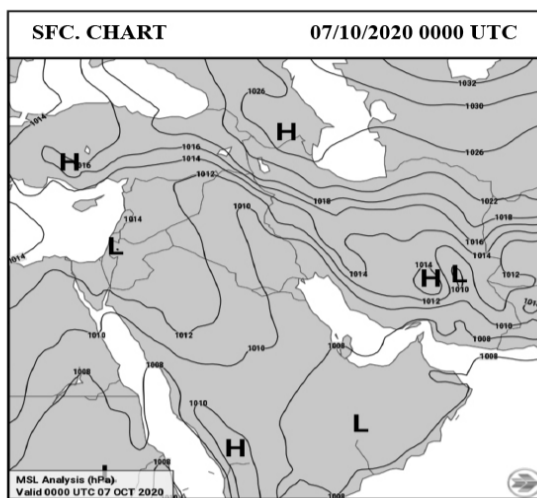
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Rather hot to fair and Humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	29 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	40 °C	28 °C
ABDALY	41 °C	22 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	41 °C	28 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	38 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	34 °C	30 °C
AHMADI	41 °C	34 °C
NUWASIB	41 °C	26 °C
WAFRA	41 °C	26 °C
SALMY	38 °C	22 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	10/08	Hot to rather hot	39 °C	23 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 35 km/h
Friday	10/09	Hot to rather hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	37 °C	22 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	10/10	Hot to rather hot	36 °C	21 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 30 km/h
Sunday	10/11	Hot to rather hot and some scattered clouds will appear	35 °C	20 °C	N-VRB	06 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:25
Sunrise	05:44
Zuhr	11:36
Asr	14:57
Sunset	17:27
Isha	18:44

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	42 °C
MIN. Temp.	24 °C
MAX. RH	93 %
MIN. RH	13 %
MAX. Wind	S 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Querilla Fernandes, w/o Christopher Joseph Antao, r/o bldg. no. 79, Flat 13, Block 10, Salmiya, Kuwait, has changed my name from Querilla Fernandes Antao to Querilla Fernandes. Hereinafter, in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name Querilla Fernandes. (C 5804) 8-10-2020

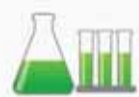
Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1

EMERGENCY 112

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

Word Search



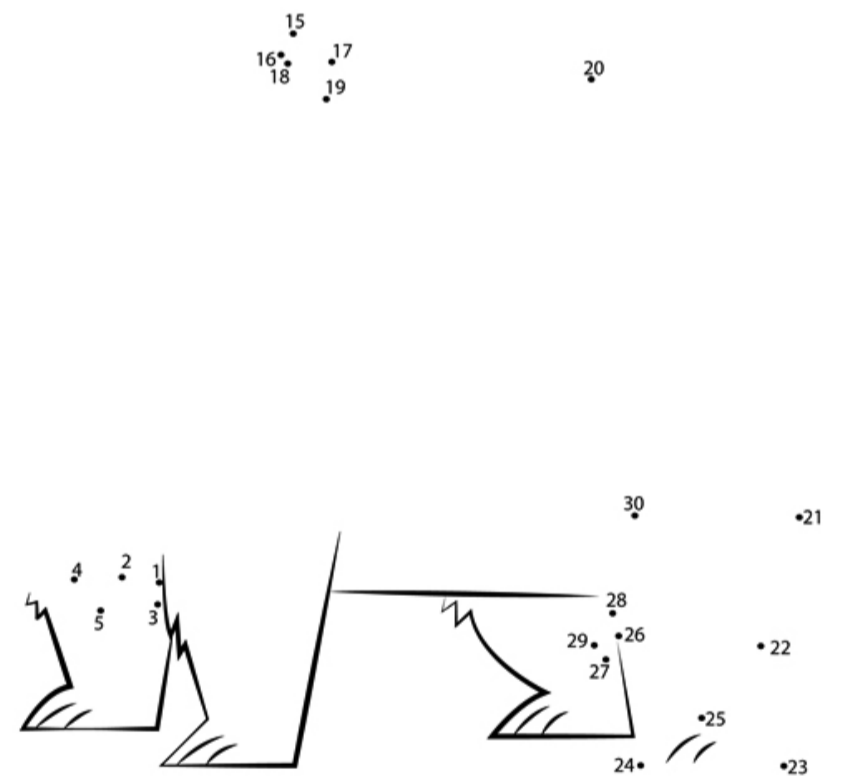
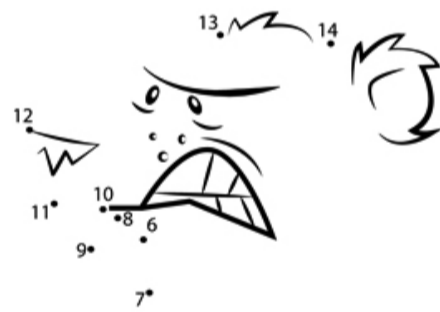
In the Chemistry Lab

Find all of the chemistry related words from the list below. The words can be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal.

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

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACID | ELECTRODE | KELVIN | SOLID |
| ATOMS | ELEMENT | LIQUID | SOLUTION |
| BASE | EXPERIMENT | LITHIUM PAPER | SUBLIMATION |
| BEAKER | FLASK | MICROSCOPE | TEST TUBE |
| BUNSEN BURNER | FUNNEL | MOLECULE | THERMOMETER |
| CHEMICAL | GAS | NUCLEUS | VOLUME |
| DENSITY | ION | PETRI DISH | |

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)
 You're likely now on the brink of completing a major move of some sort. Your first reaction may be to sit in solitary deliberation as you wrestle with the pros and cons of each piece of the situation. Try not to overload your head with too many details. Look at the overall picture. Perhaps you will find the answer you seek on a walk. During that time, you can clear your head of unnecessary clutter.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
 Try not to think too much about what is "supposed" to happen next, Cancer. The truth of the matter is that things don't necessarily work out the way they're planned, so don't count on something that has no guarantee of coming to fruition. Stick to your own way of doing things and try not to get too hung up on the results. The key now is to enjoy the process.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
 You may be wondering whose shoulder you should cry on, Libra. Usually yours is the shoulder that everyone else likes to use. The collar of your shirt is probably soaking wet by now, thanks to all the tears that have spilled on you. Your compassion for others is definitely one of your biggest strengths but be aware of the fact that it can also be one of your biggest weaknesses.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
 Feel free to go shopping online for yourself, Capricorn. While you're at it, you might as well pick out some things for others, too. You're apt to be in tune with the pleasant spirit of the people around you. On the other hand, if they're being especially negative or cranky, don't hesitate to just go elsewhere. Unfortunately, that may be easier said than done.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
 This is one of those days when you will be walking along and all of a sudden hear a street performer playing music. Suddenly your feet start to move and soon you're dancing. You find yourself boogying down the rest of the road. It won't take much to get you grooving. Once you start, it may be hard for you to stop. Go with it!

Leo (July 23-August 22)
 Water your plants today and make sure they're getting enough light, Leo. If you don't have any plants, take this opportunity to go to the nursery and pick up a couple for your home or office. Nourish the organic things in your life to help remind you of your own roots, which are extremely important for you right now. Sink deep into the Earth in order to understand the environment around you.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
 Your coals have been smoldering for a while, and there is a great deal of smoke pouring from your blackened embers, Scorpio. The good news is that there's apt to be a great gust of wind today, acting as the catalyst that ignites the flames. You've provided the heat and the fuel. The missing element of air is finally coming your way, so be prepared. The fire is apt to heat up quickly.

