



**4** Kuwait calls on NAM states to cooperate to tackle crises



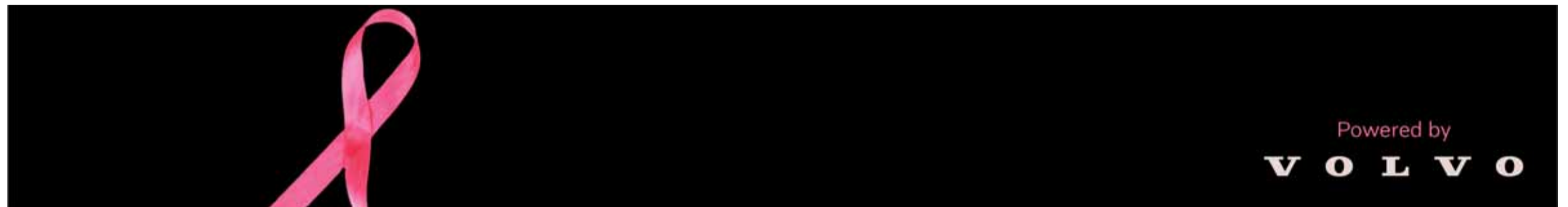
**9** Immigration impasse, virus clobber US crab industry



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**16** Nadal wins 13th French Open, 20th Grand Slam



# Crackdown on gatherings in bid to halt virus spread

Police on highest level of alert • Kuwait reports 548 COVID-19 cases, 3 deaths

## Amir receives letter from Saudi King



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives at Seif Palace yesterday Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz, who delivered a letter from King Salman bin Abdulaziz regarding ties between the two countries and their peoples. — KUNA (See Page 2)

KUWAIT: Police are actively pursuing violators of preventive measures against the spread of the novel coronavirus, the interior ministry confirmed yesterday, adding that officers have dispersed various public gatherings in the past few days. The interior ministry's warning comes as the Cabinet is set to discuss during its weekly meeting today the health situation in Kuwait, with the possibility of reintroducing lockdowns or other measures to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The government lifted a five-month-long curfew on Aug 30, 2020, but maintained a ban on public gatherings including weddings, parties and receptions involving people other than the host's family members.

"The security apparatus implements the decisions of the Cabinet and instructions of health authorities to face the spread of the coronavirus," Director General of Relations and Security Information at the Interior Ministry Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari said. He added that policemen remain "on the highest alert" to deal instantly with any violation of the ban on gatherings, noting that necessary legal action will be taken against violators.



Tawheed Al-Kandari

Meanwhile, the health ministry announced that the number of confirmed coronavirus infections in Kuwait rose by 548 yesterday to take the total to 111,116 cases. Three more deaths took Kuwait's death toll from the outbreak to 658, health ministry data showed. In terms of health zones, Ahmadi governorate recorded 145 cases, followed by 91 in Farwaniya, 123 in Hawally, 100 in the Capital and 89 in Jahra, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said.

Kuwait has registered 16 COVID-related deaths in the past three days, in addition to 1,675 new cases. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood at 7,190 as of yesterday, 140 of whom are in intensive care units, said Sanad. This is an 11-patient increase from the previous day, which recorded 134 ICU patients.

Sanad added that 2,717 swab tests were conducted in the past day, to take the total to 782,255 tests. Some 546 people recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours to take the total of recoveries to 103,268, the ministry earlier said. Urging the public to be mindful of health precautions, Sanad said following social distancing rules is the only way to halt the spread of the virus.

## News in brief

### Israel opposes F-35 sale to Qatar

JERUSALEM: Israel will oppose any US sale of F-35 warplanes to Qatar, Israel's intelligence minister said yesterday, citing a need to maintain Israeli military superiority in the region. Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen made the comments on Israeli Army Radio when asked about a Reuters report that Qatar had submitted a formal request to Washington to buy stealthy F-35 fighter jets. — Reuters

### China calls for new Mideast forum

BEIJING: China's foreign minister Wang Yi has called for a new forum to defuse tensions in the Middle East after a meeting with his Iranian counterpart where he reiterated Beijing's support for Tehran. Wang and Javid Zarif also reaffirmed their commitment to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, an implicit rebuke of the US for abandoning the accord during their Saturday meeting in Tengchong city. — AFP

### Lebanon closes bars, nightclubs

BEIRUT: Lebanon said yesterday it will close bars and nightclubs to help contain the COVID-19 outbreak which has killed more than 450 people. The interior ministry shut bars and nightclubs until further notice and enforced local lockdowns on 169 villages and districts across the country. It also reiterated a 1 am-6 am curfew as well as a ruling that masks must be worn when travelling. — Reuters

### Iran gas explosion kills 5

DUBAI: A suspected gas explosion flattened a building and shops in a marketplace in southwest Iran yesterday, killing at least five people, a fire official said, in the latest in a series of fires and blasts. State television showed rescue teams looking for survivors in the rubble of the two-storey residential building located near a historic marketplace in the old district of the city of Ahvaz. — Reuters

## Trump claims he's 'immune' from COVID

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday declared himself immune from COVID-19 as he prepares to return to the campaign trail in a fight to regain ground against surging White House rival Joe Biden. "It looks like I'm immune for, I don't know, maybe a long time and maybe a short time, it could be a lifetime, nobody really knows, but I'm immune," Trump said in a Fox News interview, a day after his doctor affirmed he was no longer a transmission risk for the disease.

"You have a president who is immune... so now you have a president who doesn't have to hide in a basement like his opponent," he added - in a jab at the Democrat Biden and his far more cautious approach to campaigning in a pandemic. It is not yet clear to what degree contracting COVID-19 confers immunity from future infection, with early studies suggesting a few months while newer ones have indicated it could last longer.

While it acknowledges that - generally - a person who recovers from a viral infection is protected against new infection, the World Health Organization cautioned in August: "For COVID-19, we do not yet have enough data to confirm if antibodies protect, what antibody levels are required, or how long protection will last."

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## India virus cases cross 7 million

NEW DELHI: India's coronavirus cases surged past seven million yesterday, taking it ever closer to overtaking the United States as the world's most infected country. Health ministry data showed a rise of almost 75,000 cases yesterday, taking the total to 7.05 million, second only to the US which has recorded 7.67 million infections.

Experts say that the true number may be much higher, with testing rates in the vast country of 1.3 billion people - home to some of the planet's most crowded cities - much lower than in many other countries. This is borne out by a string of studies measuring antibodies to the virus among the Indian population that have indicated infection rates could be several times higher than officially recorded.

India's death toll of 108,334 as of yesterday is also lower than in the US and other countries with higher caseloads. The United States has recorded 214,000 deaths while Brazil, with two million fewer infections than India, has lost nearly 150,000 lives so far.



MUMBAI: A security guard wearing a facemask as a preventive measure against COVID-19 is pictured yesterday. — AFP

Possible factors for this include India's relatively young population, immunity thanks to other diseases - and under-reporting. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease reached 6 million.

The rise in infections in India comes as the government continues to lift restrictions to boost an economy battered by a severe lockdown imposed in March. On Thursday, cinemas are set to reopen - albeit at 50 percent capacity - and experts fear the upcoming festival

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## Hopes dashed for Karabakh ceasefire

STEPANAKERT: Hopes that a Russian-brokered ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan might hold were further eroded yesterday, with both sides accusing the other of intensive shelling of civilian areas and escalating two weeks of fierce clashes. Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said that overnight shelling by Armenian forces on the country's second largest city, Ganja, had left at least seven people dead and 33 wounded including children, less than 24 hours after the halt to fighting was supposed to take effect.

Rescuers in red helmets dug through piles of debris with their bare hands in search of signs of survivors, an AFP journalist in the city reported. They retrieved one nearly naked body and gingerly put it in a white bag to be taken away in an ambulance while several horrified residents watched on and wept.

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## Local

# Kuwait's Amir accepts King Salman's invitation to visit Saudi Arabia

## Crown Prince receives letter from Saudi counterpart



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, at Seif Palace yesterday, Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz, who delivered a letter from King Salman bin Abdulaziz regarding ties between the two countries and their people. The letter also dealt with

means of further boosting relations in all fields, as well as issues of mutual interest, and regional and international developments. Furthermore, the letter included an invitation to His Highness the Amir to visit Saudi Arabia, an invitation His Highness the Amir accepted and said was happy to honor. Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz.

Sabah attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Prince Turki, who delivered a letter from Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz dealing with ties between the two countries and

their people, as well as means of further boosting relations in all fields, in addition to the latest regional developments. The letter also included an invitation to His Highness the Crown Prince to visit Saudi Arabia. Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the meeting. — KUNA



Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah welcomes Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz upon his arrival to Kuwait yesterday.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a letter from Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz.

## Trump claims he's 'immune'...

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During his phone interview on Fox News, Trump went on to suggest that his White House rival could himself be sick. "If you look at Joe, he was coughing yesterday horribly and grabbing his mask, as he's coughing," Trump said. "And I don't know what that was all about, and it didn't get much press."

The Biden campaign has been publishing daily coronavirus tests for their candidate since Trump tested positive on Oct 1 - landing him in hospital for three nights and derailing his campaign. There has been less transparency surrounding Trump's own state of health, with his medical team repeatedly refusing to say when he last tested negative for the virus. That has fueled suspicions that he may not have been tested for several days prior to his diagnosis.

Trump rallied hundreds of supporters for a comeback event at the White House on Saturday, and is planning back-to-back rallies this week in a bid to salvage his struggling campaign three weeks from the Nov 3 election. "I am feeling great!" Trump declared as he stepped out to a White House balcony - tugging off his mask to address the crowd, most of them masked under their red "Make America Great Again" hats, but with little social distancing. "Get out and vote - and I love you," Trump told supporters, who chanted "USA" and "Four more years" throughout the address lasting just under 20 minutes.

Badly trailing Biden in the polls less than four weeks from election day, Trump has been counting the days until he can hit the trail again. The White House doctor announced late Saturday the president was "no longer considered a transmission risk". Tests showed there was "no longer evidence of actively replicating virus" and that Trump's viral load was "decreasing." Sean Conley said - though he did not state that the president was virus-free.

Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that, for mild or moderate Covid-19 cases, isolation and precautions can be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset, and once patients have been fever-free for 24 hours. However, the severity of Trump's illness has not been confirmed.

Saturday's event set the stage for a full-fledged campaign rally today in Florida - followed immediately by two more in battleground Pennsylvania tomorrow and Iowa Wednesday. Biden has slammed as "reckless" Trump's determination to

rally huge crowds during the pandemic - but the president has brushed the concerns aside, insisting America has the upper hand against the virus despite a death toll of 213,000 and rising.

"I want you to know our nation is going to defeat this terrible China virus," Trump said. "It's going to disappear. It is disappearing. We are producing powerful therapies and drugs, and we are healing the sick and we are going to recover, and the vaccine is coming out very quickly, in record time as you know."

While Trump, 74, has declared himself recovered - and appeared smiling and energetic at the White House - doubts linger over his health, with the president's doctor accused of a lack of transparency with the public. Trump's biggest liability - overwhelming public dissatisfaction over his handling of the pandemic - has returned as the headline issue of the campaign thanks to his own infection, with cases again on the rise nationwide.

The seven-day average of new daily cases recorded between October 3 and 9 - 47,184 - was the highest since the week of Aug 13 to 19, according to an AFP analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University. "Over 213,000 Americans have died from this virus - and the hard truth is it didn't have to happen this way," Biden, 77, tweeted Saturday.

For months, taking their cue from a president who mostly shunned and at times mocked the wearing of masks, White House advisors were rarely seen masked inside the West Wing. Since Trump and his wife Melania tested positive, the mood has shifted and mask-wearing was compulsory at Saturday's event.

A similar gathering two weeks ago, to announce the nomination of conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, has been singled out as a likely source of many of the dozens of positive cases since linked to the White House. Biden, vice-president under Barack Obama, is currently close to 10 points ahead in national polls with a solid lead in key battlegrounds.

And in the Republican camp, there is increasingly palpable concern about the state of the race. "If on Election Day people are angry and they've given up hope and they're depressed... I think it could be a terrible election," Senator Ted Cruz warned last week. "I think we could lose the White House and both houses of Congress, that it could be a bloodbath of Watergate proportions."

But speaking at Saturday's rally, Trump cited "great polls all over the place", mentioning Florida and Nevada among other states, without elaborating on the details. "This is the single most important election in the history of our country," he said, before telling the crowd to "get out and vote". — Agencies

## Hopes dashed for Karabakh...

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One witness said they were woken by a huge blast that leveled an entire square block of one- and two-storey houses in the early hours of the morning, leaving nine apartments destroyed. "Everything I've worked for my entire life has been destroyed," said resident Zagit Aliyev, 68. The agreement to pause hostilities in order to exchange prisoners and the bodies of people killed after two weeks of fighting over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region was approved by Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in marathon Russia-brokered talks in Moscow.

The truce officially entered into force at noon on Saturday but both sides almost immediately accused each other of violations. Yesterday, the defence ministry in the breakaway region insisted Armenian forces were respecting the humanitarian ceasefire and in turn accused Azerbaijan of shelling civilian-populated areas. Claims that Armenian forces were responsible for shelling Ganja were "an absolute lie", it added.

The leader of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, Arayik Harutyunyan, described the situation as "calmer" yesterday, but warned that the truce was precarious. An AFP journalist in the administrative capital of Stepanakert, which has been subjected to heavy bombing since the fighting erupted and is pockmarked with deep craters and unexploded ordnance, reported hearing loud explosions throughout the night.

Vahram Poghosyan, a spokesman for Karabakh's leader, said the overnight shelling of Stepanakert was "a disrespect of the agreements reached in Moscow", and called on the international community to recognize the Karabakh's independence as a way to end the

hostilities. New fighting broke out late last month, stemming from a long-simmering disagreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region.

The disputed territory is an ethnic Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan, home to about 150,000 people, which broke from Azerbaijan's control in a war in the 1990s that killed some 30,000 people. Its separatist government is strongly backed by Armenia, which like Azerbaijan gained independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The most recent bout of fighting has been the heaviest since the 1990s war, with more than 450 people reported dead, thousands forced to flee their homes.

The return of fighting has stoked fears of a full-blown war embroiling Turkey, which strongly backs Azerbaijan, and Russia, which has a military treaty with Armenia. Turkey's defense ministry blamed Armenia for the ceasefire violations in a post on Twitter and accused Yerevan of committing "war crimes and crimes against humanity". Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov during a call with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu yesterday called for a "strict implementation" of the Moscow agreement.

Armenia and world leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron have denounced the deployment of pro-Turkish fighters from Syria and Libya to bolster Azerbaijan's army. The defense ministry in Yerevan reposted an amateur video showing corpses in military fatigues and with the man behind the camera speaking in Arabic, claiming this was proof Syrian mercenaries were fighting with Baku's forces.

France, Russia and the US - known as the "Minsk Group" - have for decades sought a lasting solution to the Karabakh conflict, but have failed to stop sporadic outbreaks of fighting, and Baku with Turkey's backing appears set on continuing with its military intervention. A senior Azerbaijani official said Saturday the truce was only meant to be "temporary", and said Baku had "no intention to backtrack" on its effort to retake control of Karabakh. — AFP

## India virus cases cross...

Continued from Page 1

season when large crowds gather for public celebrations will exacerbate the situation.

Anticipating a fresh surge in cases, the government has issued strict guidelines and capped the number of revelers for the two main Hindu festivals of Dussehra on Oct 25 and Diwali next month. On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a mass awareness campaign, encouraging the public to wear masks, practice hand hygiene and maintain physical distance. "Our collective efforts have helped saved many lives. We have to continue the momentum and protect our citizens from the virus," Modi tweeted.

A few states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat in the west have put restrictions on gathering during the nine-day Navratri festival due to begin on Oct 17. "Festival season is approaching. A little carelessness of people during festivals can worsen the situation," India's health minister Harsh Vardhan told his social media followers in a broadcast yesterday. "There is no need to congregate in large numbers to prove your faith or your religion. If we do this we may be heading for a big trouble," Vardhan said.

The virus initially hit major metropolises such as Mumbai and New Delhi, but has since spread to almost every corner of the huge country, including the remote Andaman and Nicobar islands. The southern state of Kerala, which won praise for its early handling of the coronavirus pandemic, on Saturday reported 11,755 new cases, the highest in the country. Neighboring Karnataka and its capital Bangalore, where many software companies are based, has also been struggling to contain the spread of virus. — Agencies

Local

# Kuwait's Amir receives Crown Prince at Seif Palace

## Sheikh Mishal meets top state officials



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Seif Palace. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. — KUNA



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



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



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

News in brief

### Guinea-Bissau President congratulates Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Saturday a cable of congratulations from President of Guinea-Bissau Umaro Sissoco Embalo on his recent ascension to the Amir's position. His Highness the Amir addressed him with a cable, expressing gratitude for the gracious sentiments and lauding the solid and close relations between the two friendly countries. He also wished the president everlasting wellness and his country further progress and prosperity.

### Indian Premier congratulates

KUWAIT: Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi congratulated His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on assuming the position of Kuwait's Amir, and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on taking charge as Kuwait's Crown Prince. Modi expressed confidence that Kuwait would "continue to play an important global role under their leadership, and the historic India-Kuwait friendship will be further strengthened."

