



4 Expat exodus forces drop in rents around Kuwait



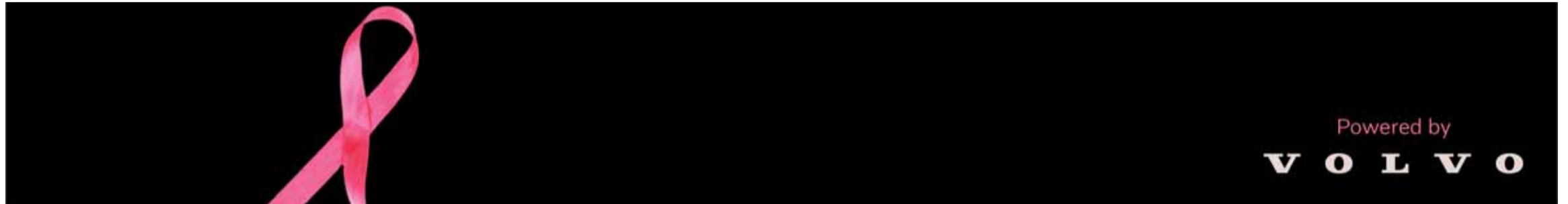
5 Crew reaches International Space Station in record time



8 Apple joins 5G revolution with four iPhones for fast networks



16 Braves survive Dodgers scare; Rays roll over Astros, take lead



Amir thanks Guterres after UN mourns loss of late Amir

Sheikh Sabah eulogized for his leadership, humanity, diplomacy



NEW YORK: The United Nations holds a session on Tuesday to mourn the loss of late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of appreciation to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his kind speech during a special United Nations General Assembly session to mourn the loss of the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday.

The Amir thanked Guterres for his kind words, which reflected the depth of his appreciation and great respect for HH the late Amir. HH Sheikh Nawaf hailed Guterres' words regarding the late Amir's outstanding contributions in support of UN activities in various fields, in particular his leadership in mobilizing support to alleviate the suffering of refugees and those afflicted by natural disasters, wars and crises.

Furthermore, HH the Amir reaffirmed Kuwait's permanent support to help the organization in being more capable and efficient to face the challenges and dangers that threaten the world. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Guterres.

Global delegates stood for a minute of silence at the UN to mourn the loss of the virtuous ruler - who was granted a 'Humanitarian Leader' award by former UN chief Ban Ki-moon - in memory of his legacy in humanitarianism, diplomacy, peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Guterres described the late Amir as a distinguished statesman, a distinguished human being, a builder of bridges and a messenger of peace, saying he prioritized cooperation and pluralism. Throughout his reign, Sheikh Sabah gained everyone's appreciation and respect for his outstanding leadership and commitment to keeping peace.

He was always ready to build bridges between religions, cultures and countries in the neighborhood and beyond, and thanks to insight, political wisdom and perseverance, he formed the preventive diplomatic line of Kuwait in the region and at the international level, Guterres said. Guterres indicated that Sheikh Sabah played a vital role in mediating, facilitating dialogue and spreading messages of peace, tolerance and coexistence, describing him as a close friend of the UN. His ambitious vision contributed to the development of modern Kuwait, and his work to support and empower women at all levels was evident in his efforts to ensure the right of women to vote in Kuwait.

The world has lost a global leader and a symbol of humanity, Guterres added. He expressed the UN's aspiration for the continuation of the strong partnership and friendship with Kuwait based on the legacy of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah, pledging to continue supporting Kuwaiti mediation efforts and its role in promoting peace and stability.

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Falcon sells for \$170,000

RIYADH: A young peregrine falcon in Saudi Arabia has sold for more than \$170,000, the most expensive sale ever of that type of bird and the costliest purchase so far at an annual 45-day auction of the hunting birds cherished in Gulf countries. The bird was sold on Tuesday for 650,000 Saudi riyals (\$173,000) by virtue of its unique characteristics and scarcity, the auction's organizers, the Saudi Falcon Club, said in a statement. The falcon, weighing 1.1 kg, was captured from the wild in Hafer al-Batin, in north-east Saudi Arabia, the club said. — Reuters

Iran hits new virus records

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday announced temporary travel restrictions on five major cities including the capital Tehran as the country hit new single-day records in both COVID-19 deaths and new infections. The measures include banning travel to and from the cities of Tehran, Karaj, Mashhad, Isfahan and Urmia from midnight until Sunday noon, only involving private vehicles but not public transportation. COVID-19 deaths numbered 279 yesterday as 4,830 new cases of infection were confirmed. The novel coronavirus has killed a total of 29,349 people out of 513,219 cases in the Middle East country hardest hit by the pandemic. — AFP

Pandemic caused emissions drop

PARIS: Pandemic restrictions saw an unprecedented fall in greenhouse gas emissions in the first half of 2020, experts said yesterday. As governments ordered lockdowns, CO2 emissions from transport, power and aviation plummeted. Using data including hourly electricity production, vehicle traffic from more than 400 cities worldwide, daily passenger flights and monthly production and consumption figures, they determined that the year-on-year emissions drop of 8.8 percent was the largest in modern history. They noted however that emissions had rebounded to their usual levels by July 2020, when most nations had eased lockdown measures. — AFP

Several police, inmates injured in prison riot

KUWAIT: Police clashed with prisoners at the Central Prison while carrying out an unscheduled

inspection during which some inmates were found with mobile phones, the interior ministry confirmed yesterday. The brawl left several policemen and inmates injured as officers used force to place the situation under control, it added.

"Forces of the correctional institutions were carrying out a sudden inspection tour at the prison and discovered that some prisoners were using mobile phones, which is a violation of prison rules. The forces attempted to confiscate the phones and took legal

Lebanon, Israel start maritime border talks

NAQOURA, Lebanon: Lebanon and Israel, still technically at war, held unprecedented talks under UN and US auspices yesterday to settle a maritime border dispute and clear the way for oil and gas exploration within "reasonable time". In a joint statement afterwards, the United States and the United Nations said the talks had been "productive" and that the delegates had "reaffirmed their commitment to continue negotiations later this month".

Following years of US shuttle diplomacy, Lebanon and Israel this month said they had agreed to begin UN-brokered negotiations, in what Washington hailed as a "historic" agreement. The talks, held at a UN peacekeeping force base in the Lebanese border town of Naqoura, lasted for around one hour and came weeks after Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates became the first Arab states to establish relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

This has prompted suspicions that the flurry of US-sponsored diplomacy relating to Israel is meant to boost President Donald Trump in his reelection campaign. A second round of negotiations will be held on Oct 28.

Continued on Page 2

Israel approves settler homes after Gulf deals

JERUSALEM: Israel approved 2,166 new homes in settlements across the occupied West Bank yesterday, official figures sent to AFP showed, ending an eight-month lull in settlement expansion. The approvals came less than a month after the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed agreements to normalize relations with Israel, which in return pledged to freeze its plans to annex swathes of the West Bank.

NGO Peace Now said the settlement uptick signals Israel's rejection of Palestinian statehood and deals a blow to hopes of a wider Israeli-Arab peace.

It said that around 2,000 more homes are expected to be approved today. "Netanyahu is moving ahead at full steam toward solidifying the de facto annexation of the West Bank," it said in a statement ahead of yesterday's decisions.

Neighboring Jordan condemned what foreign ministry spokeswoman Daifalla Ali Alfayez described as an "unilateral and illegal" Israeli decision. Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said the Israeli move exploited the warming relations in the Gulf and "blind support from the Trump administration". The Netanyahu government's settlement policy, he said in a statement, "will lead the region to the brink of the abyss".

The latest settlement plans, for a total of more than 4,000 new homes, were on the agenda yesterday and today at a session of the top planning committee of Israel's Civil Administration, the defense ministry body which oversees civil affairs in the occupied West Bank. Details of the approvals were

provided to AFP by the Civil Administration spokesman.

Peace Now noted that the plans were approved for submission by Benny Gantz, leader of the centrist Blue and White party who serves as defense minister in a coalition government led by the rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. With Gantz's participation, "Israel will be signaling to the world its bipartisan support for the end to the concept of a two-state solution and a Palestinian state," it said. Netanyahu was embarked on a new settlement push "instead of taking advantage of the agreements with the Gulf states and promoting peace with the Palestinians", it added.

Excluding annexed east Jerusalem, more than 450,000 Israelis live in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, alongside some 2.7 million Palestinians. Among settlements to grow under the latest approvals is Har Gilo, in the southern West Bank between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. — AFP



NAQOURA, Lebanon: Vehicles of the UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL are pictured near the border with Israel yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives letter from Qatari Amir

Sheikh Nawaf, Sheikh Mishal receive Qatari FM, Saudi prince



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reads a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, during his meeting with Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani yesterday. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Prince Turki Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Prince Turki Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani who handed over a letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani regarding boosting ties in all fields, issues of mutual interest, regional and global developments. His Highness the Amir praised the distinguished and historic relations between the State of Kuwait and Qatar, and said the two countries were keen on developing cooperation in all spheres for the best interest of the two nations and their people. Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah accompanied Sheikh Mohammad Al Thani. Meanwhile,

His Highness the Amir received Saudi Prince Turki Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who offered condolences over the passing of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Prince Turki also congratulated His Highness the Amir on assumption of office, and wished him success and good health.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Saudi Prince Turki Al-Faisal, who extended condolences on the passing of the late Amir, and Sheikh Dr Mohammad. Prince Turki also expressed his sincere congratulations to His Highness the Crown Prince on

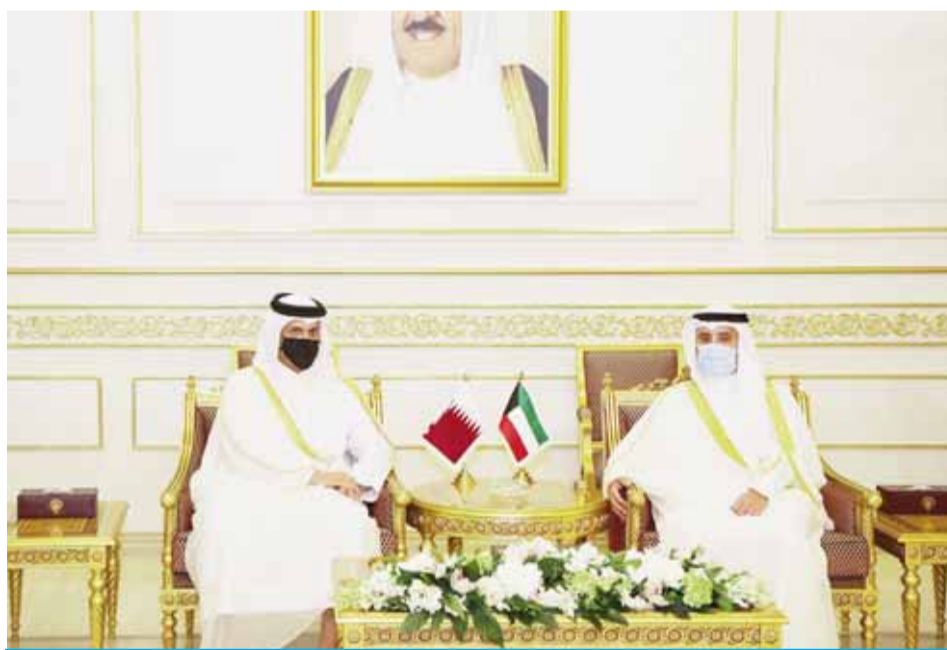
his new post, wishing him success and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad and Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al Thani. The Crown Prince Diwan's head of ceremonials Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah attended the meetings.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received on Tuesday a phone call from Egyptian President Abdulfattah Al-Sisi. During the conversation, President Sisi offered, on behalf of the brotherly people of Egypt, heartfelt condolences over the demise of

the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and prayed that Allah Almighty may give Al-Sabah family strength and solace. He also congratulated His Highness Sheikh Mishal on his inauguration as Crown Prince of Kuwait, wishing him success and the Kuwaiti people more progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked the Egyptian leader for the cordial call and sincere sentiments which materialize the depth of relations between both countries. He wished President Sisi well-being and the Egyptian people more progress and prosperity under his wise leadership. — KUNA

Kuwait, Qatar foreign ministers discuss ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah met yesterday with Qatar's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who was on an official visit to Kuwait. They tackled various issues contributing to bolstering the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the two nations and means to boost and enhance the historical cooperation between the two nations. They also discussed the latest developments on the regional and international arenas and issues of common interest. The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister held a luncheon in honor of his Qatari counterpart's visit. Several senior officials attended the meeting including Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dhari Ajran Al Ajran, the Foreign Minister Assistant for Gulf Cooperation Council Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Mezayyan, Foreign Minister



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Qatar's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. — KUNA photos

Assistant for the Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Bandar Bin

Mohammad Al-Atiyyah, and the accompanying Qatari delegation, along with senior Qatari Foreign Ministry officials. His



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister at Bayan Palace, in the presence of Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad. — KUNA

Amir thanks Guterres after...

Continued from Page 1

UN General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir praised the late Amir as a pioneer of preventive diplomacy due to his commitment to peace and conflict resolution through dialogue. During his time as foreign minister over four decades, he also had a pivotal role in establishing the Gulf Cooperation Council and helped strengthen cooperation in the Middle East and amongst nations of the world, Bozkir added.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad clearly underlined, during the summit for the adoption of sustainable development goals in 2015, Kuwait's commitment to the United Nations 2030 plan, he said, adding that since becoming a UN member in 1963, Kuwait has been an active

partner, working to achieve the organization's goals.

This is why the UN recognizes the work of this prominent leader in humanitarian work, he said, as his leadership contributed to saving tens of thousands of lives and motivated others to participate in humanitarian work. The generosity of Kuwait and its late Amir transcended the Middle East to various parts of the world, Bozkir added.

Africa group and Cameroon representative said the late ruler left an important legacy through his contributions to the development of Kuwait and global humanitarianism. Indonesia's representative said, on behalf of the countries of Asia and the Pacific, that the late Amir will be remembered for his great leadership and generous and sympathetic deeds. The Latvian representative, on behalf of the Eastern European Group, described the late ruler as a wise man and a pioneer in Arab diplomacy, due to his courage and his determination to promote diplomacy in the region and beyond, and a symbol of generosity. — KUNA

Lebanon, Israel start maritime...

Continued from Page 1

Yesterday's talks marked a "first step in the thousand-mile march towards the demarcation" of the sea frontier, Brigadier General Bassam Yassin, head of Lebanon's delegation, said according to an army statement. "We are looking to achieve a pace of negotiations that would allow us to conclude this dossier within reasonable time."

The Naqoura talks, which focused exclusively on the disputed sea frontier, came at a sensitive time as Lebanon, battered by multiple crises, hopes to continue exploring for oil and gas in a part of the Mediterranean also claimed by Israel. US envoy David Schenker facilitated the opening session along with US ambassador to Algeria John

Desrocher, who was the mediator. Security was tight, with roads in the area blocked by UN peacekeepers and Lebanese troops, and helicopters flying overhead.

Israel sent a six-member team, including the director general of its energy ministry, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser and the head of the army's strategic division. Lebanon's four-member delegation comprised two army officers, an official and a maritime border law expert. Israel and Lebanon have no diplomatic relations and yesterday's talks were a rare official interaction.

Lebanon insists that the negotiations are purely technical and don't involve any soft political normalization with Israel. Lebanon's main Shiite parties Hezbollah and Amal issued a statement late Tuesday bemoaning the presence of civilians in the Lebanese negotiating team. "This harms Lebanon's position and interests... and amounts to giving in to the Israeli logic that seeks some form of normalization," they said. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives Crown Prince, state officials

Municipal Council members wish Amir success

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 Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. He also received Sheikh Jaber Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir, meanwhile, received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Municipal Council President Osama Al-Otaibi, his Deputy Abdullah Al-Mehri and the council's Secretary General Bader Al-Rifae who offered their condolences over the passing of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Municipal Council members also congratulated His Highness the Amir on his assumption of office, and wished him success and good health. Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan chief Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah, Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Undersecretary and Director of His Highness the Amir's



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.



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 Municipal Council President Osama Al-Otaibi, his Deputy Abdullah Al-Mehri and the council's Secretary General Bader Al-Rifae.

office Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad and Amiri Protocols Chief Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the meetings.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Speaker

Ghanem, Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour, as

well as the Municipal Council's President Otaibi, his deputy Mehri and the council's Secretary General Rifae. — KUNA

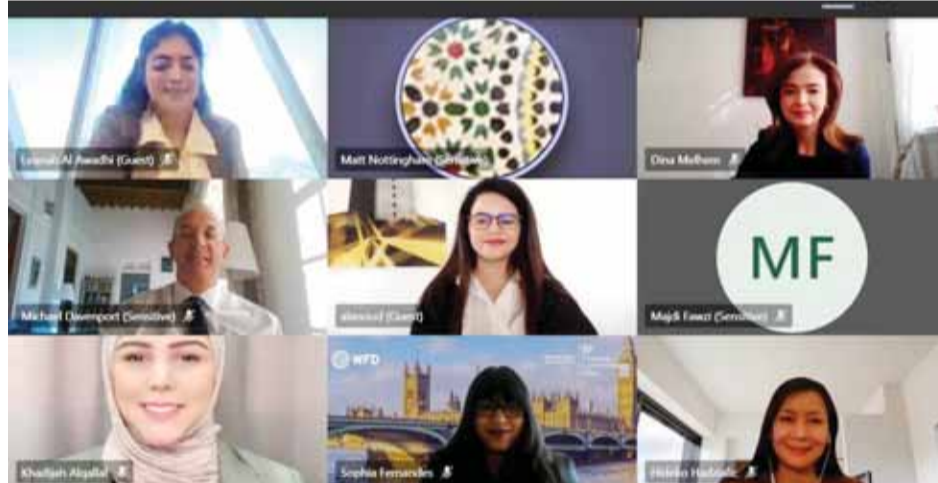
UK embassy hosts roundtable on women in parliament

KUWAIT: The British Embassy in Kuwait held a virtual roundtable yesterday about overcoming the obstacles facing women participants in parliamentary elections, with the participation of some Kuwaiti women candidates for the coming parliamentary elections. British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport started the roundtable by welcoming women parliamentary candidates and other participants including speakers Hideko Hadzialic from UNDP, Dina Melhem and Sophie Fernandes from Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Alanoud Al-Sharikh of Ibtikar and Leannah Al-Awadhi of Mudhawi's List.