Aquarius (January 20-February 18)
 You're likely to gravitate toward those who can put on a show and carry your imagination to a far-off land today, Aquarius. Look for this quality in others instead of turning to the TV to satisfy this need. If you aren't careful, you may end up a couch potato all day, without talking to anyone. Take note that real life is much more enriching than anything that could come over the airwaves.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
 Don't take things that don't belong to you, Gemini. Your penetrating eyes are apt to spot things that are easily pocketed, even though you know deep down that those things aren't meant for you to keep. Your imagination might try to convince you that it's OK to pull such sneaky maneuvers, and you may be tempted. Don't deceive yourself.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)
 You're on a roll today, Virgo. Don't let other people's insecurities or shallow understanding about an issue get in the way of your progress. There's a distinct advantage to the way you approach things. Feel free to exert your will on those who need strong direction. If you're confident about the answer, don't be shy about saying so. If people don't like the way you're leading, they don't need to follow.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
 Be wary of big promises today, Sagittarius. This could be one of those days when people are more likely to take a gamble because they're unrealistic about how things are going to work out. Don't be surprised if the stock market jumps as a result of the dollar signs that people imagine. It will be hard for others to resist when people receive promises of a big payoff.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
 Connect with those who carry you upward and encourage your fantasies today instead of those who try to bring you down to reality, Pisces. There's a need for you to shine more brightly than usual, and there's no reason why this wish shouldn't be granted. Everything will work out splendidly for you as long as you align yourself with admirable people and noble causes, so go for it.

Lifestyle | Features



A Yemeni woman checks out a book from a mini-library, put in place by "Yemen Reads" campaign, in the capital Sanaa. — AFP photos



A Yemeni man checks out a book from a mini-library, put in place by "Yemen Reads" campaign.



A Yemeni man donates a book to a mini-library, put in place by "Yemen Reads" campaign.



A Yemeni man checks the app of a mini-library, put in place by "Yemen Reads" campaign.

Yemen's mini-libraries: 'A candle in the dark'

"It is lighting a candle in the dark," says Fawzi al-Ghoudi in Yemen's rebel-held capital Sanaa, of his initiative to reignite people's interest in books, as an escape from the grimness of war. The idea for the "Yemen Reads" campaign is simple-to establish mini-libraries across the city where people can borrow books for free, the 30-year-old told AFP. The initiative dates back to 2013, a year before the Iran-backed Huthi rebels seized control of Sanaa, igniting an all-out war with the government which is supported by a Saudi-led military coalition. Many of the project's

volunteers escaped at the time, fearing for their lives, but Ghoudi and four other companions revived it in 2019 after obtaining permission from the Huthi authorities.

They have so far set up five small booths with shelves full of books in public places in Sanaa, including a shopping mall. "By establishing these booths, you make people feel there is still life in Yemen," Ghoudi told AFP, adding that war-weary citizens were tired of the noise of boots on the ground, and endless news of killings and deprivation. Yemen's conflict, which has triggered what the

United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, is in its sixth year, with tens of thousands killed and the majority of the population reliant on aid for survival. Sanaa was once one of the most vibrant commercial and cultural hubs in the region, but its heyday is now just a memory.

The Huthis impose a strict moral code, including shutting down cafes that do not observe rules on segregating men and women, and enforcing modest dress. "The country smells of gunpowder... and these small libraries are reminders that reading is still important

even if it is no longer a priority," said Mohammed Mahdi, 32, one of the regular readers. He said he came across one of the booths "by chance" last year and has since then not stopped borrowing books or encouraging others to do the same. Ghoudi said that through donations, they have been able to gather about 5,000 books and hope to open 10 more libraries. But in a country with many pressing needs, gathering the funds they need is difficult. "People tell you that they prefer to make donations to provide aid to people affected by the war, and avert the threat of famine," he said.

Still, Ghoudi and his companions continue to try to build the project as best they can, and have set up collection boxes for books in their humble kiosks. However they avoid accepting books about politics and religion-contentious topics in the troubled country. Fatima Al-Kathiri, 24, a university student, is delighted to take part in the initiative. "This is one of my best experiences," she said. "Reading in general helps to clarify ideas and to think better." — AFP



T-Rex fossil sells for record-breaking \$31.8m

One of the most complete specimens of a T-Rex fossil in the world was sold for a record \$31.8 million Tuesday by Christie's in New York, nearly quadrupling the previous highest price for a dinosaur at auction. The apex predator made mincemeat of Christie's opening price of between six and eight million dollars, showing off the lasting power of the T-Rex. It then shredded the previous record set by a specimen called Sue that was sold for \$8.4 million in October 1997 by Sotheby's to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. Only around 50 Tyrannosaurus fossils have been discovered since the first was unearthed in 1902.

Bids hit the \$9 million mark in less than two minutes after the start of the

auction, but after 14 minutes there were just three bidders left in the race, until the hammer came down on an offer of \$27.5 million, to which were added costs and commissions. The sale was organized in New York, where the expert assessor was located, but with lines open to Hong Kong and London, where Christie's specialists were taking calls from collectors. The fossil, nicknamed Stan, stands 13 feet (four meters) high and 40 feet long, with puncture marks in the skull and neck that experts believe show evidence of fights with fellow T-Rexes. He would have weighed in at around eight tons when alive, some 67 million years ago. — AFP

Let's-a go! Super Mario to make theme park debut in Japan next year

A real-life "Super Mario" game-where players jump to collect coins-and a "Mario Kart" ride will open next spring at Universal Studios Japan, as gaming giant Nintendo makes its first foray into theme parks. The new area of the amusement park in the western city of Osaka was originally planned to open in July this year ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, with huge droves of tourists expected. But the long-awaited "Super Nintendo World" zone, which also features a ride based on the beloved green dinosaur Yoshi, will now open in spring 2021, the park said in a statement yesterday. It will offer interactive attractions where guests can jump and hit blocks to collect coins and items, the park said, without elaborating on how this would work.

The opening was delayed as Japan imposed social distancing measures earlier this year to curb the spread of the coronavirus. In late February the whole park closed its doors, but it has gradually resumed operations since June, with sanitary precautions in place. If all goes to plan, the park's new area will still open before the Olympic Games, which were also postponed due to the pandemic until July 2021. Ahead of the full opening, Universal Studios Japan will open a Mario-themed restaurant next week, featuring food and beverages inspired by the Italian plumber and his friends and enemies, along with a gift shop. — AFP



CAVE RAIDERS: THAI ARCHAEOLOGISTS HUNT ANCIENT ARTWORK

An antelope, a lonely figure, a family linking arms-Kanniga Premjai shines her flashlight across a cave to reveal long-hidden paintings, a stunning discovery for Thailand's scrappy team of archaeologists. For months, Kanniga and her small team have combed Sam Roi Yot National Park, about four hours southwest of Bangkok, following a ranger wielding a machete as he slashes a path through thorny vegetation. They had searched about 40 caves-with no luck-before they stumbled on a cavern located a steep climb through rocky cliff terrain. "I screamed when we found the paintings," she tells AFP, pointing out clusters of rust-colored figures that look like they are holding hands.

The dark walls initially shrouded the etchings, but careful examination and the use of a mobile application-which helps researchers enhance rock art-exposed the drawings. "They are pre-historic and they're about 2-3,000 years old," Kanniga says. Thailand has unearthed ancient temples

and cities, such as the ruins in the historic former capital of Ayutthaya and northern Chiang Mai-which attract domestic and foreign tourists.

But the search for cave drawings is more challenging for Thailand's understaffed Department of Fine Arts, often because of the arduous trekking required. "A lot of their primary work is just preserving what is already found... and that already takes up a lot of time," says Noel Hidalgo Tan, an expert with Southeast Asia's regional centre for archaeology and fine arts. "There's a lot of places in Thailand that are still unexplored."