### Arab fund supports Palestine projects

RAMALLAH: Palestinian Prime Minister's office announced approving a number of projects worth \$5.7 million in occupied Jerusalem, provided by the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). The funds are provided to different institutions specializing in health, culture, development and education, the office said in a statement yesterday. The projects include developing the institutions' infrastructure, providing scholarships and youth developmental initiatives. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh announced on Saturday that AFESD will provide \$1.2 million to support Palestinian hospitals in fighting the coronavirus. — KUNA

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In my view

## Stop smoking!

By Abdellatif Sharaa

I learned two days earlier about the death of a friend who was a smoker - a heavy smoker at times. His direct cause of death was cancer, and all indicators place smoking as a prime suspect! It is really sad! I wrote earlier about my dear father who also smoked for a long time, and the ailments that caused his death at a young age of 67 were caused by smoking.

We hear about people from all walks of life, including heads of state, who died as a result of smoking, so I will never get tired of saying the two words - "STOP SMOKING". This message goes to my children, relatives, friends and fellow humans, as they all must be convinced that smoking cigarettes is not for us people and not for the environment around us.

I mentioned the environment because of what we keep hearing about something called passive smoking. If you have a newborn or a baby at home and you smoke around them - which amounts to a crime in my view - you will bring up a smoker, and when they reach a certain age, even when still considered children, do not be surprised if you catch them with a burning cancer stick between their tender fingers! Pharmaceutical companies, major and otherwise, have carried out research that confirmed that the chemicals produced by burning tobacco are very harmful, but the addictive nicotine is less harmful, so they worked on producing all types of nicotine replacements including patches, chewing gum, inhalers and so on, but that was not enough to keep the cigarette away!

More recently, a major pharmaceutical manufacturer produced a drug in tablet form with the claim that it helps to quit smoking. To be honest I do not have enough information about how successful this therapy is, but it augments the claim that smoking is bad for our health.

This fact finally rang a very loud bell at tobacco companies, and for the first time I heard officials who say it straightforwardly that smoking is harmful. Already some of these companies have begun the process of moving away from tobacco wrapped in paper to more advanced technological devices that heat tobacco leaves, creating a nicotine vapor that is relatively free from the other chemicals that are produced at a much higher temperatures.

So take it from the manufacturers themselves - smoking is harmful, along with the admission that the new methods and devices are not risk free at all. So please heed the warnings and take the advice of those involved in the medical community, tobacco producers and smokers themselves: Smoking is hazardous to your health and survival - quit it! May God bless you all!

## Kuwait calls on NAM states to cooperate for tackling crises

## Foreign Minister renews call for peaceful resolution to regional crises

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait has appealed to Non-Aligned Movement member states to cooperate for resolving international and regional crises latest of which is the coronavirus pandemic that has afflicted countries in all corners of the globe. Such challenges and crises should "prompt us to bolster cooperation and international partnership through respect for the international law and conventions," said Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, addressing a virtual NAM ministerial meeting, held yesterday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 75th session.

The minister was alluding to the conflicts and troubles in several regional countries in addition to the latest crisis, the novel coronavirus, that added to the humanity's piles of troubles and afflictions. "Our meeting today constitutes an opportunity for contributing to efforts to find best means that ensure establishing a secure and peaceful world," Sheikh Ahmad stated during the online meeting. "The world in its current status is teeming with conflicts and crises: amid a bitter situation full of violations

and a peril threatening international security and peace, which is the spread and increase of activities by terrorist groups despite global efforts to nip this scourge in the bud."

Addressing the Azeri counterpart whose country is chair of NAM's session, the Kuwaiti foreign



COVID-19 added to humanity's woes



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah participates in the virtual NAM ministerial meeting. — KUNA

minister turned to conditions in the Arab region, where fiery conflicts have drained peoples' resources. Noting stalemate affecting the Palestinian cause, he renewed Kuwait's support for the Palestinians' quest to attain their legitimate

rights. He also called for resolving peacefully the crises in Syria, Yemen and Libya according to relevant UN resolutions. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah receives a copy of credentials of the new French Ambassador Anne-Claire Legendre. — KUNA photos



Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets the new French Ambassador Anne-Claire Legendre. — KUNA photos

## Foreign Minister receives new French Ambassador's credentials

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah received yes-

terday Anne-Claire Legendre who presented a copy of her credentials as France's new Ambassador to Kuwait. Sheikh Dr Ahmad

wished Legendre best of luck in her new tenure and for relations between the two countries to progress further, a foreign ministry statement said. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran and Assistant foreign Minister for the Minister's office Saleh Al-Loughani attended the meeting. — KUNA

## Late Amir eulogized in Mass at Catholic Church

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A special funeral Mass for the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was recently held at the Holy Family Cathedral in Kuwait City, led by Patriarch Peter Ghareeb. The Mass was held in the presence of members of the Lebanese Business Council in Kuwait and a number of Arabic congregations.

"The morning when I heard about the death of HH the Amir was not an ordinary day for me - I immediately recalled the face of humanity in the

body of HH the Amir. I remember the smile on his face - a man of well-balanced political wisdom. He was known as the wise man of the Gulf and the Arab world," Ghareeb said. "Humanity lost its bearer and leader," he added.

Ghareeb pointed out that Arabs lost a leader who championed moderation and love. "The late Amir spent his life bringing Arabs together and welcomed both strangers and relatives as a symbol of generosity and giving." He said the late Amir will be remembered as someone who loved his country very much and took care of his citizens to the fullest.

"The world cried when he finally bowed out, but his life will be celebrated by his children who loved him dearly," Ghareeb said. He prayed for the comfort of the late Amir's soul and thanked him for harboring many peoples for many years, and giving without limit.



KUWAIT: People attend a special funeral Mass for the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Holy Family Cathedral in Kuwait City.



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The mystery of India's low coronavirus death rate

## #MeToo case: Egypt court starts sex crimes trial

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FIZULI, Azerbaijan: A man stands by what is said is the remains of a Tochka U missile in a field yesterday. — AFP

# Under-fire Azerbaijanis call for war

## Bitter dispute between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis

**TERTER:** Sakhb Khashimov was in no mood to talk about peace as he picked through the wreckage of his shelled-out apartment on the Azerbaijani side of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ethnic Armenian separatists had shelled the frontline town of Terter-home to around 1,000 families displaced by decades of fighting-for days before Saturday's ceasefire was announced. Khashimov and dozens of others used the lull to return and pack up what remained of their belongings before finding yet another place to call home.

The last thing the 40-year-old wanted was for this war to end just as Azerbaijani forces claim to be making meaningful gains. "This operation is our best chance," Khashimov told AFP about an hour after the pause in two weeks of fighting came into force. "If they don't give us back our land during the ceasefire-with a clear timeline for when they do, like

our president says-then continuing this operation is our best chance. We will not have another."

### Disbelief

The latest escalation in the bitter dispute between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis over a prized patch of the Caucasus mountains is known to have killed more than 450 people. Locals said it claimed the lives of just two brothers in Terter. But the skeletal remains of the town's rows of five-floor buildings built for those displaced by the dispute show signs of real warfare that required people to shelter for days in basements. Most houses stood with gaping holes instead of apartment windows or had balconies sheared off by artillery and rocket grenade fire.

Khatire Zhalilova said she was watching the latest news from the safety of a more distant village when

she saw a journalist report from the ravaged remains of her very own home. "I told myself, this could not be our house. But, unfortunately, it is," she said while walking around in disbelief in her destroyed kitchen. Piles of wooden debris and concrete rubble intermixed with toys and slippers are strewn across the simple apartment's floor. "I think the operation should go on. We want our land back."

### 'Give our land back'

Others simply looked shocked. The first thing Parvane Khatamova did after climbing past the debris around the front door of her apartment was rush to her potted plants on the windowsill. She silently picked out the sharp pieces of glass and carefully watered them. "I came and saw that all the flowers were destroyed and I felt I needed to help them," the mother-of-three said. "I don't want them

to die, that is why I am watering them," she quietly repeated. "Maybe we will come back here again. Or maybe we will one day go back to our homeland," she said in reference to the hills of Nagorno-Karabakh looming on the horizon.

Terter is mostly inhabited by people who have ancestral roots in the disputed region but have spent most of their lives fleeing the fighting from one town to another. "What can you do? God has written our peoples' destiny this way," Nazhiba Sadzhigova said with a sigh as she inspected the remains of her building. "This is the way our story was written," she said. "This is the second time I have become a refugee. But still I say: Long live our army. I trust our army. Long live our soldiers." Local farmer Elnur agreed. "If they agree to give our land back, I agree to a ceasefire. And if they do not, I don't. We want our land back," he said. — AFP

## Residents inspect destroyed homes



STEPANAKERT: Ashot Aghajanian, 54, walks in the yard of his house destroyed by shelling yesterday. — AFP

**STEPANAKERT:** Guennadi Avanesian had a big two-storey house at 28 Saroyan Street, with a wooden terrace and vines laden with dark grapes. But his comfortable middle-class home in a well-off street in the capital of war-hit Nagorno-Karabakh region has been smashed to pieces during the conflict between neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia.

"I spent two years renovating this house with my own hands, and (Azerbaijani president) Aliyev destroyed it in two seconds with his bombs," Avanesian rages to anyone who will listen from behind his moustache. With a blue hat on his head, the 70-something clambers onto the huge heap of debris that is all that remains after the gutted house collapsed in on itself.

With a shovel, he searches through the twisted sheet metal, bits and pieces of the

home's structure and traces of his former life. Azerbaijani forces bombarded the area a week ago, and it is the first time Avanesian has returned. He is looking to scrape together whatever can be salvaged during a lull in the fighting after a ceasefire came into force on Saturday at noon. "I was here when the rocket came down. I heard a whistle and I rushed into the cellar. I was two seconds away from being killed," he recalls.

His son-in-law, also in the house that day, got away with an injury-a minor miracle given the total destruction visited on the house. "It's a Smerch rocket that did this," Avanesian says, referring to the Soviet-era "Tornado" projectiles that have been falling throughout Karabakh's largest city during the past week of fighting over the ethnic Armenian breakaway territory. — AFP

## Tajikistan vote seen as easy win for strongman

**DUSHANBE, Tajikistan:** Voting was held in Tajikistan yesterday in a presidential election expected to pave the way for incumbent Emomali Rakhmon to become the longest-ruling strongman in the former Soviet space. Few are anticipating any hiccups for Rakhmon as he closes in on three decades in power and looks to overtake Kazakhstan's recently retired Nursultan Nazarbayev in the Central Asian longevity stakes.

The Central Electoral Commission said the vote had passed the turnout threshold required for validation, with more than 70 percent of the nearly five million strong electorate casting votes. Statements of turnouts are a feature of elections in this part of the world however, and are impossible to verify. Authoritarian Rakhmon faces four other candidates, all viewed as token opponents, in his bid for a fresh seven-year term. Polling stations opened at 6:00 am local time (0100 GMT) and closed at 8:00 pm (1500 GMT), with results expected today.

Voters in the capital Dushanbe interviewed by AFP overwhelmingly stated their intention to cast their ballot for Rakhmon - and struggled to name the other candidates. Zarina Mamadnazarova, a 25-year-old woman who is currently unemployed, said she would vote for Rakhmon "because he is the best president, our national leader". Another woman, 39, who preferred not to give her name, said Rakhmon had her vote "because the other candidates are not as strong".

### 'Peace is the main thing'

While disputed votes in neighboring

Kyrgyzstan and fellow former Soviet republic Belarus have triggered massive upheaval, similar developments appear unlikely in Tajikistan. Rakhmon is portrayed by state media as bringing stability to the country following a civil war during the 1990s that pitted government forces against a diverse opposition including Islamist fighters. Constitutional changes passed in 2016 allowed the "Founder Of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation", as Rakhmon is officially known, to run for office an unlimited number of times.

Rights groups have flagged an intensifying crackdown on opposition, media and civil society since the changes took effect. Safar Mallayev, 66, was voting for Rakhmon because of his "enormous experience". "Peace is the main thing. If we have peace it means everything will be alright," Mallayev said. Few would have guessed that former collective farm boss Rakhmon would stay the course when he was elevated in 1992 to the chairmanship of the national assembly - a position equivalent to head of state - as fighting between pro-government forces and the United Tajik Opposition raged.

### 'Venerer of campaign'

He was elected president in 1994 after the position was re-established, and re-elected in 1999, 2006 and 2013. None of the votes were endorsed by Western electoral observers. The candidates he faces exist "to give a veneer of campaign to what is otherwise a non-event," said John Heathershaw, professor of international relations at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. Heathershaw cited the example of Abdulhalim Ghafforov, now challenging Rakhmon for a third time.

"In 2006, he gained just over two percent, in 2013, just over one percent, so if he continues on that trajectory he will get very few votes this time," said Heathershaw. A party that many view as the only real opposition



DUSHANBE, Tajikistan: Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon casts his ballot at a polling station during presidential elections yesterday amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

force in the country - the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan - announced that it would boycott the vote not long after a date for the ballot was set. "We see that all power structures, all levers (of government) work for the benefit of one person," the party's deputy chairman Shokirjon Hakimov told AFP.

Hakimov added that politics in the country under Rakhmon's rule has been defined by "nepotism, regionalism and corruption". This time round, some observers had expected Rakhmon, 68, to copy 80-year-old Nazarbayev's decision to step down from the top job and install a loyalist in his place. In Tajikistan, any future succession is likely to be hereditary, analysts believe. Earlier this year, Rakhmon's son Rustam Emomali was elected chairman of parliament's upper house, which positions him constitutionally as second-in-line to the presidency. — AFP

## International

## Delta leaves Louisianans reeling and out of power

## Hurricane Delta batters region; clean-up begins

**LAKE CHARLES:** Weary residents of coastal Louisiana began cleaning up yesterday from wind and water damage inflicted by Hurricane Delta to their already storm-battered region, even as it weakened and moved northeast. Delta made landfall near the town of Creole in Cameron Parish early Friday evening as a Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, packing sustained winds of 100 miles per hour. Though not as powerful as August's Hurricane Laura, a Category 4 storm that tore homes and businesses apart, Delta toppled trees and power poles, leaving hundreds of thousands of Gulf Coast residents without power.

The storm weakened to a tropical depression as it moved inland to western Mississippi, according to the National Hurricane Center, but still carried heavy rains. Sylvia Pastrano, 65, said the roof of her Lake Charles, Louisiana home leaked from Delta's rains after being initially damaged by Laura. She positioned three trash cans over her bed to catch the water. "We were debating whether to leave or not but my husband has got orthopedic issues and I do too and we're just too exhausted to even get up and evacuate," Pastrano said. "Last night it was terrifying, the whistling and whistling."

Delta brought widespread flooding of streets and riverbanks, mostly in southwestern Louisiana, tracking the path of destruction left by Laura but causing damage over a larger swath of the Gulf Coast. "Even if it wasn't quite as powerful as Hurricane Laura, it

was much bigger," Governor John Bel Edwards told a briefing in Baton Rouge. Some 3,000 National Guard troops had been called up to distribute relief supplies, clear roads, maintain security and conduct search and rescue operations, the governor said.

**600,000 without power**

While no deaths have so far been linked to Delta, Edwards said storm-related fatalities often occur in accidents such as falls, during clean-up operations, or from carbon monoxide poisoning from residents using home generators. About 600,000 of the state's electric customers, 25% of the total, were without power at midday, Edwards said. But restoration was progressing faster than it did after Laura because Delta's winds were less damaging to the infrastructure, he said. Laura's winds damaged tens of thousands of homes, leaving roofs across the region dotted with blue tarps. More than 6,000 people were still living temporarily in hotels when Delta struck.

Delta spared many of the rooftop tarps that were still up, but deluged some streets and littered others with downed trees and branches. "Laura was much worse," said Lake Charles resident Matthew Williams, 49. "This was more rain than wind." Williams, who had just gotten his power back about a week and a half ago after the outage left by Laura, said he rode out the storm at his home. With the sun shining brightly, Frederick Hannie, 35, surveyed the water damage to his gym, CrossFit Lake Charles, which had already



## Delta topples trees and power poles



**CREOLE, Louisiana:** An aerial view shows floodwaters from Hurricane Delta surrounding structures destroyed by Hurricane Laura on Saturday. —AFP

sustained wind and roof damage from Laura.

Between two hurricanes and the coronavirus pandemic, Hannie said, "it definitely takes a little financial gymnastics" to run a business this year. As Delta made its way over the Gulf of Mexico on Friday, energy companies cut back US oil production by about 92%, or 1.7 million barrels per day -

the most since 2005's Hurricane Katrina. While the storm is expected to continue weakening, it is forecast to bring rain through Tennessee, Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley through early next week. Delta was the tenth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season to make US landfall this year, eclipsing a record dating to 1916. —Reuters

## Turkish Cypriots vote for new leader amid east Med tensions

**NICOSIA:** The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was voting yesterday for a new leader amid heightened tensions on the divided island and in the wider eastern Mediterranean. The presidential election in the breakaway region pits the incumbent Mustafa Akinci, who supports the reunification of Cyprus, against nationalist Ersin Tatar, who is backed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The vote in the TRNC, which is recognized only by Ankara, comes three days after Turkish troops angered the Republic of Cyprus, an EU member, by reopening access to the seaside ghost town of Varosha for the first time in decades.

That move sparked protests in the majority Greek-speaking Republic of Cyprus, which exercises its authority over the island's southern two thirds, separated from the north by a UN-patrolled buffer zone. Almost 200,000 of the about 300,000 residents are registered to vote in the TRNC, which was established after the northern third of the island was occupied in 1974 by Turkey in reaction to a coup to annex Cyprus to Greece.