The Ambassador recalled the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security and the importance of ensuring greater representation for women in decision-making and elected roles. He said there are 220 women members of UK's House of Commons, at 34 percent an all-time high, but there is still much more

to do. He said that he is keen advocate for getting more women elected and involved in politics. The roundtable was held in coordination with Mudhawi's List, which is an online platform that aims at supporting women candidates running for office.

Awadhi spoke about opportunities that technology offers in this election while Hadzialic, Melhem and Fernandes spoke about overcoming obstacles facing women parliamentary candidates. Sharikh highlighted work in Kuwait to support a network of women entering politics. Women parliamentary candidates who participated in the roundtable are Dr Bibi Ashour, Aliah Al-Khaled, Huda Al-Kraibani, Dr Sheikhha Al-Jasim, Nadia Al-Othman, Reem Al-Aleidan and Dr Khadija Al-Qallaf.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Louis-Pierre Emond visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Amir congratulates UN General Assembly President on new post

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable to Volkan Bozkir, congratulating him on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished Bozkir all success in his new post, as His Highness expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation for his generous initiative to hold a special session on Tuesday, to mourn His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir hailed Bozkir's words regarding His Highness the late Amir's outstanding contributions in supporting the UN activities in various fields and in particular his leadership role in mobilizing support to alleviate the suffering of refugees and those afflicted by natural disasters, wars and crises. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

In other news, Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen congratulated His Highness the Amir on his assumption of power in a letter sent yesterday. The president also wished His Highness the Amir success in his new role, commending the two countries' close bilateral relations. His Highness the Amir, in response, expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the warm sentiments. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received condolence letters yesterday from Montenegro's President Milo Dukanovic and Lithuania's President Gitanas Nauseda over the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The two presidents extended heartfelt commiserations to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people, praising the late Amir's legacy characterized by generosity. In response, His Highness the Amir sent messages highlighting his gratitude and appreciation for the warm sentiments. — KUNA

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Kuwait's COVID-19 cases rise by 532, deaths by four

KUWAIT: Kuwait's confirmed coronavirus cases increased by 532 to 113,269, while four patients passed away during the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 676, the health ministry said yesterday. The figures include people who have come into contact with infected individuals, and others whose source of infection is currently being investigated, read a ministry statement. There are 139 people currently receiving intensive care for the virus out of a total 7,357 patients being hospitalized. Some 4,177 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 786,432 so far, the ministry said. Earlier, the ministry revealed that 728 people have recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 105,236. — KUNA

Kuwait's oil price drops 10 cents

KUWAIT: Kuwait oil lost 10 cents during Tuesday's transactions to close the day at \$40.83 per barrel compared with \$40.93 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Brent futures rose 73 cents to \$42.25 pb and the West Texas Intermediate gained 77 cents to \$40.20 pb. The OPEC daily basket price rose up by 11 cents to stand at \$40.68 per barrel Tuesday compared with \$41.57 pb on Monday, the OPEC Secretariat said yesterday. The annual price for OPEC in 2019 was roughly at \$52.43 pb, it added. In its monthly report, OPEC expected in 2021 for oil to reach million 27.9 pb, which approximately million 5.6 pb higher than it was in 2020. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Oriente (Ecuador), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE), and Meroy (Venezuela). — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The Milky Way galaxy is pictured on October 13, 2020 in Kuwait's Mutriba desert, 100 kilometers northwest of Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Expat exodus forces drop in rents around Kuwait

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Nearly a quarter of a million expatriates have left the country for good after losing their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic. In three months alone till July, 167,000 expats left the country, and according to estimates, the number could rise to more than 1 million, reported Al-Rai Arabic daily. Many real estate companies were directly hit by the exodus and are suffering from low occupancy rates.

"Many of our flats are empty; earlier we used to have almost full occupancy, but now that many expats have left the country, many of our flats are without tenants," a real estate company told Kuwait Times. To cope with the sudden decline in occupants, several apartment owners resorted to cut the monthly rent by KD 20 to KD 40 per month for new renters, although there are no discounts for existing tenants.

"I am shifting to another flat as the rent is only KD 270 compared to KD 310 we are currently paying. The flat owner did not want to give even a KD 10 discount, so when I found an empty flat nearby, I told my roommates that we are moving. They all agreed, so we are going to shift next month," said Marz, a tenant. In order to save money, many expat 'bachelors' and families share apartments. "We are

three families in one flat. We all agreed to move because it means huge savings for us," he added.

Two-bedroom apartments usually priced at KD 350 are now available for KD 270. Most of these types of apartments can be found in Salmiya, Hawally, Maidan Hawally, Farwaniya and as far afield as Mahboula and Fahaheel. Saeed, an Egyptian haris (building janitor), confirmed that flats in Hawally that usually went for KD 320 are now being rented for KD 280. A studio apartment in Salmiya which earlier cost KD 210 is now at KD 180.

He said there are no new takers these days except for those already in the country prior to the pandemic. No new people are coming in, so there are many empty flats, and in order for the flats to be fully occupied, they need to lower the price. "The building owner said they want our building to be fully occupied. We have a few empty flats and I hope I can give more discounts," Saeed said.

"The rent value of flats is reasonable now - it's a good discount compared to the price before COVID-19," he said. "Expats are shifting from one flat to another for cheaper rent, but people are also paying more if they find a location favorable to them," he said.

When moving to a new building in Kuwait, the haris usually demanded a 'gift' or 'ikramiya' of KD

60 to KD 100 and even more, but this practice has been completely eliminated now. "Before COVID, when I moved to our flat, I was told to pay KD 100 to the haris apart from the rent. I paid because they said it was a tradition. But now I am not obliged to pay anything," Marz said.

In my view

Corona it is!



By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

Yes, and I am sorry - it is COVID-19 again! When the coronavirus launched its total and devastating attack towards the end of last year, countries sounded alarms, went on the alert and took several measures in an attempt to contain it and keep it from invading countries that did not have it initially. However, the virus made it to every country and spot on the globe, though I am not sure about the north and south poles, but I remind you the virus can survive in temperatures of around -50 C, so take notice!

Still, initial measures were relatively successful in keeping the number of cases low and prevented the virus from spreading rapidly. This continued for a few months and the number of cases were going down somewhat. Meanwhile, the economy was taking a hard beating, while a huge backlog of work at government offices piled up because of the abrupt halt in functioning, so authorities began a gradual easing of measures on the way to restore normal life and jumpstart the economy!

Health authorities meanwhile kept their instructions as they are, and added to them to prevent people from being infected and transmitting the virus to others. We were warned about a second wave of the virus, which may be more devastating than the first, and people must brace for it!

It seems that people who were frustrated with the measures went out in droves, leaving behind all that is necessary to keep themselves from being infected, so those responsible for disease control started to slow down the full return to normal life and the phases started to drag on, but eventually things progressed to what are almost normal day-to-day activities.

Now we are experiencing the rebound of this vicious virus that did not go to sleep for a second. This opportunistic unseen enemy kept searching for a weak front we created for it and penetrated it with a vengeance. My friends, it is us who are keeping this annoyance around. It is because of our behavior and our lack of compliance with instructions, the very simple steps that we should take to help avoid the disease to a very large extent!

- What is wrong with wearing a mask?!
- What is wrong in keeping a distance between you and others?!
- What is wrong with waiting when too many people are in an elevator?!
- What is wrong in washing hands and using sterilizers before touching your face?!
- What is wrong with going along with common sense?!!

Governments and concerned authorities are now thinking about reversing gears and start reinstating strict and tough measures to gain control over the super-spreading behavior and practices of people. Experts can tell us what to do, but it is we who should execute and implement. And if we do not comply, then it is only us to blame!

I hope the message was delivered. May God bless you all.

Kuwait urges cap on weapons flow for world peace



NEW YORK: Second Secretary of Kuwait's Diplomatic Mission at the UN Ibrahim Al-Dai speaks before the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. — KUNA

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait has restated its unyielding and firm positions on the issues of disarmament and international security by stressing that it is not possible to attain world peace and security unless weapons proliferation is halted. Second Secretary of Kuwait's Diplomatic Mission at the UN Ibrahim Al-Dai made these remarks before the First Committee of the UN General Assembly Tuesday. "Attaining peace obliges all of us to seek to rid humanity of these weapons and to provide and harness material and human potential for the sake of advancement and development," he said.

He noted that Kuwait's stance stems from its respect of international agreements and treaties, and its unwavering belief in relevant obligations, chiefly disarmament-bearing ones. He called for reactivating cooperation in the realm of peaceful use of atomic energy, welcoming the success of the First Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, presided by Jordan. He called anew on all invited parties to join the gathering in order to reach a consensual and binding treaty in this regard, thus bolstering regional and international security and peace.

The Kuwaiti diplomat stressed that it is essential for countries and international organizations to share information and expertise so as to stop the flow of weapons to terrorist groups and entities. He further urged the promotion of international cooperation in order to promote communication and information technology security with a view to boosting the capabilities of countries against cyber-attacks which puts global security in jeopardy. Finally, he hoped that open dialogue and constructive dialogue would continue with the goal of ensuring sustainable peace, peace and stability and shoring up confidence and as well as reducing the perils of weapons proliferation. — KUNA

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Nigeria youth find voice in police brutality protests

Indian jewelry chain withdraws ad after outrage by hardliners



The Soyuz MS-17 spacecraft carrying the International Space Station (ISS) expedition 64 crew of NASA astronaut Kate Rubins and Russian cosmonauts Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov (inset) blasts off to the ISS from the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan yesterday. —AFP

New crew reaches ISS in record time

Emergence of private players has fuelled talk of a new 'space race'

ALMATY, Kazakhstan: A three-person crew successfully reached the International Space Station yesterday aboard a Russian rocket after the fastest ever journey from Earth of just over three hours. The mission of the Soyuz spacecraft carrying two Russian cosmonauts and one NASA astronaut was of immense importance to Russia's space agency Roscosmos, coming as the SpaceX program relaunches manned spaceflight from the United States and ignites fresh talk of a space race between the two countries.

Roscosmos said "a new record for flights to the International Space Station was set - the total time from launch to docking of the Soyuz MS-17 was three hours and three minutes". Roscosmos has had the job of ferrying US astronauts to the ISS since the retirement of the space shuttle in 2011. Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of Roscosmos and NASA's Kathleen Rubins launched from the Russian-operated Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 0545 GMT Wednesday.

Journeys to the ISS usually take around six hours - a time that was a vast

improvement on the two-day flights that prevailed prior to 2013. Yesterday's manned journey even beat the fastest time for missions just carrying supplies to the station. Only an unmanned Progress cargo space ship has previously used this profile which requires just two orbits before docking.

'Incredibly lucky'

The launch is sandwiched between two SpaceX missions - the first manned spaceflights to the ISS under NASA's aegis since 2011. Before May 30, when US astronauts Robert Behnken and Doug Hurley arrived at the ISS courtesy of cars to rockets tycoon Elon Musk, Russia and Baikonur had enjoyed a lucrative monopoly on manned missions to the ISS. But their Dragon Endeavour craft only docked successfully with the ISS about nineteen hours after reaching orbit.

The NASA duo returned safely on Aug 2 and a fresh SpaceX launch, this time anticipating a full-length half-year mission to the space station, is expected next month. The emergence of private players SpaceX and Boeing - part of NASA's

Commercial Crew Program - has fuelled talk of a new "space race" between a number of countries.

But the men and women who fly to the space station play down talk of competition and focus instead on space travel's ability to bring rival nations together for a common cause. Speaking at a pre-launch press conference on Tuesday, Rubins did not directly reference the SpaceX flight when asked how she felt to be on board during a new era in space exploration.

"We don't get to choose our launch date or what occurs on station but certainly I feel incredibly lucky to be on station when... these events are happening," said the American astronaut, who was celebrating her 42nd birthday yesterday.

Stringent precautions, including tighter quarantine and mask-wearing before launch, have been taken due to the coronavirus pandemic but the astronauts and space officials rejected any concerns about a risk of infection on the ISS. "We have a very strict quarantine, almost from March by my perception," said Rubins, a microbiologist who researched the deadly Ebola virus before

she began training as an astronaut.

'Too US-centric'

Ryzhikov, a 46-year-old former military pilot, has spent 173 days in space compared to Rubins' 115 while Kud-Sverchkov, 37, is flying for the first time. On the eve of the launch, Ryzhikov expressed sadness over ongoing fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and said he hoped the example of the ISS could help "spread love, friendship and comradeship".

The ISS, which has been permanently occupied since 2000, has been a rare example of cooperation between Moscow and Washington. Rogozin on Monday said he did not envisage Moscow participating "on a large scale" in a NASA-led Moon-orbiting station known as The Gateway. The proposed new station "is too US-centric" Rogozin said.

The Russian space program has suffered a series of reverses in recent years, most notably the failure of a Soyuz rocket in 2018 just minutes after blast-off - the first such incident in the history of post-Soviet space travel. The two astronauts on board were not hurt. —AFP

Azerbaijan strikes inside Armenia as fighting widens

BAKHARLY, Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan said yesterday it had destroyed missile launchers inside Armenia that were targeting its cities, as fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh risked widening beyond the disputed region. Hundreds have already lost their lives in two weeks of fighting, and continued clashes have rendered almost meaningless a humanitarian ceasefire agreed in Moscow last week.

Armenia confirmed that military positions inside the country had been hit but denied its forces had been firing into Azerbaijan. It warned that it too could start targeting military sites inside its adversary's territory. Clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh - where Armenia-backed separatist fighters are battling Azerbaijani forces - have been largely confined to areas in and around the region since a fresh outbreak of fighting started last month.

Direct confrontations between Armenia and Azerbaijan risk spiraling into an all-out, multi-front war with devastating consequences for both sides. Moscow has so far refused to become drawn into the conflict - even though Armenia is part of a regional Russia-led security group - noting that the organization's treaty does not apply to Karabakh.

Overwhelmingly populated by Armenians, Nagorno-Karabakh has been controlled by Armenians since a 1990s war that erupted as the Soviet Union fell. Azerbaijan has never hidden its desire to win back control and no state has recognized Nagorno-Karabakh's declaration of independence. The latest fighting, which erupted on September 27, has been the most intense since a 1994 ceasefire, claiming more than 600 lives, including more than 70 civilians, according to a tally based on partial tolls from both sides. Each side has accused the other of targeting civilian areas with shelling, missile and rocket attacks.

Tunisians protest after man dies in kiosk demolition

KASSERINE, Tunisia: Angry residents took to the streets of an impoverished Tunisian town on Tuesday after a man died when authorities demolished an illegal kiosk where he was sleeping. The shop in Sbeitla, in the central province of Kasserine, was demolished in the early hours on the orders of local authorities, security sources told AFP. Abderrazek Khachnaoui, the father of the shop's owner, was killed in the operation, according to the same sources and his son.

"I was not informed of this decision... and agents of the municipality proceeded with the destruction without checking if there was someone inside," said the son, 25-year-old Oussama Khachnaoui. "My father, who was only 49 years old, died on the spot. Security agents fired tear gas at my family who had tried to approach my kiosk to save my father," he told AFP. The death sparked angry protests by residents who blocked roads and set fire to a municipal vehicle in Sourour district, where the shop sell-

ing newspapers and cigarettes was located, witnesses told an AFP correspondent.

The protesters also threw stones and other objects at the security forces, the interior ministry said, while the defense ministry added that military and security forces had been deployed "as a precaution" to protect sensitive sites. Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi announced an enquiry into the incident, but Sbeitla residents voiced skepticism. "Will an enquiry tell us anything? There have already been lots of cases like this in Tunisia," said resident Anis Ouled Ben Jama. "People die in these kind of circumstances but afterwards, nothing happens. We find the case has been closed."

Regional officials sacked

Sbeitla, in Tunisia's economically marginalized center, has often seen protests in the past over lack of jobs and investment. Young people often turn to selling newspapers and bread on the informal market in order to support their family's incomes while out of work. Mechichi on Tuesday voiced his support for Khachnaoui's family, saying he had sacked two top regional officials, a district security chief and Sbeitla's police head.

He also dispatched Interior Minister Taoufik Charfeddine "immediately" to offer "moral and material" support to the



SBEITLA: Tunisian protesters take to the streets of this impoverished town on Tuesday after a man died when authorities demolished an illegal kiosk where he was sleeping. —AFP

victim's family. Inland regions of Tunisia have higher unemployment than the already dire national average, which is currently at 18 percent and could top 21 percent by the end of the year. Khachnaoui's death came as Tunisia prepares to mark 10 years since a revolution sparked when a young street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself alight to protest against police harassment. —AFP

Governments use pandemic to crack down on dissent

WASHINGTON: Governments around the world are using the pandemic as a justification to expand surveillance and crack down on dissent online, resulting in a 10th consecutive annual decline in Internet freedom, a human rights watchdog report said yesterday. The report by Washington-based Freedom

House said authorities in dozens of countries have cited the COVID-19 outbreak "to justify expanded surveillance powers and the deployment of new technologies that were once seen as too intrusive".

This is leading to increasing censorship of dissent and the expansion of technological systems for social control, according to the report. "The pandemic is accelerating society's reliance on digital technologies at a time when the Internet is becoming less and less free," said Michael Abramowitz, president of the nonprofit group. "Without adequate safeguards for privacy and the rule of law, these technologies can be easily repurposed for political repression."