Lost for centuries

Locals often venture into the caves to collect guano-or bat feces used as fertilizer-but might not notice the wall art, which is why Kanniga's mission is "to search every cave and cliff in the park". "We don't know what we'll stumble upon," the 40-year-old archaeologist says, as she ducks into the cave's inner chambers. While they are not

Thailand's oldest-that title belongs to markings believed to be between 5-11,000 years old found in the north-the "Clay Cave" supports Kanniga's hypothesis that the Sam Roi Yot area was once home for pre-historic people. Cave exploration is Kanniga's passion, but this year is the first in her nearly two-decade career that she is able to devote time and resources to it. She is one of three archaeologists overseeing six provinces in the Ratchaburi Fine Arts Department and previously spent time assessing historical sites to determine age and provenance.

"Foreign archaeologists usually specialize in one thing, but in Thailand we need to do a bit of everything," she says. The discovery of paintings in 2016 by authorities doing a cursory sweep of Sam Roi Yot's perimeter prompted Kanniga to push for further research in the park's unmapped grounds. Today, the national park is popular with domestic tourists visiting nearby beaches and avid birdwatchers observing the wetlands.

'Finding treasure'

The evidence suggests that hunter-gatherers lived in the area some 3,000 years ago, says Tan, a senior specialist on cave and rock art in the region. "They would be moving camp-to-camp, so they would have a camp up in the mountains," he says, adding that the shoreline of the Gulf of Thailand would have been further inland. Despite the area's potential, sustained exploration by the kingdom's over-stretched archaeologists is likely difficult because "caves can't be easily turned into tourism sites" like historic temples, Tan says. "As a way to preserve them and protect them, you need to generate revenue but it is not as monetisable."

But Kanniga remains undeterred by the challenges, pushing on with two researchers to search for hidden finds in the park's unexplored caves. "It's quite exciting, but it's a little scary especially when we're climbing," Chananchaita Kitcho tells AFP. — AFP



This picture shows archaeologists from the Fine Arts Department in Ratchaburi looking at newly-discovered cave paintings in Khao Sam Roi Yot national park in the coastal Prachuab Kiri Khan province. — AFP photos



WHO, Greta or press watchdogs for Nobel Peace Prize?

The World Health Organization is the bookies' favorite to win the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, though experts say Greta Thunberg or press freedom groups are also strong contenders. The peace prize-the highlight of the Nobel season and the only one of the six Nobels awarded in Oslo-always sparks wild guessing games, rendered especially tricky by the fact that the list of nominees is kept secret for at least 50 years. Only their number is known: this year there are 318 nominees, including 211 individuals and 107 organizations, according to the Nobel Institute. That leaves much to the imagination of experts. "In the absence of a very clear front-runner... I think that we could and should see a prize to either an umbrella organization for journalists or individual journalists working in the field," suggested Henrik Urdal, the director of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo.

"During conflicts, it's extremely important that journalists contribute to provide information about what's happening, both in order to hold the conflict parties accountable for their actions as well as providing information to the outside world that allows governments an opportunity to assess the situation and possible measures," he explained. Both Reporters Without Borders, known by its French acronym RSF, and the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists have been mentioned as possibilities. Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg is also a name on experts' lips, either alone or with other activists. She was favorite to win the prize last year, when it went to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for helping to end a 20-year postwar stalemate with Eritrea.

Nobel historian Asle Sveen said that while RSF was his first choice, Greta, as she is simply known, was "a possible candidate, absolutely". Greta would be the second-youngest laureate in the Nobel Prizes' almost 120-year history, after the Pakistani advocate for girls' education Malala Yousafzai. "Even if you have this pandemic right now, climate change is in the long term much more serious," Sveen noted.

No Nobel for Trump

Meanwhile, the new coronavirus pandemic has pushed the World Health Organization (WHO) to the top of online betting sites, just ahead of Greta. That would be a way for the five-member Norwegian Nobel Committee to honor the UN agency's multilateral approach to the virus. But the WHO has also been sharply criticized for its slow response, while Donald Trump has accused it of yielding to Chinese influence. It's also not known whether the WHO was nominated in time. The new coronavirus was defined as a pandemic on March 11 — while the deadline for peace prize nominations was January 31, and Nobel committee members can only add their own suggestions at their first meeting of the year in February. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

ROCK LEGEND EDDIE VAN HALEN
DIES AFTER LONG BATTLE WITH CANCER

Eddie Van Halen, the guitar virtuoso whose group is considered one of the greatest rock bands of all time, died on Tuesday following a long battle with cancer, his son announced. "I can't believe I'm having to write this, but my father, Edward Lodewijk Van Halen, has lost his long and arduous battle with cancer this morning," Wolf Van Halen

much, Pop." Born in the Netherlands and raised in California, Van Halen founded the rock group with his older brother Alex in the early 1970s and quickly earned a fan base. He was famous for what became known as "finger tapping"-playing the guitar with two hands, like a piano.

He was also known for his guitars,

there's Eddie Van Halen," friend and guitarist Jerry Cantrell of Alice in Chains said during Grammy weekend in January 2019. "Those two guys tilted the world on its axis." Van Halen has sold more than 75 million albums and has more number one hits on the mainstream US rock chart than any other artist, according to the band's label. The group's album "1984" was to be the band's high point, giving them their only number one single "Jump."

'Didn't drink to party'

The creative tension within the band boiled over during the "1984" tour, with Eddie Van Halen and original frontman David Lee Roth falling out. Roth left the band in April 1985. One of his gripes with Eddie Van Halen was reportedly the rocker's outside work that included providing the lead-in guitar for Michael Jackson's 1983 smash hit "Beat It." However, Van Halen announced a reunion tour in 2007 with Roth performing with the group for the first time in 22 years. Another tour planned in 2012 had to be cancelled after Eddie Van Halen had to undergo emergency surgery. But the band reunited again in 2015 for an extensive North American tour. Eddie Van Halen was known to have health problems that would interfere with his work for years.

He underwent hip surgery in 1999 and had part of his tongue removed in 2000 after being diagnosed with cancer, likely because of heavy smoking. Although he was declared cancer free following the surgery, the American tabloid news site TMZ reported earlier this year that he had been going to Germany for throat cancer treatment. His drug abuse and heavy drinking con-



Mementoes including a rose, guitar picks and a cigarette are left on the handprints at the Guitar Center in Hollywood, California of rock guitarist Eddie Van Halen on October 6, 2020.

tributed to his 2007 divorce from TV actress Valerie Bertinelli after 16 years of marriage. "I was an alcoholic, and I needed alcohol to function," he said in a 2015 interview with Billboard magazine.

'Guitars weeping everywhere'

"I didn't drink to party. Alcohol and cocaine were private things to me. I would use them for work. The blow keeps you awake and the alcohol lowers your inhibitions. I'm sure there were musical things I would not have attempted were I not in that mental state." Tributes from some of the biggest names in the music world poured in Tuesday following news of his death. "I'm just devastated to hear the news of the passing of my dear friend Eddie Van Halen. He fought a long and hard battle with his cancer right to the very end.

Eddie was one of a very special kind of person, a really great friend. Rest In Peace my dear friend till we meet again," Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi tweeted.