The election comes amid tensions in the eastern

Mediterranean over the planned exploitation of hydrocarbons between Turkey on the one hand, and Greece as well as its close ally Cyprus on the other. Erdogan announced on Tuesday, together with Tatar, the partial reopening of Varosha, a beachside resort that drew Hollywood stars and other celebrities in the 1970s before it was abandoned by its Greek-Cypriot inhabitants during the Turkish invasion.

The move to allow visitors back into the abandoned and fenced-off area was condemned by Akinci and other candidates, who saw it as Turkish interference in the election. It was also heavily criticized by the Republic of Cyprus, the European Union and the United Nations, whose peacekeepers monitor the 180-kilometre buffer zone between the two parts of the island. Kemal Baykalli, founder of the non-government group Unite Cyprus Now, told AFP that "the main issue of this election is how we will define our relationship with Turkey".

**'Pressure from Turkey'**

Eleven candidates are in the running, and the favorite is Akinci, 72, a Social Democrat who favours loosening ties with Ankara, which has earned him the hostility of Erdogan. The negotiations aimed at reunification stalled during Akinci's term of office, notably on the question of the withdrawal of tens of thousands of Turkish soldiers stationed in the TRNC. Turkey supports the nationalist Tatar, 60, currently "prime minister" of the breakaway north. "We're actually choosing the president

to the nine-member court, and he has done it in a single four-year term rather than Reagan's eight years. The Senate's Republican leaders rejected Democratic pleas to delay the hearing after two Republican Judiciary Committee members and Trump himself tested positive for the coronavirus in the days following his Sept. 26 White House ceremony announcing Barrett, 48, as his nominee.

Even after testing positive, Trump took to Twitter to urge Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell "not to delay, but to instead focus full time on approving" Barrett, a favorite of religious conservatives who make up a key voting bloc for him. "We're going to have all hands on deck for the Supreme Court nominee. It's an extremely important thing for the country, and we intend to process the nomination and put her on the Supreme Court," McConnell said at a news conference on Friday.

Barrett is scheduled to deliver her opening statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday, with senators also making opening remarks. Barrett is scheduled to face questions from senators on Tuesday and Wednesday, starting with Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, for what promises to be grueling all-day sessions. The hearing is due to conclude on Thursday with outside witnesses testifying about her qualifications.

With Republicans holding a 53-47 Senate majority, Barrett's confirmation seems assured. Democrats

"sexually assaulting three girls under the age of 18 and threatening them along with a fourth girl with disclosing matters related to their honor".

Zaki, who comes from a wealthy family, could face a life sentence or death sentence if the prosecution proved rape with evidence. The case has attracted widespread attention from media, religious figures and women's groups in a country where rights defenders say sexual harassment or abuse often goes unpunished. A 2017 Thomson Reuters Foundation poll found Cairo to be the most dangerous megacity for women and 99% of women in Egypt interviewed by the United Nations in 2013 said they had experienced sexual harassment.

Allegations against Zaki were posted in previous years on a private Facebook group run by AUC students but authorities reacted this year after the accusations surfaced on an Instagram account named @assaultpolice. After Zaki's arrest, hundreds



**NICOSIA:** A Turkish-Cypriot woman casts her ballot at a voting station during presidential elections yesterday. —AFP

who will be negotiating with the Greek Cypriots about the future of Cyprus, so I think that it is important," said one voter, Esat Tulek, a 73-year-old retired public servant.

Voting at 738 polling stations was to close at 6:00 pm, with results due to be released in the evening. If no candidate wins at least 50 percent of the vote, the two leading candidates will face off in a second round on October 18. The Varosha announcement led to the withdrawal of the party of one candidate, Kudret Ozersay, from the ruling coalition and its de facto collapse even though it continues to run day-to-day affairs. —AFP



**WASHINGTON:** Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes sit at the table on Oct 9, 2020 where Supreme Court Justice nominee Amy Coney Barrett will testify during her confirmation hearings next week in the Hart Senate Office Building. —AFP

are still fuming that McConnell is hurrying to confirm Barrett as the election approaches after refusing to let the Senate even consider Democratic President Barack Obama's nominee to fill a 2016 Supreme Court vacancy because it was an election year. Graham has said his committee will likely vote on the nomination on Oct. 22, setting up a vote on the Senate floor by the end of the month. —Reuters

of women started to speak up on social media about abuse sparking at #MeToo Movement, exposing several men and also revealing a high-profile rape case that occurred in a Cairo hotel in 2014. In August, the public prosecution arrested two suspects in that case and said seven others had fled the country and it was pursuing them.

On Sept 25, the public prosecution said Lebanon had handed over three men accused in the case while two others had fled. Responding to the growing public debate over women's safety, parliament passed a law in August giving women the automatic right to anonymity in a bid to encourage more to report sexual assaults. "Zaki's case has been shocking as it put into debate a deeply-rooted tradition of accusing the victim not the harasser and justifying his actions," said lawyer Reda Eldanbouki, executive director of the Women's Center for Guidance and Legal Awareness. —Reuters

## It's 'all hands on deck' in Senate on Trump's court nominee

**WASHINGTON:** Senate Republicans turn in earnest this week toward making good on President Donald Trump's top objective in Congress ahead of the Nov 3 election - placing his nominee Amy Coney Barrett on the US Supreme Court and moving it even further to the right over furious Democratic objections. A four-day Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing for the conservative appellate court judge is set to begin on Monday, a key step before a final full Senate vote by the end of October on her nomination for a lifetime job on the court. Barrett's confirmation to replace the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg would create a 6-3 conservative majority on the court that could lead to rulings rolling back abortion rights, expanding religious and gun rights and upholding Republican-backed voting restrictions, among other issues.

Trump's ability to reshape the Supreme Court will be one of the enduring achievements of his presidency. He is the first president since Ronald Reagan in the 1980s to get to make three additions

## Egypt court starts sex crimes trial in #MeToo case

**CAIRO:** A former Cairo university student appeared in court on Saturday charged with blackmail and indecent assault of at least three women in a closely-watched case prompted by social media that opened up a rare public debate on sex crimes. Ahmed Bassam Zaki, aged in his early 20s and a former student at the American University in Cairo, attended a closed session with the trial adjourned to Nov. 7, a lawyer from the defence team, Ahmed Ragheb said. In September, the public prosecutor referred Zaki to the criminal court on charges of

## News in brief

## Rape, murder spark outrage

**PESHAWAR:** Police in northwest Pakistan have made a string of arrests as they search for the killer of a two-year-old girl whose rape and murder have drawn comparisons to an infamous 2018 killing that sparked riots. The girl, Zainab, disappeared Tuesday while playing outside her village home in Charsadda district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Her body was discovered a day later, prompting a large-scale manhunt that by Saturday had led to the arrests of at least 17 men, district police chief Muhammad Shoab told AFP. Additionally, police took DNA samples from about 400 people, he said. "Initial medical reports have confirmed the minor girl was raped before murder," Shoab said. The incident was reminiscent of an early 2018 case in which a six-year-old girl - also called Zainab - was raped and murdered in the eastern city of Kasur, in Punjab province. —AFP

## Syria fires under control

**DAMASCUS:** Fires that ravaged parts of Syria and Lebanon in recent days have been brought under control, authorities in the two countries said yesterday. In Syria, blazes fuelled by high temperatures broke out Friday in the provinces of Homs, Tartus and Latakia, where at least three people died, according to the health ministry. Several families had to flee residential areas near the fires, according to media reports. "Civil defense teams, supported by army units and the population, are now in control of all the fires in the province" of Latakia, governor Ibrahim Khader al-Salem said, quoted by state news agency SANA. Firefighters were still on the scene trying "to cool the burned sites," he added. SANA said all fires in Tartus had also been brought under control, and crews had managed to completely extinguish a fire in the Korb Ali forest in the western suburbs of Homs. —AFP

## Lithuania votes amid virus

**VILNIUS:** Lithuanians voted yesterday in the first round of a general election overshadowed by a record spike in coronavirus cases, with the ruling centre-left coalition defending its handling of the pandemic in a tight race with opposition conservatives. The rivals are also focused on bridging the economic and educational gulf between rural and urban residents in the Baltic euro-zone state of 2.8 million people. All major parties share a pro-EU and NATO platform, and back Vilnius's drive to rally support within the EU for neighboring Belarus's democratic opposition after a disputed presidential election. Opinion polls show a tight race, with Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis' centre-left Farmers and Greens Union and the conservative Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats both garnering around 15 percent. —AFP

## Hour-long fireworks attack

**PARIS:** Around 40 people staged an hour-long fireworks attack against a police station outside Paris yesterday, authorities said, the latest in a string of incidents targeting security forces in recent months. The station's entrance and several police vehicles were damaged but nobody was injured during the raid launched just before midnight in Champigny-sur-Marne, around 12 kilometers east of the capital. The city's mayor, Laurent Jeanne, told BFM television the police might have been targeted in retaliation for an "incident" involving a scooter driver who was stopped by officers a few days ago, without providing details. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin tweeted that "these little dealers don't scare anyone, and will not discourage our anti-drug work," though police officials did not identify the attackers, and no arrests were made. —AFP

International

# N Korean leader speaks softly, shows off new military might

## Pyongyang showcases cutting-edge military power

SEOUL: North Korea's unprecedented nighttime military parade on Saturday showcased an unusually broad array of new weapons, from a show-stopping "monster" ballistic missile to previously unseen battle tanks. The hardware, likely still in varying stages of development, offered leader Kim Jong Un a chance to show the world his cutting-edge military power while adding practical capabilities to the North Korea's already formidable nuclear and conventional forces, experts said. Kim is walking a fine line, seeking to increase pressure on the United States to ease sanctions while not destroying rapport with US President Donald Trump or Pyongyang's partners in China.

"Kim Jong Un's speech was not threatening to the United States, instead labeling North Korea's nuclear forces as self-defensive," said Bruce Klingner, a retired CIA North Korea analyst now at the Heritage Foundation. "The clear message was that, counter to US claims, the North Korean nuclear threat has not been solved." Video from the parade suggested a huge intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) potentially more lethal either because of multiple warheads or a bigger payload, larger missile carriers, a next-generation submarine-launched missile, and advances in conventional weaponry, military analysts said.

### Multiple warheads?

The star of Saturday's show was a massive, previously unseen ICBM carried on an equally huge "transporter-erector-launcher" (TEL) vehicle with 11 axles. Estimated to be 25 to 26 meters (82 to 85 feet) long and 2.5 to 2.9 meters (8 to 9.5 feet) in diameter, the unidentified missile would be the largest road-mobile ICBM in the world, military analysts said.

Given that the Hwasong-15, the largest missile ever test-flown by North Korea, can already target anywhere in the United States, the most likely practical use for the new ICBM would be the ability to carry multiple warheads, said Melissa Hanham, deputy director of the Open Nuclear Network. It is much cheaper for North Korea to add warheads than for the

United States to add interceptors, said Jeffrey Lewis, a missile researcher at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS).

"If each new North Korean ICBM can carry 3-4 warheads, we would need about 12-16 interceptors for each missile," he said on Twitter. "The last time the U.S. bought 14 interceptors, it cost \$1 billion." Other analysts said the missile could simply be designed to carry a single, larger warhead. "A bigger warhead doesn't necessarily mean multiple warheads, a technology I believe North Korea has not secured yet," said Kim Dong-yup, a former South Korea Navy officer who is now a professor at Kyungnam University's Far East Institute in Seoul.

### Missile carriers

Analysts said it was also notable that North Korea appeared to have built the huge new TELs to carry the new missiles. "They have a very limited supply of long TELs they acquired from China," said another CNS researcher, Dave Schmerler, adding that the lack of vehicles has limited the number of ICBMs that could be deployed. "So the longer TELs we saw were indignously produced." But the massive size of the new missile and its carrier also has drawbacks, said Markus Schiller, a missile expert based in Europe. "Only special roads and bridges could support this in fuelled condition," he said. "No sane person would drive this ticking bomb through the North Korean countryside." It would likely take as much as a half a day to fuel such a large missile, making it difficult to quickly deploy in a war, meaning the missile's main purpose is likely a political warning, Schiller said.

### Submarine missile

North Korea also unveiled what appeared to be a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), labelled the Pukguksong-4. "If the new SLBM is intended to be deployed, it may be intended for the new conventionally powered ballistic missile submarine that North Korea hinted at building in July 2019,"



PYONGYANG: This picture taken on Saturday shows a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea in Kim Il Sung square. — AFP

analysts at 38 North, a US-based think tank, said in a report. At least some parts of the missile's motor case appeared to be filament-wound, which would reduce the missile's structure weight and allow greater range and payload capability, the report said.

### Conventional weapons

The parade featured what appeared to be new or updated weapons for North Korea's conventional military, one of the largest in the world. The North displayed rows upon rows of multiple launch rocket

systems and short-range ballistic missiles that were heavily tested over the past year. "My biggest concern was the solid-fuel, short-range tactical missiles that North Korea had focused on developing over the past year or so," said Chun Yung-woo, a former South Korean nuclear negotiator. The parade also displayed new mobile air-defense radar vehicles and what appeared to be an entirely new tank with anti-tank missiles and smoke grenade launchers more closely integrated into the design than previous imported models. — Reuters

## Who are Al-Shabab militants terrorizing north Mozambique?

JOHANNESBURG: A violent rebellion battering northern Mozambique entered its fourth year this month, having so far claimed more than 2,000 lives and displaced at least 310,000 civilians. It is waged by a shadowy group known locally as Al-Shabab, which a year ago pledged allegiance to the so-called Islamic State, but its leadership remains largely unclear and its motives were only recently revealed. Drawing from an array of sources including security, military, intelligence experts and specialists reports, AFP has pieced together some key elements on what is known so far about the group.

### Roots of rebellion

Around 2007, Islamic religious leaders said they started noticing a "strange movement" among some youths who started practising a "different" type of Islam, drinking alcohol and entering mosques dressed in shorts and shoe. The disaffected young men formed Ansaru-Sunna, a sub-unit of the Islamic Council in the northernmost Cabo Delgado province and built new mosques while adopting a harsher form of Islam, according to Eric Morier-Genoud, lecturer at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland. Local government was aware of their existence but underestimated their capability, said locals. "We all knew they were dangerous, but we never thought they were capable of waging a war," said a local imam who was then based in Mocimboa da Praia-which later became the epicentre of the insurgency.

### Leadership, affiliation

Initially, after October 5, 2017, when they staged their first attack, members hid their identities, but in March, the group unmasked its fighters in videos as it openly declared its goal of turning the gas-rich region into a caliphate. Unlike jihadist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, which has a central leader, Mozambique's Al-Shabab appears to have no definitive head. But Mozambique's Centro de Jornalismo Investigativo (CJI) suggests two possible leaders. One is Abdala Likonga, believed to have received religious education and training in insurgency operations in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2018 however, the police named six men as the group's leaders, excluding Likonga. The so-called Islamic State has claimed responsibility for about 40 attacks since June last year when they opened the central Africa franchise, according to International Crisis Group's consultant Piers Pigou. "They are obviously affiliated with ISIS, but seem to receive little to no support other than propaganda-based benefits from the affiliation," said South Africa-based John Stupart, director of the African Defence Review.

### Recruitment, strength

While a number of youths get press-ganged into the ranks, there have been some, already inclined towards sectarianism, who joined willingly. Others are lured on false promises of scholarships to further Islamic studies abroad-only to end up in training camps in Cabo Delgado's dense forests. "At first it was by enticement, with promises of money or employment. But now people are kidnapped or abducted, which has made the group grow quickly," said Enio Chingotwane, security studies expert at Joaquim Chissano University in Maputo. Military intelligence sources on the ground estimate the group's strength at around 4,500, of whom 2,000 are believed to be armed. Foreigners are involved, including some Tanzanians, but their role remains hazy. "There is clearly a foreign presence," said Pigou.—AFP



Investigators work by the wreckage of an overturned bus involved in a deadly collision with a train next to Khlong Kwaeng Klan railway station in Chachoengsao province yesterday. — AFP

## 20 killed on temple trip in Thailand as bus, train collide

BANGKOK: A bus heading to a Buddhist temple collided with a train in central Thailand yesterday, killing at least 20 people dead and injuring 30, authorities said. The accident took place at 8:05 am near the Khlong Kwaeng Klan railway station 63 km east of Bangkok, said Maitree Tritilanon, governor of Chachoengsao province, where the crash occurred. A tour bus carrying some 60 factory workers on their way to a Buddhist ceremony at a temple was crossing a railway track when it was hit by a freight train headed to the capital from the east of the country.

The bus was flipped on its side its side and the top ripped off, with debris and metal scattered around the accident area, images from rescue workers showed. The train remained on the rails.

## Armenians in Argentina decry Karabakh conflict

BUENOS AIRES: Hundreds of people from Argentina's Armenian community demonstrated Saturday in Buenos Aires, calling for an end to fighting in the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The protesters, some wrapped in the red, blue and orange flags of Armenia and the contested enclave, marched from the Azerbaijan embassy to the Turkish embassy, chanting "No to terrorism" and "Peace in Armenia and Artsakh," using the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh.

The disputed territory is an ethnic Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, home to about 150,000 people, which broke from Azerbaijan's control in a war in the 1990s that killed about 30,000 people. Recent fighting, since September 27, has been the heaviest in two decades, with more than 450 people reported dead, thousands forced to flee their homes and fears of escalation into a devastating all-out conflict.