Freedom House's index of Internet based on a

score assigned on a 100-point scale to 65 countries shows a drop in internet freedom for a 10th straight year. The scale is based on 21 indicators pertaining to obstacles to access, limits on content and violations of user rights. China was the worst-ranked country for the sixth consecutive year, according to the report.

It said Chinese authorities "combined low- and high-tech tools not only to manage the outbreak of the coronavirus, but also to deter Internet users from sharing information from independent sources and challenging the official narrative". The report said these trends are showing a growing trend toward Chinese-style "digital authoritarianism" globally and a "splintering" of the internet as each government imposes its own regulations. —AFP

Thuds of shelling

Azerbaijan's defense ministry said in statements yesterday that it had destroyed ballistic missile launchers deployed in Armenia in two separate attacks overnight. The OTR-21 Tochka mobile systems were in areas of Armenia bordering the Kalbajar district of Azerbaijan that is under separatist control, it said. Launchers at the first site were aiming at the Azerbaijani cities of Ganja, Mingachevir and other populated areas, it said. Armenian defense ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan confirmed that military positions in the area had been hit. But she denied that Armenian forces had ever fired "a single missile, shell or projectile" inside Azerbaijan. Armenia's military now "reserves the right to target any military installations and combat movements on the territory of Azerbaijan", she said on Twitter.

Nagorno-Karabakh's regional capital Stepanakert was under heavy shelling and rocket fire for days before the ceasefire, forcing thousands to flee their homes or seek shelter in basements. AFP journalists in the city said it was quiet yesterday, after several days of relative calm since the ceasefire deal took effect at noon on Saturday. —AFP

International

Growing antipathy to Trump among Florida's seniors as coronavirus rages

Republican stronghold state slowly moving closer to supporting Biden

MIMAI: It should have been an idyllic dotage in coastal Florida for Gregory Zec and his wife. Instead, they are contemplating a retirement overshadowed by uncertainty and fear because of a viral outbreak that has laid low friends and family alike. Like other seniors, the 69-year-old and his septuagenarian wife are high risk for a raging coronavirus epidemic that has killed 215,000 Americans and turned many of the elderly against President Donald Trump in a crucial election year.

"The big thing for me is the coronavirus because that is killing a lot of people and it's getting worse," said Zec, 69, who lives with his 72-year-old wife in Sarasota on Florida's west coast.

He said several of his friends and relatives had fallen sick from the virus, and some ended up in intensive care. "Looks like by the end of the year as many people will be dead from this as from World War II," Zec told AFP, citing projections that more the US death toll could surpass 300,000 in the coming months.

More than 15,300 people have died of the disease so far in Florida. "I don't want to be one and I don't want my wife to be one," said Zec. "The magnitude is big." Zec worked for 35 years in the pharmaceutical industry and did not want to say who he voted for in 2016. But he said there was no way he would be voting for Trump on November 3.

The way the president dealt with his own infection, stage-managing his return from hospital to the White House in a helicopter, did not help sway his opinion either. "When he got off the helicopter, I thought it was pathetic," said Zec. "He had a lot of spray tan on, makeup which I don't like to see in a man, and standing on a balcony remind me of Benito Mussolini," the Italian fascist leader who allied with Nazi Germany in World War II.



Key state remains unpredictable

Key state, but unpredictable

Opinion polls suggest that this voting group in a traditional Republican stronghold are slowly moving closer to supporting Trump's opponent, Democrat Joe Biden.

A Quinnipiac poll on October 7 showed a comfortable advantage for Biden over Trump of 55 to 40 percent among voters aged 65 or over in Florida. In addition, those who voided their ballot or voted for a third party candidate in 2016 are leaning toward the former vice president, said Eduardo Gamarra, a lecturer in political science at Florida International University.

Eyeing that shift, Biden made a flying visit to Florida Tuesday to address seniors. "The only senior that Donald Trump cares about is the senior Donald Trump," the 77-year-old Democrat told a small gathering at a retirement community center in Pembroke Pines, north of Miami.

"He's never been focused on you," Biden said. "You are expendable, you are forgettable, you are virtually nobody. That's how he sees this." Gamarra said he was nevertheless wary of the trend toward Biden because the election

is still three weeks away and the situation remains "very volatile." Nevertheless, he said there is no doubt that "there has been movement, especially among the over-65s...and that is probably due to the issue of the pandemic." Florida, with 14 million voters, has historically had a high proportion of older citizens in the United States (20.5 percent) because of all the pensioners who come to its balmy climate for their retirement.

At the same time it is crucial in elections because it carries 29 of the 270 electoral colleges votes needed to win the White House, and, just adding to the suspense, its results are generally very difficult to predict. For example, in 2000, the Republican candidate George W. Bush won the White House by

close, and non-medical face coverings mandatory in all indoor spaces for people aged over 13. In Britain, Labor opposition leader Keir Starmer called for a 2-3 week "circuit break" lockdown to slow the rates, saying the government had "lost control" of the outbreak having ignored stringent measures suggested by scientific experts on September 21.

French President Emmanuel Macron was expected to announce tighter restrictions and faster testing in a prime-time TV interview late yesterday, with some media speculating Paris and other cities could face evening curfews.

Meanwhile China—where COVID-19 first emerged late last year—launched a drive to test all residents of Qingdao after a handful of cases were detected on Sunday. More than four million samples had been collected and 1.9 million results returned as of Tuesday afternoon, Qingdao authorities said, adding that no new cases had been found beyond already confirmed infections.

Chinese officials intend to test the entire city—around 9.4 million people—by today.

In scenes contrasting with the fumbled testing efforts elsewhere, health workers in protective clothing swiftly set up tents and residents queued up to provide samples. As the rest of Europe struggled to contain the disease, Russia also reported its highest-ever number of daily virus deaths, at 244, and a record number of new

cases at almost 14,000.

Italy imposed new, tougher rules to control a resurgence, including an end to parties, amateur football matches and snacking at bars at night. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki became the latest high-profile figure to go into quarantine after coming into contact with an infected person.

And Portugal's football federation said star striker Cristiano Ronaldo had tested positive for the virus. —AFP

for the White House and control of Congress has helped inspire the high turnout, and many Americans are casting ballots early to avoid Election Day crowds amid coronavirus safety concerns. By way of comparison, as of Oct. 16, 2016, some 1.4 million Americans had cast early votes.

"Voting as early as possible and making sure your vote counts is the best way to end the craziness of this year," said Brandon Marcy, 40, who stood in line for 45 minutes to vote for Biden at a Lubbock, Texas, grocery store. Tina Wilson, a 58-year-old Republican, voted for Trump in Lubbock after waiting in line for about 30 minutes. She regularly votes early but felt a more urgent need this year because of concerns about the pandemic and the logistics of voting. —Reuters

from the impact of corruption, violence and a lack of opportunities. Victims of police abuse in Nigeria are often between 16 and 35 years old according to data collected by SBM Intelligence, a research and data consultancy. —AFP



SANFORD: Supporters of US President Donald Trump attend a Make America Great Again rally as he campaigns at Orlando Sanford International Airport in Sanford, Florida. —AFP

just 537 votes in Florida, while in 2016 Trump won the state with a margin of 1.4 points.

To see the grandkids or not

That is why any movement in the polls, no matter how small, can be significant. This year, said Gamarra, the difference could be made by the small voting community of Venezuelans, by the more numerous Cuban-America community or even with white Republican pensioners who have become disillusioned with their party.

"Florida seniors now hold the keys to the White House," said Lorraine Tulliano, president of the Orlando chapter of the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans. "It's been a rather devastating seven months. We are staying home, we only go out for

necessities," she said. "I haven't seen my mother and my family for seven months... I don't think the Trump administration understands how regular people live."

Seniors who backed Biden in Florida used to stage timid rallies in his favor with small golf cart rallies in The Villages, the largest retirement community in Florida and a bastion of Trump supporters.

Vice President Mike Pence went to The Villages on Saturday where he called on supporters not to heed the polls and to vote to ensure that "America remains America." According to pictures posted on Facebook by Democrats in The Villages, a small airplane flew over the Pence gathering trailing a banner for the community's 100,000 residents to read. It said, "Pence is why you can't see your grandkids." —AFP

Lockdowns from China to Europe as virus trials stumble

PARIS: As Europe imposed new restrictions to try to stall a surging second wave of the novel coronavirus, hopes for vaccines to rapidly provide relief suffered a blow Tuesday with the suspension of two clinical trials in the United States.

China meanwhile rushed to test an entire city of nine million within days after a minor coronavirus outbreak in the sprawling country, and Europe struggled to tackle a new surge of infections.

The virus is still spreading rapidly worldwide, with over one million deaths and 37 million infections. Many nations that suppressed their first outbreaks now face a second wave. Hopes for a rapid vaccine rollout suffered a setback as US pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly said it had suspended the Phase 3 trial of its antibody treatment over an unspecified incident, the second in less than 24 hours after Johnson & Johnson ran into a similar problem.

In Europe, the Netherlands imposed a "partial lockdown" to curb one of the region's worst coronavirus surges, with all bars, cafes and restaurants to

Record early US turnout with 3 weeks to go

LUBBOCK, Texas: Texans on Tuesday joined a wave of Americans casting ballots at a record-setting pace, jamming early-voting polling places ahead of a Nov 3 election showdown between Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden. Long lines of voters snaked out the doors and down the sidewalks at polling places in cities around

Nigeria youth find voice in police brutality protests

LAGOS: Protests against police brutality in Nigeria have brought Africa's largest city to a standstill and dominated social media, channeling anger among the frustrated youth that has forced the government to listen. From raising funds online to influencers drawing big crowds, the campaign has topped Twitter worldwide and received support from some of Africa's biggest celebrities.

In Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and other cities, young protesters have sang and danced, sprayed graffiti and snapped themselves for Instagram as they brandish placards reading "stop police violence", "no justice, no peace". "This is unprecedented," Udo Jude Ilo from the Open Society Initiative in West Africa said, pointing out that protests in Nigeria are normally organized by political parties or unions.

"Young people who are usually seen as removed from governance were now asking the hard ques-



DORTMUND: People wearing protective face masks walk in the pedestrian area in the city of Dortmund, western Germany, yesterday amid the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. —AFP

cases at almost 14,000.

Italy imposed new, tougher rules to control a resurgence, including an end to parties, amateur football matches and snacking at bars at night. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki became the latest high-profile figure to go into quarantine after coming into contact with an infected person.

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LAGOS: A Nigerian youth seen waving the Nigerian national flag in support of the ongoing protest against the unjust brutality of The Nigerian Police Force Unit named Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Lagos on Tuesday. —AFP

from the impact of corruption, violence and a lack of opportunities. Victims of police abuse in Nigeria are often between 16 and 35 years old according to data collected by SBM Intelligence, a research and data consultancy. —AFP

News in brief

WB OKs \$12bn for COVID vaccines

WASHINGTON: The World Bank said Tuesday that it approved \$12 billion for developing countries to finance the purchase and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatment. The financing "aims to support vaccination of up to a billion people," the bank said in a statement. The money is part of an overall World Bank Group (WBG) package of up to \$160 billion through June 2021 designed to help developing countries battle the novel coronavirus pandemic. "This financing package helps signal to the research and pharmaceutical industry that citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines," the statement read. Access to safe and effective vaccines "and strengthened delivery systems is key to alter the course of the pandemic and help countries experiencing catastrophic economic and fiscal impacts move toward a resilient recovery," World Bank Group President David Malpass said in the statement. —AFP

Indonesia seeks 'equal access'

JAKARTA: Developing countries must have "equal access" to future Covid-19 vaccines, Indonesia's foreign minister warned, as wealthy nations scoop up billions of doses. Retno Marsudi said it was crucial for rich and poor nations to work together so "we can guarantee equal access to a safe and affordable vaccine". "Can you imagine...if most vaccines go to developed countries?" Marsudi told AFP in a video interview from London. "What will be the fate of the developing countries?" Marsudi's comments follow an Oxfam report last month that found a group of wealthy nations representing just 13 percent of the global population have already bought up more than half of the promised doses of future COVID-19 vaccines. —Reuters

Author sued over Melania tell-all

WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department filed suit Tuesday against a former aide to Melania Trump over her tell-all book on the US first lady. The department said that Stephanie Winston Wolkoff, who published the book "Melania and Me" last month, had committed not to disclose information about President Donald Trump's wife that was gleaned from her position as a White House volunteer. While Wolkoff, who worked on an unpaid basis for Melania during 2017-2018, was not a federal employee, the suit says she nevertheless signed an enforceable "contract" called a gratuitous services agreement. In that agreement, she was "specifically prohibited from publishing, reproducing or otherwise divulging any such information to any unauthorized person or entity in whole or in part." She also was forbidden from profiting on what she learned in the White House, without the approval of White House lawyers, the suit said. —AFP

Lebanese Christian nomination

BEIRUT: Lebanese politician Samir Geagea, whose Lebanese Forces party has the second biggest Christian bloc in parliament, said yesterday it would not nominate anyone to be the new prime minister at official consultations to fill the post. Geagea's comments came after Sunni leader Saad al-Hariri held meetings with Lebanese political blocs about forming a new government that would implement a French roadmap to lift the country from an unprecedented financial crisis. President Michel Aoun is set to hold formal consultations today with parliamentary blocs to pick a new prime minister. —Reuters

International

Thousands of villagers flee Taliban onslaught in southern Afghanistan

People fear militants' return outside shadow of US forces

LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan: Tens of thousands of people in southern Afghanistan have fled their homes following days of heavy fighting between the Taliban and security forces, officials said yesterday, as violence continues to soar despite ongoing peace talks.

Taliban militants launched a series of attacks on the city of Lashkar Gah in restive Helmand province on Sunday night, prompting the US to call in air strikes to defend Afghan forces. The fighting triggered an exodus by local residents who crammed onto motorcycles, taxis and buses. "More than 5,100 families or 30,000 people... have fled the fighting so far," Seyed Mohammad Ramin, director of the refugees department in Helmand, said. "Some families are still living in the open in the streets in Lashkar Gah, we don't have tents to give them."



Internally displaced people with their belongings flee from Nadali district to Lashkar Gah during the ongoing clashes between Taliban fighters and Afghan security forces, in Helmand province yesterday. — AFP

civilians, inc. safe paths for those wishing to leave" the area.

A collision between two helicopters early yesterday in Helmand's Nawa district also killed at least nine people, according to Omar Zhwak, a spokesperson for the provincial governor. The defense ministry said they were investigating the incident. Helmand—a Taliban stronghold—is where international forces fought some of the bloodiest campaigns of Afghanistan's 19-year war.

Villagers live in fear

Living in the shadow of a US military base had provided protection to villagers in eastern Afghanistan, but locals now say the recent withdrawal of foreign troops has left them exposed to militant attacks. "When the Americans were here, there were drones in the air 24

hours a day and there were no Taliban and Islamic State," said Kameen Khan, who lives near one former US base in the Achin district of Nangarhar province. "In the months since they left the area, the Taliban and IS have restarted their activities," he told AFP.

Dozens of US special forces set up shop in Achin—and at another base in neighboring Haska Mina—to fight IS after the militants seized large parts of Nangarhar in 2015 and established a foothold in Afghanistan. For a while, the province was terrorized by jihadists, who sometimes beheaded locals or forced them to sit on bombs before detonating them.

They also destroyed health centers and forced schools to close. For many in nearby towns and villages, the US arrival provided a welcome respite: attacks dropped dramatically as drones and jets pummeled militant positions. The Pentagon focused significant resources on the area, including in 2017 when it deployed the military's largest non-nuclear weapon, the MOAB, nicknamed "Mother Of All Bombs", on an IS cave complex. "Security got better, people were happy," said Haska Mina governor Rizwanullah Basharmal.

Haji Gul Shinwari, who lives in Achin, said the American presence had meant farmers could return to their fields in relative safety. "But since they left, we cannot go outside at night, as we worry the Taliban or IS will come again," he said.

Mines shut down

Living alongside a US military base also allowed trade to flourish, and the presence of nearby troops provided some stability to industries such as talc mining. But now several nearby mines have shut down, said Hayatullah, whose relatives were involved in the extraction of the mineral used in products ranging from baby powder to paint. "Over the years, traders came here to invest in mines, but when US forces left, they too left,"

said Hayatullah, who like many Afghans goes by one name.

The withdrawal of US troops has been a cornerstone of US President Donald Trump's plans to end America's longest war. His administration cut a deal with the Taliban in February, promising a full troop withdrawal in exchange for a commitment from the group to stop trans-national jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda and IS from operating in Afghanistan. Last week, Trump tweeted that all US forces in Afghanistan "should" be home by Christmas, a move that would hasten the withdrawal timeline by about four months. US forces began leaving the Achin and Haska Mina bases in November after Afghan officials declared victory over IS. The withdrawals were completed in May and July respectively.

Some limitations

During recent visits to the facilities, signs of the former American presence remained—including small stars-and-stripes flags in various rooms and US military emblems spray-painted onto walls. Afghan forces have now assumed full control but admit to some limitations. "American forces had modern equipment like drones and were controlling the area from the air," said First Lieutenant Hashmatullah, a commander of about 60 men at the Achin base. "Unfortunately we don't have those capabilities." — AFP

Afghan forces have some limitations

Local resident Hekmatullah said he was forced to flee after a mortar hit his neighbor's house, killing two women. "The fighting was so intense that I did not have time to take any extra clothes. I only took my family," said Attaullah Afghan, a farmer who fled with his family of 12. Fighting was ongoing in at least four districts yesterday, Afghan officials said, adding that security forces have repelled repeated Taliban assaults in the area. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said thousands had fled and called on Taliban fighters and security forces "to take all feasible measures to protect



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (center) on her campaign trail. — AFP

Ardern set to win in New Zealand's 'COVID election'

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: There were no masks on display as about 1,000 university students gave Jacinda Ardern a rock-star reception during her final Wellington campaign rally this week—and the New Zealand prime minister was fine with that. Ardern, also without a face covering, happily posed for selfies alongside dozens of youthful supporters, rubbing shoulders with a disregard for social distancing that would spark outrage almost anywhere else in the world. Success containing COVID-19 means masks and distancing are no longer mandatory in New Zealand, an achievement upon which Ardern has staked her political future in Saturday's general election.