"Sad to hear Eddie Van Halen has passed away. A guitar innovator with a fierce spirit of musical and technical exploration. Prayers and thoughts with his family and friends," Yusuf/Cat Stevens tweeted. Songwriter Diane Warren said in a tweet that "guitars are gently weeping everywhere. Shred In Power Eddie Van Halen." The rocker is survived by his second wife Janie Liszewski and his son, as well as his first wife Bertinelli. — AFP



In this file photo taken on May 17, 2015 Musician Eddie Van Halen of Van Halen performs onstage during the 2015 Billboard Music Awards at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on February 07, 2012 musician Eddie Van Halen of Van Halen performs at their dress rehearsal for family and friends at the Forum in Inglewood, California.

wrote in a message on Twitter with a picture of the rocker who was 65. "He was the best father I could ever ask for," he added. "Every moment I've shared with him on and off stage was a gift. "My heart is broken and I don't think I'll ever fully recover from this loss. I love you so

including one named Frankenstein which he pieced together from part of other instruments. Among the group's classics are "Jump," "Panama," "Runnin' with the Devil," and the guitar solo "Eruption." "Ed's a once- or twice-in-a-century kind of guy. There's Hendrix and

anti-crime agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation, has been probing Rajput's death since August, while the Narcotics Control Bureau has been looking into his consumption of cannabis.

The Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences completed its forensic examination earlier this month and reportedly ruled that the actor had died by suicide, not murder, dismissing the speculative claims made by some TV channels. The saga has now morphed into a probe into drug use in Bollywood, with police hauling in superstar Deepika Padukone and other actresses for questioning last month. Rajput was unusual among Bollywood stars in that he did not come from one of the industry's many powerful families, but hailed instead from Bihar, India's poorest state. Abandoning his engineering studies in Delhi for Mumbai, he got his big break in 2013 and won acclaim for his portrayal of Indian cricket hero Mahendra Singh Dhoni in a hit 2016 biopic. — AFP



In this file photo Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty (center) arrives at the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) office in Mumbai. — AFP

Bollywood actress
wins bail in
ex-boyfriend
suicide case

Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty won bail yesterday, nearly a month after being arrested for allegedly buying drugs for her ex-boyfriend actor Sushant Singh Rajput, whose suicide sparked a media storm in India. Rajput, 34, was found dead in June in his Mumbai apartment, triggering a national frenzy with television news channels speculating that Chakraborty drove him to kill himself with cannabis and black magic. A star with many hits to his name, Rajput's suicide initially triggered a debate over mental health in India's multi-billion-dollar movie industry. But Rajput's family disputed reports that he suffered from depression and accused Chakraborty, 28, of stealing his money and harassing him. She has strongly denied the allegations.

Yesterday, a court in Mumbai ordered the actress to be released on bail, her lawyer Satish Maneshinde said, calling it a victory for "truth and justice". "The arrest and custody of Rhea was totally unwarranted and beyond the reach of law," he said in a statement. Her brother Showik, who was also arrested last month, remains in custody. Chakraborty and her family have been hounded by Indian media who have spent months obsessing over the case, with some celebrities including actresses Vidya Balan and Sonam Kapoor accusing TV channels of carrying out a "witch hunt" against her. The country's top



Johnny Nash

'I CAN SEE CLEARLY
NOW' SINGER JOHNNY
NASH DIES AGED 80

American singer-songwriter Johnny Nash, best known for his 1972 hit "I Can See Clearly Now", has died aged 80, according to US reports. The Texas-born pop and reggae star died at his home in Houston on Tuesday, his son Johnny Jr told the CBS Los Angeles TV station. Nash rose to the top of the US Billboard chart with "I Can See Clearly Now", and his 1975 hit "Tears on My Pillow" reached number one in the UK rankings.

He was one of the first non-Jamaican singers to record reggae music on the island, his website said. His son told the TMZ website: "He was a wonderful father and family man. He loved people and the world. He will be missed within his community. Family was his everything." — AFP

De Beauvoir's tragic love
story is finally published

A tragic love story that Simone de Beauvoir thought "too intimate" to publish during her lifetime finally saw the light of day yesterday, 34 years after her death. The great feminist writer recounts her teenage crush for another girl in "Les Inseparables", the story of a "passionate and tragic friendship between two rebellious young girls."

But de Beauvoir put the deeply autobiographical novel into a bottom drawer after her partner Jean-Paul Sartre "held his nose" when he read it. The author of "The Second Sex" wrote how she became "instantly charmed by her new classmate", Elisabeth "Zaza" Lacoine, who died of encephalitis at the age of 21. "From the day I met you," she wrote, "you were everything for me."

In the novel, the de Beauvoir character does "her all in order to make Andree (a thinly-disguised Zaza) love her back," said the 2Seas literary agency, who handled the foreign rights for the book. Described as "moving, gripping coming-of-age novel" that "outlines Simone de Beauvoir's personal battle against the conventional expectations", de Beauvoir finished it in 1954, five years after her feminist masterpiece was published. It's theme of "the friendship between two young women struggling against conventional ideas of what a woman should be in early 20th-century Paris" echoed "The Second Sex". The book's English publishers, Vintage, said the two girls were expected to be "devout, obedient and obliged from a young age to set aside her own interests and passions" for the men in their lives.



In this file photo taken on April 21, 1983 French writer Simone de Beauvoir poses after receiving the "Sonning Award", a cultural award at the embassy of Denmark in Paris. — AFP

Unrequited passion

The writer went on to have several other relationships with women, some of whom were also Sartre's lovers. De Beauvoir first evoked her relationship with Zaza in her "Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter". The two were so close during World War I and the 1920s that fellow students and teachers at their school called them the "inseparables". Zaza's relationship with the communist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whom she had met through de Beauvoir, scandalized her traditionalist Catholic family. He appears as a charismatic student in the story, and one of his classmates was none other than Sartre. The pair quarreled and then permanently fell out over Soviet communism around the time the novel was written. By then the object of de Beauvoir's unrequited love was long dead. — AFP

'Unique' fruit-enveloping vine found by 90-year-old nature volunteer

An unusual vine discovered by a 90-year-old volunteer nature guide in Japan has a "unique" way of using its leaves to curl around its fruits to envelop them in a protective microclimate, scientists said yesterday. The cucurbitaceous vine, a type found in East Asia, is an oddity because while leaves come in all shapes and sizes and perform a crucial role in photosynthesis, they are rarely associated with reproduction. But a new study published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences found that the vine had specialized leaves able to enclose fruit and enhance seed production in colder conditions.

The research was led by Nobuyuki Nagaoka, the 90-year-old guide at

Yamagata Prefectural Natural Museum Park, who first spotted the leaf behavior in 2008 and has observed it every year since. "Here, we report, for the first time, a unique function of leaves that enclose immature fruits in an annual vine," said the authors, who also include researchers from Kyoto University and Japan's Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute. They describe the vine as a slen-



An unusual vine discovered by Nobuyuki Nagaoka.

der, annual plant that often inhabits the edges of deciduous forests with disturbances like roads, rivers or mountains. It can either be hermaphrodite or male and produces small, white flowers pollinated from August to September and later develop into fruits, each with a single seed.

The researchers looked at plants at different altitudes at the foot of Mount Gassan, in the southern part of the Dewa Mountains, in an area partly within Yamagata park. They noted some leaves on hermaphrodite plants that were undeveloped in summer "expanded and overlapped with each other" to create a sort of cocoon around immature fruit. The study found that these specialized "enclosure leaves" are produced towards the end of the growing season and produced a microclimate of up to 4.6 degrees Celsius warmer than was recorded around fruit where the leaves had been plucked off. Removing the leaf enclosures negatively affected the survival and growth of the vine's fruit, although they were unable to identify the mechanism, said the authors. They also found that the leaves grew thicker protective layers in colder areas. "The results suggested that enclosures allow the plant to produce seeds under the cold weather the plant encounters at the end of its life," the study said.



A hand out image shows Nobuyuki Nagaoka, the 90-year-old guide at Yamagata Prefectural Natural Museum Park. — AFP photos

Reproductive role

These enclosure leaves were found to have less photosynthetic ability and were different in greenness and structure from others. Previous research has described some functions of leaves that aid reproduction, such as the plant Saururus chinensis, whose leaves can temporarily turn white to attract pollinators. But the study

said such traits were likely "in conflict with traits that promote photosynthesis, the primary function of leaves". "Leaves that play a major role in reproduction rather than in photosynthesis have not been reported so far to the best of our knowledge," the authors said. — AFP

An unusual vine discovered by Nobuyuki Nagaoka.