Diana Dergarabetian, a second-generation Argentinean-Armenian, lament-

ed shelling in the region. "The losses are deplorable on both sides," she told AFP. "This struggle is not against the people of Azerbaijan, the Armenian people are defending their right to self-determination." "It's very sad, they are killing their brothers," said Gabriela Kamakian, a 35-year-old lawyer. "Artsakh... will always belong to the Armenians, we have lived in this region for more than 3,000 years," she said.

The march attracted a mostly young crowd, with demonstrators playing traditional Armenian music and performing folk dances. They gathered in front of the embassy of Turkey, which has been accused of military support for Azerbaijan in the conflict. Ankara denies the charge. Nagorno-Karabakh's separatist government is strongly backed by Armenia, which like Azerbaijan gained independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. Argentina's Armenian community is estimated at 100,000 people, most of whom are third- or fourth-generation. —AFP

## The mystery of India's low COVID death rate

NEW DELHI: India, with its population of 1.3 billion people, has the world's second-highest number of coronavirus cases, now more than seven million, but far fewer reported deaths than other badly-hit countries. The figures have baffled experts, with explanations ranging from the young population to immunity given by other endemic viral diseases and under-reporting. Here are some of the questions and theories raised by India's pandemic statistics:

### What are the figures?

India said on Sunday there had been 108,334 fatalities from COVID-19 since the first death was reported in mid-March, with 60,77,977 recoveries. The world's second-most populous nation has the lowest number of deaths per 100 confirmed cases - the observed case-fatality ratio - among the top 20 worst-affected nations at 1.5 percent, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally. In comparison, the United States, the most infected country, has a death rate of 2.8 percent. India's number of deaths per 100,000 population is 7.73, compared with 64.74 in the United States.

### Younger population

Older people suffering from conditions such as diabetes and heart disease

have become a particular target of the pandemic but India has a young population with a median age of 28.4, according to the UN World Population Prospects report. In comparison, France - which has reported almost 700,000 cases and more than 32,000 deaths for a death rate of 4.7 percent - has a median age of 42.3.

### Late start, strict lockdown

The Indian government says the first infection was detected on Jan 30, with numbers passing 100 in mid-March. By that time, the epidemic was already raging across Europe. Italy had reported more than 24,000 infections and almost 2,000 deaths, while France recorded nearly 5,500 cases and around 150 deaths. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown from March 25 that severely limited movement. That gave India time to prepare for the pandemic, while experts say the strict lockdown may have helped doctors learn from the experiences of other countries. "Many of the treatment protocols were much better stabilized (by that time), whether it was oxygen use or ICU use," Anand Krishnan, a community medicine professor at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi said.—AFP

## Employment Opportunity

### A Major Local Company in Kuwait Announces

#### The need to fill the following positions:

- Electrical Technician
- Generator Technician
- AC Technician
- Electronic Technician
- Equipment Technician
- Mason
- General Fitter

With minimum 5 years' experience in the same field  
A valid driving License  
Age doesn't exceed 50

- Car wash worker
- Labor

With minimum 5 years' experience in the same field  
Age limit between (30-40)

#### Note:

- 1) Transferable work permit
- 2) Preference will be given to Oil & Gas Experience person
- 3) Project work permit no need to apply

Candidates meeting the above conditions and requirements should send their CV's to

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# Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020

## Zain signs exclusive partnership with e-commerce company Brandatt.com

### To offer exclusive promotions to customers and reward them with free Internet GBs

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the signing of an exclusive partnership agreement with Brandatt.com, an e-commerce company that specializes in beauty products, accessories, and perfumes. Through this partnership, Zain offers its prepaid and postpaid customers with a range of special and exclusive offers, as well as reward them with free Internet GBs when they purchase any of the offers on brandatt.kw.zain.com.

Zain's exclusive collaboration with Brandatt.com, a Kuwait-based company, comes under the umbrella of its strategy that closely focuses on enriching its digital partnerships ecosystem. The company aims at expanding the portfolio of innovative services and solutions it offers, as well as introduce the best and most exclusive offerings and rewards to meet the needs and aspirations of its customer base, the largest in the Kuwaiti market.

Zain prepaid and postpaid customers can now enjoy a range of special and exclusive offers and discounts when visiting the dedicated link for Zain customers (brandatt.kw.zain.com). In addition, cus-

tomers will receive great rewards when claiming any of the included offers, where they will receive 2 GBs of free Internet when spending KD 25, and 5 GBs of FREE Internet when spending KD 50. Noting that the free GBs are valid for a period of one month after activation.

Brandatt.com explained that signing an exclusive partnership with Zain comes in line with both companies' keenness to collaborate and provide customers with special and exclusive offerings. The agreement introduces an added value to Brandatt customers who shop on the company's website and mobile app, while giving them discounted prices and unique offers on a wide range of perfumes, gifts, beauty products, and luxury watches.

The Brandatt app for smartphones now features a great collection of products from global brands with the best prices and the highest online shopping security standards. The company further explained that the number of the app's users, from both inside and outside Kuwait, is in a continuous and swift increase. By signing such digital partnerships, Zain seeks to meet its customers' needs and aspirations



through the offering of the latest innovative services and technologies. The company is always keen on offering the most advanced tools to enhance its



customers' experience, and offer them an unmatched telecommunications experience on its largest network in Kuwait.

## 5G iPhone expected to star at Apple event

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple is expected tomorrow to unveil a keenly anticipated iPhone 12 line-up starring models tuned to super-fast new 5G telecom networks in an update considered vital to the company's fortunes. A streamed event was cryptically teased with the message "Hi, Speed" in an apparent reference to the faster wireless networks being introduced in many parts of the world.

Analysts expect Apple to introduce a selection of iPhone 12 models in multiple sizes, with some shipping earlier than others due to the toll the pandemic has taken on the company's supply chain.

"We believe iPhone 12 represents the most significant product cycle for Cook & Co. since iPhone 6 in 2014 and will be another defining chapter in the Apple growth story," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said in a note to investors, referring to chief executive Tim Cook.

The time is ripe, analysts said, for Apple to hit the market with an iPhone tailored to the super-fast 5G telecom networks taking root around the world. "Apple absolutely needs 5G right now," said Techspontanal analyst Avi Greengart, "not for the US, but for China, where 5G is driving purchase decisions."

Some Apple rivals have already produced 5G models, and China is far ahead of the US when it comes to the new-generation networks. 5G networks are touted as promising an exponential leap in the amount and speed of wireless data, enabling advances in self-driving vehicles, virtual reality, connected health and more as sensors and servers



In this file photo taken on September 15, 2020, Apple CEO Tim Cook kicks off a special event at Apple Park in Cupertino, California. Apple is expected tomorrow to unveil a keenly anticipated iPhone 12 line-up starring models tuned to super-fast new 5G telecom networks in an update considered vital to the company's fortunes. — AFP

communicate instantly.

"5G is happening in China with or without Apple; in fact, more 5G phones than non-5G phones are selling in China," said analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights & Strategy.

New-generation 5G networks have also taken shape in South Korea and in parts of Europe.

Meanwhile, US telecom firms are looking at a 5G iPhone as a catalyst for consumer interest that will justify the big investments needed for those networks, according to analysts.

"US carriers are waiting for Apple to announce a 5G iPhone to put the pedal to the metal in the US," said Moorhead.

### Powering the 'ecosystem'

Apple also needs a 5G-capable iPhone to maintain its premium image, analysts added. Powerhouses Samsung and Huawei already have



This illustration picture shows the 5G wireless technology logo displayed on a smartphone and a wireless signal sign displayed by a tablet in Paris. — AFP

5G smartphones on the market. Google recently unveiled two new smartphones with 5G wireless capability under its Pixel brand, which showcases the Android mobile system but has limited market share.

"Apple got away with not releasing a 5G device last year because the 5G use-cases and network coverage simply wasn't there," said Futuresource Consulting research analyst Stephen Mears.

"Apple won't want to be perceived as being two generations behind on 5G handsets." The streamed event comes a month after Apple unveiled new service bundles and smartwatch models tied to the iPhone, which remains at the heart of its money-making ecosystem.

Adding 5G iPhones to its line-up should help Apple "drive forward" with that lucrative blend of hardware, software, services and digital content, Mears said. From the health-centric Apple Watch to subscriptions to music and television services, the iPhone is at the center of the user experience. — AFP

## Tunisian jobless rate soars amid economic crisis

**TUNIS:** Tens of thousands of Tunisians have lost their jobs in a worsening economic crisis exacerbated by efforts to stem rising cases of novel coronavirus, a key employers' federation has warned. "The first wave of the epidemic (March to June) resulted in the loss of 165,000 jobs," Bechir Boujday, a member of the board of the employers' federation UTICA, told AFP Friday night.

A decade on from a revolution that toppled the old regime, leaders are struggling to meet the expectations of the people, who complain they have seen little increase in living standards.

Unemployment rose three points to 18 percent, with predictions it could be over 20 percent by the end of the year, according to a joint study by the government and the United Nations. Nearly a third of small to medium sized businesses are "threatened with bankruptcy", Boujday said. Tunisia, which was already battling high unemployment before the start of the pandemic, has seen a record shrinking of its economy. GDP was cut by 21.6 percent in the second quarter of 2020, an "unprecedented contraction of economic activity", the National Institute of Statistics said.

The key tourist industry has all but collapsed, with tourism income plunging 60 percent and swathes of hotels likely to close permanently, officials said last month. Last month parliament approved a new technocratic government tasked with tackling deep social and economic woes in the North African country. — AFP

## UK urged to open up tax havens to public scrutiny

**LONDON:** Recent events in the British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands are seen by some as an indication that Britain is showing signs of improving tax transparency in its overseas territories, although activists say more still needs to be done. Two years ago, an amendment made to UK anti-money laundering legislation required overseas territories including Bermuda, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man to establish public registers to show the real owners of shell companies.

The British Virgin Islands, considered by anti-corruption and anti-money laundering groups as one of the murkiest financial centres in the world, was the last to join, but has finally done so.

"It's huge news," Nienke Palstra, of Global Witness, told AFP. "They had been dragging their feet, even though it's been a legal obligation since 2018." Huge recent data leaks, including the FinCEN files and the Panama Papers, showed that the Caribbean archipelago was a major global hub for money laundering and tax evasion.

### Concerns remain

Alex Cobham, from the global Tax Justice Network (TJN) research and

analysis group, said although BVI's commitment to publish records was welcome, it would have little effect. The islands—home to some 35,000 people in an area about one-fifth the size of London—ranked ninth in its financial secrecy index, and first in its list of corporate tax havens.

He pointed to a statement from its premier Andrew Fahie, who in September spoke only of "working towards" publicly accessible ownership registers. Fahie also voiced concerns that they could be misused by "the prurient and ill-intentioned", and could potentially breach the rights of law-abiding taxpayers.

"This is basically just a clever restatement of the status quo ante," added Cobham.

Palstra, though, believes a legal duty to publish would have a deterrent effect on attempts to move dirty money to the territory. "The problem is how they make the info available," she said, suggesting high fees or delays could slow down or hinder requests for information.

### Lobbying

Meanwhile, the Cayman Islands saw itself removed from the European Union's blacklist of tax havens on



LONDON: Two years ago, an amendment made to UK anti-money laundering legislation required overseas territories including Bermuda, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man to establish public registers to show the real owners of shell companies.

Tuesday. The move was not universally welcomed, however.

Aid and development charity Oxfam said all countries that operate as tax havens should stay on the list, given that they cost countries billions in lost revenue every year. The TJN claimed the removal was the result of lobbying from the Caymans itself. The EU list, which is supposed to combat tax evasion by multinationals and high net worth individuals, was created in December 2017 after the Panama Papers and LuxLeaks revelations. The TJN said the risk of the Caymans was less in its past traffick-

ing of money from the proceeds of crime or corruption but more in the destabilisation of the global financial system.

The islands allow large companies to avoid taxes and regulations of the countries where they operate, and played a significant role in the 2008 financial crisis.

Anti-corruption campaigners Transparency International also said some financial instruments, such as trusts-private investment funds favored in particular by wealthy families for their assets-escape the registers and remain opaque. — AFP

## Nigeria not looking to issue Eurobonds

**ABUJA:** Nigeria will avoid issuing Eurobonds due to their expense, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo said, and will look at alternative ways to raise funds to support the economy in the face of a looming recession. "We are not likely going to explore again the Eurobond market because we are trying to avoid commercial borrowing," Osinbajo told journalists in a group interview late on Friday.

Nigeria's economy has been hobbled as the coronavirus pandemic has triggered a crash in the price of oil, its main export, and an exodus of foreign investors. Nigeria is likely to enter recession in the third quarter after its economy contracted 6.1 percent in the second quarter. The government expects the economy to shrink as much as 8.9 percent this year.

On Thursday, the government presented a record 13.08 trillion naira (\$34.4 billion) 2021 budget to lawmakers, targeting a return to growth. Osinbajo said Nigeria is looking at World Bank loans rather than Eurobonds, though the lender delayed a \$1.5 billion facility in August, expressing concern that Nigeria had not adopted a unified, flexible exchange rate to close the gap between official and black market naira rates.

"All of us agreed that we must close the arbitrary gap but this is the function of the central bank," Osinbajo said. Nigeria also aims to build 300,000 low-cost homes in a year and guarantee loans to farmers to boost food production. — Reuters



## Business

# Coronavirus-hit Athens kiosk owners fear for their future

## Out of 11,000 kiosks all over Greece, just 5,500 survived the pandemic

**ATHENS:** Only about half of Greece's periptera, the little kiosks selling cigarettes and newspapers in town squares across the country, survived the economic crisis. Now, those still standing face a fresh threat, from the coronavirus pandemic—and adding masks and gels to their inventory might not be enough to see them through.

A feature of the urban landscape and social life since 1911, many went out of business during the financial crisis that devastated the country between 2010 and 2018. "During the financial crisis, out of 11,000 kiosks all over Greece, just 5,500 remained, 500 among them in Athens," said Theodoros Mallios, the president of the kiosk owners union in Athens. "These last months, I see more of them shutting down," he added.

"The lockdown and the restrictive measures taken afterwards by the government, might prove really difficult to overcome for our profession."

### Mandatory shutdown at midnight

Late in September, because of the spike in the number of coronavirus cases, mainly in big towns, the government ordered the kiosks to close from midnight to 5:00am. The idea was to discourage after-hours bar crowds from gathering at squares to buy liquor from the kiosks, most of which stay open into the small hours.

Panagiotis Karatsas, for one, keeps his open 24/7 at a spot near Athens' central Syntagma square in a corner of the National Garden. The new, enforced midnight shutdown has hit him hard, he said.

"With that measure, I've lost around 20 percent of my turnover, after already having endured two

months of shutdown during the lockdown," he added. With the average Greek having less money to spend these days, and periptero owners facing heavy taxes, 40-year-old Karatsas said he had thought about giving up.

"Many of my colleagues have shut down their kiosks in the centre of Athens. I have endured, but for how long? The coronavirus is one more hardship for us." A few meters away, fellow kiosk owner Spiros Karagiorgis faced a similar struggle. "We are worried for our future," he said.

"In the center of Athens, in Syntagma, the situation is worse than in other areas, because there are no residents," he explained. "Normally, we have as clients those working in offices, but now many of those are teleworking—and tourists, who this year have not visited the Greek capital." According to the Bank of Greece, during the first semester of the year, the number of foreign arrivals fell by more than 70 percent.

Karagiorgis does not know where he will find the 1,500 euros to renew his license with the city authorities, he added. And Mallios is not even sure the city authorities want to renew those licences.

"The municipalities want to give more space to the pedestrians and they are annoyed by the kiosks that are sticking out on squares and pavements."

### The neighborhood's soul

In the Petralona district, at the foot of the Acropolis, the cafes and restaurants in Merkouri Square are full to bursting. Giorgos Siaplaouras, the kiosk owner there, was furious at the latest government measures. "The measures are ridiculous and



**ATHENS:** Locals and tourists walk by a kiosk at Monastiraki square, an area popular with tourists, in Athens on Saturday. Only about half of Greece's little kiosks across the country survived the economic crisis. — AFP

only promote the large supermarkets!

"Last night I closed at midnight but the square was full of people carrying coolers full of beers and other alcoholic drinks that they had purchased earlier from the supermarket," he said. "Shutting down the kiosks earlier won't stop young people partying," he said with a sigh. Siaplaouras is a familiar face to locals. Pensioner Dimitris Katsigiannis, 70, goes every morning to buy his newspaper at the kiosk, or just to chat with its owner.

"It's a meeting point as much as the cafe," he explained. "During the 60s, when we didn't have landlines in our homes, we came here to make our phone calls. "Also, we would come to buy our newspapers—and candies for the children on Sundays. "And now at my age, living alone, coming to the periptero is my daily walk, a way to have a break from my loneliness," he added. He cannot imagine his favorite place shutting down, he said. "It would be dramatic. The whole neighborhood would lose its soul!" — AFP

## Immigration impasse, coronavirus clobber iconic US crab industry

### HOOPERSVILLE, United States:

As crab season arrived in Hoopersville, Maryland, locals began asking where Jose Bronero Cruz was. For two decades, he'd traveled from Mexico to the remote town to pick crab meat, but this spring, he did not arrive. Nor did any of the other foreign workers Janet Rippons-Ruark relies on to process meat from the blue crabs Maryland is famous for, exacerbating a worker shortage that ballooned into a crisis for the eastern US state's iconic industry.

