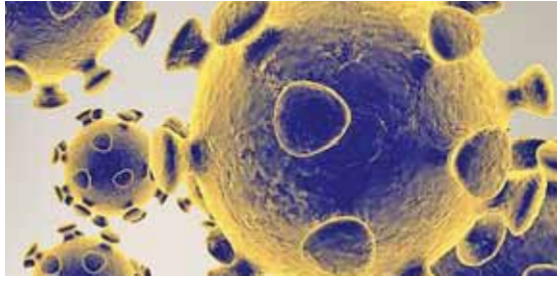




**4** Kuwait reports 4 deaths,  
739 new COVID-19 cases



**5** Lebanon protest movement  
marks 'harrowing' first year



**13** Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt  
confirms cancer diagnosis



**15** Pakistan's 'Gul-dozer' calls  
time on topsy-turvy journey



# Nine arrested after teacher beheaded in Paris suburb

## Teen Chechen assailant shot dead by police after 'terror attack'



CONFLANS SAINT-HONORINE, France: Adults and children stand in front of flowers displayed at the entrance of a middle school yesterday after a teacher was decapitated. — AFP

CONFLANS-SAINTE-HONORINE, France: French police have arrested nine people over the beheading of a teacher near his school in a Paris suburb, a judicial source said yesterday, in what President Emmanuel Macron labeled an Islamist terror attack. The source said the killing was carried out by an 18-year-old Chechen, who was then shot and killed by police near the scene in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, northwest of Paris.

Police said the victim was 47-year-old history teacher Samuel Paty, who had shown his pupils some cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as part of a class discussion on freedom of expression - a lesson that had prompted complaints from parents. Two of the suspect's brothers and his grandparents were initially detained by police for questioning.

The judicial source told AFP yesterday that five more people had been detained, including the parents of a child at the school and friends of the suspect. According to the source, the parents had signaled their disagreement with the teacher's decision to show the cartoons. The attack came as a trial is in progress over the Jan 2015 massacre at the offices of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine, which had

published caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that unleashed a wave of anger across the Islamic world.

The magazine republished the cartoons in the run-up to the trial in September and last month a young Pakistani man wounded two people with a meat cleaver outside its former offices. Documents found on the beheading suspect showed he was an 18-year-old born in Moscow but from Russia's southern region of Chechnya.

The attacker shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is greatest") as police confronted him, a police source said. There had been no previous indication that he was a potential radical, a source close to the investigation said. French anti-terror prosecutors said they were treating the assault as "a murder linked to a terrorist organization".

Police said they were investigating a tweet posted from an account - since shut down - that showed a picture of the teacher's head. It was unclear whether the message, which contained a threat against Macron described as "the leader of the infidels", had been posted by the attacker, they said. Visibly moved as he visited the scene, Macron said

Continued on Page 2

### News in brief

#### Several charged for mutilating boy

AMMAN: Jordan's public prosecutor has charged several people after a 16-year-old boy had his eyes gouged and hands partly sliced off in an apparent revenge act that has shocked the Arab kingdom. The mutilation was carried out Tuesday in Zarqa, after a group kidnapped the boy, allegedly in retribution against the boy's father, who is in custody accused of murder. Outraged Jordanians have called for those responsible to face the death penalty, after security forces said this week they had arrested the main perpetrator along with five other suspects. King Abdullah II ordered the boy's transfer to Amman's King Hussein Medical Centre, while Queen Rania termed the attack "an unspeakable atrocity in every respect". — AFP

#### US sailors help Iran vessel

MANAMA: An American guided-missile destroyer came to the aid of an Iranian flagged vessel in distress in the Arabian Sea, an international maritime coalition said Friday. The dhow broke down due to a motor problem and launched a distress call to the USS Winston S Churchill on Thursday. The missile destroyer's "boarding team transited to the dhow via a rigid-hull inflatable boat... and conducted an initial seaworthiness inspection. They provided the mariners with food and water," the coalition said. The USS Churchill established that it was not carrying the type of battery the vessel required, so it sought assistance from Oman's coastguard, which duly arrived to "render further assistance". — AFP