Sports

Photo of the day



Max Verstappen driving the Aston Martin Red Bull Racing RB16 during the F1 Grand Prix of Russia. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Australia women thrash New Zealand to equal record ODI win streak

BRISBANE: Australia demolished New Zealand by 232 runs in the third women's one-day international to equal the world record of 21 consecutive ODI victories set by Ricky Ponting's all-conquering men's team in 2003. After smashing their way to 325 for five off their 50 overs at Brisbane's Allan Border Field, the Australians then bowled New Zealand out for just 93 to record their biggest ever win against the Kiwis.

Australia dominated all aspects of the match from the outset, with Rachael Haynes (96) and Alyssa Healey (87) putting on an opening partnership of 144. Annabel Sutherland (35), Ash Gardner (34) and Beth Mooney (29 not out) chipped in to set the visitors an imposing target. New Zealand were never in the hunt, particularly after they lost captain Sophie Devine in the first over for a duck. There was some resistance from Amy Satterthwaite, who smashed 41 from 49 balls, but the rest of the New Zealand line-up folded meekly to hand Australia an easy victory. Captain Meg Lanning, who was rested from yesterday's match with a hamstring strain, said equaling the world record was a special achievement. "It's a really special effort, especially over a long period of time," she said. "To win 21 on the trot is something to be really proud of, and the way we have swept this series has been something that has given us a lot of pleasure." The win gave Australia a 5-1 overall series win, with the New Zealanders winning the third T20 international on September 30.

Haynes, who stood in for Lanning as captain yesterday, was named player of the series after a string of high scores. "I thought the Kiwis bowled well to start," she said. "The great thing about this ground is the longer you spend out in the middle, the easier it gets." It was great to set a platform from where we could launch at the end." New Zealand's Devine was bitterly disappointed after the match. "It's a tough one - I thought in the second game, we showed we can compete with the best in the world," she said. "Today we just didn't show up." —AFP

Astros push A's to the brink

Dodgers defeat Padres; Braves overwhelm Marlins



LOS ANGELES: George Springer #4 and Carlos Correa #1 of the Houston Astros celebrate a 5-2 win against the Oakland Athletics in Game Two of the American League Division Series at Dodger Stadium on October 06, 2020. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: Jose Altuve #27 of the Houston Astros throws to first - to complete the double play after forcing out Marcus Semien #10 of the Oakland Athletics at second to end Game Two of the American League Division Series at Dodger Stadium on October 06, 2020. —AFP

NEW YORK: George Springer hit two home runs and the Houston Astros crushed their way to within one victory of their fourth consecutive American League Championship Series, beating the Oakland Athletics 5-2 at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday. Martin Maldonado also hit a home run as the Astros went deep three times, one day after also hitting three homers in Game 1 of the series. Houston will look to sweep the best-of-three series on Wednesday. Astros starter Framber Valdez (2-0) gave up two runs on five hits over seven innings. He walked one and struck out four. Khris Davis and Chad Pinder hit home runs for the A's, who now need to win three consecutive games in order to advance to the ALCS. A's starter Sean Manaea (0-1) gave up four runs on five hits over 4 1/3 innings with one walk and two strikeouts.

Braves 9, Marlins 5

Travis d'Arnaud broke a seventh-inning tie with a home run as Atlanta erupted for six runs in the frame en route to a victory over Miami in Game 1 of their National League Division Series in Houston. Dansby Swanson also hit a homer in the inning. Ronald Acuna Jr. led off the first with a home run, and Marcell Ozuna drove in two runs with a single and a double for the second-seeded Braves, who won for the third straight time in the postseason after having swept the Cincinnati Reds in the best-of-three first round. Marlins starter Sandy Alcantara (1-1), who beat the Chicago Cubs in the Marlins' first-round sweep last week, was charged with five runs on eight hits in six-plus innings. Miguel Rojas homered for Miami, which also got three hits from Brian Anderson.

Rays 7, Yankees 5

Randy Arozarena homered for the second consecutive night, and three teammates also went deep as Tampa Bay defeated New York at San Diego to even their American League Division Series at one game apiece. Mike Zunino and Manuel Margot slugged two run-shots while Austin Meadows joined Arozarena in hitting a solo homer as Tampa Bay tied the franchise postseason record of four homers. Rays right-hander Tyler Glasnow (1-0) struck out a franchise postseason-record 10 in five-plus innings. He gave up four runs-all on Giancarlo Stanton homers and three hits while walking three. Stanton had two homers and four RBIs for New York, including a booming three-run shot that cleared the second-deck seating area in left-center field at Petco Park. Stanton has homered in four straight games this postseason.

Dodgers 5, Padres 1

Hitless through five innings, Los Angeles put together a four-run rally in the sixth in a come-from-behind victory against San Diego in the opening game of their National League Division Series at Arlington, Texas. In the first-ever playoff game between the NL West rivals, the first Los Angeles hit came when Mookie Betts delivered a one-out double against Garrett Richards (0-1) in the sixth. The Dodgers ended up with four hits and two walks in the rally, which also featured a run-scoring wild pitch. Padres starter Mike Clevinger, a surprise addition to the NLDS roster after he came away with an elbow impingement in his final start of the regular season, started Game 1 but lasted just one-plus inning and 24 pitches, leaving with a tight right arm. He walked three and struck out one but didn't yield a run. —Reuters

Storm sweep Aces to capture the fourth WNBA championship



FLORIDA: Sue Bird #10 of the Seattle Storm is interviewed after winning the WNBA Championship following a Game 3 win over the Las Vegas Aces at Feld Entertainment Center on October 06, 2020 in Palmetto, Florida. —AFP

LOS ANGELES: The Seattle Storm used a balanced attack to capture their fourth WNBA championship in franchise history on Tuesday with a 92-59 rout of the top seeded Las Vegas Aces. Breanna Stewart scored 26 points to lead four players in double figures as the Storm swept the best-of-five finals in three straight.

The Storm are now tied with the Minnesota Lynx and the Houston Comets, for the most titles (four) in league history. The Storm also won in 2004, 2010, and 2018. Stewart was named MVP of the finals after averaging 28.3 points in the series which was held at the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida. Jewell Loyd scored 19 points and had nine rebounds while Jordin Canada tallied

15 points for the Storm, who have won a record 11 games in a row in the WNBA finals, dating to the team's first championship in 2004.

Seattle is also the sixth team in league history to go undefeated in a single postseason (6-0), joining the 2013 Lynx (7-0), 2010 Storm (7-0), 2002 Sparks (6-0), 2000 Comets (6-0) and 1997 Comets (2-0). Sue Bird, who will turn 40 next week, finished with five points and seven assists. She has been a part of all of the titles. "I do what I have to do to be able to play at a high level," said Bird. Seattle put the game away in the third quarter, scoring 12 of the first 14 points in the period. A'ja Wilson led the Aces with 18 points, including 14 in the first quarter. —AFP

Street vendor to IPL: The cricketing fairy tale of India's Jaiswal

NEW DELHI: Teenage batsman Yashasvi Jaiswal sold street food and lived in tents to pursue his cricket dream, and now he is playing with top stars in the Indian Premier League. The 18-year-old left-hand batsman scored 400 runs in six one-day matches for India at this year's Under-19 World Cup, but it was his IPL deal with Rajasthan Royals that turned heads.

He was snapped up by the Steve Smith-led Royals for \$338,000 in the December auctions of the world's richest Twenty20 tournament, making him the most expensive of a new crop of youngsters. Life, though, was not always easy for Jaiswal, who hails from a small town in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh but moved to Mumbai at the age of 11 to hone his skills.