"We've survived Covid. But we're in an area where there is just not local help," Rippons-Ruark said.

A shortage of visas for foreign workers combined with disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic paralyzed parts of Maryland's crab industry this year, forcing two-thirds of the major seafood processors to scrape by on the few employees they could find, or close entirely. A batch of visas issued at the start of October finally allowed Cruz and other guest workers to enter the country, but amid the prolonged deadlock over immigration policy in Washington that shows no sign of abating soon, crab

industry leaders fret for their future.

"Whether we'll survive the staffing thing... That remains to be seen," said Jack Brooks, president of the Chesapeake Bay Seafood Industries Association.

### Backbones of industry

Blue crabs pulled from the waters of the Chesapeake Bay are perhaps Maryland's best-known export, with the state the second-largest producer of the 2018 US harvest valued at \$188.4 million, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The industry is at the mercy of weather—as well as regulations intended to protect crab habitats, but processors can also enjoy booms during years like 2020, when prices rose as the pandemic's arrival seemed to increase crab's popularity.

"We're not in what you call a growth industry at this point, but we do have a domestic product that a lot of people want," Brooks said. Less desirable is the work of processing crab, which involves steaming them, cracking open their shell, removing their gills and picking out the meat for



**A worker picks meat from a crab at Bay Hundred Seafood in St Michaels, Maryland. — AFP**

sale—a job industry leaders say few Americans want to do, particularly since workers are employed for only part of the year.

Processors rely on guest workers from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America entering on temporary H-2B visas to extract the crabs, though migrant rights groups have also accused the industry of giving workers poor housing and insufficient health care access.

For Cruz, journeying all the way from Tabasco state in southern Mexico to Hoopersville, located on a

dead-end road so low-lying that waves splash onto it, is better than trying to find work back home. "In Mexico, you don't make money," Cruz, 46, told AFP. "Here, you do."

US law allows 66,000 H-2B visas to be issued each year and Brooks said the Maryland crab industry needs only around 450, but in the face of competition from industries such as forestry and landscaping, even getting those is tough. More than 99,000 requests for visas were received at the start of 2020, according to the Department of Labor. — AFP

## Critics see gap in BlackRock's climate rhetoric and record

**NEW YORK:** BlackRock, the world's biggest money manager, made headlines early this year when it pledged to prioritize climate change in its investments and pare down its coal holdings.

But environmentalists say the company has failed to make good on this promise in a series of shareholder proposals at annual meetings this year. Led by influential Wall Street player Larry Fink and overseeing some \$7.3 trillion in assets, BlackRock in January vowed to take action to address climate change and sustainable development, raising the hopes of environmentalists.

"We applauded BlackRock for its statement at the beginning of this year... and we acknowledge that they have taken some steps in that direction," said Ben Cushing, who leads the Sierra Club's financial advocacy campaign. "But clearly it has not translated into fast-enough, or bold-enough action."

### Need for 'stewardship'

Part of the skepticism comes from BlackRock's response to shareholder proposals to require companies to take action on the environment. BlackRock supported only 13 percent of the green-oriented resolutions in 2020, down from 20 percent in 2019, according to Proxy Insight, which tracks global shareholder voting.

A September report from non-governmental organization Majority

Action said the New York financial giant backed only three of 36 resolutions on climate change in proxy votes of S&P 500 companies.

And though BlackRock signed on to Climate Action 100+, a global investor engagement initiative, the company supported just two of 12 resolutions presented by the coalition. BlackRock holds shares in numerous large companies, including Apple, Facebook and Exxon Mobil, as well as ConocoPhillips and Nike.

Cushing said BlackRock could make a big difference if its actions match its rhetoric. "BlackRock is a huge contributor to the climate crisis through its financing of fossil

fuels, deforestation and other climate damaging industries," he said. "They are one of the world's largest shareholders in almost every publicly traded company," Cushing said. "That gives BlackRock tremendous power and leverage to steer the behavior of corporations in the US and around the world."

The company voted against proposals to require Chevron to develop a report on the risks from petrochemical plants and to make Delta Airlines evaluate how its lobbying strategy conforms with the Paris Climate Accord, saying the firms already had taken steps to address the issue. But BlackRock has defended its record, saying it had taken other steps, like voting against board nominees who are not committed to environmental issues and prodding action in meetings with company management. — AFP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** In this file photo, a protester holds a sign during a youth climate strike outside of the BlackRock offices in San Francisco, California. BlackRock, the world's biggest money manager, made headlines early this year when it pledged to prioritize climate change in its investments and pare down its coal holdings. — AFP

## US expects better earnings, but still a weak quarter

**NEW YORK:** While good business news has been in short supply, investors may take slight comfort in coming weeks from US corporate earnings that are likely to be bad, but not as bad as they have been.

Analysts expect third-quarter S&P 500 earnings to have fallen 21 percent compared with the year-ago quarter, a big improvement from second-quarter's 30.6 percent drop that was most likely the low point for earnings this year because of coronavirus-fueled lockdowns, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

Earnings reporting will get rolling next week with results from some of the big US banks, likely impacted by near record low interest rates and the pandemic-induced recession. JPMorgan & Co. and Citigroup both release results on Tuesday. Overall, S&P 500 quarterly results tend to beat analysts' cautious expectations, and they could do that even more than usual this reporting season, strategists said. In a break from the typical trend, guidance from US companies has been more positive than negative and estimates have been improving in recent weeks to reflect more upbeat guidance.

Whether that will be enough to support stocks in the weeks ahead is up for debate. "Very rarely in the last 10 years have we seen earnings estimates moving higher after a quarterly reporting season," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at National Securities in New York.

"That's a very good sign. It's a sign there's a strong possibility this quarterly earnings season is now going to be better than expected," he said. "The only problem is, now that we've entered the fourth quarter, a lot of the economic indicators are plateauing." That could weigh on fourth-quarter guidance and overshadow some of the better-than-expected results, he said.

Data this past Thursday on US jobless claims was among the latest to underscore the view the labor market recovery was struggling to gain momentum, with coronavirus cases continuing to rise.

Earnings season comes as the nation also prepares for the Nov 3 US presidential vote, which lands in the middle of one of the heaviest weeks of profit reporting. That, along with focus on prospects for additional fiscal stimulus from Washington, could overshadow earnings news.

Companies that have reported so far on the quarter have not seen much cheer from investors, despite their much stronger-than-expected results, some strategists have noted. "Firms that reported Q3 already have declined 1 percent on average despite the big beats, suggesting the bar is much higher for investors," UBS strategist Keith Parker wrote in a note.

US stocks registered sharp gains for the third quarter, but they fell in September in the first monthly decline since March, when the coronavirus began its rapid spread across the United States. Among the sectors, earnings from the S&P 500 energy sector are expected to have declined the most, with a projected 115 percent year-over-year drop, based on Refinitiv's data. — Reuters

## Spain's budget minister rules out corporation tax rise

**BARCELONA:** Spain will not raise corporation tax while its economy struggles to recover from the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget minister said in an interview published yesterday. In a country that has not managed to approve a full-year budget since 2016 because of a prolonged political paralysis, Spain's minority left-wing coalition government is currently trying to garner support from other parties to pass the 2021 spending plan. A fresh surge in infections is compounding the hit to the economy, which is expected to shrink by more than 11 percent in the year as a whole, according to Spanish government estimates.

In an interview with La Vanguardia newspaper published yesterday, budget minister Maria Jesus Montero discounted the possibility of hiking corporation tax in the midst of an economic downturn.

"But as for the profound reforms, which affect the production model, the structure (of the economy), such as corporation tax, it would be logical and reasonable for us to wait for this storm pass," she said. — Reuters

## Business

# Ooredoo Telecom recognized as gold partner by Aruba

## Signed up as Aruba's first Managed Service Provider in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, is reshaping the age of information and insight through innovative partnerships. Ooredoo represented by Fast Telco has been recognized as a Gold Partner in the Aruba Partner Ready for Networking Program with Hewlett Packard Enterprise. It has also signed up to be Aruba's first Managed Service Provider (MSP) in Kuwait.

Gold Certified Partners are recognized for having some of the industry's best-trained network engineers and demonstrating the highest level of expertise in planning, designing, implementing, and supporting complex networking, security, and wireless solutions. Ooredoo has fulfilled Gold level competencies and completed noteworthy projects in the country which has enabled them to reach this level.

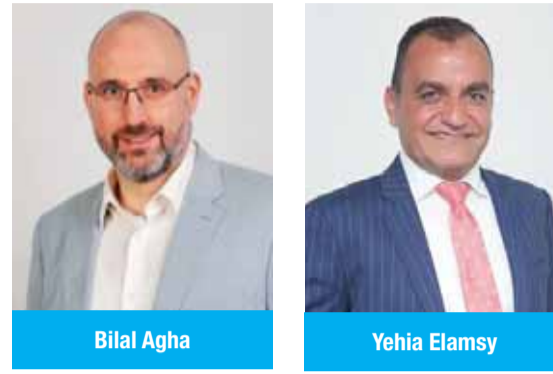
Ooredoo, using a combination of Aruba's integrated wired, wireless, security, network management, as well as built-in location solutions, are enabling users to enjoy an elevated, seamless, and secure connectivity experience. Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company (NYSE: HPE), understands the changing customers' demands and businesses' needs, and the rapidly evolving technologies. Intending to provide greater flexibility, connectivity, and security for all network operations, Aruba adapts a cloud-native approach and principles that deliver performance, automation, and analytics. Ooredoo makes this possible with flawless execution.

As organizations look for more efficient ways to utilize IT resources to meet growing mobile, BYOD and IoT expectations, many are opting to outsource their applications, security and networking needs. Cloud

managed networks allow organizations with limited internal IT resources or know how to offload the deployment, management and monitoring of their network to trusted partners, without having to do it themselves. This allows organizations to move from a CAPEX model to a more predictable service experience and an OPEX-based consumption model. Ooredoo with its Aruba MSP status can now offer organizations various services which can move from CAPEX to OPEX based consumption models.

Due to the tough times everyone witnessed during the global issue, keeping employees connected was vital for the business continuity and every minute counts. Ooredoo Kuwait, as a customer-centric company, took an action for an increased efficiency. Working from home has become easier with the Aruba cloud services, employees will not only be able to enjoy a convenient, direct access to the needed information and resources, but also to work and interact with their colleagues without interruption. Each and every employee have the authority to safely access Ooredoo's data center delivering the in-office experience to work from home. To secure and protect customer's valuable assets, Aruba's network-based approach which uses both: proximity and location telemetry is critical. It allows contact and location tracing so they are able to monitor the interacted users and the exact location of the interaction. Indeed, Aruba artificial intelligence for IT operations (AIOps) uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data to constantly improve, detect, segregate, and remediate network issues that influence reliability.

Ooredoo Kuwait constantly evolve by adapting the



Bilal Agha

Yehia Elamsy

best practices and innovative learning models when implementing zero-trust security, these security mechanisms are pervasive, simple, scalable, and easy to use and manage. With Aruba Zero Trust Security Solutions, Ooredoo Kuwait customers can ensure a consistent and efficient remote access deployment, protects its private data, offers active cyber protection, visibility and network access control for today's connect-from-anywhere digital workplace.

"In the race for excellence, there is no finish line. Enriching people's digital lives is our vision, and at Ooredoo Kuwait, we are committed to our promise. In today's highly competitive environment, business requirements always drive innovative technology solutions. In response, our partnership with Aruba, a HPE company, along with our shared values and visions, will respond to the dynamic market changes, and make our customers' everyday lives more efficient, comfortable,

and secured" commented on the partnership agreement, Bilal Agha, Marketing Director - B2B at Ooredoo Kuwait.

"Security has been the core and priority in our digital development. The idea behind the Zero Trust architecture is that all our customers' systems are going to require verification for access regardless of the location. We are focusing on the network as a whole, thus, our protections are going to start to be as close to the asset as possible that we are protecting. Our partnership with Aruba, a HPE Company, is built on trust that they have sufficient security that will live up to customer's expectations" added Bilal.

"It is our belief in teamwork that has inspired us to continually improve and bring innovation to our global customer base. For over 30 years, we have led the industry in delivering the technology, support, motivation, and rewards that enable our partners to inspire the world. Ooredoo Kuwait represented by Fasttelco Co. has always been integral to HPE's success and by collaborating with them, we will boost our business growth, and introduce the latest technology solutions to Kuwait market" said Yehia Elamsy, Country Manager for Gulf Levant and Egypt- HPE Aruba.

Leading change in a changing world is huge, and there is no doubt that there is a point in every enterprise's lifecycle when they are trying to become innovative, and Ooredoo Telecom has already drawn its line in the sand and they do so efficiently and effectively. Ooredoo is thinking short-term and long-term, it is not either/or, it is both in order for them to develop competitiveness.

## Why is the ECB eyeing a 'digital euro'?

**BERLIN:** The European Central Bank will today launch a public consultation and start experiments to help it decide whether to create a "digital euro" for the 19-nation currency club.

The move comes as the pandemic accelerates a shift away from cash, and as policymakers nervously eye the rise of private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin. Here's an explainer of what a "digital euro" would mean for the region's citizens.

### What is a digital euro?

A digital, or virtual, euro would be an electronic version of euro notes and coins, it would be legal tender and guaranteed by the European Central Bank. It would also be the first time allow individuals to have deposits directly with the ECB. This could be safer than with commercial banks, which could go bust, or than holding cash that could be stolen or lost.

And like cash, money could be stored outside of the banking system, such as in a "digital wallet".

It would allow citizens and firms to make their daily payments "in a fast, easy and secure way," the ECB said as it published a report on virtual money in October. A digital euro would "complement cash, not replace it", the ECB stressed. Issuing and transferring digital euros could be done using the distributed ledger technology known as blockchain on which cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin rely.

## Pandemic fuels NY used-car sale surge, risking 'Carmageddon'

**NEW YORK:** Increasing numbers of New Yorkers are buying cars as they avoid public transport because of the coronavirus pandemic, igniting the second-hand market but undermining hopes of less congestion in the Big Apple. Julien Genestoux, 35, never owned a car when he lived in Lyon, Rome and San Francisco. And he got through five years in New York without needing one. "Using a car in the city is a nightmare," he told AFP. "There's the traffic jams, going round for hours looking for somewhere to park."

"For me, it was not practical at all. But here it has become necessary unfortunately."

A few weeks ago, Genestoux, who has three children, finally took the plunge and bought a family car from a used-car website. It has allowed his family to escape New York at a time when virtually all its cultural activities are shut down. "Living in New York when you can't do anything, you have to go out," said the tech entrepreneur. Genestoux has swapped weekends in Central Park for trips to Rockaway beach. And he's not the only one to purchase four wheels of their own.

He was the last of his group of friends to buy a car. The Manheim used vehicle value index, which tracks price trends in the United States, reached an all-time high of 163.7 in August, against 141.3 a year ago.

In early June, second-hand car dealer Chris Stylianou was close to completely emptying his stock, something he'd never come close to achieving in his 30-year career.

"A car I was buying for \$5,000 two years ago, I end up (paying) \$5,500 today. Same car, same model, same condition," said Stylianou, owner of Major Auto Show in Brooklyn. "People were buying just to avoid public transportation. Anything that was good to go would go," he added.

Rudy Blocker, a used-car salesman at A Class Auto Sales, also in Brooklyn, believes the surge in purchases was helped by weekly \$600 cheques the government sent to unemployed Americans until the end of July to help stimulate the economy. "People had a little money and it was burning their pocket," he said. Sales of new



### Why now?

The Covid-19 pandemic has boosted electronic payments as customers avoid notes and coins over fears they might spread the coronavirus. Even in Germany, where cash is said to be king, consumers are this year expected to spend more money by card than in cash for the first time, according to a recent Euromonitor International report.

Like other central banks around the world, the ECB is also wary of falling behind virtual money issued by foreign private players like Bitcoin and Facebook's yet-to-be-launched Libra. If people in the eurozone were to switch en masse to virtual currencies that operate outside the ECB's reach it could hamper the effectiveness of its monetary policy measures.

Facebook's plan to create the Libra, "has accelerated central banks' thinking" on the subject, Pictet Wealth Management economist Frederik Ducrozet told AFP.

### What are the risks?

People might avoid traditional accounts in favor of going digital, weakening retail banks in the euro

cars have not soared, however. While they have picked up since June, they are still significantly down from 2019 for all major makers. "With a lease, you'd have to commit for three years," said epidemiologist Magdalena Cerda, who bought a BMW station wagon for \$35,000. "When you buy a new car you're losing so much money just as soon as you drive it out of the parking lot. It seemed like a better investment just to buy a used car," she added.

### 'Gridlocked'

Cerda, the mother of a seven-year-old girl, wanted a temporary fix because she hopes New York City will one day return to normal and she'll be able to safely take the subway again.

"Everyone hopes it is just temporary," agreed Genestoux. "If the situation returns to normal, I think we would get rid of the car," he added. Neither Genestoux or Cerda use their new vehicles on weekdays, unlike the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who now hit the road every day. "It's differ-

ent people (from before). It's people who work around here," said Fernando Bajana, manager of the GMC Seven Eleven parking lot in Midtown, Manhattan.