"When people ask, is this a Covid election, my answer is yes, it is," the charismatic center-left leader said when launching her bid for another three-year term. Indications so far are that the strategy is working, with Ardern's Labor Party enjoying a strong lead in opinion polls after a campaign light on policy detail but full of references to quashing the coronavirus. "Who's better placed to keep New Zealand safe and who's better placed to get us on track to recovery?" the 40-year-old asked during a debate with Judith Collins, leader of the main opposition National Party. New Zealand has recorded just 25 Covid-19 deaths in a population of five million and its response has been singled out for praise by the World Health Organization. Aside from closed borders and a pandemic-induced recession, everyday life on the South Pacific nation is near-normal, as unrestricted crowds flock to sporting events and bars without fear of infection.—AFP

Thai protest rivals in show of force on Bangkok streets

BANGKOK: Thousands of Thai anti-government protesters and royalist supporters of King Maha Vajiralongkorn staged rival shows of force yesterday with political tension growing after three months of demonstrations. Anti-government demonstrators set off from the Democracy Monument for the government's official compound, known as Government House, to demand the departure of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, and a new constitution. They have also called for reform of the monarchy.

Just meters away, were a mixture of security forces, state employees and royalists who had all dressed in the royal yellow color before a royal motorcade was due to pass along the road. Despite some brief scuffles, the two sides largely kept apart, but the standoff revived fears of trouble in a country that suffered a decade of street violence between supporters and opponents of the establishment before a 2014 coup.

"Have faith in democracy. We cannot fall back," protest leader Parit "Penguin" Chirawat, told protest-

India's Tata Group pulls controversial ad after outcry

NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD: A subsidiary of India's tea-to-telecoms Tata Group has withdrawn a jewelry advertisement featuring a Hindu-Muslim family celebrating a baby shower, following threats to one of its stores and wide criticism on social media. Muslims make up about 15 percent of India's 1.3 billion people, most of whom are Hindu, and marriages between the two communities are still taboo in some regions.

Tanishq, a jewelry firm and unit of the Tata-controlled Titan Company Ltd, released the advertisement in its "Ekattvam", or oneness campaign, showing a Hindu bride and her Muslim in-laws holding a baby shower in the Hindu tradition. Yesterday, staff at the Tanishq jewelry store in the city of Gandhidham in western Gujarat state told Reuters they had posted an apology outside the store following hundreds of threatening calls.

"The Tanishq ad appearing in media today is shameful," read Monday's note, written in Gujarati, the state language. "Gandhidham Tanishq seeks forgiveness from the entire Hindu community of Kutch district." Although some people had gone to the store seeking an apology for the advertisement, police official Mayur Patil told Reuters, there were no physical threats.

"They did get a lot of phone calls because of the ad, but there has been no attack or ransacking," added Patil, a police superintendent in the area. "Police are present at the store, and the store is functioning." Calls to boycott the company over the advertisement were trending on social media on Tuesday, with some people accusing it of promoting "Love Jihad", a reference to the idea of a conspiracy by Muslims to forcibly convert Hindu women.

In a statement late on Tuesday, Tanishq said it withdrew the film due to "hurt sentiments, and the well-being of our employees, partners and store staff". The withdrawal has also provoked criticism that the company is pandering to extremists. "Its capitulation points to the pervasive atmosphere of fear and intimidation that some have unleashed in the country," said Shashi Tharoor, a prominent opposition lawmaker. "Never thought I'd see the day when purveying communal hatred is the new normal." Founded in 1868, Tata is one of India's largest and well-known companies, with dozens of businesses spanning chemicals to consultancy.—Reuters



HYDERABAD: Residents gather on a flooded street outside their homes following heavy rains in Hyderabad yesterday. — AFP

Heavy rains kill 12 in India, damage crops

MUMBAI: Heavy rains have killed at least 12 people in southern India and caused widespread flooding in the city Hyderabad, home to major IT companies and startups, government officials said yesterday. A wall collapsed killing nine people in Hyderabad, the capital of the southern state of Telangana, while the other three were killed in separate incidents, they said. Torrential rain also battered the neighboring state of Andhra Pradesh. Many parts of Hyderabad had received more than 25 cm (10 inches) of rainfall over the past 24 hours, a government official said, while floodwater inundated main roads and caused widespread chaos. Authorities in Hyderabad declared a holiday yesterday and today and asked residents to stay indoors.

Residents posted pictures of waterlogged homes, offices and streets on Twitter. "Heavy to very heavy" rain was expected in the neighboring Maharashtra state today, the India Meteorological Department said in its daily forecast. The rains have damaged rice paddies and other crops such as corn, cotton, and pulses, traders said, but they said it was too early to assess the full extent of crop losses. — Reuters



BANGKOK: Student Union of Thailand spokesperson Panusaya "Rung" Sithijirawattanakul (center) speaks from a truck as pro-democracy protesters march towards the Government House during an anti-government rally in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

ers. While thousands of yellow-clad people lined the streets as the protesters passed, it was not clear how many were there from conviction. One gave the three-fingered salute of the anti-government protesters, who rushed to shake his hand. Royalist leader Buddha Issara said the protesters could demand democracy, but must not call for reforms of the monarchy, as some have done. "They must not touch

on the institution," he told reporters. Protesters made a rare direct challenge to the king on Tuesday, chanting at his passing convoy after 21 activists were arrested during scuffles with police. Police said detainees would be charged with public order offences yesterday. The protests have become the greatest challenge in years to a ruling establishment dominated by the army and the palace.—Reuters

News in brief

India frees Kashmir politician

SRINAGAR: India has freed a former chief minister of Kashmir who was detained 14 months ago along with thousands of others when New Delhi imposed direct rule on the disputed region with a huge security clampdown. Mehbooba Mufti was released late Tuesday after remaining in custody since August 2019 when the Indian government imposed emergency laws, snapped all communications and sent thousands of extra troops into the Muslim-majority state. Mufti, 61, was arrested along with three other former chief ministers and other top politicians under the Public Safety Act that allows authorities to keep people in custody for up to two years without charge or a trial. The other three former chief ministers have since been released but many of the roughly 8,000 other detainees, including some politicians, remain in custody. Mufti's detention order was revoked late Tuesday, without authorities providing any explanation, just a day before India's Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a petition in her case. — Reuters

Neo-Nazi leaders sentenced

ATHENS: A Greek court yesterday handed a 13-year prison sentence to the leader of neo-Nazi group Golden Dawn for running a criminal organization disguised as a political party. As well as Nikos Michaloliakos, the party's founder — who received an additional one year for illegal possession of a weapon — the court also sentenced five former members of his inner circle to prison terms on the criminal organization charge. They included current independent European Parliament member Ioannis Lagos. Greek judicial authorities must send a request to the European parliament for Lagos' immunity to be lifted. The court also gave a life sentence to the Golden Dawn member who murdered anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in 2013, the act that sparked the investigation into the paramilitary group.—AFP

Hunt for missing in Vietnam

HANOI: A search operation has been launched for a missing rescue team as severe flooding and landslides battered central Vietnam, authorities said yesterday, as the country braced for further heavy rain. Close to a million people have been impacted by heavy downpours and rising waters since mid-last week, with more than 200,000 homes flooded, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Thirty-six people are now dead, Vietnam's disaster management authority said, while rescue workers have launched a search for around 30 people missing at a hydropower plant in Thua Thien Hue province following landslides. The missing include a team of soldiers and officials who had tried to find plant workers who disappeared days ago.

Australia concerned about writer

SYDNEY: Australia yesterday expressed deep concern at the prosecution of writer Yang Hengjun after Beijing officials confirmed an espionage case against him would go ahead. Foreign Minister Marise Payne said officials had been shown no evidence to support charges against the Chinese-Australian, despite repeatedly asking Beijing for details of the case. "The government is disappointed and deeply concerned that Chinese authorities have decided to prosecute Australian citizen and academic Dr Yang Hengjun," Payne said in a statement. Relations between China and Australia have been peppered with spy scandals and trade rows in recent months, with both sides accusing the other of harassing citizens as diplomatic leverage. Yang Hengjun, a pen name for the spy novelist and former diplomat Yang Jun, became an Australian citizen in 2002. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2020

Zain first operator in Kuwait to offer Samsung's latest Smart TVs

Most advanced innovations and highest viewing quality

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the offering of a range of Samsung smart TVs for postpaid customers, featuring the most advanced innovations, the highest viewing quality, and many smart features on Zain's largest and fastest 5G network in Kuwait, starting at KD 5 monthly only.

Yesterday's announcement makes Zain the first telecom operator in Kuwait to offer the latest smart TVs from Samsung, reflecting the company's continuous efforts to introduce a refreshed line of the most advanced products and services. This comes to meet the unique digital lifestyles of its customers on both personal and professional levels, especially as they represent the biggest family of subscribers in Kuwait. Zain postpaid customers can now enjoy a range of the latest and most advanced smart TVs from Samsung as standalone devices or bundled with Zain's 5G plans, which come with a variety of monthly 5G Internet capacities to meet their unique personal needs. The new devices include the Samsung Crystal UHD, which features a 4K display with over a billion

shades of color. The device comes in three different display sizes, and starts at KD 5 monthly only.

The new devices also include The Sero, an innovative and first of its kind TV with a unique display that rotates to perfectly fit the user's content, starting at KD 10 monthly only. Zain also offers the Samsung QLED with a high quality 4K

or through the Zain Online Store (zain.to/samsungtv) and enjoy FREE delivery to their doorstep. Noting that Zain follows strict health protocols that adhere to official precautionary measures to ensure the safety of both customers and staff, Zain recently received 'Kuwait's Fastest Fixed Broadband Network' award for Q1-Q2 2020 from Ookla, the company behind the renowned Speedtest Internet testing platform, and the global leader in transparent Internet testing applications, data, and analysis.

The announcement comes to reinforce Zain's leadership in the Kuwaiti market, especially with regards to the company's offering of the largest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait. Since commercially launching fifth generation wireless technology (5G) back in June 2019, Zain was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. The company succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, ultimately transforming the telecom sector across the country and region.



Offer starts from KD 5 monthly

display, which comes in three different display sizes and starts at KD 10 monthly only. In addition, Zain offers the Samsung QLED 8K with the highest quality QLED 8K display, which comes in two different sizes and starts at KD 21 monthly.

Customers can easily get any of these new devices by visiting Zain's branches

SHOP FROM OUR WIDE RANGE OF SAMSUNG TVs STARTING FROM KD5



8K | 4K | UHD | The Sero
Available in 43"/55"/ 65"/75"

Apple joins 5G revolution with 4 new iPhones

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple joined the move to 5G on Tuesday, unveiling four new iPhones which use the new standard in what could be a turning point for the high-speed wireless technology.

"Today is the beginning of a new era for iPhone," Apple chief executive Tim Cook said during a streamed launch event from the company's headquarters in California. "This is a huge moment for all of us. And we're really excited. 5G will bring a new level of performance for downloads and uploads, higher quality video streaming, more responsive gaming, real time interactivity and so much more."

The new models include the redesigned iPhone 12 — successor to the top-selling iPhone 11 launched last year—with a display of 6.1 inches at a starting price of \$799, available October 23. A smaller iPhone 12 mini with a 5.4 inch display will start at \$699 and will be in stores November 13.

With more features, the iPhone 12 Pro will launch this month from \$999 and the 6.7 inch Pro Max from \$1,099 in November, the same levels as their predecessors. The new handsets offer improvements

to the camera system and a redesign that adds more display with a smaller overall size.

The new lineup of iPhones was expected to ignite a surge in interest in smartphone upgrades to take advantage of the faster networks. Apple's move could ignite interest in 5G devices as the new, fast networks are slowly being rolled out in the United States and other parts of the world.

"Apple drives a lot of technology shifts in the industry, and the iPhone 12 supports 5G in all its forms on four different phones," said Avi Greengart, analyst with Techspontial. "5G has not been a big purchase driver in most markets, but that could start changing now, and Apple is now much better positioned to succeed in the one place where consumers have been buying 5G phones—China." Thomas Husson of Forrester Research tweeted that "Apple will do more for 5G than 5G will do for the new iPhones... experiences can only improve as telcos progressively roll out networks."

Joining 5G revolution

Apple joins other handset makers including Samsung and Huawei in introducing smartphones taking advantage of the growing 5G footprint around the world, which could open up new markets and technologies. 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 communicate instantly.



In this photo released by Apple, Apple CEO Tim Cook holds up the all-new iPhone 12 Pro during an Apple event at Apple Park in Cupertino, California on Tuesday. — AFP

The growth of 5G could also be a catalyst to revive a sluggish smartphone market. Total smartphone sales were down 16 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, according to research firm IDC.

The new iPhones give Apple a range of handsets from the \$400 iPhone SE launched earlier this year, as the company seeks to expand its ecosystem with more digital content and services. Stephen Mears of Futuresource Consulting said Apple appears to be holding the line on prices to gain more consumers as it drives further into services. — AFP

Post-Brexit trade talks on brink as time runs out

BRUSSELS: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen hold crunch talks today with time running short for the two leaders to decide on whether it is worth pursuing post-Brexit trade negotiations. The call between the two comes on the eve of an EU summit that Johnson had declared to be the deadline for a breakthrough, but a source close to the talks said he would only decide after the meeting.

The European Union had never recognized the October 15 ultimatum, but diplomats have prepared a draft summit conclusion proposing to "intensify" the negotiations.

A source close to the negotiations told reporters that Johnson's call with Von der Leyen would not necessarily be decisive. The source said that London would not make any decision on next steps before hearing the result of today's summit. EU spokesman Eric Mamer said the call would take place at 8:30pm (1830 GMT) and would also involve EU Council president Charles Michel.

Today, the 27 EU leaders will meet in Brussels and the log-jam in the post-Brexit trade talks with their former partner will be the first item on their summit program. According to draft conclusions seen by AFP, they will express concern "that progress on key issues of interest to the Union is still not sufficient for an agreement to be reached."

And they will invite EU negotiator Michel Barnier to "intensify negotiations" to strike and implement a trade deal before January 1, when the UK will have left the single market. Britain left the European Union



Lorries are held in a formation on the A256 a few miles north of Dover in southern England as they take part in a trial to tackle potential post-Brexit traffic queues heading into the country's main Port of Dover. — AFP

on January 31, but Barnier and UK negotiator David Frost have been locked in inconclusive talks on a follow-on arrangement for cross-Channel business.

If no deal is reached, trade rules will revert to the bare bones of World Trade Organization regulations.

Fair competition

Both sides insist they are ready for this—and would prefer it to accepting a deal that breaks their red lines—but experts forecast severe economic disruption. Seeking to spur progress, Johnson declared October 15 to be his deadline to reach a deal or walk away. This date now seems likely to pass without talks breaking down. On Tuesday, after meeting EU ministers in Luxembourg, Barnier stressed that much remains to be done. "The EU will continue to work for a fair deal in the coming days and weeks," he tweeted. In response, a UK government source accused Brussels of "using the old playbook in which they thought running down the clock would work against the UK." — AFP

Goldman Sachs profit blows past estimates

NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs Group Inc yesterday posted its best quarterly performance in a decade by some measures, as its trading business moved back into the limelight and its lack of a big consumer business switched from a curse to a blessing. The Wall Street trading powerhouse easily outperformed rivals JPMorgan Chase & Co and Citigroup Inc with a 29 percent jump in overall trading revenue, as clients bought and sold more stocks and bonds to adjust their portfolios in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The bank's shares rose nearly 3 percent in pre-market trading as it reported a 49 percent surge in bond trading revenue to \$2.5 billion. Equities trading revenue rose 10 percent to \$2.05 billion.

Unlike rivals such as JPMorgan and Bank of America Corp, Goldman has a relatively small consumer business, even though it has been one of the top strategic priorities for Chief Executive David Solomon who wants Goldman to look more like a Main Street bank. However, the lack of a large consumer bank has proved to be a blessing for Goldman, protecting it from loan defaults during the pandemic and the impact of low interest rates.

In the third quarter, Goldman set aside \$278 million to cover loans that go bad, compared with \$1.59 billion in the second quarter. Goldman's return on equity (ROE) climbed to 17.5 percent, its best since 2010. Metrics like RoE help measure how well a bank uses shareholder money to produce profit. — Reuters

Saudi hosts G20 talks on recovery and debt relief

RIYADH: G20 finance ministers and central bankers were holding talks yesterday aimed at spurring global recovery from a coronavirus-triggered recession while considering a proposal to extend debt relief for crisis-hit poor countries.

The virtual talks, hosted by current G20 president Saudi Arabia, come a day after the International Monetary Fund warned that global GDP would contract 4.4 percent in 2020 and the damage inflicted by the pandemic would be felt for years. The meeting will "discuss updates to the G20 Action Plan—supporting the global economy through the COVID-19 pandemic," G20 organizers said in a statement.

The group will also discuss "the progress made on the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and its proposed extension into 2021," the statement added. The 20 most industrialized nations had pledged in April to suspend debt service from the world's poorest countries through the end of the year as they faced a sharp economic contraction caused by the pandemic.

The World Bank and campaigners have called for the debt suspension initiative to be extended through the end of 2021, while charities such as Oxfam say it needs to be stretched through 2022.