"Initially finding a place to stay (in Mumbai) was the hard part. I used to sleep in a dairy and then stayed at my uncle's place but it wasn't big enough and he asked me to find a different place," Jaiswal told AFP from the United Arab Emirates, where this year's IPL is being held. "I then started to stay in a tent near Azad Maidan (a Mumbai sports ground) and would play cricket there during the day. "I sold pani puri at night, to help earn some money for food," he said, referring to a popular street snack. Jaiswal also did some cricket scoring and worked fetching balls in club games to help finance his career.

His efforts started to pay off after he won a place in the Mumbai team and became the youngest batsman in the world, at 17 years and 292 days, to score a one-day double century. But it was an even bigger day in the life of the Jaiswal family when the young batsman and useful leg-

spinner was bought by the Royals for more than 12 times his base price of \$27,000. The Royals fielded Jaiswal in their opening game against Chennai Super Kings, but the opener scored just six runs and in his second outing, he was out for nought off Mumbai Indians quick Trent Boult.

Dhoni respect

But Jaiswal, who greeted Chennai captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni with his hands folded together in prayer, a mark of respect, before the game in Sharjah, says sharing a dressing room with big guns including Jos Buttler, Jofra Archer and Smith is a tremendous learning experience. "It's been great to talk to all the great players here. I've been talking to everyone and picking up things that would help me improve my game," said Jaiswal. "It has been good to have the support of skipper Steve Smith. He's been very helpful and has been open to anything I've asked him. I've been trying to learn from his international experience."

Jaiswal, who was player of the tournament in the U-19 World Cup in South Africa, where India were runners-up, credits coach Jwala Singh for helping him through his tough times in Mumbai. "I started practicing there (Mumbai) but my father, who runs a paint shop, said 'Let's go back home', but I wanted to stay on," said Jaiswal. "One day after my practice I met coach Jwala and he offered to help me with my accommodation and work on my game and fitness. It helped me as a player."

The young boy's ambition struck a chord with Singh, who played state cricket himself but had to give up because of a lack of money and guidance. "I saw in Yashasvi a younger me and thought God is giving me another chance to play well in my second innings of life," Singh said. "I always believed he would play cricket at the highest level." As for what the future holds, Jaiswal - who, like many young Indians, idolises record-breaking batsman Sachin Tendulkar - will take it as it comes. "My focus is to work on things I can control and not worry too much about the future." —AFP

Sports

More than 'just football game' as Kosovo aim for world stage

'The most important match in Kosovo's history'

PRISTINA: It's just football, some say, but for Kosovo, one match means so much more than that. Not only can today's game in Skopje take Kosovo a step closer to the re-scheduled Euro 2020 but it is also being seen as a chance for the Kosovar people to stand up and be noticed as an independent country. Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008, meet neighboring North Macedonia in the Euro play-off semi-finals, knowing that victory in Skopje will edge them closer to a place at sport's top table for the first time.

"I live for our flag to be raised among the 24 flags of the best nations in Europe," said 23-year-old psychology student Besart Morina. The game has been dubbed by the media as "the most important match in Kosovo's history", and even head coach, 69-year old Bernard Challandes sees the Skopje showdown as "not just a football game". "We are in the new country of Kosovo and the football team is so important for the people," the Swiss-born boss said in a press conference.

Refugee squad

Sports are a frequent arena for tensions with Serbia. The scars still run deep after the bitter war between the two which ran from February 1998 to June 1999. The Serbs attempted to block Kosovo from joining UEFA and FIFA in 2016 but their failure on that score makes the Kosovars the newest side in the qualifiers. The fact that none of the 24 players selected for the match play in the domestic league is a remnant of Kosovo's violent past - a majority of the squad are descendants from ethnic Albanian refugees that fled the violent regime of Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic during 1990s.

A lot of the players born after the bloody conflict started their careers scattered from Sweden to Switzerland, but opted to play for the yellow-

and-blues. Some of them are good enough to play in Europe's top leagues. Captain Amir Rrahmani is at Napoli while Samir Ujkani and Mirgim Vojvoda both play for Torino. Another in Serie A is Lazio's Vedat Muriqi - he is in the squad for Skopje although a recent positive Covid-19 test makes him a doubtful starter.

Others play in the France's Ligue 1, the Dutch Eredivisie or Germany's Bundesliga. "A lot of players got good contracts, but they must never forget their roots and what it means to play in the Kosovo shirt," said Challandes. The European newcomers struggled during qualifying for 2018 World Cup, scoring only three goals and recording just a single point - a 1-1 draw in Finland - in 10 matches. Despite being labeled as outsiders in Euro qualifiers, Kosovo were a revelation.

They put together a remarkable 15-game unbeaten run, including friendlies, before falling to England 5-3 in September 2019. But they finished third in their group, ahead of Bulgaria and Montenegro, to secure their place in the play-off. "Challandes brought sustainability. He unified them with discipline and self-confidence," said Eroll Salihu, secretary general of the Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK).

Fitness woes

However, the side travel to Skopje plagued with fitness issues, as four of the squad are expected to miss the game through injury. The coronavirus has also affected fitness levels with some players not having played since before lockdown. "We have waited more than two years for this match, and now we are in this situation," said Challandes. "We don't have a lot of alternative options." The historic match will only be played about 100 kilometers from Kosovo's capital Pristina but because of the virus no fans will be allowed into the stadium.



PRISTINA: Kosovo's national football team players attend a training session in Pristina. It's just football, some say, but for Kosovo, one match means much more-not only a step closer to the re-scheduled Euro 2020 but also international notice as an independent country. —AFP

Kosovo also face a determined opponent - North Macedonia have waited 30 years to get this far. "We will give everything to work out their weaknesses so we can win," said North Macedonian forward Vlatko Stojanovski. But Kosovars are proud of their national team no matter what happens. Posters of the players are dotted around the streets in the bars and the shops are packed with replica kits.

Arsim Mehana, a 41-year-old taxi driver, told AFP the team was doing more for the international standing of the country than all the politicians. "They are young but better and contribute more to our recognition on the international stage than our diplomats," he said. If Kosovo win today they will still have one more hurdle before they reach the Euros - a play-off final against either Georgia or Belarus. —AFP

Messi to put Barca drama behind him

BUENOS AIRES: Superstar footballer Lionel Messi will take a break from his Barcelona soap opera as he bids to fire Argentina to the World Cup in Qatar and what will probably be his last chance to try to win the coveted trophy. The 33-year-old, a record six-time winner of the Ballon d'Or, has won everything in the club game with Barcelona several times over but his international trophy cabinet looks bare in comparison. "The only goal I have now is to win the World Cup with the national team," he has said. The closest he has come so far was as losing finalist against Germany in 2014. Today's clash with Ecuador gives him the chance to start building towards one last tilt at that goal.

He will be 35 by the time the Qatar

World Cup ends, and will turn 39 during the following global showpiece in North America. In the meantime, he has a pair of qualifiers - Argentina also travel to Bolivia next Tuesday - to distract him from his club travails. Messi tried to force his exit from the Catalan giants in the close season but Barca held firm and a 700 million euro release clause ensured he remained, albeit disgruntled. Playing Ecuador in his homeland may provide a welcome respite but it is also fraught with potential difficulty.

Four years ago at the start of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Ecuador stunned Argentina 2-0 at River Plate's iconic Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires. It took a hat-trick by an inspired Messi in Argentina's final qualifier - away to Ecuador - to send the twice world champions to Russia. Today's match will be in another iconic stadium: Boca Juniors' Bombonera. But it will be a surreal experience in an empty ground that would normally be bouncing with stands packed full of some of the most

fervent and passionate fans in the world. COVID-19 has put paid to any hopes of a paying public.