"Before they came to work using public transportation but now they are afraid to do so." Transportation Alternatives, a non-profit that works to take cars off New York's streets, noted in September that despite most New Yorkers working from home "traffic is down only nine percent compared to last year."

The group warned that without action the city faces becoming a "gridlocked, exhaust-choked, and crash-laden 'Carmageddon.'" Self-proclaimed champion of the fight against pollution Mayor Bill de Blasio has not yet laid out any plan to prevent congestion borne of the pandemic. A pre-pandemic congestion charge scheme for midtown Manhattan scheduled for January 2021 has been postponed until at least the end of 2021. "If today people buy cars, I think that shows there is also a failure of public transport policies in the city," said Genestoux. — AFP

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**NEW YORK:** Used cars are displayed at A Class Auto Sales, a used car dealership in downtown Brooklyn, New York. More and more New Yorkers are choosing to buy a car, to escape public transportation and the pandemic, and help to ignite the second-hand market, while the city is on the brink of congestion. — AFP



## S&P 500, Dow track second weekly gain

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street's main indexes rose on Friday, setting up the S&P 500 and the Dow for their second straight weekly gain on hopes of more federal fiscal aid and growing expectations of a Democratic victory in next month's presidential election. Eight of the 11 major S&P indexes were up in morning trading, led by materials and information technology. Energy stocks dipped, but were still set for their biggest weekly percentage increase since June.

US President Donald Trump on Thursday called for a "skinny" relief bill that would include elements such as direct payments and a bailout to the struggling airline sector. However, the S&P airlines subindex gave up early gains after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the prospect for more federal aid, including additional relief for airlines, was "murky" and unlikely ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

"The market is very much being held hostage regarding stimulus talk between the Republicans and the Democrats," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial in Newark, New Jersey.

"The major focus right now is do we get a package and what will that package comprise." Recent trading on Wall Street has been dictated by negotiations in Washington on more stimulus as signs of a slowdown in the domestic economic recovery sparked calls for more aid for businesses and households.

Investors have also begun to digest the possibility of Biden winning the Nov. 3 election after a fractious debate last month led to a jump in his lead over Trump in several national polls. "The market is increasingly factoring in Biden in the White House," Krosby said. "Expectations are that Biden comes in and introduces a really heavy package of stimulus."

The S&P small- and mid-cap indexes are on course to end the week with gains of about 5.5 percent and nearly 5 percent, respectively, outpacing a rise of about 3.5 percent in the benchmark S&P 500.

The two indexes are also on track to outperform the tech-heavy Nasdaq, which has surged since a coronavirus-driven crash in March, thanks to a narrow rally in stocks of mega-cap technology companies such as Apple Inc and Amazon.com Inc. At 11:21 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 125.86 points, or 0.44 percent, at 28,551.37, the S&P 500 was up 20.78 points, or 0.60 percent, at 3,467.61, and the Nasdaq Composite was up 109.40 points, or 0.96 percent, at 11,530.38. In company news, Xilinx Inc surged 11.8 percent after a report said Advanced Micro Devices Inc was in talks to buy the chipmaker in a deal valued at more than \$30 billion. Shares of AMD fell 3.4 percent.

General Electric Co jumped 3.4 percent as a report said Goldman Sachs reinstated coverage on the U.S. industrial conglomerate with a "buy" rating, saying the company will emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 1.21-to-1 ratio on the NYSE. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 1.34-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P index recorded 64 new 52-week highs and one new low, while the Nasdaq recorded 109 new highs and 11 new lows. — Reuters

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Egyptian artist Hany Genedy poses for a photograph next to pictures made with salt in a gallery room at his home in Hihya city. — Reuters



Egyptian artist Hany Genedy creates an art with coloured sand and salt on the floor of a gallery room at his home in Hihya city.



Egyptian artist Hany Genedy uses salt for his artwork pictures.

## EGYPTIAN ARTIST CRAFTS PICTURES WITH SALT



Egyptian artist Hany Genedy creates a picture of Al Pacino made with salt in a gallery room at his home in Hihya city.

**E**gyptian artist Hany Genedy focuses as he carefully pours white salt onto a black surface to create an image of actor Al Pacino. Genedy experimented with materials such as leaves and money before settling on a substance he says is versatile and cheap - salt. Genedy, who crafts images of Egyptian and international celebrities and landmarks, says he thinks only a handful

of artists worldwide use the mineral.

Surrounded by assorted colors of salt in his home studio in a village in the Nile Delta province of Sharqia, the 24-year-old says he developed a secret technique to fix his images. "At first it took me four or five hours to make a picture with salt then I had to erase it, but later I had the idea of looking for a way to preserve these works," he

said. "After several attempts I was able to find a way to fix the pictures," Genedy said, adding some of his salt works have been hanging on the wall for more than three years. He makes a small income from selling paintings, but hopes his salt art will win recognition in Cairo and internationally. — Reuters



Egyptian artist Hany Genedy uses salt for his artwork pictures.



Egyptian artist Hany Genedy creates an art with coloured sand and salt on the floor of a gallery room at his home.

## Damien Hirst remembers 'immortal' 90s with new show

**T**urner prize-winner Damien Hirst looks back on his time as one of the most notorious "Young British Artists" in a new solo retrospective show opening in London on Wednesday. "End of a Century" includes more than 50 installations, paintings and sculptures from his time as a student in the 1980s through to the 1990s, when he and others such as Tracey Emin dominated the UK art scene. There are some well-known works,



A gallery worker poses with artwork entitled 'Beautiful, childish, expressive, tasteless, not art, over simplistic, throw away, kids' stuff, lacking in integrity, rotating, nothing but visual candy, celebrating, sensational, inarguably beautiful painting (for over the sofa)', from 1996 by British artist Damien Hirst.



An artwork entitled 'Prototype For Infinity' from 1998 by British artist Damien Hirst is displayed during a photocall at the Newport Street Gallery in London ahead of an exhibition of his early works. — AFP photos

including from the iconic series Natural History-animals preserved in formaldehyde and displayed in large tanks-alongside others that have never before been shown in public. Speaking to AFP about his work back then, he recalled a time of drugs and drinking, saying: "It felt like a massive celebration, and I felt immortal in some way. "So it's quite funny to see the works in here. They look a little bit old and broken and there's pencil marks.

"Things are ageing in a kind of nostalgic way, whereas at the time I really thought I was immortal and it would never stop." Hirst is staging the retrospective at his Newport Street Gallery. He worried

about exhibiting other artists during the coronavirus outbreak, so decided to show his own work. He kept painting during lockdown, saying he was used to working on his own-although he had to stop using assistants. "I started mixing my own paints, cleaning my own brushes-god forbid!" he joked. "What kept me sane really was being able to go to the studio every day and paint." — AFP



A gallery worker poses with artwork entitled 'Art's About Life, The Art World Is About Money', from 1999 by British artist Damien Hirst.



A gallery worker poses with artwork entitled '100 Years', in 1990 by British artist Damien Hirst.



A gallery worker poses with artwork entitled '7 Pans', from 1987 by British artist Damien Hirst.

## Torlonia collection's ancient sculptures back on show after restoration

**O**ne of the world's biggest private collections of antique marble sculpture is bringing restored works, from mythical creatures to statues of emperors, back to public display in Rome this month. More than 90 Greek and Roman pieces of 620 in the Torlonia catalogue are to be shown in the Villa Caffarelli at the Italian capital's Capitoline Museums from October 14. The aristocratic Franco-Italian Torlonia family grew wealthy managing the Vatican's finances. Now three artists in a workshop in central Rome have cleaned, whitened and reconstructed their collection. Valentina Raciti, who has worked on the restoration for four years, was passing a sponge soaked with ammonium carbonate over the figure of a reclining woman holding a crown on a tombstone when AFP visited.

Such pieces might already have been restored several times over the centuries. "The way they restored things in the 18th Century tried to imitate what was added, the flaws. By contrast, we have an eye for the artistic side, but also try not to hide what we've done," Raciti explains. Her colleague Elisabetta Lulii points out how "you can see the previous restorations, like in a history book" on a Greek sculpture known as "Il caprone in riposo" ("The resting goat") that was worked on by legendary Baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini. "What's especially interesting in this collection are all the inserts that have been made, either in marble or plaster, in short all the interventions of the past, we catalogue them to get a general idea of the history of each piece," says restorer Kine Settimini.

"It's emotional just to touch" works like a bronze sculpture of Germanicus, a Roman general who was the older brother of Emperor Claudius and father of Caligula, the Torlonia collection's chief curator Anna Maria Carruba says. "There's a big difference between works preserved in museums and those in private collections. With art in museums, the observer is supposed to imagine the missing pieces back into places, so even if they aren't nice to look at they have the charm of ancient things. In a private collection, by contrast, that's unacceptable," she adds. The "Torlonia marbles" exhibition-supposed to open in April but pushed back due to the coronavirus pandemic-was born of a partnership between the Torlonia foundation, Italy's culture ministry and the luxury brand Bulgari. It is set for a tour of Europe and the US before returning to a permanent space in Rome. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

# CELEBRITIES LEAD TED GLOBAL CALL TO ACT ON CLIMATE CRISIS

With a call to save the planet, Prince William and Pope Francis on Saturday joined activists, artists, celebrities and politicians in a free streamed TED event aimed at mobilizing and unifying people to confront the climate crisis. "The shared goals of our generation are clear," William said in a video message kicking off the event, dubbed Countdown. "Together we must protect and restore nature, clean our air, revive our oceans, build a waste-free world and fix our climate." For more than five hours the second-in-line to the British throne and other speakers delved in the reality of the climate crisis, the need for action, and what can be done.

Solutions posed included ways of farming that welcome wildlife as well as crops; transportation systems powered by electricity; cities designed for people instead of cars; economies that thrive by keeping the planet healthy instead of destroying it, and voting for political leaders keen to end the climate crisis. "We are living during a historic moment marked by difficult challenges, as we all know," Pope Francis said while urging people of all faiths to unite to protect Mother Earth. "The world is shaken by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which highlights yet an even bigger challenge - the socio-environmental crisis." The Pope joined other speakers in saying the climate crisis is real and backed by science, and needs to be urgently confronted in ways that are socially just.

"The Earth must be worked and



This handout photo courtesy of TED shows entrepreneur and activist Lindsay Levin (left) and head of TED Chris Anderson (right) speaking at the Countdown Global Launch 2020 on Saturday. — AFP photos

nursed, cultivated and protected," the Pope said. "We cannot continue to squeeze it like an orange." Countdown also focused on ways in which damage to the environment also fuels social and racial injustice. "Black people breathe the most toxic air relative to the general population, and it is people of color who are most likely to suffer in the climate crisis," said British Parliament member David Lammy. "It gives all new meaning to the Black Lives Matter slogan 'I can't breathe.'" Lammy called for climate and social justice leaders to join forces, and for a new international "ecocide" law to criminalize "the most severe actions against nature itself."

**Capitalism 'monstrous'**

Firms that make fortunes from fossil fuels or other greenhouse gas-emitting operations cause damage they don't

pay for, while funneling money to politicians who help preserve the status quo, said another speaker, US economist Rebecca Henderson, who called on businesses to step up. "We let capitalism turn into something monstrous," she said, adding: "It's going to be tough to keep free enterprise alive if most people believe the rich and the white are trashing the planet for their own benefit."

Other speakers presented ways people can help stop slow down climate change. The mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, for example, explained a project there to plant a million trees to protect against flooding and to absorb carbon dioxide.

**Climate knows no politics**

Countdown came as some world leaders have seized on the issue of climate change for political gain. US



This handout photo courtesy of TED shows Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas speaking at the Countdown Global Launch 2020.



US actor Jaden Smith speaking at the Countdown Global Launch 2020.

**'Clarion call'**

Countdown organizers set a goal of mobilizing governments and citizens to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half over the next decade and get to net-zero carbon pollution by the year 2050. TED head Chris Anderson called Countdown "a clarion call" to tackle the daunting challenges of climate change. "But it's also a day of hope that there is a pathway to do this and we must walk down it together." A recording of the live event is available at [countdown.ted.com](https://countdown.ted.com). Other participants include UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, Mexican activist Xiye Bastida and actors Priyanka Chopra, Jane Fonda, Don Cheadle, Chris Hemsworth and Mark Ruffalo. — AFP



This combination of pictures shows (From Top left) US actor Don Cheadle, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, US actor Mark Ruffalo, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Pope Francis, Australian actor Chris Hemsworth, US actress Jane Fonda, former US Vice President Al Gore speaking at the Countdown Global Launch 2020. — AFP

## Earth 'squeezed like an orange': Call for climate action

Celebrities from filmmaker Ava DuVernay to Britain's Prince William to the Pope himself issued powerful calls Saturday calling for people to mobilize and unify to confront the climate crisis. Here are some quotes from the free, streamed TED event:

"The Earth must be worked and nursed, cultivated and protected. We cannot continue to squeeze it like an orange."

\* Pope Francis

"I want to cast my vote in favor of the planet."

\* Filmmaker Ava DuVernay

"Young people no longer believe that change is too difficult. They believe that the climate crisis and the threat to our biodiversity deserve our full attention and ambition."

\* Prince William

"We let capitalism morph into something monstrous. The truth is business is screwed if we don't fix climate change."

\* US economist Rebecca Henderson

"The fossil fuel industry knows how to stop global warming, but they are waiting for someone else to pay and nobody is calling them out on it."

\* Oxford professor and climate science scholar Myles Allen

"What happens in the next 10 years will likely determine the state of the planet we hand over for future generations. Our children have every right to be alarmed."

\* Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research director Johan Rockstrom

"We must make sure each country has a plan to zero emissions. Billions of people around the world are already suffering from our failure to act."

\* UN secretary general Antonio Guterres

"We can and need to be a part of this movement: eat local food, ride your bike more, understand what you are spending your money on, vote for people who share our vision. Let's change the world."

\* Music star Prince Royce

"Black people breathe in the most toxic air relative to the general population, and it is people of color who are more likely to suffer in the climate crisis. It gives all new meaning to the Black Lives Matter slogan 'I can't breathe.'"

\* British Parliament member David Lammy

"We can do nothing and hope the problem goes away; we can despair and fall into paralysis, or we can become stubborn optimists and rise to the challenge."

\* Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

"California uses more electricity playing video games than the entire country of Senegal uses overall. There is a mind-blowing gap between the energy haves and the energy have-nots."

\* Kenyan energy researcher Rose Mutiso

"What about committing to never buying a car or two-wheeler again with an internal combustion engine?"

\* Climate activist Xiye Bastida

"Tree restoration is not a silver bullet, there is no silver bullet. It is part the solution."

\* Ecology professor Thomas Crowther

"The good news is it is now clearly cheaper to save the planet than to ruin it. The bad news is we are running out of time."

\* Prominent Silicon Valley investor John Doerr. — AFP

## LAPA continues to collaborate with international theater artists

Mandy Fox reveals the secrets of the actor's vocal performance

LAPA continues to organize the Theater Retreat workshops under the supervision of Arab and International theater artists. American theater artist Mandy Fox has finally finished her "Foundations in Voice" workshop. "I thank LAPA and its trainees for the warm welcome and kindness", Fox said. She added, "I hope that soon I will have the opportunity to cooperate directly with" LAPA "and not only via the Internet."

After completing the workshop, Bahraini artist Ahmed Saeed said: "The workshop completely exceeded expectations. Workshops at Zoom are challenging, and their success is not easy as they require patience, cohesion, and constant communication with the trainees. Training with Mandy Fox was so successful that I personally learned a lot and really enjoyed it". And he continued, "As a professional actor, I believe it is important to understand the basics of this profession. As a self-taught actor, I have worked all my life on research and physical exercise. And this workshop proved that there are unlimited possibilities for Voice development after Fox excelled at



Bahraini artist Ahmed Saeed



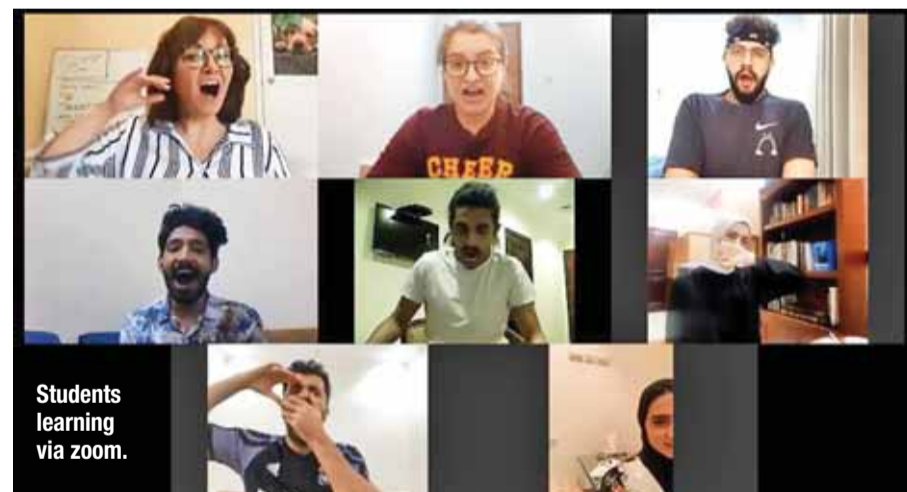
American theater artist Mandy Fox

teaching us this. Moreover, we not only learned to warm up efficiently, but also to prepare, understand and connect our physical tools; Body, limbs, muscles, lungs and back, all the way to effective breathing techniques that open the whole body through vibrations. The possibility of our body and mind playing a specific role becomes greater through "thinking with breathing" techniques that increase the ability to express with sound in the simplest way. These simple techniques if remembered can be very helpful to the actor". Saeed concluded by saying: "I thank Mandy Fox and LAPA for this wonderful opportunity, and I am sure that these contributions will add a lot to

the artist community and will definitely create artistic enlightenment as it did for me in these four consecutive days". From Kuwait, the artist Farah Al-Hajji said: "what is distinctive about this workshop is that it was not routine, as it was based on understanding what is required of the voice and employing it and training it on that. The workshop increased my knowledge and understanding of vocal performance and how to warm up the sound in various ways that combine it with the mind and body to achieve the required safely and thoughtfully".