But World Bank President David Malpass on Monday warned G20 countries may only approve a six-month debt relief extension because "not all of the creditors are participating fully" to help poor nations weather the health crisis. "I think there will be compromise language (on) maybe a six-month extension that can be renewed depending on debt sustainability," Malpass said.

The DSSI has received 46 applications from eligible countries across the world, most of them from Africa, the G20 said last month. But global campaigners have criticized the group for doing little to help poor countries stave off the knock-on effects of the pandemic.

Uncertain' recovery

The talks, chaired by Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and central bank governor Ahmed Al-Kholifey, come as the surging health crisis continues to batter the global economy and triggers unemployment on a massive scale. Huge injections of government aid have kept economies from plunging further in 2020, but the continued presence of Covid-19 means the outlook is highly uncertain, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook on Tuesday. The recession has been less severe than expected but still deep and "the ascent out of this calamity is likely to be long, uneven, and highly uncertain," IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said. — AFP

Business

In shadow of TikTok, China's apps hoover up downloads

App makers are becoming agile in hostile markets

BEIJING: While SHEIN has its origins in China it is one of the biggest shopping apps in the United States, SHAREit has been banned in India despite being massively popular elsewhere, and Likee is chasing TikTok-but desperate to avoid a similar fate. China's app makers are having to be agile in a world where key markets have turned hostile to their country's tech.

They are either going under the radar in territories where the war over privacy, security and geopolitics rages-or are moving to friendlier markets to win millions of downloads. Experts say that could signal an unstoppable rise for China's smart and responsive tech, depending on the long-term damage that security and diplomatic squabbles may bring to the Made in China brand.

For now, the strategies of Chinese-owned platforms-quick reflexes to their customer base and aggressive social media marketing-are winning fans in unexpected places. Fast-fashion online retailer SHEIN has deployed a legion of influencers and celebrities in the US, including singers Rita Ora and Katy Perry, to soar up the app store rankings.

The platform also advertised a Perry-curated range of affordable tees, dresses and accessories to coincide with her album launch this year. The company now boasts one of the top five free shopping apps on Apple's app store in the US, Australia and France, according to US-

based research agency Sensor Tower. "Many of their global users will actually be unaware that they are dealing with a Chinese company," Hong Kong-based retail analyst Philip Wiggenraad said of such apps. In a February post on WeChat to recruit suppliers, SHEIN said it had operations spanning more than 200 countries, with 2019 sales exceeding 20 billion yuan (\$2.96 billion).

Catch me if you can

Even TikTok, battered by an ownership dispute in the US where it is accused of being a security risk, has racked up around 800 million installs this year globally despite the squall of negative publicity, Sensor Tower data shows. That comes despite its blacklisting in India, which has also banned more than 200 other Chinese apps in the wake of a deadly border dispute earlier this year.

TikTok is now struggling to close a deal allowing it to continue its massively popular US operations.

The travails of the app-and others winded in the geopolitical ruckus-may signpost the way ahead for other less well-known Chinese platforms. File-sharing app SHAREit, banned in June by India, has quickly pivoted to new markets. It says it already has 20 million monthly active users in South Africa and is also targeting Indonesia, which has the world's fourth-largest population.

Others are basing outside China and experts say tying in early with western businesses could balance against potential boycotts by suspicious governments. "We have servers in several different locations across the globe, including the United States, Singapore and India," a spokesperson for Bigo, owner of short-video app Likee, said. "But we do not have any servers in mainland China or Hong Kong." Bigo was built and headquartered in Singapore before being bought by Chinese firm JOYY, which is listed on the Nasdaq in New York. The app was the third-most installed by a Chinese publisher for the year to mid-September, according to Sensor Tower.

Adapt or die?

With privacy, cybersecurity and potential influence by Beijing all hot-button issues, Chinese developers will need to do a lot more to convince governments and consumers in the long term.

Suspensions will likely "change the landscape in which they operate, and force them to adopt very different business and data localization strategies", said Severine Arsene of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. That could mean locating a company's headquarters and tech development in "safer" territories, or locating data processing in different territories.

"This requires adapting the whole



PARIS: This file photo illustration shows the logo of the application TikTok in Paris. China's app makers are having to be agile in a world where key markets have turned hostile to their country's tech. —AFP

tech architecture of a given service," she added. The pressure points to the fundamental issue of Chinese companies being seen as "de facto proxies" of the Chinese Communist Party, says Hinrich Foundation research fellow Alex Capri. "Chinese firms will find it increasingly difficult to compete outside of a techno-authoritarian digital landscape," he added. Chinese companies have increasingly drawn suspicion over whether they might be compelled to share data with the gov-

ernment. Despite recent spats with Washington and New Delhi, Beijing has shown no signs of "putting aside its technology ambitions", said United Overseas Bank economist Ho Woei Chen. Even a future decoupling of China from the global tech supply chain could have the unintended consequence of forcing "Chinese companies to upgrade and build up their capabilities", she added. And buffed up by a vast domestic market, "they will likely remain in business". —AFP

'Super-efficient' Somali Islamists rake in cash

NEW YORK/NAIROBI: Somalia's Islamist insurgents are moving millions of dollars through the formal bank system and appear to be investing in businesses and real estate, according to a United Nations report offering a rare glimpse into their finances.

Al-Shabaab has for years been battling Somalia's internationally-backed government to impose strict Islamic law in the anarchic Horn of Africa nation. "Al-Shabaab remains in a strong financial position and is generating a significant budgetary surplus, some of which is invested in property purchases and businesses in Mogadishu," said the report by the UN sanctions panel on Somalia.

The report by the group, which monitors compliance with an arms embargo on Somalia, is due to be published this week. The Al-Qaeda-linked Somali militants carry out frequent bombings and attacks at home and have also killed hundreds of civilians in Kenya and Uganda. Earlier this year, Al-Shabaab killed three Americans at a US military base in Kenya.

The UN report said the group had funded various small- and medium-sized businesses, including in Mogadishu's main Bakara market which sells everything from guns to food. The report included details on two bank accounts held at Salaam Somali Bank, founded in 2009 as part of the Hormuud group of companies, raising questions about Somalia's capacity to enforce a 2016 law aimed at curbing terrorist financing. The bank said the panel had not provided them details, so it was unable to verify. "The Panel's report makes no allegation of misconduct against Salaam Somali Bank," it said in a statement. "There



MOGADISHU: Rickshaw taxis drive past the Salaam Somali Bank in Wadajir district of Mogadishu yesterday. — Reuters

has also been no instance where Salaam has opened an account for a sanctioned individual or entity."

Somalia's Financial Reporting Center, which oversees compliance laws against money laundering and terror financing, said it is investigating the allegations against Salaam. Nearly \$1.7 million moved through one of the accounts during a 10-week period until mid-July this year, the report said, noting the account appeared set up to receive Islamic tax called zakat.

Multi-million turnover

With around 5,000 fighters, Al-Shabaab controls towns and countryside in southern Somalia, but its spies and assassins operate nationwide. Its estimated expenditure last year was around \$21 million, with about a quarter of that going to the Amniyat intelligence arm. Al Shabaab also runs its own courts. One businessman told investigators that the courts had summoned him this year and ordered him to pay more than \$100,000 in zakat based on a review of his

business, which they had assessed before he arrived.

The businessman, who was not named, provided a banking deposit slip and a receipt from al Shabaab to investigators as proof of payment. Another account, which appeared to handle fees levied on businessmen using Mogadishu port, had \$1.1 million moved through it from mid-February until the end of June this year, the report said. It included a cash deposit of \$25,000 by someone calling himself "A B C" on documentation. In total, the two accounts made more than 128 transactions exceeding the \$10,000 threshold that should trigger automatic reporting to the Financial Reporting Centre.

When asked if the accounts had been shut down, Amina Ali, head of the centre, told Reuters: "All the necessary steps have been taken." The report also examined a single road checkpoint - one of dozens - that former Al-Shabaab tax officials told investigators made between \$1.8 million-\$2.4 million per year. — Reuters

How one tech firm is pushing into electric vehicles

NEW YORK: The miniature motors that make iPhones buzz on silent helped power Japan's Nidec to become a 1.5-trillion-yen (\$14 billion) company. In recent years, Nidec's founder Shigenobu Nagamori has turned his attention to autos, and a technology which turns electricity stored in the battery into propulsion power. This technology, called an e-axle or e-drive, is emerging as a new competitive front as the auto industry shifts to electric vehicles. By 2030, Nagamori says he wants a 35 percent slice of a global e-axle market that is forecast to be worth \$20-30 billion a year by then, up from an estimated \$2.8-\$3 billion now.

He is betting that electric cars will follow the same route as room aircons, washing machines and computers, with key components, such as motor systems and central processing units, standardized and supplied by a few dominant tech firms. "Laptops and aircons from different makers might look different outside, but you look inside, the (key) parts are all more or less the same. The gut technologies of EVs are going to become as commoditized or standardized" as these items, Nagamori told an earnings news conference earlier this year. E-axes and batteries will come from a few competitive suppliers, he predicted.

To ensure Nidec emerges as one of these suppliers, Nagamori, a no-nonsense 76-year-old, has set his sights on acquiring gear-maker JATCO from Nissan Motor Co and combining it with Nidec's motor and power-control electronics business.



Some details of this effort, which Nissan is resisting, are reported here for the first time. The takeover battle underscores how quickly electrification is reshaping the auto industry. "Nidec brings to the auto industry the tech industry's approach," says Daiwa Securities analyst Shiro Sakamaki. "Like cell-phones and laptops, car models are already being redesigned at an increasingly rapid pace, and Nagamori is betting that trend will accelerate and automakers are going to leave the development and manufacturing of technologies such as the e-axle to suppliers."

Nagamori declined to be interviewed for this article. Nidec declined to comment about its pursuit of JATCO. The e-axle, or e-drive, combines an electric vehicle's gear, motor, and power-control electronics. It's the "brain" that controls how a vehicle manages energy stored in its battery and transforms it into power. It also helps to recover energy lost in braking and returns it to the battery.

In other words, a well-designed e-axle maximizes a vehicle's power efficiency and acceleration and helps extend its driving range and its smoothness. The technology has emerged as a competitive front in part because automakers are under pressure to cut electric vehicles' manufacturing costs to make them as affordable as mainstream gasoline cars. — Reuters

Uber, Lyft argue in California court over status of drivers

NEW YORK: Ride share services Uber and Lyft on Tuesday defended their business model before a California appeals court, fighting a law requiring them to reclassify their drivers as employees.

The hearing was part of a legal battle the two ride share platforms have with California authorities, who are seeking to enforce the law known as AB5, which regulates the status of independent workers.

The law, which entered into force in January, requires businesses in the "gig economy" to reclassify independent contractors as employees eligible for unemployment coverage, medical and other benefits-something Lyft and Uber have categorically refused to do. The court, which ordered the two ride-hailing rivals back in May to obey the law, granted them a temporary reprieve in late August.

Uber and Lyft had threatened to pull out of California, which would have left tens of thousands of drivers without work. On Tuesday, Uber's attorney Theodore Boutros faced the court's three judges to argue that law AB5 would force the company "to completely change its business model."

He said the company "is not a hiring entity, it is not a transportation company (...). It's a multisided platform that allows riders and drivers to connect." During his argument delivered via video-conference, Boutros also tried to establish a distinction between Uber and Lyft, saying the company he represents guaranteed more independence and freedom to its drivers and that its case should be therefore heard separately. —AFP

Cyber warriors sound warning on working from home

TALLINN, Estonia: Cyber warriors on NATO's eastern edge are warning that the growing number of people working from home globally due to the pandemic is increasing vulnerability to cyberattacks.

The Baltic state of Estonia hosts two cyber facilities for the Western military alliance-set up following a series of cyberattacks from neighbor Russia more than a decade ago. "Large scale use of remote work has attracted spies, thieves and thugs," Jaak Tarien, head of NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), told AFP in an interview.

The increased amount of information travelling between institutional servers and home networks is creating new challenges for employers. "Tackling these new challenges is complicated and requires a lot of resources as well as a different kind of approach," Tarien said.

"We are likely only scratching the surface in assessing the magnitude of malicious activities taking place in the Covid-era busy cyberspace." An EU-wide survey in September found that around a third of employees were working from home.

Boom in online courses

The concerns are echoed at NATO's Cyber Range-a heavily-guarded facility protected by barbed wire in the center of the capital Tallinn run by Estonian defense forces. The server rooms inside serve as a platform for NATO cyber security exercises and training.

"Specialists have set up the work infrastructure, but they cannot control the way people use their home internet or how secure it is," said Mihkel Tikk, head of the Estonian defence ministry's cyber policy department. Tikk said the latest cyberattacks have targeted Estonia's health sector and Mobile-ID-the mobile phone based digital ID. The coronavirus pandemic has also affected operations at the cyber facilities themselves, forcing the cancellation of offline exercises. But the NATO Cyber Defense Centre said the silver lining is the growing popularity of the cyber security courses it is putting online.

The online courses include "Fighting a Botnet Attack", "Operational Cyber Threat Intelligence" and "IT Systems Attack and Defense". There were 6,411 students by September 1 and the centre is aiming for 10,000 by the end of 2020.

'A massive mistake'

The Cyber Defense Centre was set up following a series of cyberattacks of unprecedented sophistication on Estonian websites in 2007. The Russian pro-Kremlin youth organization Nashi later claimed responsibility. These days, Estonia faces a "continuous flow of attacks" and repelling them requires constant work, Defense Minister Juri Luik said. But he said the country was in "a pretty good situation" since it has had time to learn from past experience. "We have worked diligently to guarantee that the computer networks are difficult to break in and the communication is encrypted-both military but also civilian communication." "So I think it is relatively more difficult to harm Estonia than many other countries who perhaps are not so used to working via cyberspace and haven't given too much attention to cyber defense," he said. — AFP

Business

Egyptian economic development projects surpass the challenges

Reform programs are evidence of resilience, challenge and popular will

By Dr Ibrahim Al-Ankele

CAIRO: Egypt has witnessed throughout its history many challenges and conflicts that contributed to one degree or another in impeding the process of development and was keen to overcome them in order to keep pace with regional and international changes, investing in this its uniqueness in the most distinguished geographical location in the world, which played a vital role in the development process, and perhaps what Egypt went through. From 2011 until now, the best evidence for this is that after many economic problems have accumulated in Egypt, and with the emergence of a new vision to resolve these problems, beginning in 2013, economic reform programs whose efforts differ from their predecessors, as they focused on addressing the origins of problems and threats as well as working on Realizing the future with all its tools.



Economic reforms show results

Under President Sisi, Egypt succeeded, with the will and sacrifices of its great people, for the first time in its history, in converting spending from consumer spending in the first place to productive spending in favor of building and developing the entire state's infrastructure "roads and bridges - reclamation and cultivation of hundreds of thousands of acres - providing housing for the poor and middle-income - establishing a new administrative capital - developing factories - developing slums", and continuing to open mega productive projects in various governorates, and continuing transformation programs to e-government, indicating the existence of a well-thought-out scientific plan to establish a modern state with all standards to face internal and external challenges.

In order to promote the national economy and improve the living conditions of citizens, Egypt implemented an economic reform program, starting in 2017, aimed at achieving social justice and directing support to those who deserve it from the most needy groups. The International Monetary Fund reports indicated that the economic conditions in Egypt have improved significantly since the start of the reform



program. Which helped liberalize the exchange rate, accelerate growth rates, reduce the external and financial deficit and increase the monetary reserve, in return for a decrease in unemployment rates of 8.3 percent and inflation, which is expected to reach its lowest levels at the end of the fiscal year 2020/2021 compared to the rates of 2011, and to be guided by the relevant international institutions.

Despite the positive indicators reflected in the implementation of the economic reform program, however, in the short term, some of the burdens arising from the state's decisions to raise subsidies appeared, but they did not affect the stability of the situation at home in light of the people's confidence resulting from the state's decisions to raise subsidies, but it did not affect the stability. The situation at home in light of the Egyptian people's confidence in the government's policies, which is aware that it is an essential element in the economic reform process recommended by the World Bank, and is implemented in cooperation with the IMF. For example, but not limited to, the high prices of means

Transportation in Egypt, however, is still considered among the cheapest countries in the world (\$ 0.5 for a metro ticket, for example), despite the high operating costs.

Undoubtedly, the outbreak of the new Corona pandemic has affected the economies of the whole world. However, despite the pressures exerted on all national projects on state resources, international



economic institutions have unanimously agreed on the success of Egypt - within a limited number of countries in the world - in achieving a positive growth rate during the crisis, and the challenge facing the government is how to balance the continuation of the development process and absorb the challenges that emerged against the background of that crisis.

Where the Egyptian government has allocated large sums of money from the general budget to develop the health and education sectors, in addition to financial subsidies to help daily workers and families most affected by the Coronavirus crisis, and a report by Moody's for the Credit Rating issued in September 2020 praised the creditworthiness indicators of Egypt, granting the Egyptian economy "B2" assessment with a stable outlook, indicating that raising the rating is related to the country's ability to withstand debt, reduce overall financing needs, and maintain high levels of foreign exchange reserves. Golden Man Sachs confirmed the ability of the Egyptian economy to withstand the economic repercussions of the Coronavirus. Accordingly, about "50 percent" of the indirect foreign investments (about \$ 10 billion) that came out with the beginning of the Corona crisis, expressing positive expectations until the end of this year regarding inflation rates, the strength of the pound, as well as the realization of some tourism flows despite the Corona crisis. Wise Air, which is the third largest low-cost airline in Europe, announced the re-operation of "3" weekly

flights between Milan and Alexandria. The Royal Dutch Airlines has made its flights to Cairo "after a three-year hiatus", as well as the return of flights from Russia and Kazakhstan to Egypt, with the government applying precautionary measures agreed upon to receive tourists.