'Memory' players

This is a much-changed Argentina from that which disappointed at the last World Cup. Young coach Lionel Scaloni embarked on an ambitious regeneration of the squad following the abject exit from Russia under the tutelage of Jorge Sampaoli. However, alongside Scaloni's 'new guard' remain several old hats, like Messi. "We can say that there are seven or eight 'memory' players that are the foundation," said Scaloni, pointing out that with "only one day of preparation" they would need the experienced heads to help the team hit the ground running.

He will be without the injured Manchester City forward Sergio Aguero, though, while Scaloni has left out Paris Saint-Germain winger Angel Di Maria. "Messi needs two players ahead of him that he can assist, and sit deep, not at the tip. That's how we got

results at the Brazil 2019 Copa America," added Scaloni in reference to Argentina's third-place finish. One player competing to lead the line is Sevilla's Lucas Ocampos. "He's strong, technical and scores goals, and also helps in the defensive phase," said Scaloni, who will have to also select between Paulo Dybala of Juventus and Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez.

Cruyff's successor

It's been a turbulent covid period for Ecuador, who will be led by Argentine Gustavo Alfaro after Dutchman Jordi Cruyff quit without ever leading the team. Cruyff, the son of late Dutch legend Johan Cruyff, was hired in January but football was put into lockdown over covid-19 before he could take charge of his first match and he subsequently resigned in July with no restart date yet fixed. Alfaro has coached 13 clubs in Argentina, winning the Copa Sudamericana with Arsenal in 2007, but this is the 58-year-old's first job as a national team coach. —AFP

Scotland and Ireland among those seeking places in Euro playoffs

LONDON: Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland are among the 16 sides hoping to take a step closer to qualifying for next year's European championships in the Euro 2020 playoffs today. AFP Sport explains how the new format will work and who can claim one of the four remaining places at the rescheduled tournament.

How does it work?

Twenty teams have already book their place at Euro 2020 through qualifying. The 16 sides in action this week are the best-placed finishers from the inaugural Nations League to have not already qualified. Split into four sections of four, each path will consist of two semi-finals played on Thursday and one final on November 12.

Who is in the mix?

At least one nation from every tier of the Nations League must qualify. Therefore one of Georgia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Kosovo will reach a major international tournament for the first time as the best teams from League D. Scotland are aiming to end a 22-year wait to qualify for a tournament as they face Israel at Hampden.

"We knew how big this game was going to be a long time. It has always been in the back of our minds, even previously playing other games this has always been the one that everybody has looked at," said Scotland midfielder Kenny McLean. "It is the biggest game we have had in a long time, we know that as players, we know how important it is. It is such a big thing for the country. We are ready." Even if Steve Clarke's men make it through to next month's final, the spectre of Erling Haaland stands in their way as the winners between Scotland and Israel with face Norway or Serbia.

Borussia Dortmund striker Haaland scored his first international goals last month, including a double in a 5-1 thrashing of Northern Ireland, and leads a talented Norwegian generation also including Real Madrid midfielder Martin Odegaard. There could be an all-Ireland showdown next month as Northern Ireland travel to Bosnia, while the Republic face Slovakia away. Surprise quarter-finalists at Euro 2016, Iceland host Romania hoping to set up a final against Bulgaria or Hungary.

Will there be fans?

UEFA announced last week that supporters will be allowed to attend the playoff matches if local authorities permit them to do so, up to a maximum of 30 percent of stadium capacity. In a statement, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said: "27 countries on the continent already allow fans to some extent." "This decision will allow for a coherent approach on a country-by-country basis and not on a competition-by-competition basis which was sometimes difficult to understand for fans." Even in countries where fans are being allowed back, in most cases the numbers remain well below 30 percent of stadium capacity. For Norway's clash with Serbia, just 200 fans will be allowed in to the 28,000 capacity Ullevaal Stadion. —AFP

GAZOO Racing claims 3rd win of the season

KUWAIT: Elyn Evans claimed his second victory for the GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team (WRT) recently on a dramatic final day at Rally Turkey during the World Rally Championship (WRC) organized by the International Automobile Federation (FIA). The Welsh driver rose from fourth to first position in the No. 33 Toyota Yaris WRC during the longest stage of the 2020 season.

The 38.15-kilometre Cetibeli stage was the first of two demanding tests that would be run twice on the third and final day of the event. The initial run over the rocky terrain proved to be highly eventful, with a number of drivers having to stop and change wheels. Evans made it through the stage without trouble, setting the fastest time to surge into a 46.9-second lead in the No. 33 Toyota Yaris WRC.

From there, he and co-driver Scott Martin were able to safely complete the remaining stages and secure a victory that moves them to the top of the drivers' championship, 18 points clear of GR teammates Sebastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia. The result also enabled Toyota to increase its lead in the manufacturers' championship to nine points.

"Evans and Martin, thank you very much for driving through these harsh Turkey roads faster than anyone!" commented Akio Toyoda, President, Toyota Motor Corporation. "I deeply feel that we are on the way to make cars that respond to drivers' requirements and feelings. We will keep challenging to make ever-better cars so that our drivers can feel confident to drive toward the goal. I believe many fans all over the world watched the live broadcasting. I appreciate all of your continued support."

Elyn Evans, Driver of the No 33 Toyota Yaris WRC, added: "It obviously feels good to come away from a really tough rally with a win. We showed some good pace from the start. We really tried to focus on keeping it in the middle of the road and that paid off for us, and I'm happy to come away with all those points. It's a great result towards the championship and a good position to be in."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including



Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand.

Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under

the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The next event of the season, Rally Italia Sardegna, will now take place from October 8 to 11 instead of its usual dates in June. Drivers can expect fast and narrow stages coated with fine sandy gravel, which is swept away by each passing car to leave rockier, rutted roads. Exposed rocks and trees at the side of the road can catch out the unwary, making for a challenging but exciting event.

14 Astros push A's to brink; Dodgers defeat Padres



14 Storm sweep Aces to capture fourth WNBA championship



15 More than 'just football game' as Kosovo aim for world stage



PARIS: Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova serves the ball to Germany's Laura Siegemund during their women's singles quarter-final tennis match on Day 11 of The Roland Garros 2020 French Open tennis tournament yesterday. —AFP

Czech Kvitova powers past Siegemund

Nadal passes Sinner test to storm into French Open semi-finals

PARIS: Czech seventh seed Petra Kvitova put in a powerful display to breeze past unseeded German Laura Siegemund 6-3 6-3 yesterday to reach her second semi-final at the French Open after a gap of eight years. The 30-year-old, a two-times champion at Wimbledon, reached the last four stage on the claycourts at Roland Garros in 2012 and was yet to lose a set at this year's tournament in Paris, which has lost the top three seeds in the women's draw.

Roland Garros was where Kvitova made an emotional return to professional tennis three years back after being sidelined for six months following a burglar attack at her home that left her with severe damage to the nerves and tendons in her left hand. "It means a lot to me, definitely," Kvitova said in her interview on Court Philippe Chatrier. "I didn't dream to be in a semi-final after everything that happened. Right now it's my lucky place, I'm really happy to be here, to play. I really missed it when I was off. I'm happy I'm still able to play and compete with the best."