#### Iran virus deaths top 30,000

TEHRAN: The death toll in Iran from the coronavirus pandemic has crossed the 30,000 mark, the health ministry announced yesterday. "Unfortunately, we have lost 253 of our fellow citizens to COVID-19 over the past 24 hours," ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari told a daily briefing. The latest deaths raised the overall toll to 30,123 for the eight months since Iran reported its first fatalities from the novel coronavirus. Iran recorded 4,103 new cases over the past 24 hours, bringing the total caseload so far to 526,490, the ministry spokeswoman added. — AFP

## Ardern wins by landslide in 'COVID polls'

WELLINGTON: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a landslide victory in New Zealand's general election yesterday, leveraging success battling COVID-19 into an unprecedented majority she said gave her a mandate for progressive reform. Ardern's center-left Labour Party took 64 seats in the 120-member parliament with 49 percent of the vote, after the youthful and charismatic leader steered the nation through the upheaval wrought by the global pandemic.

"Thank you to the many people

who gave us their vote, who trusted us to continue leading New Zealand's recovery," the 40-year-old told cheering supporters. Ardern had dubbed the vote "the COVID election" and campaigned on her government's success in eliminating community transmission of the virus, which has caused just 25 deaths in a population of five million.

The pandemic is one of a string of emergencies that tested Ardern's leadership during a torrid first term, after she rode to an unexpected victory in 2017 polls on the back of a wave of support dubbed "Jacinda-mania". She displayed both empathy and decisive action on gun control after a white supremacist gunman killed 51 Muslim worshippers in the Christchurch mosques attack last year.

Continued on Page 2



AUCKLAND: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaks after the Labour Party won the general election yesterday. — AFP

## Azerbaijan vows retaliation for deadly strike

GANJA, Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev vowed yesterday to take revenge on Armenia after a missile strike killed 12 sleeping people in the

city of Ganja, a dramatic escalation in the conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. The early hours attack, which also saw a strike on the nearby strategic city of Mingecevir, came hours after Azerbaijani forces shelled Stepanakert, the capital of the ethnic Armenian separatist region.

The explosions in Ganja levelled a row of houses and left at least 40 people injured in an attack Aliyev described as "a war crime". In televised remarks, he said his army would "take revenge on the battlefield" and promised to capture Karabakh

by driving out Armenian forces. As the sun rose over the devastation in Ganja, Mayil Shakhnazarov, 36, said it was impossible to identify some of those killed. "What can we say? Our pain is deep. Really deep," he told AFP.

The seeming tit-for-tat attacks further undermine international efforts to calm a resurgence of fighting between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis and avoid drawing regional powers Russia and Turkey into a conflict that has killed

Continued on Page 2

## Bid to smuggle endangered falcons foiled

KARACHI: Pakistani authorities said yesterday they had foiled an attempt to smuggle dozens of endangered falcons worth more than one million dollars out of the country. Wildlife traffickers catch falcons in Pakistan's mountainous north, often to sell them for lucrative profits in the Gulf region, where hunting with the birds is a popular sport.

Customs officials seized 75 falcons and a houbara bustard at locations around the southern port city of Karachi in what they called an "unprecedented"

anti-smuggling operation. "The birds are listed as rare and endangered species and their trade is strictly banned," said senior customs officer Mohammad Saqif Saeed. He did not identify the species of the birds but estimated their value to be around 200 million rupees (over \$1 million) on the black market.

Authorities have arrested two suspects and plan to release the birds into the wild. The houbara bustard is a desert bird whose meat is prized as an aphrodisiac. Falcons are often used by wealthy hunting parties from the Gulf who travel to Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province every winter to catch and kill the houbara. An earlier ban on the sport was overturned by Pakistan's top court. Two hundred rare falcons were reportedly exported to Qatar from Pakistan earlier this year on special permission. — AFP



KARACHI: A custom official touches a falcon that was recovered from illegal captivity during a press briefing yesterday. — AFP



## Local

# UN, FAO mark World Food Day: Time to recognize food heroes

## Kuwait displayed high level of competence in emergency planning: UN representative

KUWAIT: Every year on 16 October, the world celebrates World Food Day, and this year it marks the 75th anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This year, on October 24, the United Nations also celebrates its 75th Anniversary. Therefore, the World Food Day is an occasion to recognize the contributions of the United Nations in general. The FAO75 and UN75 anniversaries come during a very exceptional time as many countries are dealing with the widespread effects of the COVID-19 global health crisis. The global pandemic has been a time to reflect on our health and our most basic, everyday needs: undoubtedly food is one of them.