Artist Abdul-Malik Al-Shizawi from the Sultanate of Oman said: "The voice is one of the important elements of theater work. The workshop was useful, and I benefited greatly on the personal level. I learned many of the ways and methods that we benefit from in the theater and in our daily life situations. I would like to thank the instructor Mandy for this opportunity, and I wish the workshop had been longer so that we could learn more and more. Thanks also to LAPA for this opportunity".

The designer, Hessa Al-Abbad, said: "The workshop was smooth and unique, in which I learned a lot on the practical level, and I hope in the future to employ what I learned in self-development".



Students learning via zoom.

## CAMBODIAN FARMERS DEPLOY SCARECROWS TO WARD OFF VIRUS

Armed with a stick, a floral-shirted scarecrow with a plastic pot for a head stands guard in front of a rural Cambodian home—a sentry erected by superstitious farmers to ward off the coronavirus. Known as "Ting Mong" in Khmer, the creatively rendered scarecrows often pop up in villages that have been hard-hit by infectious diseases like dengue or water-borne diarrhea. This time, "I've set up the Ting Mong to prevent the coronavirus from threatening my family," says farmer Sok Chany, 45. She has two posted in front of her wooden stilt home in Kampong Cham province, about 110 kilometers (70 miles) northeast of the capital Phnom Penh.

The other is dressed in camo-green and has a stick propped like a rifle across its hay-stuffed chest. "It is our

ancient superstition to set up Ting Mongs when there are dangerous diseases or to avert evil," she tells AFP. The majority-Buddhist kingdom has a strong strain of animism incorporated into the daily lives and rituals of Cambodians, with many believing that spirits are tied to places, animals and things. The Ting Mongs are meant to ward off evil spirits wishing to bring harm on an unsuspecting family by spreading disease.

In Sok Chany's Trapeang Sla village, no chances are taken—an effigy is tied to the gate of nearly every home, though constructed with varying degrees of effort. Some are elaborately dressed in military uniform or floral pyjamas, while others simply have stuffed bags with sunglasses perched on them for a head.—AFP



A man sets up a scarecrow in front of his home in Cambodia's Kampong Cham province on October 11, 2020, as superstitious residents in the region set up the sentries known as "Ting Mong" in Khmer to ward off the COVID-19 coronavirus during the pandemic.

## Sports

Photo of the day



Fabio Wibmer performs in Austria. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## All Blacks and Wallabies dejected by 'wild' draw

WELLINGTON: The All Blacks and Wallabies were both left dejected after they battled for nearly 90 minutes in a 'wild' thriller to relaunch international rugby after the COVID hiatus only to end up with 16-16 draw. There were chances for both sides to snatch victory in the wind and rain at Wellington Stadium as play swept up and down the field for nearly 10 minutes after the final hooter, but in the end they had to settle for a stalemate. "That's bitterly disappointing for an All Blacks side," coach Ian Foster said while Wallabies' mentor David Rennie said the Australians "had a chance but didn't take it. We're certainly not celebrating in the changing room."

Although there were obvious signs of rust in the first Test for New Zealand and Australia in almost a year since the 2019 World Cup, as a showcase for a sport re-emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic the match was a gripping cliffhanger. The build-up to the match had been dominated by a war of words over the future course of the southern hemisphere's Super Rugby and Rugby Championship competitions.

And there was little clue in the pulsating battle on the field that the Wallabies had not won in New Zealand since 2001 and had not lifted the trans-Tasman Bledisloe Cup for 18 years. The All Blacks started as overwhelming favorites but they were a whisker away from seismic upset when, with the score 16-16 and the 80 minutes expired, a booming Reece Hodge penalty from 55 meters to win the match for the Wallabies rebounded off the upright.

## 'I won't forget that game'

That ignited a frenzied period in which play swept from one end of the field to the other as both teams unsuccessfully attempted to find the winning points as the clock ticked towards 90 minutes. "I won't forget that game any time soon. It was wild," said Wallabies captain Michael Hooper who was celebrating his 100th Test cap. Rennie said his Wallabies needed to improve the quality of their cleanout after infringing on multiple occasions at the breakdown. —AFP

## Skipper Kohli stars as Bangalore thrash Chennai Super Kings in IPL

## Kolkata's Narine reported for chucking in IPL

DUBAI: Skipper Virat Kohli hit an unbeaten 90 as Royal Challengers Bangalore outplayed Chennai Super Kings by 37 runs in the Indian Premier League on Saturday. Kohli held the innings strong despite early losses including AB de Villiers for nought and a slow start to take the attack to the opposition in Bangalore's 169 for four in Dubai. The star batsman scored his second half-century of the IPL season and exploded in the last four overs to help Bangalore get 66 runs as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Chennai lost the plot.

"It was one of our more complete performances," man of the match Kohli said after leading Bangalore to their fourth win of the season in six matches. "We spoke at the time out that around 150 would be

great. When you don't get too far ahead of the game, it rewards you. "If you're in at the death overs and you have a score and you're hitting it well, you can capitalise well. That was something for us to learn tonight."

Bangalore's South African paceman Chris Morris led a disciplined bowling attack with figures of 3-19 from his four overs to keep down Chennai to 132 for eight at the end of 20 overs. Ambati Rayudu top-scored with 42 but the top and the middle order faltered including Dhoni scoring just 10 runs in Chennai's fifth loss in seven games. "I think the last four overs when we were bowling (didn't go to plan), before that the bowlers had done a good job, we needed to close in nicely," said a disappointed Dhoni.

"Batting has been bit of a worry and today also it was evident. We need to do something about it. I think we are better off playing the other way round, playing the bigger shots even if you get out." Coach Stephen Fleming said the team needs to bat with more "intent" in the upcoming games and the play-off race will get "further away" if the three-time IPL champions keep playing like this. Kohli stood out with a well-paced knock as he scored fifty in 39 balls and then smashed the bowlers to all parts of the ground with four fours and four sixes in his 52-ball stay.

"What fun that was to watch Kohli. Not just the shots but the running (between the wickets)!" veteran commentator Harsha Bhogle wrote on Twitter. Earlier in the first

match of the day, skipper Dinesh Karthik led by example with a blazing 58 to set up Kolkata Knight Riders' narrow two-run win over Kings XI Punjab. Karthik top-scored to guide Kolkata to 164 for six, a total their bowlers defended by restricting Kings XI Punjab to 162-5 in Abu Dhabi.

## Kolkata's Narine reported

Meanwhile, West Indies spinner Sunil Narine has been reported for suspect bowling action in the Indian Premier League during his team Kolkata Knight Riders' narrow win on Saturday. Narine stood out with figures of 2-28 from his four overs of his mystery spin to choke Kings XI Punjab's chase of 165 as Kolkata won by two runs in the first match of the day in Abu Dhabi. "The report was

made by the on-field umpires (Ulhas Gandhe and Chris Gaffaney) according to the IPL's Suspected Illegal Bowling Action Policy," said an IPL statement. "Mr Narine will be placed on the Warning List and is permitted to continue to bowl in the tournament."

Another report for the 32-year-old Narine will make him ineligible to bowl in the Twenty20 tournament until cleared by the Board of Control for Cricket in India's suspect bowling action committee. Narine has been reported for chucking several times during his nine-year-old international career and was barred from bowling in 2015 by the International Cricket Council but came back with a re-modeled action. But his action was once again under scrutiny in the 2018 Pakistan Super League. —Agencies

## Yates' COVID-19 exit leaves Giro on edge

VIESTE: Alex Dowsett soloed to victory in the Giro d'Italia eighth stage on Saturday to give his Israel Start-Up Nation team a first win but fellow Briton Simon Yates' exit hours earlier after a positive coronavirus test has left the race on edge. Yates, 28, withdrew before the start of the 200km stage from Giovinazzo in Puglia to Vieste after becoming the first rider to test positive for Covid-19 at a Grand Tour. The Mitchelton-Scott team leader, who won the Vuelta in 2018, was 21st in the standings ahead of Saturday's stage with overall victory still potentially within his grasp.

"Simon's health remains our main concern and, thankfully, his symptoms remain very mild and he is otherwise in good health," team doctor Matteo Beltemacchi said. Yates tested positive after developing a slight fever on Friday, and a second test confirmed the positive result. But questions remain about how he caught the virus and whether he passed it on to others as his teammates were all cleared to continue the race.

"Yates is the first case after ten days," said Giro race director Mauro Vegni. "This means that the 'bubble' at the Giro held up very well, quick checks allowed us to promptly ascertain Yates' positivity. "If we had only followed the International Cycling Union protocol, we would certainly have lost precious time, we would have been forced to send the swabs to Milan and then wait for the result tomorrow (Sunday). "Today, therefore, Yates would have had to compete in the stage, risking to infect other riders."

## 'New checks'

Vegni said that riders from a dozen teams would now undergo fresh swabs on Sunday with the first rest day on Monday. "On Monday morning, thanks to a reinforced team, we will complete the samples

and send them to Milan," he continued. "We will wait for the results before the start of the stage on Tuesday and on Wednesday we will carry out new checks on everyone." But the future of the three-week Giro remains linked to the outcome of the next round of tests. "We all want to get to Milan, only a possible intervention by the authorities could stop us," added Vegni of the race finish on October 25. Yates retirement after fellow Briton Geraint Thomas and Colombian Miguel Angel Lopez has now deprived the race of three top contenders. Two-time winner Vincenzo Nibali's hopes have been boosted by the Italian sixth overall, one-minute behind Portugal's Joao Almeida, who holds the leader's pink jersey. In Vieste, Dowsett produced a powerful finish to cross the line alone more than a minute ahead of Italian Salvatore Puccio of Ineos and Briton Matthew Holmes of WorldTeam Lotto. Dowsett shook off his five breakaway companions with 20km to go, with the former world Hour Record holder finishing as in a time trial.

## No contract, baby on way

The 32-year-old rider from Essex claimed his second Giro stage win, seven years after his first. "I can't say how much I needed a win like this in such a difficult year," said Dowsett. "Since Israel Start-Up Nation stepped up to the WorldTour, we've been fighting for this victory." He added: "I don't have a contract yet for next year and with a baby coming in January, I really needed such a result so badly, I cannot believe it."

Deceuninck's Almeida finished 17th nearly 14 minutes behind Dowsett to lead Spaniard Pello Bilbao (Bahrain-McLaren) and Dutch rider Wilco Keldermann of Team Sunweb going into Sunday's ninth stage over 208km from San Salvo to Roccaraso. "Tomorrow will be a crucial day for the defense of the Maglia Rosa," said Almeida. "My whole team has worked so hard for this jersey up to now, we won't let it go." The mountainous stage in Abruzzo finishes at altitude with a final climb of 9.6km. —AFP

Open, and American Cantlay each fired six-under par 65s to set the pace on 20-under 193 after 54 holes at TPC of Summerlin in suburban Las Vegas.

Laird's round was highlighted by a 50-foot eagle putt at the par-five ninth. He hit all 14 fairways and 16 of 18 greens in regulation. "It got a little tricky in spells," Laird said. "The wind was kind of swirling on the front nine. "I hit the ball nicely, got the ball in the fairway a lot, which is what you've got to do around here. If you get it in the fairway you can be aggressive." Cantlay could join Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson as the only players since 1960 with four straight top-two finishes at the same event after

## Kim stretches lead to two strokes at Women's PGA

NEW YORK: South Korea's Kim Sei-young, chasing her first major title, fired a three-under par 67 and stretched her lead to two strokes after Saturday's third round of the Women's PGA Championship. The 27-year-old from Seoul, whose most recent of 10 LPGA victories came in last year's Tour Championship, stood on seven-under 203 after 54 holes at Aronimink in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania.

Kim, who led by a stroke when the day began, made six birdies against three bogeys, lipping out a six-foot par putt off the left edge of the cup at the par-4 18th to miss out on a three-shot advantage entering Sunday's final round. Sweden's Anna Nordqvist and Canada's Brooke Henderson shared second on 205 with South Korean Park In-bee fourth on 206 and Filipino 22-year-old Bianca Pagdanganan fifth on 207 after a second straight 65.

Kim birdied the par-4 second and made bogey at the fourth, then answered with three birdies in a row starting at the par-3 fifth. She opened and closed the back nine with bogeys but offset that with birdies at 15 and the par-5 16th. "On 10, a missed tee shot led to a bogey, but I got my composure back and I'm glad I finished strong," Kim said. "The last bogey on 18 was disappointing, too. "I wouldn't say I'm nervous, but I'm excited about going into the final day. I just want to take each shot at a time and just keep focus, and the results will follow."

Two-time major winner Nordqvist, who ran off three birdies in a row starting at the sixth hole, bounced over the 18th green on the way to a bogey that dropped her level with Henderson. "I'm feeling pretty good," Nordqvist said. "The wind makes it really tough out there and it felt like it was a lot of tucked pins there on the back nine. I hit a lot of good shots and kept my patience up out there. "I feel like

a 2017 win and runner-ups the past two years.

But it was Wolff, a 21-year-old American and 2019 US college crown, who stole the show by shooting a 61, one off the course record and in a third-place pack on 195 with compatriots Brian Harman, Wyndham Clark and Austin Cook. "I put myself in a really good spot for the final day," Wolff said. "I'm pretty pleased with my ball striking and how everything has come together." Wolff became only the fifth US PGA player since 1983 to make three eagles on a front or back nine in a PGA event. "With those three eagles, it kind of just propelled me to the top," Wolff said.



PENNSYLVANIA: Kim Sei-young of Korea plays her shot from the fourth tee during the final round of the 2020 KPMG Women's PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club yesterday in Newtown Square. —AFP

on this course anything can happen, but I'm just happy to be in a good position."

Henderson, whose lone major win came at the 2016 Women's PGA, reeled off five birdies in an 11-hole span from the second through the 12th in a bogey-free round to grab a share of second with a 65 after an opening 71. "Just a little more comfortable on this golf course, knowing it a little bit more," Henderson said. "I gave myself a lot of looks and made quite a few putts too. "I made good decisions. I put myself in a good spot so hopefully I have a chance tomorrow."

## Park plays it smart

Reigning Olympic champion Park, a seven-time major winner and three-time Women's PGA champion, pulled within reach with a 66. "I was pretty calm. I was trying to put up a number to maybe give myself a chance going into tomorrow," Park said. "I feel like I played really smart. The course is playing tough but if you play smart around it there is a way to make a birdie." —AFP

## Wolff feasts on eagles but Laird and Cantlay share PGA lead

LOS ANGELES: US Open runner-up Matthew Wolff made three eagles in a five-hole span but it was Patrick Cantlay and Martin Laird who shared the lead after Saturday's third round of the PGA Shriners Hospitals for Children Open. Scotsman Laird, chasing his first win since the 2013 Texas

Wolff, who won his first PGA title at last year's 3M Open just weeks after turning professional, shared fourth at the PGA Championship in August in his major debut, then led entering the last day before losing to Bryson DeChambeau at the US Open. After pitching in a birdie from the rough from 70 feet at the third hole and back-to-back birdies at nine and 10, Wolff began his eagle run at the par-4 11th, holing out from the fairway from 116 yards with a lob wedge. "It was just a smooth one and one hop," Wolff said. "I think skipped past the hole and spun back in, so really nice to jump start the back nine." —AFP

## Sports

# Spain edge Swiss 1-0; Germany stun Ukraine in Nations League

## Luxembourg beat Cyprus; Montenegro ease past Azerbaijan

PARIS: Mikel Oyarzabal pounced on a horror slip by Swiss captain Granit Xhaka to seal a 1-0 victory for Spain in the Nations League on Saturday. The night's other League A Group 4 match saw Germany beat Ukraine 2-1 in Kiev. At the Estadio Alfredo Di Stefano in Madrid, usually home of Real Madrid's second string side, Real Sociedad striker Oyarzabal struck in the 14th minute. The Swiss boldly tried to play out from the back, but Xhaka slipped as he sought to collect goalkeeper Yann Sommer's pass.

Mikel Merino pounced and threaded the ball through to clubmate Oyarzabal, who finished superbly past Sommer. "I am happy for the victory and for adding three points," Oyarzabal told Spanish television. "We knew that (Switzerland) were a powerful team, that they liked to play a lot and that they had fewer points than they deserved. We also knew they were risking a lot from behind and we wanted to pressure them because we believed we could rob them and hurt them and that's the way it worked out."

There was a golden opportunity for Oyarzabal to double his tally in the 52nd minute. Switzerland again struggled to clear their lines, Jesus Navas fazed a cross-shot into the area which Sommer could only push into the path of Oyarzabal. The striker's effort, however, hit the post and went wide. It was then the turn of Merino to scuff another prime chance. On the hour mark, a badly cleared corner fell to his unfavoured right foot and he shot high and wide directly in front of goal.