Siegemund, ranked 66th in the world, was appearing in the second week of a Grand Slam for the first time in her career and had lost her only meeting against the tall and big-serving left-hander 6-1 6-1 at the US Open in 2015. The 32-year-old did not pose a challenge in the opening set as Kvitova put in a near-perfect show. The left-hander hit six aces, lost a single point on her first serve and converted her first breakpoint opportunity to canter through the opener in 34 minutes. She hit 14 winners against five unforced errors. But the German gave a good account of her fighting spirit in the second despite suffering a lower back problem midway through. Kvitova broke serve early but started having trouble with double faults. She saved three breakpoint chances before the German con-

verted the next to get the set back on serve at 2-2. Siegemund saved three breakpoints from 0-40 in the next game but lost her cool at the umpire after getting a time violation warning at 40-40 and suffered another break. She then called the trainer to get a massage on her lower back and returned to break Kvitova to get the set back on serve. Kvitova, however, kept her focus and got the decisive break in the next game and then converted her second match point when her opponent served a double fault. "You are playing the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam so I expected her to play very well, which she showed whole match," Kvitova added. The Czech will meet the winner of the all-American clash between Danielle Collins and Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin for a place in her maiden final at Roland Garros.

Nadal into 13th semi-final

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal reached his 13th Roland Garros semi-final yesterday with a straight sets win over Italian teenager Jannik Sinner but claimed it was "dangerous" to finish at 01:30 in the morning when the temperature had plummeted to 12 degrees (53F). Nadal, the 12-time champion, defeated 19-year-old Sinner 7-6 (7/4), 6-4, 6-1 to clinch a 98th victory in his 100th match at the French Open. He will next face Diego Schwartzman, the diminutive Argentine over whom he holds a 9-1 career advantage, as he moves closer to equalling Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 majors. However, Nadal, more accustomed to the bright sunshine of Mallorca than the autumn chill of a French Open pushed back four months due to the coronavirus pandemic, was unhappy with organisers who scheduled five matches on the main Court Philippe Chatrier. "I know footballers play under

these conditions, but they are all the time moving," said Nadal after the latest ever finishing match at the tournament. "We stop, we come back, we stop on the changeovers. I think this is a little bit dangerous for the body with these very heavy conditions."

Nadal and Sinner only got on court at 10:30pm after Schwartzman and Thiem had taken five hours to decide their quarter-final. They also had to wait for another women's last-eight tie to be completed after two others had kicked off the program. The sparse and shivering crowd that greeted them wore thick coats, scarves and hats. "I don't know why they put five matches on Chatrier. It's a risk," added 34-year-old Nadal who finished his news conference at 02:10. Nadal will be playing in a 34th semi-final at the majors.

'I was over limit'

He takes a 9-1 lead over Schwartzman into that match although the Argentine won their most recent clash in Rome on the eve of Roland Garros. World number 75 Sinner, bidding to become the first man to make the semi-finals on debut since Nadal in 2005, was left to rue missed chances. He led with breaks in both of the first two sets, even finding himself just two points away from taking the opener. Nadal admitted he had been in a contest unlike his first four matches where he dropped just 23 games. "It was very tough during the first two sets and especially at the end of the first. He was hitting the ball very hard and with the cold, the balls had less lift." Sinner has been tipped to make the world top 10 next season, but said he is not looking too far ahead. "I'm a person who looks not in the future and not in the past, always in the present," said the Italian who had seen off two seeded players to make the last-eight - 11th seed David



PARIS: Spain's Rafael Nadal serves the ball to Italy's Jannik Sinner during their men's singles quarter-final tennis match on Day 10 of The Roland Garros 2020 French Open tennis tournament. —AFP

Goffin and sixth-seeded Alexander Zverev; the US Open runner-up, Argentine 12th seed Schwartzman defeated US Open champion and third seed Thiem in a five-hour epic to reach his first ever Grand Slam semi-final. The 28-year-old Schwartzman triumphed 7-6 (7/1), 5-7, 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/5), 6-2. It was one marathon too many for Thiem, the runner-up in Paris for the last two years, who had needed five sets and three and a half hours to down world number 239 Hugo Gaston in the fourth round. The 5ft 7in (1.70m) Schwartzman's success came on the same day that compatriot Nadia Podoroska, the world 131, reached the last-four of the women's singles. "Dominic is one of the great players. He is my best friend and I have a lot of respect for him,"

said Schwartzman. "So this win is very important for me. In the second and third sets, I was going a little crazy and I was screaming at myself because I had so many chances. But, come on, I deserved to win tonight," added Schwartzman. Thiem had been attempting to reach a fifth successive semi-final in Paris. However, despite crumpling 65 winners to his opponent's 47, he committed 81 unforced errors in a match which featured 19 breaks of serve and at five hours and eight minutes was the second longest of the tournament. "I was over the limit today," said Thiem. "At the net I just told him that he deserves it. I think he's for the first time top 10 with that win. That's also great achievement." —Agencies

Lakers hit back to beat Heat and take 3-1 NBA Finals lead

ORLANDO: LeBron James scored 28 points as the Los Angeles Lakers moved to within one win of a 17th NBA championship on Tuesday with a 102-96 victory over the Miami Heat. Humbled by Miami in game three on Sunday, James and the Lakers came roaring back in a hard-fought defensive battle that was finely balanced until Los Angeles pulled away in the closing minutes. The win leaves the Lakers 3-1 up in the best-of-seven series, meaning they can clinch the championship with victory in game five in Orlando on Friday.

"It felt like both teams were desperate, understanding the situation they had put themselves in," James said afterwards. "Trying to get every extra possession, execute offensively, not to make mistakes defensively, that's what it was all about." James started slowly but clicked in the second half to lead the scoring while providing

eight assists and hauling down 12 rebounds. Anthony Davis meanwhile finished with 22 points, while Kentavious Caldwell-Pope chipped in with a vital 15 point contribution.

Caldwell-Pope's tally included a three-pointer and a layup in the closing stages that put the Lakers seven points ahead with two minutes remaining. Davis then drained only his second three-pointer of the night with 39.5 seconds left on the clock to give the Lakers a 100-91 lead and effectively seal the contest. Butler, the 40-point hero of Miami's win on Sunday, was restricted to 22 points, frustrated throughout by a commanding defensive display from Davis. "He challenges me every night, I challenge him every night," James said of Davis. "We have to do things to help our team win, defensively, and offensively, and he did that tonight—he was spectacular."

'Moments of truth'

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said the game had been decided in key moments in the closing stages. "There was some moments of truth there at the end, and probably the bottom line is they won those moments of truth," Spoelstra said. "It came down to making plays. They just made more plays and more shots to seal it." An attrition-

al contest saw defenses on top throughout, with Miami containing the threat of James and Davis for long periods. James in particular struggled to generate his usual rhythm throughout the first half, giving up five turnovers and scoring just eight points.

The Lakers looked to have built a head of steam towards the end of the first quarter, edging into a 27-22 lead after a Kyle Kuzma three-pointer and a driving layup from Alex Caruso. But Miami responded swiftly at the start of the second quarter, transforming a five-point deficit into a 33-29 lead after Jae Crowder's three-pointer. Butler, meanwhile had started smoothly, going five-from-five in the first quarter to move into double figures. Despite Miami's defensive efforts, the Lakers were still able to carve open a series of good looks, only for off-target shooting to let them down. Nevertheless the Lakers had inched into a two-point lead at half-time at 49-47.

In the third quarter, James' shooting from distance improved, his first three-pointer of the night coming with a 29-foot effort to put the Lakers ahead at 55-54. A Danny Green bucket was followed by a driving layup from James and the Lakers had suddenly moved into a 59-54 lead. James made another long-range three shortly afterward to put the Lakers 62-57 up with 6:44



FLORIDA: Jae Crowder #99 of the Miami Heat defends LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers during the fourth quarter in Game Four of the 2020 NBA Finals on October 6, 2020. —AFP

left in the third. Davis's first three-pointer of the game from 28 feet put the Lakers seven points clear with two minutes left in the third. The Los Angeles big man closed the quarter with four free throws to leave the Lakers five points clear heading into the fourth. —AFP