During previous years, the Egyptian government focused on addressing deficiencies in the Egyptian economic indicators, as well as the social problems resulting from it, as it succeeded in achieving a decline in the annual inflation rate for the total of the republic over the month of August 2020 to become "3.4 percent" compared to "4.6 percent" in July 2020, and about 6.7 percent for the same month last year, against the backdrop of the continued decline in the prices of the food and drink group, grains and other food products.

The government is also trying, for the first time in the history of Egypt, to provide an accurate digital registration of real estate and agricultural lands, in a way that helps solve the problem of erosion of agricultural lands and alleviates the facilities crisis that resulted from the exploitation of the events of the 2011 revolution in the random expansion of construction on agricultural land.

In another context, the Egyptian state announced its targeting in the near future to increase government investments in the current fiscal year 2020/2021 by about 55 percent over the previous fiscal year, bringing their total to about LE 280 billion.

Huawei launches Huawei FreeBuds Pro in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) yesterday announced the launch of its latest flagship True Wireless Stereo (TWS) earphones, the HUAWEI FreeBuds Pro. Huawei FreeBuds Pro is the world's first intelligent dynamic noise-cancelling earphones and this year's flagship among Huawei's audio products, further establishing Huawei's as a pioneer and innovator in the TWS earphones field. The new earphones deliver exquisite craftsmanship, long-lasting comfort, intelligent dynamic active noise cancellation, long-lasting battery life and a wide range of smart interaction features which is sure to delight consumers.

The Huawei FreeBuds Pro will be available on shelf from 22nd of October 2020, priced at KD 54,900 in color variants of Carbon Black, Ceramic White and Silver Frost.

Combining art and technology to shape the future of design

Huawei designed the new Huawei FreeBuds Pro with style and comfort in mind. Adhering to the design principle of minimalism, the new Huawei FreeBuds Pro strip back any unnecessary design features while ensuring each element is functional as well as stylish. Featuring a unique in-ear design that also makes it comfortable to wear the Huawei FreeBuds Pro come with three varying sizes of silicone earplugs. This combines with a fit detection feature - available in the Huawei AI Life app - allowing users to find the perfect and stable fit. To achieve this, Huawei Audio Lab collected and analysed ear canal data from over 1,000 real users around the world.

Additionally, the new Huawei FreeBuds Pro's distinctive square-shaped stem is sleek and stylish, while minimizing external noise and housing vital technical components. The wind-proof design eliminates sound pickup holes to mitigate wind noise interference. This means users could avoid being affected by outside noise, even when walking, run-

ning or cycling. What's more, users can effortlessly enable active noise cancellation, adjust the volume, answer calls, press play and skip songs using the Huawei FreeBuds Pro earphone stems. The gestures are highly intuitive - simply swipe or pinch a specific area to take control. Huawei FreeBuds Pro can accurately detect users' operating habits to minimize false touches.

As Huawei's newest and most advanced flagship audio product, the Huawei FreeBuds Pro delivers astonishing audio quality. What's more, the listening experience is enhanced by new and intelligent features which are set to redefine the TWS headphone market. Redefine noise cancellation with the world's first intelligent dynamic noise cancellation.

Huawei FreeBuds Pro are the world's first TWS earphones that features intelligent dynamic noise cancellation. Improving on previous models, the noise cancellation is boosted up to 40dB while the closed in-ear fit naturally lends itself to cutting out distractions. Enhancing this further, the dual microphones positioned inside and outside the earbuds can quickly identify your surrounding noise environment and automatically switch between three noise cancellation modes - Ultra Mode, Cozy Mode and

General Mode - to effectively cut out environmental noise. Whether the user is at home, going for a walk or in a busy train station, Huawei FreeBuds Pro intelligently senses their environment and improves the noise cancelling experience.

A whole host of other smart features further enhance the user experience, making Huawei FreeBuds Pro a delight to use. Awareness Mode and Voice Mode utilize the two microphones to help users hear the outside world when crossing the road or having a conversation.

HUAWEI FreeBuds Pro

Redefine Noise Cancellation



US economy, Fed policy in 'good position,' says Daly

SAN FRANCISCO: The US Federal Reserve's vow to keep interest rates near zero for what could be years is "appropriate" for now, though more action could be needed as the recovery proceeds, San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said.

"We've got the economy and the policy in a good position right now," Daly told reporters on a call. "I see us as well positioned to weather this storm we are in, and it remains to be seen if more will be needed ... I'll continue to watch the data and see if adjustments will be necessary." The Fed slashed interest rates to zero in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and began pumping trillions of dollars into financial markets, extraordinary actions that have helped fuel stock price gains even as the real economy struggles to regain its footing. Millions of Americans are still out of work. The situation, Daly said in a talk Tuesday hosted virtually by the University of California, Irvine, "seems unfair (and) another example of Wall Street winning and Main Street losing." But keeping interest rates at their current near-zero levels until the economy returns to full employment, as the Fed has promised it will do, will in time create more jobs and help reduce inequality, Daly said.—Reuters

Singapore economy shrinks at slower pace as curbs eased

SINGAPORE: Singapore's coronavirus-hit economy shrank at a slower pace in the third quarter as restrictions were eased, official data showed yesterday, but the trade-reliant city-state still faces a long road to recovery. The financial hub plunged into its first recession since the 2008 global financial crisis in the second quarter when the government closed businesses as part of drastic measures to contain infections. One of the world's most open economies, Singapore is seen as a bellwether for the health of global trade, and its economy's dramatic deterioration rang alarm bells.

"The worst is over for Singapore, but the path to recovery is still a bit bumpy," Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Banking, said. In July-September, gross domestic product shrank 7.0 percent year-on-year, according to preliminary data released by the trade ministry. While a heavy fall, it was better than the record 13.3 percent drop registered in April-June, with many businesses having reopened as Singapore's outbreak slows.

Compared with the previous quarter, the economy grew 7.9 percent, rebounding from a 13.2 percent drop, the ministry said. Manufacturing, which includes key semiconductor exports, was up 2.0 percent, a turnaround from negative growth in April-June.—AFP

Scenario-based Intelligent ANC Mode Switch



Cozy Mode



General Mode



Ultra Mode

Connect the digital audio world with the smarter features

Dual Connection with Android, iOS and Windows smart systems means users can seamlessly switch between devices without being tied to one brand. This new intelligent sound combined with distinctive design, craftsmanship and comfort means the new Huawei FreeBuds Pro are a must buy for consumers everywhere.

Lifestyle | Features

TikTok video propels Fleetwood Mac classic into top 100



Fleetwood Mac

A viral TikTok video featuring a laid-back skateboarder lip-synching to Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" has propelled the 1977 hit back into the Billboard Hot 100 after an absence of more than three decades. TikTok user doggface208's antics—as he cruised down the street, sipping a family-sized bottle of juice—quickly struck a chord, racking up 8.6 million likes. And beyond propelling its creator—real name Nathan Apodaca—to viral fame, the video has reignited interest in the 70's country-rock legends. Stevie Nicks' melancholic meditation on a failed relationship, re-entered the Billboard chart for the week of October 17 at 21, just two weeks after Apodaca's clip first went viral.

"TikTok has driven catalog hits back to various Billboard charts before... but never a song this old and a Hot 100 rebound this high," Billboard reporter Tatiana Cirisano wrote in a post on the magazine's website. "It shows that TikTok's tried-and-true power to catapult songs to mainstream recognition is only getting stronger." Phil Collins is another classic artist to have benefited from a viral-video bounce. In August, a YouTube clip in which two 22-year-olds shared their first reaction to his famous drum fill from "In the Air Tonight" sent the song into the number two spot on Apple's iTunes chart. The return of "Dreams" to the charts has also sparked a broader surge of interest in Fleetwood Mac's back catalog, with

Billboard reporting a bump in streams for the rockers' other work.

The song's creators have even paid tribute to Apodaca's viral hit—co-founder Mick Fleetwood last week recorded his own version of the 37-year-old factory worker's now world-famous video. And on Tuesday, Nicks posted her first video on TikTok, singing along to "Dreams" while sitting at a piano, lacing up a pair of roller skates. She tagged doggface208 in the video, which also featured a similar bottle of juice. Asked to account for the clip's popularity, Billboard's Cirisano said the "wholesome skateboarder vibe" had universal appeal. — AFP

Judge to set new R. Kelly trial date after virus delays

The singer R. Kelly should learn when he will stand trial on sexual assault charges before the end of the year after delays caused by Covid-19, a judge said Tuesday. Kelly's trial had been originally due to begin on Tuesday in Chicago but was postponed when several witnesses reported problems travelling to the Midwestern city from out of state. At a hearing at a federal court, District Judge Harry Leinenweber said he expects to set a new trial date for Kelly on December 16. Kelly did not appear at the hearing, which was held by phone Tuesday.



In this file photo singer R. Kelly arrives for a court hearing at the Leighton Criminal Court Building in Chicago. — AFP

While Kelly's attorney and prosecutors agreed to wait until December for the trial to be set, Vadim Gluzman, an attorney for Darrell McDavid, Kelly's former manager who is charged with child pornography and obstruction of justice, asked Leinenweber to set a trial date immediately. The judge denied Gluzman's request, saying the court needs more time to find an open courtroom for the trial. "Because of the pandemic and a lot of cases that were backed up, it's been hard to schedule court rooms," Leinenweber said.

Also on Tuesday, Kelly's attorney Michael Leonard said he will be filing motions seeking bail for a seventh time and for an evidentiary hearing regarding an attack on Kelly in August by another inmate at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago, where Kelly has been held since July 2019. Kelly is facing federal charges in Chicago and Brooklyn, New York, and local charges in Cook County, Illinois and Hennepin County, Minnesota. The federal case in Chicago alleges child pornography and obstruction of justice, while the feds in Brooklyn have alleged racketeering. No date for either case has been set. — AFP

Kiwi teen tops US chart after Jason Derulo, BTS remix viral TikTok tune

A 17-year-old New Zealander whose TikTok anthem "Savage Love" has been viewed more than a billion times said yesterday "it blows his mind" to have now topped the US Billboard singles chart. Jawsh 685 — whose real name is Josh Nanai—saw his viral instrumental remixed by US RnB star Jason Derulo and Korean supergroup BTS to become an international megahit. "It blows my mind to be US number 1," he said in a social media video post. "A kid from South Auckland y'know showing other kids you can do it, any street you're from, anywhere. You can do it, believe in yourself, you can do it. Trust me." The young producer's dream run of success began after the tune—"Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Beat)"—was picked up by TikTok users as the backing track for a hugely popular dance challenge. The challenge—which saw users showcase their cultural heritage by dressing in traditional outfits and dancing to the song—was also embraced by stars like Jennifer Lopez, Jimmy Fallon.

As of Monday the hashtags #sirenbeat, #sirenbeatchallenge and #laxedsirenbeat have collectively been viewed over two billion times on the video-based social media platform. Nanai was signed by Columbia Records and has now topped the charts in



Jawsh 685 is the third Kiwi to ever top the UK singles chart.

Britain, Germany, New Zealand and Australia among other countries. The song initially caused some controversy after RnB superstar Jason Derulo took the original beat, added some lyrics, and promoted it as his own. Following the controversy, Nanai told local radio station Mai FM in June there had been an exchange of messages between the two before the incident, but that it was "unfinished business." Columbia Records has since said Derulo and Nanai have "put aside their differences and come together". — AFP



Halloween decorations are seen at Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen during the Danish Championships in giant pumpkins held in Copenhagen. — AFP

CANADA CAN STILL CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN

The coronavirus pandemic has upended life around the world but there's no reason Canada can't still get some treats on Halloween—as long as measures to stop the virus's spread are upheld, health authorities said Tuesday. "In my opinion, it's an important occasion. We have to keep events, important occasion for our society and it's very important for children," deputy public health officer Howard Njoo told reporters when asked about Covid-19 risks at Halloween. "I encourage Halloween but with good public health practices," Njoo said, adding it is "possible to give candy, receive candy in a safe way."

But trick-or-treating on October 31

must be done outside houses, said Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer. She suggested creative methods for respecting health and safety measures, such as incorporating face masks into costumes, handing out candy with a hockey stick or using a "pool noodle" to keep distance between children. Ultimately, however, given the disparity in the number of cases between Canadian provinces, it will be up to local officials to decide whether Halloween can happen, the health officials said. As of Tuesday, Canada had recorded 185,371 cases of Covid-19 with 9,645 deaths. — AFP



Photo shows outside Lincoln Center and the New York Philharmonic at the height of the pandemic in the city. — AFP

New York Philharmonic cancels 2020-21 season over COVID-19

The New York Philharmonic has cancelled all shows through mid-June 2021 over the coronavirus pandemic, the first time the 178-year-old institution has been forced to scrap an entire season. The famed symphony said it made the decision—the latest blow to live music, coming after similar moves by Broadway and the city's Metropolitan Opera—on the advice of health officials. The Phil vowed to continue offering free digital content and said it would announce an expanded winter and spring orchestra streaming series at a later date.

The company also said in the spring it would reboot its newly minted outdoor pop-up series, which found success this fall and features small ensembles who play free shows in parks and on street corners throughout the city on weekends. "The cancellation of an entire New York Philharmonic season is not only unprecedented—it is devastating, both in its impact on the morale of musicians and audiences, and in its profound economic consequences," said the institution's President and CEO Deborah Borda, adding there was "no other choice."

"This will not be a silent season, and we eagerly anticipate September 2021,

when the entire Orchestra can reunite with our audience. We cannot wait for that first downbeat!" she said. The Phil said it estimates a net loss of approximately \$10 million in the most recent fiscal year, as well as a loss of \$20 million in ticket revenue from the cancelled 2020-21 season. Nearly half of the administrative staff has been furloughed or laid off, and staff making more than \$100,000 year have pay cuts up to 30 percent. A Philharmonic spokesperson told AFP the organization is in negotiations with musicians but declined to comment on specifics per its agreement with the union.

Currently symphony musicians are receiving 75 percent of their base pay, about \$2,200 a week. Those who normally earn salaries above base are receiving 35 percent of overscale. The prolonged lull at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, the Manhattan stage where the Phil performs, could provide time for long-planned renovations. The acoustic overhaul of the facility first opened in 1962 was slated for opening May 2022, with an estimated cost of \$550 million.—AFP

French museum halts Genghis Khan show after Chinese pressure

A French museum won backing from scholars on Tuesday for its decision to halt an exhibition about Mongol leader Genghis Khan because of a censorship attempt by the Chinese government. The history museum in the western French city of Nantes announced Monday that it was delaying the opening of the exhibition about the legendary founder of the 13th-Century Mongol Empire by more than three years. Preparations for the show, planned in collaboration with the Inner Mongolia Museum in Hohhot, China, ran into trouble after the Chinese Bureau of Cultural Heritage pushed for changes to the original project plan, "including notably elements of biased rewriting of Mongol culture in favour of a new national narrative", the Nantes museum said.

The Chinese authorities demanded that certain words, including "Genghis Khan," "Empire" and "Mongol" be removed from the exhibition, and later asked for control over exhibition texts, maps, brochures and communication, the museum said. The dispute coincides with a tougher Chinese line against ethnic Mongols, who account for about 6.5 million of China's 1.4 billion inhabitants and mostly live in the northern province of Inner Mongolia. The province has seen

weeks of protests and school boycotts over a policy requiring schools to teach politics, history, and literature in Mandarin rather than the local language.

"The Chinese regime bans historical narratives that don't match its official narratives. And tries to do the same abroad," tweeted Valerie Niquet, an Asia specialist at France's Foundation for Strategic Research. Antoine Bondaz, a research fellow at the foundation, also backed the museum's decision on Twitter, calling the reported Chinese demands "crazy." "The Nantes museum and Hohhot museum had good working relations until Beijing changed its policies and tried to impose its narrative abroad," he added. The "hardening this summer of the Chinese government's position towards the Mongol minority" prompted the halt of the exhibition, the museum said. "We decided to stop this production in the name of the human, scientific and ethical values that we defend," museum director Bertrand Guillet said in a statement. The show, which was to open next week, had already been pushed back to the first half of 2021 because of the coronavirus crisis. —AFP

ART CORNER



Palestinian artist Khulud Al-Desouki hangs her paintings as she works during lockdown at home in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, amid strict restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.— AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



A man walks past former house of Akhmedula Akhmedov, 1902, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk, which is one of the famous wooden buildings in Tatar neighborhood of Tomsk. — AFP photos



A woman walks past a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.

SIBERIA'S TREASURED WOODEN HOUSES FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The ornate wooden homes dotting the Siberian city of Tomsk are cherished landmarks, but that hasn't prevented many from falling into disrepair following years of neglect, with some now facing demolition. A scattering of the iconic buildings still boast brightly-coloured and cared-for exteriors with intricate wood carvings adorning window frames and roofs. A large number, however, look as if they have been abandoned. The townhouses represent some of the finest examples of wooden architecture in the country. Yet historians in the city say their future is uncertain, with government support too slow to respond to the urgent need to save them and commercial interests spying prime real estate.

Many of the homes have only survived this long because residents "were forced to live in what already existed",

historian Sergei Maltsev, 46, tells AFP. There are around 2,000 of the historic houses in the city of 575,000 people, Maltsev says, pointing out that fewer than 100 are preserved by the state as heritage sites. Some fall prey to real-estate developers and can be leveled on orders from the mayor. Some 2,900 kilometers (1,800 miles) east of Moscow, Tomsk is one of the oldest cities in Siberia, founded in 1604 on the banks of the river Tom. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was a major transport hub through which merchants would pass on their way to Asia.