Food is the essence of life and bedrock of cultures and communities. Preserving access to safe and nutritious food is and will continue to be an essential part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems are key to ensure a world with "Zero Hunger." Even before COVID-19 hit, estimates were that about 690 million people are hungry. Over 2 billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food.

Economic disruption linked to the pandemic may add another 130 million. At the same time, unhealthy

diets and sedentary lifestyles have led to soaring overweight and obesity rates, not only in the developed countries, but also in low-income countries, where hunger and obesity coexist.

Today, the world produces more than enough food to feed everyone. However, food systems in recent decades are out of balance. Hunger, obesity, environmental degradation, loss of agro-biological diversity, food loss and waste are only some of the issues that underline this imbalance. Given exponential dynamics of COVID-19, the supply chain is critical to getting goods and services quickly, safely and securely. Business leaders must make rapid decisions and take immediate actions to sustain business operations to serve their customers, clients and communities, as well as protect and support their workers.

"The supply chain sustainability is a particularly essential for Kuwait as its economy is highly vulnerable to the global and regional value chain, with more than 80 percent of goods exported to and imported from outside the region and in fact as a net importer when oil related exports are excluded," highlighted Dr Tarek El-Sheikh, the Representative of the United



Dr Tarek El-Sheikh

Nations Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait.

"Kuwait displayed a high level of competence in its emergency planning and implementation, as we all witnessed the great potential and the corporate-level financial resiliency which was placed at the center of the plan. The pandemic has seriously enlightened the need to invest in the local agri-enterprises and strengthen their ability to build back better. Especially small businesses comprised of farm enterprises, traders, food manufacturers, distributors and retailers across food chains. In a moment like this, it is more important than ever for the government authorities to recognize the need to support our food heroes - farmers and workers throughout the food system - who are making sure that food makes its way from farm to fork and the critical role that these companies can play in main-

taining functioning food systems even amid disruptions as unprecedented as the current COVID-19 crisis," Dr El-Sheikh added.

In this context, there is a pressing need for the government and businesses to build long term resilience in their value chains for managing future challenges with effective supply chain strategy for planning, execution and monitoring. This requires holistic approaches to manage the broken supply chain by building in enough flexibility to protect against future disruptions. The Supply-Chain Response Plan in COVID-19 setting is a must in this regard. The planning priorities should include developing a resilience plan and supply chain strategy and sensitizing and analyzing risks to supply chain scenarios.

Dino Francescutti, FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for the GCC States and Yemen stated that Kuwait is defining short to long-term goals for the food and agricultural sector. The country requires a robust strategic plan to transform its food systems to achieve food security and stable food supply chain. FAO and the UN in general stand ready to support Kuwait authorities to develop and implement such a strategic plan.

"FAO and Kuwait's partnership aims at reinforcing the interaction and synergies between the different parties towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Kuwait and other countries of the Near East" Kayan Jaff, Coordinator of FAO-Kuwait Partnership Program and Senior Policy Advisor in the Regional Office in Cairo stated.



Grow, nourish, sustain together

## Kuwait to continue path set by late Amir

KUWAIT: Kuwait will continue to follow in line with the policies set by the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to strengthen global partnerships, support mediation efforts and spread peace and tolerance around the world, the foreign minister said on Friday. Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah sent letters of appreciation and gratitude to several senior United Nations officials and global counterparts after the General Assembly held a special session to eulogize the loss of the late ruler, read a ministry statement. These included the UN's General