Sergio Ramos then saw an effort shielded away by Xhaka before a header went just wide moments later with Spain in the driving seat. Switzerland thought they had an equalizer as Xherdan Shaqiri pivoted and sent the ball spiral-

ing into the Spanish net. But it was not to be as the referee handed Atalanta's Remo Freuler a yellow card for a foul on Sergio Busquets in the build-up. It was then the turn of Gerard Moreno to blast high after a smart twist and turn in front of the Swiss goal after a nice ball from Sergio Canales.

### Unbeaten run extended

Luis Enrique's side then contented themselves with seeing out the game, extending to 14 their current unbeaten run. They have also not lost in Madrid in 20 games dating back to 1987. "It was not an easy game, it was not a game in which we have been especially fluid," said Enrique. "We took advantage of hard pressing to score the goal and then we had further opportunities to close down the game, but without luck." The Spaniards top their group, having kicked off with a creditable 1-1 away draw against Germany before a sparkling 4-0 victory over Ukraine, whom they now face on Tuesday. In Kiev, Germany picked up a first win in their Nations League group with a workmanlike 2-1 away victory over the Ukrainians.

Defender Matthias Ginter gave Germany a first-half lead, then Leon Goretzka capitalized on a horrible mistake by the Ukraine goalkeeper before Ruslan Malinovskyi converted a late penalty for the hosts. Germany coach Joachim Loew said he was "satisfied" with the away win, but admitted "we should have been three or four goals ahead before they scored". "In some phases we gave the ball away too easily." After drawing their opening Nations League games against Spain and Switzerland, then being held 3-3 by Turkey in a friendly on Wednesday, the win lifted Germany to second in the group behind Spain.



VALDEBEBAS: Spain's forward Mikel Oyarzabal (right) scores a goal during the UEFA Nations League A group 4 football match between Spain and Switzerland at the Alfredo Di Stefano stadium in Valdebebas in northeastern Madrid on October 10, 2020. —AFP

However, Germany can expect a much tougher task against the Swiss in Cologne on Tuesday and should have scored more having enjoyed around 75% possession against a weakened Ukraine side. In the evening's other games, Luxembourg beat Cyprus 2-0 and Montenegro eased past

Azerbaijan by the same scoreline in Group 1 of League C. In League D action, the Faroe Islands were held to a 1-1 draw at home against Latvia and Andorra fought out a goalless draw with Malta in Group 1, while Gibraltar edged Liechtenstein 1-0 in Group 2. —AFP

## Steyn stars as late rally secures Bulls hard-earned win

PRETORIA: A strong finish enabled the Bulls to beat the Griquas 30-23 in Pretoria Saturday on the second day of South African Super Rugby Unlocked after an unexpectedly close match. The Bulls have been among the 'big four' of South African rugby for decades while the Griquas' lone major trophy came 50 years ago.

But it took the hosts 63 minutes to go ahead, through a penalty from 36-year-old former South Africa fly-half Morne Steyn, behind closed doors at Loftus Versfeld owing to the coronavirus. A try from stand-in skipper and loose forward Arno Botha stretched the advantage to nine points before the Griquas responded through a second try from

winger James Verity-Amm. Steyn, who new Bulls coach Jake White calls his "general", had the final say with his penalty ensuring the Bulls of victory but not preventing the Griquas from taking a losing bonus point.

"I am happy with the win, but not with the way we achieved it," said Botha, one of many new signings made by 2007 Rugby World Cup-winning coach White when he took charge last March. "We lacked discipline at the breakdowns during the first half and all of us need to watch a recording of this match and study where we did not execute the game plan properly. The experience of Morne (Steyn) was a key factor for us and I do not think this guy is ever going to grow old." Back in Pretoria after six years with French Top 14 outfit Stade Francais, Steyn contributed 13 points from two conversions and three penalties after missing his first shot at goal.

### 'Unacceptable'

Griquas captain and fly-half George Whitehead also pinpointed indiscipline, and was self critical

having been sin-binned on 53 minutes. "Getting yellow-carded was unacceptable," he admitted. "One of my tasks as captain is to set a good example to my team-mates and I clearly failed. No one gave us a chance before the game and I am proud that we ran the Bulls close. Our aim is to compete in this competition and not just take part." Apart from the shrewdness of Steyn, the Bulls were indebted to their scrum, which made life increasingly uncomfortable for the Griquas.

The side from northern Cape city Kimberley built a 10-point lead only to concede an additional-time try to lock Ruan Nortje and turn over level at 10-10. An Anthony Volmink try helped the underdogs lead 18-10 before a penalty try triggered a Bulls comeback that gave them a victory they just deserved. Meanwhile, Malcolm Jaer scored three tries and fellow winger Rosco Specman two as the Cheetahs romped to a 53-31 victory over the Pumas in Bloemfontein. In a match of two halves, the home side averaged a point a minute in the first to lead 41-3 at the break against overwhelmed opponents. —AFP

## Dodgers and Braves chasing end to MLB title droughts

LOS ANGELES: A power-hitting Los Angeles Dodgers squad and a tough-pitching Atlanta Braves lineup meet in the Major League Baseball playoffs with each trying to end a World Series title drought. The Dodgers and Braves, both unbeaten in this year's post-season run, open their best-of-seven National League Championship Series today at Arlington, Texas. The winner advances to the 116th World Series to face the winner of the American League Championship Series, which sends the Houston Astros against the Tampa Bay Rays starting Sunday in San Diego. The Dodgers are trying for their third World Series appearance in four years, but they have not captured the crown since 1988, losing to Houston in 2017 and Boston in 2018. Atlanta last won the crown in 1995 and until this year, the Braves had not won a playoff series since 2001, dropping 10 in a row. The Dodgers produced the best record in this coronavirus-shortened campaign at 43-17, leading the major leagues with 118 home runs and 385 total runs, one better than Atlanta.

## 'Top-form' Kolbe scores again as Toulouse edge second-string Racing

PARIS: South African Rugby World Cup winner Cheslin Kolbe scored his sixth try in as many games this season as Toulouse won 30-24 at European Champions Cup finalists Racing 92 in the French Top 14 on Saturday. Kolbe crossed in the first half, with a perfect display from the tee by fly-half Thomas Ramos against a much-changed Racing ahead of next Saturday's continental showdown with Exeter Chiefs in Bristol.

"He's in top form. A great player who made the most of confinement to rest. He's started the season very well, he's key for us," Toulouse defence coach Laurent Thuery said. The game was played under the cloud of an off-the-field political row in French rugby between the league running professional rugby (LNR) and the federation (FFR) regarding extra Tests matches this autumn.

The dispute escalated further Saturday as the

LNR said the 31-man France squad named by national coach Fabien Galthie earlier this week to host Wales on October 24 was "null and void". The FFR responded with their own letter reminding the LNR of its obligation to release players for international windows designated by global body World Rugby. "What's important is that rugby wins from the situation. For the France national team to be strong, the clubs have to be strong," Racing coach Laurent Travers said.

Back on the pitch, Travers made 12 changes from the European semi-final win two weeks ago, but France squad members Olivier Klemenczak and Teddy Thomas as well Ireland lock Donnacha Ryan kept their places.

Travers' Toulouse counterpart Ugo Mola started all but one of his eight les Bleus squad members as hooker Julien Marchand was rested and full-back Ramos moved to outside-half, with Romain Ntamack starting at inside centre. The visitors led 7-3 after 11 minutes as winger Matthis Lebel scored directly from Ramos' restart after Maxime Machedaud had opened the scoring with a penalty goal.

France scrum-half Machedaud slotted two further penalties before Kolbe touched down to



SAN DIEGO: A view of a section of cardboard cutout fans in Game Five of the American League Division Series between the Tampa Bay Rays and the New York Yankees at PETCO Park. Due to concerns of the spread of the coronavirus, MLB games are being played without fans. —AFP

Smith said. "It will probably up the intensity a little bit, but once the game starts, it's intense. Every pitch matters." Snitker still marvels at the feat of going this far into the season during a pandemic. "It's all going so fast," he said. "Sometimes I do step back and think, 'How the hell are we doing this?'" This has been tough on the whole industry to get through this. But we're down to final four. —AFP



Cheslin Kolbe

keep his impressive early season scoring record after Ntamack orchestrated a break on the outside. Ramos added a penalty before Klemenczak set up Donovan Taofifenua to slalom his way through for his first senior try and Machedaud's conversion cut the deficit to 17-16 at the break. Travers' men reclaimed the lead three minutes after the interval as former France under-20s No 8 Jordan Joseph crashed over but Australian Zack Holmes restored the lead with half an hour to play and Ramos' extras made it 24-21. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Sordo wins Rally of Sardinia



ARGENTIERA: Spain's driver Dani Sordo and Spain's co-driver Carlos Del Barrio steer to win with their Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC the Rally of Sardinia in Argentario yesterday. —AFP

ALGERO: Spain's Dani Sordo won the Rally of Sardinia for the second straight year yesterday ahead of fellow Hyundai driver Thierry Neuville of Belgium. After a three-day battle along the narrow, sandy and gravel roads of the Mediterranean island, Sordo held off Neuville by just 5.1sec with France's former six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier just one second further behind for Toyota. Ogier's Welsh teammate Elfyn Evans finished fourth over a minute behind the winner to hold the world championship lead after six of eight rounds. Evans has a 14-point lead on Ogier and 24 on Neuville, who moves up from fifth to third. Defending world champion Estonian Ott Tanak is fourth overall, struggling to sixth in the race after suspension problems on Friday, but finishing in style yesterday with a win in SS16. —AFP

#### MLS games postponed

NEW YORK: Major League Soccer announced two match postponements on Saturday after two positive Covid-19 tests each for Minnesota United players and Columbus Crew staffers. The league postponed yesterday's Columbus at Orlando City match and Minnesota's match at FC Dallas over health and safety concerns. No immediate reschedule date was announced. The positives are the latest involving MLS clubs. The Colorado Rapids have had their past four matches postponed due to a coronavirus outbreak on the team, the latest being a scheduled Saturday affair against the Los Angeles Galaxy. Columbus, 9-3 with four drawn, ranks third in the Eastern Conference with 31 points, trailing Philadelphia on goal difference with Orlando one point adrift. Minnesota, 6-5-5, ranks fourth in the Western Conference on 23 points, two ahead of sixth-place Dallas. —AFP

#### Hassan smashes record

THE HAGUE: Ethiopian-born Dutch runner Sifan Hassan smashed Paula Ratcliffe's long-standing European record for the women's 10,000m on Saturday. Hassan, who won double gold in the 1,500m and 10,000m at last year's world championships in Doha, timed 29min 36.67sec after 25 laps in rainy conditions at Hengelo. It obliterated by more than 24 seconds the previous record of 30:01:09 set by Britain's Ratcliffe in 2002. Only seven other female runners have been below the 30min mark, and Hassan becomes the first European to do so. "I am so happy to have run a new European record, especially a record that has stood for so long by such a strong athlete as Paula," said Hassan, who is the world record holder for both the 5km road race and the mile, both set in 2019, as well as the one hour run, set in Brussels in September. —AFP

**14** Wolff feasts on eagles; Laird and Cantlay share PGA lead



**15** Dodgers and Braves chasing end to MLB's title droughts



**15** Spain edge Swiss 1-0; Germany stun Ukraine in Nations League



## Nadal wins 13th French Open

Nadal demolishes Djokovic, claim record-equaling 20th Grand Slam title



PARIS: Spain's Rafael Nadal (and inset) celebrates after winning against Serbia's Novak Djokovic at the end of their men's final tennis match at the Philippe Chatrier court on Day 15 of The Roland Garros 2020 French Open tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP

PARIS: Rafael Nadal demolished Novak Djokovic 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 to win his 13th French Open and equal Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 Grand Slam titles yesterday. For world number one Djokovic, the defeat ended his hopes of an 18th Slam and of becoming the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four majors twice. Nadal, 34, claimed his 100th match win at Roland Garros against just two defeats since his 2005 debut. The Spaniard, the oldest champion in Paris since Andres Gimeno in 1972, claimed the title without dropping a set.

He finished the one-sided affair with just 14 unforced errors to his opponent's 52. "Congrats to Novak for another great tournament. Sorry for today.

We've played plenty of times together - one day one wins, another the other," said Nadal. "After all the things I have been through in my career with injuries, I could not have done it without my family." Nadal said he wasn't even thinking about matching Federer's record. "It's been a very tough year. Winning here means everything to me so it's not about equalling Roger on 20, for me today it's just a Roland Garros victory.

"Roland Garros means everything to me. I spent most of the most important moments of my tennis career here. "Just playing here is a true inspiration. The love story I have with this court and city is unbelievable." The 56th meeting between the world's

top two started under the roof of Court Philippe Chatrier, intensifying the echo of a crowd limited to 1,000 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Conventional wisdom suggested that would favor Djokovic but nobody told Nadal who broke three times in the 45-minute opening set.

The Spaniard hit 10 winners and just two unforced errors. Djokovic's error count was 13 with the out-of-sorts Serb even squandering three break points of his own in the fourth game. More worrying for the world number one-Nadal improved to 111-0 when winning the first set of best-of-five matches on clay in his career. It was the first opening set 'bagel' in a Roland Garros final since 2004 when Gaston Gaudio recov-

ered to defeat Argentine compatriot Guillermo Coria in five sets.

Djokovic finally got on the board with a service hold in the first game of the second set but Nadal maintained his relentless push, going to a double break for 4-1 as even the Serb's usual deft touches on the drop shot deserted him. Nadal wrapped up a two-set lead with his unforced error count at just six to Djokovic's 30. Nadal broke for the sixth time for a 3-2 lead in the third before Djokovic suddenly restored his reputation as the sport's best returner by carving out his first break of the afternoon for 3-3. However, there was to be no miracle recovery as a double fault handed Nadal a 6-5 lead and he took the title with an ace. — AFP

## Swiatek continues transfer of power in women's tennis

PARIS: As Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic squared off for the 56th time in the men's French Open final, the women's game is in the throes of a youthful revolution as Iga Swiatek was crowned its latest first-time Grand Slam champion. The 19-year-old ensured her place in history as Poland's first major singles champion on Saturday, becoming the ninth woman in 14 tournaments to secure her maiden Slam title.

Swiatek, who used the coronavirus lockdown to complete her graduation exam, has toyed with the idea of continuing her studies, but will surely now go the same route as her vanquished opponent in the Roland Garros final. Sofia Kenin, 21, turned down a scholarship to the University of Miami in 2017 after holding her own against Maria Sharapova in the third round of that year's US Open.

She went on to win the Australian Open in January and narrowly missed out on becoming the first woman to capture two majors in the same season since Angelique Kerber in 2016. Her

Melbourne triumph followed Bianca Andreescu's breakout performance at last year's US Open, the Canadian taking home the title on her main draw debut in New York. Since Serena Williams collected the last of her 23 Slam crowns at the 2017 Australian Open, the likes of Simona Halep, Sloane Stephens and the now-retired Caroline Wozniacki have all gone on to land a breakthrough major.

However, the 29-year-old Halep is the outlier in a series of recent major winners, seven of eight who were aged 23 or under at the time. Kenin, Andreescu and Swiatek have accounted for three with Naomi Osaka grabbing three titles of her own, and top-ranked Ashleigh Barty triumphing at the 2019 French Open. The average age of champions in that time is 21.5. By comparison, the average age of the eight previous Slam winners was 27.4. "For sure it's inspiring. I know that there are no limits. Even though you're really young and you're an underdog, you can do a lot in a sport like tennis," said Swiatek. — AFP

## Towering Hamilton wins Eifel Grand Prix, equals Schumacher's record

NUERBURGRING: Lewis Hamilton equalled Michael Schumacher's record of 91 Formula One wins yesterday when he guided his Mercedes to a narrow, if measured, victory at a frantic Eifel Grand Prix. Taking full advantage of team-mate and pole-sitter Valtteri Bottas' early retirement with engine problems, the runaway series leader and six-time champion drove a well-judged race to claim his seventh victory from 11 contests this year.

"What a result," he said on the Mercedes team radio after taking the chequered flag clear of Max Verstappen for Red Bull with Renault's Daniel Ricciardo in third. In a touching tribute Mick Schumacher presented Hamilton with one of his father's race helmets. "Seeing Michael's dominance for so long I don't think anyone especially me could ever think of getting near Michael in terms of records," said Hamilton.

On a circuit where Germany's seven-time champion Schumacher won five times, Hamilton took his second Nurburgring victory - his previous was for McLaren in 2011. Bottas' bad luck handed Hamilton his chance and almost certainly ended his own title bid as the Briton moved 69 points clear ahead of him in the drivers' championship. Ricciardo's podium success meant that he had won a bet with Renault team boss Cyril Abiteboul, requiring the Frenchman to take a tattoo prescribed for him by the Australian.

Sergio Perez finished fourth for Racing Point ahead of Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri, Ferrari's Charles



NUERBURGRING: Winner Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton throws his trophy in the air on the podium after the German Formula One Eifel Grand Prix at the Nuerburgring circuit in Nuerburg, western Germany yesterday. — AFP

Leclerc and 'super-sub' Nico Hulkenberg of Racing Point. For Hulkenberg, it was a remarkable result coming only 24 hours after he had jumped into the cockpit of Lance Stroll's car after a late call to action from a cafe in Cologne. Romain Grosjean, with an injured finger, was ninth for Haas ahead of Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo. — AFP