Conservation efforts lack 'political will'

Traders, craftsmen and blacksmiths built hundreds of the houses made of wood-affordable building material at the time to demonstrate their success. But



A woman walks past a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.

the age of prosperity was short-lived. In the 1910s, Tomsk was stripped of its status as the regional capital in favor of a village called Novonikolaevsk, located some 265 km southwest, which was to become a stop on the Trans-Siberian railway. That settlement would later be renamed Novosibirsk, now the third largest city in Russia and a large industrial center dominated by imposing Soviet-style buildings made of concrete blocks. In 2016, a project was launched aimed at establishing a historic preservation zone in Tomsk within which the wooden houses could not be destroyed.

But the initiative has been slow to get off the ground even though Russian President Vladimir Putin last year personally instructed local government to ramp up conservation efforts. Maltsev puts this down to "lobbying by construction companies" or the "usual bureaucratic

delays". Another conservation program sees the properties rented at a symbolic price on the condition that they will be restored by their new inhabitants. But it is yet to have any significant impact.

Maltsev says the program "works" but notes it has saved fewer than 10 houses since it launched three years ago. "It takes a long time and there are few investors given the current economic situation," he tells AFP. The historian believes that only "political will" can protect the landmarks. He gives as an example the ongoing renovation in the town of Plyos on the Volga River where former president and prime minister Dmitry Medvedev is believed to own an estate. "Unfortunately, none of the big bosses are from Tomsk," Maltsev jokes. — AFP



A tram rolls past a former mansion of Russian architect Andrei Kryachkov, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A child looks out of a traditional wooden house in Tatar neighborhood.



People walk past former house of Russian architect Stanislav Khomich, 1904, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



Windows of a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A cyclist rides past a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A woman walks past a house of German - Russian Friendship, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A woman walks past a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A man walks past a former mansion of Russian architect Andrei Kryachkov, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.



A view shows former house of Akhmedula Akhmedov, 1902, a traditional wooden house in the Siberian city of Tomsk.

Great Barrier Reef's corals in steep decline

Half of the Great Barrier Reef's corals have died over the past 25 years, scientists said yesterday, warning that climate change is irreversibly destroying the underwater ecosystem. A study published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society Journal found an alarming rate of decline across all sizes of corals since the mid-1990s on the vast World Heritage-listed reef off Australia's northeastern coast. Larger species, such as branching and table-shaped corals, have been affected hardest—almost disappearing from the far northern reaches of the reef. "They're typically depleted by (up to) 80 or 90 percent compared to 25 years ago," report co-author and James Cook University professor Terry Hughes told AFP. "They make the nooks and crannies that fish and other creatures depend on, so losing big three-dimensional corals changes the broader ecosystem."

Aside from its inestimable natural, scientific and environmental value, the 2,300-kilometre-long (1,400-mile-long) reef was worth an estimated \$4 billion a year in tourism revenue for the Australian economy before the coronavirus pandemic. The reef is at risk of losing its coveted world heritage status because of ocean warming-fuelled by climate change-damaging its health. Changes in ocean temperatures stress healthy corals, causing them to expel algae living in their tissues—draining them of their vibrant colors in a process known as bleaching. Back-to-back mass bleaching events in 2016 and 2017 prompted the government to downgrade the long-term outlook for the world's largest living organism to "very poor". Mass bleaching was first seen on the reef in 1998 — at the time, the hottest year on record—but as temperatures continue to soar it frequency has increased, shrinking the reef and making it harder to recover.

The 'big mamas'

"A vibrant coral population has millions of small, baby corals, as well as many large ones—the big mamas who produce most of the larvae," the study's lead author Andy Dietzel, also of James Cook University, said. "It's resilience is compromised compared to the past, because there are fewer babies, and fewer large breeding adults." On top of long-term ocean warming and associated bleaching, the reef has been battered by several cyclones and two outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish—which eat the coral—since 1995. When the starfish occur in small numbers, they are considered part of the natural ecosystem, but when a large outbreak happens, they can rapidly destroy parts of the reef. While four mass bleaching events up to 2017 were covered by the latest research, the damage to coral species from bleaching in early 2020 is yet to be assessed.

It was the most widespread bleaching on record, impacting swathes of the southern reaches of the reef for the first time. Hughes said scientists expected corals to continue dying off unless nations met their Paris Agreement commitment to keep the increase in global average temperature under 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. "It takes about a decade for a half-decent recovery for the fastest-growing species, so the chances of us getting decades between the future sixth, seventh and eighth bleaching events is close to zero because temperatures are because going up and up and up," he said.

If temperatures do stabilize later this century under the Paris target, it is hoped that corals will be able to reassemble and rebuild their numbers. Even then, Hughes said, "we don't think they'll rebuild into the mix of species that we've known historically". If the rise is as much as 3 or 4 degrees Celsius, "forget it", he said. "The trajectory is changing very, very quickly—we're shocked and surprised by how quickly these changes are happening—and there's further change ahead." — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Professional sprint canoeer Marko Dragosavljevic is seen in Belgrade, Serbia. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Dhoni slammed for 'bullying' umpire into changing mind

Dhoni hails Curran as a 'complete cricketer' after key IPL win

DUBAI: Cricket fans have slammed icon Mahendra Singh Dhoni for apparently bullying umpire Paul Reiffel into changing a wide call during an Indian Premier League game. The incident occurred Tuesday when Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings paceman Shardul Thakur bowled outside the off stump of Sunrisers Hyderabad batsman Rashid Khan. Umpire Reiffel, who played 35 Tests for Australia before retiring, appeared to start the signal for a wide - both arms outstretched at shoulder height - when Dhoni began protesting. Reiffel then seemed to change his mind midway through the signal and the ball went down as legitimate in the crucial penultimate over of Hyderabad's unsuccessful chase of 168.

Commentator Ian Bishop, a former West Indian international, said on ESPNcricinfo that Reiffel had erred. "He started calling it a wide, he looked up, saw Dhoni and he changed his mind," Bishop said. "I am someone who is sympathetic to the umpires because it is a difficult job, but tonight I will say that Reiffel made a mistake." Hyderabad captain David Warner also seemed visibly unhappy from the dugout of the Dubai stadium in the United Arab

Emirates. The match saw Chennai bounce back from two losses to win by 20 runs and draw level with Hyderabad on six points in the eight-team table.

But Dhoni's action did not go down well on social media. "Such a mockery of game, pathetic! Dhoni keeps bullying umpires and gets away with it. I have just lost count of it," one cricket fan wrote on Twitter. Others criticized Reiffel for apparently succumbing to pressure from Dhoni. "Weak umpiring! Sad to see an Elite umpire bogging down by the stature of a cricketer," said another Twitter user. Last year Dhoni was fined 50 percent of his match fee after he stormed onto the field during a tense IPL game to contest an umpiring call. The cricket laws state: "An umpire may alter any decision provided that such alteration is made promptly."

Dhoni hails Curran

In another development, skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni Tuesday hailed Sam Curran as a "complete cricketer" for Chennai Super Kings after the England all-rounder played a key part in the team's much-needed IPL win. The 22-year-old Curran hit 31 after

opening the batting and then returned figures of 1-18 from his three overs of left-arm pace bowling as Chennai bounced back from two losses to beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 20 runs in Dubai. Curran, a left-hand batsman who was brought by Chennai for \$742,000, gave the team a brisk start in his 21-ball knock before Shane Watson, who scored 42 coming one down, and Ambati Rayudu (41) guided the team to 167 for six.

Curran then shared the new ball with Deepak Chahar to breakthrough with the big wicket of skipper David Warner, caught and bowled for nine, as Hyderabad managed just 147-8. "Curran is a complete cricketer for us and you need that seaming allrounder. He strikes the ball nicely, he can bat up the order, he plays spinners well," Dhoni said of his team's youngest member. "He can give us those 15-45 runs if you need momentum. I feel as the tournament progresses, he'll get even more comfortable with death bowling. That's one of the reasons we kept him away at the death."

Dwayne Bravo bowled the final over of the match and returned figures of 2-25 as Chennai moved level with

Hyderabad on six points from eight games in a tough first half of the Twenty20 tournament in the United Arab Emirates. Curran, younger brother of Tom Curran who plays for Rajasthan Royals, has proved his worth for three-time IPL winners Chennai while batting in the top, middle and lower order. "In terms of his contribution so far it has exceeded, I think, what we wanted. Probably not in his eyes because he is very competitive," Chennai coach Stephen Fleming told reporters in the post-match virtual chat.

"Every time he has had the challenge he has risen to it. He has been desperate to make a difference and I think we saw a glimpse today of what he can do for us in the future," Ravindra Jadeja also contributed with an unbeaten 25 off 10 balls and returned to take the key wicket of England's Jonny Bairstow, bowled for 23, with his left-arm spin. "This was one game as close to perfect as possible. One or two overs we could have been slightly better, but it was a very good game," said Dhoni. New Zealand's Kane Williamson struck 57 off 39 deliveries but his first half-century of the season went in vain as Hyderabad kept losing wickets. —Agencies

Tannehill's Titans cool off red-hot Bills to win battle of unbeaten teams

LOS ANGELES: Ryan Tannehill threw for three touchdowns as the Tennessee Titans won the battle of unbeaten teams with a 42-16 victory over Buffalo in a rare Tuesday NFL contest that was rescheduled because of the coronavirus pandemic. The short-handed Titans have four consecutive wins to start the season led by their stellar offense, and their 122 points over that span is the most in franchise history. The game, between two of the top teams in the AFC, was originally slated to be played on Sunday but remained in jeopardy after two dozen people in the Tennessee organization tested positive for Covid-19 during the last 20 days. It was the Titans' first game in 16 days after their Covid-19 outbreak postponed their week four home game against Pittsburgh.

Tannehill completed 21 of 28 passes for 195 yards, and wideout AJ Brown returned from an injury to reel in seven catches for 82 yards and a touchdown in just the third Tuesday game in NFL history. Running back Derrick Henry rushed for 57 yards and two touchdowns. The Titans currently have seven players on the Covid-19 list, including defensive tackle Jeffery Simmons, receivers Corey Davis and Adam Humphries, cornerback Kristian Fulton, linebacker Kamalei Correa, tight end MyCole



NASHVILLE: Cole Beasley #11 of the Buffalo Bills runs with the ball while being tackled by Jayon Brown #55 of the Tennessee Titans in the fourth quarter at Nissan Stadium on October 13, 2020 in Nashville.

Pruitt, and fullback Khari Blasingame. Brown hadn't played since week one when he suffered a bone bruise on his knee. Brown made five catches for 39 yards in the Titans' season opener. The Bills, who suffered their first defeat after getting off to a 4-0 start for the first time since 2008, were unable to take advantage of the Titans' depleted roster in front of a sparse crowd of 8,400 at Nissan Stadium in Nashville. Organizers restricted the number of spectators in the stadium because of the novel coronavirus pandemic which has so far killed over 219,000 Americans.

Third year quarterback Josh Allen completed 26-of-



NASHVILLE: Derrick Henry #22 of the Tennessee Titans runs with the ball in the third quarter against the Buffalo Bills at Nissan Stadium on October 13, 2020 in Nashville, Tennessee. —AFP photos

41 passes for 263 yards and two touchdowns and he also had a pair of interceptions. But the Bills had injury problems of their own and were missing star linebacker Matt Milano, who is out with a pectoral injury. Buffalo didn't do themselves any favors by committing 10 penalties for 56 yards. Henry put the Titans ahead to stay, 14-7, with a one-yard score just 66 seconds into the second quarter. Tyler Bass' 43-yard field goal pulled the Bills to within 14-10, but Tannehill engineered another scoring drive in the final 2:55 of the second as the Titans led 21-10 at halftime. —AFP

ESports fights cheating bugs, bots and hacks

PARIS: The rapid growth of eSports has increased the financial gains at stake and created a pressing need to fight the cheats and maintain the booming sector's integrity. In September a scandal broke out over a tournament for Counter Strike, the highly popular 20-year-old game in which teams role-play a group of terrorists or counter-terrorists in hostage-taking or bombing missions. In a game of strategy, speed and 3D immersion, teamwork is essential as contestants engage in breathtaking two-minute missions.

After the scandal emerged, 37 team coaches were

sanctioned by the ESports Integrity Commission (ESIC) after being found to have exploited a bug in the game to spy on rival teams' strategy. The professional, semi-professional and amateur coaches were barred for periods ranging from a few months to several years. The suspensions sent a shockwave through the gaming community and a number of teams including German outfit Mousesports, who parted company with coach Allan "Rejin" Petersen over the cheating. He has been banned for 20 months. "My deepest apologies go to the opponent affected by my mistake. My weak decision may have altered your career, and it is something I can never take back, and I regret the utmost," a contrite Petersen tweeted.

This case, which concerns competitions dating back to 2016, is neither the first nor the last to rock eSports, a sector that has been transformed in the space of a

few years from a niche hobby to a major industry. Players are increasingly excluded from competitions, suspended, or even banned for life, for having given in to the temptation of an easy victory. "The reason why there is cheating in eSports is because there are high stakes," Desire Koussawo, the director of the French arm of ESL, one of the world's biggest eSports event organizers said.

"When you realise that today you can earn millions of dollars by winning a competition, the teams and the players may be more tempted to use roundabout ways of winning." Before last year's World Cup for Fortnite, 1,200 players had their accounts suspended for cheating. "There is little empirical data or statistics regarding cheating. However, for a number of years there have been accounts from players complaining about it," eSports sociologist Nicolas Besombes said. —AFP

NZ scrap England friendly over virus

WELLINGTON: New Zealand pulled out of next month's football friendly against England yesterday, saying "complications" caused by Covid-19 had made it too difficult to field a team at Wembley on November 12. The withdrawal follows a number of coronavirus cases during the current round of international fixtures, including a positive test by Portugal and Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo. "The shifting nature of travel restrictions and commercial flight availability under Covid means that we do not have certainty we could assemble a squad at Wembley," New Zealand Football CEO Andrew Pragnell said in a statement. He said a "significant number" of players would face quarantine or other restrictions when they returned home, adding that could "potentially jeopardize their professional careers". All Whites coach Danny Hay said he was "gutted" to have to withdraw from such a high-profile fixture.

"Looking at the restrictions currently in place, as well as the rising number of Covid-19 cases across Europe, it just isn't possible to put a competitive squad together," he said. Coronavirus problems have weighed heavily on the ongoing round of international games, with several teams facing difficulties and disruption. England manager Gareth Southgate, whose team play Denmark yesterday and are also due to face Belgium and Iceland next month, earlier defended the decision to play the games during the pandemic.

"The reality of the world at the moment is we don't know what the rules will be. In this day and age you have to live form week to week," said Southgate. "There is no reason international football should be a higher risk." Ronaldo's positive test reopens controversy over his departure from Turin, where health authorities said it was a breach of virus protocols as two Juventus staff members had tested positive. The 35-year-old five-time Ballon d'Or winner is asymptomatic but has withdrawn from Portugal's Nations League game against Sweden yesterday. He played in Sunday's 0-0 draw against France in Paris. —AFP

News in brief

Barca, Real first Clásico

MADRID: The first Spanish Clásico of the season between Barcelona and Real Madrid will be played on Saturday 24 October. La Liga said on Tuesday. The match was originally penciled in for the following day, when the majority of games in the seventh round of the La Liga season will be played. It will be behind closed doors at the Camp Nou. The two giants of the Spanish championship begin their Champions League campaigns a few days earlier. Barca host Ferencvaros of Hungary on Tuesday October 20, while Real Madrid are at home to Shakhtar Donetsk of Ukraine the following day. Real Madrid lead the La Liga standings after five games, three points ahead of fifth-placed Barcelona. Real beat Barcelona 2-0 at the Bernabeu in the last meeting between the clubs at the start of January to overtake the Catalan club at the top of La Liga. —AFP

Partey's Arsenal ambition

LONDON: New Arsenal signing Thomas Partey has revealed seeing the club hold on to captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang proved to him that they are serious about matching his ambitions. Partey was a long-term target for Arsenal, who finally landed the Ghana international from Atletico Madrid on transfer deadline day as they paid his release clause, reported to be £45 million (\$58 million). Arsenal also added Brazil international Willian on a free transfer from Chelsea and signed defender Gabriel Magalhães from Lille in the transfer window. But tying Aubameyang down to a new three-year deal was seen as the best piece of business by the club, especially given the lack of Champions League football since the 31-year-old arrived from Borussia Dortmund in 2018. Aubameyang was linked with a number of Europe's top clubs before agreeing to fresh terms as he aims to become a "legend" at Arsenal. —AFP

Alonso returns to Formula One

PARIS: Fernando Alonso drove a Formula 1 car for the first time in nearly a year and a half on Tuesday in Barcelona. The double F1 champion was at the wheel of a Renault, the team he won his two titles with and who he will drive for next season. He drove the Renault being used this season by the man he replaces, Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who ended the team's nine-year podium drought on Sunday when he was third in the Eifel Grand Prix, and Frenchman Esteban Ocon. The Spaniard, who won his titles in 2005 and 2006 with Renault, was limited to 100km under the testing rules in a session officially being used to make a promotional film. "It was really very special for me to get back into an F1 car," he said in an Instagram live broadcast. "It was a good opportunity for me to feel the car," he said. "Getting back to the speed of an F1 car is not easy, but I felt that I was improving lap after lap." —AFP

Falcao rescues point for Colombia

SANTIAGO: Colombia's Radamel Falcao came off the bench to score a last-gasp equalizer in a 2-2 draw with Chile in their World Cup qualifier in Santiago on Tuesday. Jefferson Lerma put Colombia ahead after seven minutes when he took advantage of poor marking to steal in at the far post and head home a deep cross from the right. A penalty from Arturo Vidal after 38 minutes and an opportunistic goal from Alexis Sanchez three minutes before half-time then put Chile in the driving seat. But Falcao was on hand in a packed penalty box to clip a shot from Johan Mojica into the net and give Colombia a deserved share of the points. Chile, who conceded a late goal against Uruguay to lose their opener 2-1, are on one point alongside Peru in the 10-team South American group, ahead of only Venezuela and Bolivia. —Reuters

Sports

Germany recover twice in a topsy-turvy draw with Swiss

Spain go down to surprise Nations League defeat in Ukraine



COLOGNE: Germany's midfielder Toni Kroos' free kick fails to make it past the Swiss wall during the UEFA Nations League football match Germany v Switzerland in Cologne on October 13, 2020. —AFP

COLOGNE: Germany twice had to come from behind to earn a rollercoaster 3-3 draw against visitors Switzerland in an exciting Nations League group game packed with incident on Tuesday. The Swiss took an early lead through Mario Gavranovic and Remo Freuler added a second before goals from Timo Werner and Kai Havertz levelled the scores. Gavranovic then grabbed his second only for Serge Gnabry to earn Germany a point.