Assembly President and Secretary-General along with the foreign ministers of the UAE, Egypt, US, Indonesia, Cameroon, Uruguay, Latvia and Liechtenstein. The Kuwaiti minister described the messages, delivered by these countries' UN permanent representatives on behalf of their regional groups, as "most sincere, noble and greatly appreciated." Kuwait is also committed to continuing its unabated cooperation with various UN agencies and building on the legacy of the late Amir, he added. — KUNA



Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

## OPEC chief recalls late Amir's dedication to oil market stability

VIENNA: OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo hailed the role Kuwait's late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah played in ensuring stability of the global oil market. Barkindo opened the 45th Meeting of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) on Thursday by paying respects to the late Amir. He also highlighted that his key role in breaking the impasse in 2016 that paved the way to birth of the 'Declaration of Cooperation' (DoC) on December 16, 2016. "His passionate dedication to oil market stability and skilled diplomacy were central to the formation of the DoC and its success in the years since," Barkindo said.

The JTC is a technical body that is mandated to review global oil market conditions and prospects, and monitor the conformity levels to the voluntary produc-

tion adjustments adopted by the OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting. On oil market developments, the OPEC leader argued that for more than six months now, OPEC members have worked shoulder-to-shoulder to confront a market crisis that is without historic precedent. "The dark clouds of this pandemic continue to hang over us. In some countries, a second wave is already here, compounding both the human tragedy and economic uncertainty," Barkindo said. He noted that OPEC's Monthly Oil Market Report forecasts that global GDP will fall by around 4 percent this year and then bounce back in 2021 at a rate of around 4.6 percent.

"Our forecast for 2020 oil demand remains at slightly more than 90 mb/d, a 10 per cent decline for the year," he said. In reviewing the longer-term prospects for the oil market, Barkindo stated that the recently-launched World Oil Outlook sees global primary energy demand picking up and continuing to grow, increasing by a significant 25 per cent over the next 25 years. He forecasted that oil would retain the largest share of the energy mix, accounting for nearly 28 percent in 2045. He concluded by noting that the worst of the current crisis may be over. — KUNA

## Ardern wins by landslide in...

Continued from Page 1

Ardern again found herself comforting a shocked nation when a volcanic eruption at White Island, also known as Whakaari, killed 21 people and left dozens more with horrific burns. "There's no doubt the strong, great leadership we've had from Jacinda Ardern has been a massive factor in all this," Labour Party president Claire Szabo said of her party's win on broadcaster TVNZ.

Yesterday's vote marked the first time any leader won an absolute majority since New Zealand adopted a proportional voting system in 1996 and was the party's strongest showing since World War II. Opposition leader Judith Collins conceded an "outstanding result" for Labour and congratulated Ardern on her win. "Boy, we knew it was going to be a tough campaign," said Collins, whose conservative National Party is expected to take around 35 seats after its worst result in nearly 20 years.

Ardern was criticized during her first term for failing to deliver on some key promises such as improving housing affordability, protecting the environment and reducing child poverty. But she said the election had set her up for an active second term. "We have the mandate to accelerate our response and our recovery - and tomorrow we start!" she said, flagging increased state housing, more renewable energy and other infrastructure investment.

Greens co-leader Marama Davidson, whose party governed in coalition with Labour during the first term, said the vote "show how much New Zealanders want a strong, truly progressive government". About 3.5 million people were registered to vote, with well over half casting their ballots early - a much higher figure than previous elections. The vote was originally set for Sept 19 but was delayed by a virus outbreak in Auckland that has now been contained.

Collins, who took over the National Party in July after a period of turmoil when the party had three leaders in three months, said the false start had cost her campaign momentum. Her pitch for the top job had focused on the specter of the Greens forcing Ardern to adopt a wealth tax aimed at the nation's aspirational middle class. — AFP

said to have been widely liked and himself a father, laying white roses outside the school and holding up placards saying "I am a teacher - Freedom of Speech". Martial, 16, said Paty had loved his job: "He really wanted to teach us things - sometimes we had debates." Another student Tiago said he saw Paty on the day he died. "He came to my class to see our teacher. It's shocking that I won't see him again."

"According to my son, he was super nice, super friendly, super kind," Nordine Chaouadi, a parent of one of Paty's students, told AFP. According to parents and teachers, Paty told Muslim children they could leave before he showed the cartoon, telling them he did not want their feelings hurt.