The result moves Germany within a point of League A Group Four leaders Spain, who remain on seven points after losing 1-0 away to a Ukraine side now on six points, while the Swiss, still without a win, stay bottom with two points. Germany coach Joachim Loew reverted to a four-man defense for the game in an empty stadium, after they had led in the last four games only to concede equalizers in three of them.

But it remained their weak spot on Tuesday as they struggled with quick breaks from the Swiss who found far too much space. "It was extremely intense. We started badly but showed great attitude in coming back," Loew said. "That was positive. In defense we made our share of mistakes which we have to stop. But we showed that the team is ready to fight."

EFL clubs enthuse over proposals as FA warns against breakaway

MANCHESTER: English football's increasingly bitter row over plans to change the structure and financing of the game descended into threats and warnings ahead of Wednesday's crunch meeting of Premier League clubs. The plans, backed by Liverpool and Manchester United and dubbed 'Project Big Picture', would see an increase in funds for the 72 clubs in the Football League (EFL) but also include special voting rights for the top clubs in the Premier League and a reduction in the size of the top flight to 18 clubs.

While EFL club chairmen talked of "overwhelming support" for the plans, which include a 250 million pounds (\$323.48 million) rescue package for their clubs, FA chairman Greg Clarke addressed reports that there had been a threat from clubs backing the plan to leave the Premier League. Clarke said he had been involved in initial discussions with the top clubs but left them after they began to discuss the possibility of a breakaway.

"In late spring, when the principal aim of these discussions became the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few clubs with a breakaway

of defender Fabian Schaer for a second booking. The Swiss had stunned Germany with Gavranovic's fifth minute header and doubled the lead in the 26th when they intercepted a pass from Toni Kroos, playing in his 100th international, and Freuler beat goalkeeper Manuel Neuer with a cool chip.

Werner hit back for the hosts two minutes later, wrongfooting keeper Yann Sommer with a clever low shot, as the Germans maintained possession and kept pushing forward. Robin Gosens' effort was tipped over the bar by Sommer late in the first half but the keeper was beaten when Havertz charged into the box and fired in the equalizer in the 55th. But Germany's backline kept leaking goals as the Swiss went back in front in the 57th. Neuer made consecutive saves from Haris Seferovic but Gavranovic drilled in on the rebound.

A sensational Gnabry back heel flick on the hour pulled the home side level once more and rescued a point for Loew's team. "We have to defend better, defend more intelligently and smarter," Havertz said. "But we kept coming back, we showed a strong mentality. We need more patience but today there were lots of good signs. We will keep working at it." The Swiss finished with 10 men following the stoppage-time dismissal

league mooted as a threat, I of course, discontinued my involvement," Clarke said in an open letter to FA Council members. EFL chairman Rick Parry was asked by a reporter on Sunday whether he had offered the 'Big Six' — Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal — the opportunity to leave the Premier League and join with EFL clubs. Parry declined to comment. Clarke added a reminder in his letter that the FA, as the English game's governing body, has the power to block any changes and made a warning about the risks clubs would take with regard to Champions League participation. "UEFA look to us to nominate the league, and therefore the clubs, that will play in their competitions," wrote Clarke. But while Clarke's comments clearly provide a deterrent to any top flight clubs thinking of a breakaway option should the plan fail to win enough support from the Premier League clubs, the EFL clubs appear enthusiastic about the plans.

Strong support

The EFL said the plans "...received strong support, with an overwhelming majority of clubs indicating a willingness to discuss the proposals further on the basis that the primary benefits for the future of the English pyramid are clear. "...while there are no specific timescales for what happens next, there is a clear need for a progress in this matter as quickly as practically possible," added the state-



KIEV: Spain's Sergio Reguilón and Ukraine's midfielder Andrii Yarmolenko vie for the ball during the UEFA Nations League football match between Ukraine and Spain at the Olimpiyskiy stadium in Kiev on October 13, 2020. —AFP

ment. While several owners of third and fourth tier clubs have been enthusiastic about the plans, Peter Ridsdale, the owner's representative at Championship (second tier) club Preston North End, said that he was wary of the big clubs. "If I'm absolutely frank, do I trust the top six today irrespective of these proposals? No I don't. I don't think some of them believe in the pyramid," he said.

"I think some of them believe in a franchise system like you see in the (United) States. However, at the moment what we have is an offer to assist the pyramid which wasn't on the table. "Today the Football League has a unique opportunity if this remains on the table to perhaps protect the Football League for the long term while in the short-term it is in real danger". EFL chairman Parry, the ex-Liverpool and Premier League CEO, has been the public face of the plans but his decision to work with the top clubs has caused anger among some of the non-elite Premier League clubs, according to several media reports.

Sky Sports News on Tuesday cited an unnamed board member at one Premier League club saying that Parry should resign. The Premier League statement in response to the proposals reported by The Telegraph on Sunday named Parry individually. The UK government has criticized the plans with a spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying on Monday: "It is exactly this type of backroom dealing that undermines trust in football governance". —Reuters

Swiss in Cologne on Tuesday.

The Ukraine squad had been hit by a host of coronavirus cases before being trounced 7-1 by France in a friendly in Paris last week, and Andrii Shevchenko's side then lost 2-1 at home to Germany at the weekend. They were fortunate not to fall behind on several occasions against Spain, with goalkeeper Georgiy Bushchan doing well to tip over a Rodrigo Moreno header early on. Bushchan, of Dynamo Kiev, also tipped over a Sergio Ramos free-kick in the first half, while Manchester City midfielder Rodri hit the post in the 65th minute.

Luis Enrique sent on Ferran Torres along with Mikel Oyarzabal, the Real Sociedad forward who scored in the 1-0 win over Switzerland at the weekend, but Spain could not find a way through. It was a disappointing return for them to the stadium where they beat Italy 4-0 in the final of Euro 2012, and Spain have managed just one goal in three outings this month. Often criticized for his performances with Manchester United, De Gea will also face scrutiny for his positioning at the goal, and Spain's home meeting with Germany next month is shaping up to be decisive in deciding who advances to the four-team finals. —Agencies

Players' welfare is 'main priority,' says Asian football body

HONG KONG: Asian football's governing body said player welfare was its "main priority" after criticism from the global players' union that it had been slow to provide enough support since the coronavirus shutdown. FIFPro general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann last week said the Asian Football Confederation's engagement had been "lacking severely", adding that player welfare problems threatened to undo Asia's progress in the sport. But the AFC defended its response to the Covid-19 crisis. "The Asian Football Confederation put the welfare and the well-being of the players—and all our stakeholders—as our main priority throughout the pandemic," it told AFP in a statement.

The AFC "provided support for clubs and leagues through the member associations and regional associations," it added. "Our competitions were the first to be postponed in the world and that was to protect the health of all those who were to be involved in those matches." Baer-Hoffmann highlighted the problems faced by players in Indonesia, saying a "unilateral decision" by clubs to slash wages by three-quarters had caused "quite severe hardship". "We would have liked to see the confederation (AFC) involved in some of these really drastic negative situations on the domestic level," Baer-Hoffmann told AFP.

He added: "We would very much expect that the confederation sets a certain standard, in terms of embracing collective decision-making, in terms of embracing the standards that we are working under on the deeper level. And that's certainly not happening." Like many sports bodies, the AFC has suffered severe difficulty running its competitions this year. The suspended Champions League has resumed in a biosecure "bubble" in Qatar, while the second-tier AFC Cup has been cancelled and World Cup qualifiers are on hold.

"Our focus has been on the safe resumption of our AFC competitions in a biosecure environment as well as promoting the restart, where safe and appropriate, of the leagues in our member associations," the AFC said. The Kuala Lumpur-based body said it also took part in FIFA discussions leading up to the approval of up to \$1.5 billion in grants and loans for national football associations around the world. FIFPro, headquartered in the Netherlands, represents tens of thousands of footballers worldwide via 65 national player associations, including eight in Asia-Pacific. —AFP

Neymar hat-trick fires Brazil past Peru, Argentina labor

MONTEVIDEO: Neymar scored a hat-trick to become the second highest scorer in Brazil's history as the Copa America champions won 4-2 away to 10-man Peru in a World Cup qualifier on Tuesday. The goals took Neymar to 64 international strikes, two more than Ronaldo but still well behind Pele's record of 77. Elsewhere, Joaquin Correa scored the winner 11 minutes from time as Argentina labored to a 2-1 victory over Bolivia to maintain their 100% record after two matches. Peru took twice the lead through Andre Carrillo and a heavily deflected strike from Renato Tapia, but two controversial Neymar penalties, an injury time third and a close range strike from Richarlison maintained the Selecao's winning start to qualifying for Qatar 2022. Carrillo opened the scoring on six minutes with a dipping volley from 20 yards after latching onto Marquinhos' weak clearance. Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese then denied Firmino from point blank range after he seemed certain to tap home from Richarlison's cushioned header.

Brazil dominated the ball but Peru's pacy forwards looked dangerous on the counter-attack and visiting goalkeeper Weverton had to be alert to keep out a shot from Christofer Gonzales. But Neymar sent Gallese the wrong way from the spot after Yoshimar Yotun was penalised for tugging his shirt in the box. Out of nowhere, Tapia's speculative long-range strike took a wicked



LIMA: Brazil's Neymar (left) and Peru's Carlos Zambrano fall during their 2022 FIFA World Cup South American qualifier football match at the National Stadium in Lima, on October 13, 2020, amid the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

deflection off Rodrigo Caio and wrong-footed Weverton on 59 minutes. The lead lasted only a few minutes before Richarlison touched a Firmino header from a corner over the line to restore parity. The winner came seven minutes from time as Carlos Zambrano was harshly adjudged to

have fouled Neymar. Worse was still to come for Zambrano as he was sent off minutes later for a stray elbow that caught Richarlison and Neymar drilled home the final nail in Peru's coffin after Gallese spilled a shot from Everton Ribeiro. —AFP

14 Dhoni slammed for 'bullying' umpire into changing mind



15 Neymar hat-trick fires Brazil past Peru, Argentina labor



15 Germany recover twice in a topsy-turvy draw with Swiss



ARLINGTON: Nick Markakis #22 of the Atlanta Braves scores a run against the Los Angeles Dodgers during the fifth inning in Game Two of the National League Championship Series at Globe Life Field on October 13, 2020. —AFP

Braves survive Dodgers scare

Rays roll over Astros to take 3-0 lead

LOS ANGELES: Atlanta first baseman Freddie Freeman belted a two-run home run in the fourth inning as the Braves built a big lead then held off the Los Angeles Dodgers 8-7 in baseball's National League Championship Series. The victory in Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday gave the Braves a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series. "This is a good ballclub we're playing, and they're explosive, as we saw," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "I didn't feel good with a big lead because these guys are too powerful." That is a good ballgame to win. They all are now.

The winner of the series will take on either the Tampa Bay Rays or Houston Astros in the World Series. In the NLCS contest, Joey Wendle and Hunter Renfroe each drove in two runs in the sixth inning as the Rays moved within one win of their second World Series appearance with a 5-2 victory over Houston. The Braves, trying to return to the World Series for the first time since 1999, took charge early against a Dodgers team that endured a big blow with the late scratch of expected starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw with back spasms.

His replacement, Tony Gonsolin, got off to a solid start, retiring the first nine batters he faced. But he gave up a walk to Ronald Acuna

to open the fourth and Freeman followed with a homer to the right field stands off a slider from the rookie. Freeman added a run-scoring single in the Braves' four-run fifth inning and the Braves were up 7-0 before Corey Seager smacked a three-run home run with one out in the bottom of the seventh inning for the Dodgers.

It still looked like Ozzie Albies's home run in the top of the ninth was just window dressing for the Braves, giving them an 8-3 lead. But the Dodgers added some drama in the ninth, when Max Muncy hit a two-run homer off Dodgers reliever Josh Tomlin. Cody Bellinger then delivered a run-scoring triple off Dodgers closing pitcher Mark Melancon, who was able to induce a ground out from Justin Turner to seal the win. "This team has a lot of fight and we've done it all year," said Dodgers Seager. "We were one swing, one anything away from tying that ballgame and going into extras. This is a long series and we are looking (forward) to the challenge."

Rays eye World Series

Braves starting pitcher Ian Anderson stretched his personal post-season scoreless streak to 15 2/3 innings, striking out five and

surrendering five walks over four innings. Five Atlanta relievers combined to notch the final 15 outs. "The coaching staff does such a good job of keeping you in the moment and giving you the information you need at that time. Then it's up to executing. We had a good game plan, and in the playoffs you have to keep your opponent from scoring and we were able to do that," Anderson said. In San Diego, Renfroe and Kevin Kiermaier each made a pair of sterling defensive plays for the Rays, who seized a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven AL Championship Series.

Randy Arozarena had a double and two singles to become the first rookie with four three-hit performances in a single playoff season. The top seeded Rays can book a berth to the World Series for the first time since 2008 with a win over Houston in game four. "We have a good chance. We will have a good show," said Renfroe. Renfroe made a clutch sliding catch in right field to end the seventh inning and another for the second out in the eighth, the latter with the bases loaded and one out. "I knew I had a good chance to catch it. I got a good jump on it," he said. "If I didn't catch it I was going to block it any way possible." —AFP



CALIFORNIA: Carlos Correa #1 of the Houston Astros forces out Randy Arozarena #56 of the Tampa Bay Rays during the ninth inning in Game Three of the American League Championship Series at PETCO Park on October 13, 2020. —AFP

COVID surge hits sport

PARIS: Football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and men's golf world number one Dustin Johnson both tested positive for the coronavirus as a surge in cases cast a shadow over the return of professional sport. Ronaldo, the 35-year-old five-time Ballon d'Or winner, is asymptomatic but has withdrawn from Portugal's Nations League game against Sweden yesterday. He played in Sunday's 0-0 draw against France.

"We have respected all the health measures... and yet it happened," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said. The rest of the Portugal squad, and France's players, have all tested negative. New Zealand also scrapped next month's friendly against England yesterday as the coronavirus played havoc with the return of international football. America's Johnson, 36, was forced out of this week's CJ Cup in Las Vegas as he became the highest-profile golfer to test positive for Covid-19. Johnson said he was "very disappointed".

The positive tests by two of the world's top athletes highlight a rash of cases coinciding with the resumption of many sports competitions in recent weeks, often in bio-secure "bubbles" and behind closed doors. The cases, seen everywhere from football to cycling, rugby union, rugby league, American football and Formula One, also mirror a surge in Covid-19 across much of the world, including Europe and the United States. Professional sport was brought to a halt worldwide as the pandemic advanced in March, threatening an industry estimated to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Ronaldo 'sunbathing'

Many competitions have now emerged from their shutdowns, but international travel remains a major challenge. New Zealand said travel restrictions and quarantine measures would have made it impossible to field a strong team at Wembley on November 12. "Looking at the restrictions currently in place, as well as the rising number of Covid-19 cases across Europe, it just isn't possible to put a competitive squad together," said All Whites coach Danny Hay, adding that he was "gutted". Ronaldo's Juventus team-mate Giorgio Chiellini attempted to play down

the positive test by one of the world's best paid athletes, saying the forward was "fine and sunbathing".

However, the incident renews controversy over his departure from Turin, where health authorities said it was a breach of virus protocols after two Juventus staff members tested positive. Elsewhere, Scotland and Ireland's plans for crucial Euro 2020 playoff matches were also disrupted by coronavirus cases, while others were forced into self-isolation after team-mates tested positive. China-based Italy forward Stephan El Shaarawy tested positive and then negative before a friendly against the Netherlands in Bergamo, intended as a tribute to the city which was hard-hit by the pandemic.

Coach Pavel Hapal was among nine cases in Slovakia's camp ahead of the Nations League match against Israel. And Senegal's home friendly with Mauritania was called off after the visitors reported eight positive tests. England manager Gareth Southgate, whose team played Denmark yesterday earlier defended the decision to press ahead with international games. "The reality of the world at the moment is we don't know what the rules will be. In this day and age you have to live from week to week," Southgate said. "There is no reason international football should be a higher risk."

Bubble 'breach'

American football's National Football League admitted the post-season could be extended after games were moved over a cluster of cases affecting the Tennessee Titans and New England Patriots, including Patriots quarterback Cam Newton. In cycling, two teams, Mitchelton and Jumbo-Visma, were forced out of the Giro d'Italia after eight positive cases in one day. The three-week race, now down to 21 teams, still has nearly two weeks to run. Jumbo's Dutch rider Jos van Emden questioned the bubble put in place to avoid coronavirus infections, underlining the complexity of organizing competitions during a pandemic.

"In the hotel buffets, there were people who were not part of the bubble," he told The Cycling Podcast. In English rugby league, Salford will have to make team changes for the Challenge Cup final against Leeds, after two players tested positive and two were inconclusive. A number of rugby union players, including Italy's Gloucester scrum-half Stephen Varney, have also tested positive. But after the coronavirus was contained in New Zealand, the All Blacks and Australia will play the second Bledisloe Cup Test in front of packed crowds in Auckland on Sunday. —AFP