Sources said one of those detained was a father who had posted a video on social media expressing shock that the cartoons had been shown in his daughter's class. In the video, the father had reportedly called Paty a "rogue" who should no longer be a teacher and called on other parents to mobilize.

Rodrigo Arenas, head of the FCPE parents' association, said a complaint had been received from a "very agitated" father. He said Paty had invited Muslim students to leave the room before showing the cartoons. Virginie, 15, said Paty did this every year as part of a discussion about freedom following the Charlie Hebdo attack. In a tweet, Charlie Hebdo expressed its "sense of horror and revolt" at Friday's attack. Police went to the scene after receiving a call about a suspicious individual loitering near the school, a police source said. They discovered the dead man and soon spotted the suspect, armed with a blade, who threatened the officers as they tried to arrest him. They opened fire and he later died of gunshot wounds. — AFP



GANJA, Azerbaijan: Rescue teams work at a site hit by a rocket during fighting over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh early yesterday. — AFP

## Azerbaijan vows retaliation for

Continued from Page 1

hundreds of people. An AFP team in Ganja saw rows of houses in Ganja turned to rubble by the strike, which shattered walls and ripped roofs off buildings in the surrounding streets.

People ran outside in shock and tears, stumbling through dark muddy alleys in their slippers, some wearing bathroom robes and pajamas. The attack came six days after a missile struck another residential part of the city of more than 300,000 people, killing 10 civilians and leaving many on edge. At the scene of the latest strike, Durdana Mammadova, 69, was standing on the street at daybreak because her house was destroyed. "We were sleeping and suddenly we heard the blast. The door, glass, everything shattered over us," she said. "There was smoke and dust - we couldn't even breathe."

Hikmat Hajiyev, an assistant to Aliyev, tweeted that according to initial information, more than 20 houses were destroyed in Ganja. Nagorno-Karabakh's military said Azerbaijani forces had stepped up their attacks on Friday across the front, shelling Stepanakert and a nearby town. AFP journalists in the city said strikes had hit the roof of a shopping center, left a crater near a bus stop and shattered windows in a nearby residential building. "What happened here is senseless, said Gayane Gharibyan, an angry 45-year Armenian woman whose husband was fighting at the front. "How can the international community be so indifferent."

Turkey, a staunch ally of Azerbaijan widely accused

of supplying mercenaries to bolster Baku's forces, said the strikes were a war crime and called on the international community to denounce them. "Armenia continues to commit war crimes and massacre civilians. To remain silent in the face of this savagery is to be complicit in these crimes," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter. The Armenian defense ministry tweeted following the attack a list of what it described as "legitimate targets" in Ganja, including a special forces headquarters and an ammunition factory.

At around the same time in the city of Mingecevir, an hour's drive north of Ganja, AFP heard the impact of a huge blast that shook buildings. Mingecevir is protected by a missile defense system because it is home to a strategic dam. The defense ministry said Mingecevir had come "under fire", but provided no other immediate details. An Azerbaijani official said another missile hit a separate industrial district of Ganja at around the same time.

The decades-long Nagorno-Karabakh conflict erupted on September 27 and has so far killed more than 700 people, including nearly 80 civilians. The mountainous western region of Azerbaijan has remained under separatist Armenian control since a 1994 ceasefire ended a brutal war that killed 30,000. Armenia, which backs Nagorno-Karabakh but does not recognise its independence, has admitted that Azerbaijani forces have made important gains along the front in the past week.

An AFP team was taken by the Azerbaijani military on Friday to one settlement re-captured in the southern section of the conflict zone near the Iranian border. Azerbaijani officials said they last controlled the settlement of Jabrayil, which includes strategic heights overlooking a fertile valley, during the post-Soviet war. The current escalation is the deadliest and longest since that six-year conflict. — AFP

## Nine arrested after teacher...

Continued from Page 1

"the entire nation" stood ready to defend teachers and that "obscurantism will not win". His office said yesterday a "national tribute" would be held in Paty's honor. Prime Minister Jean Castex tweeted that teachers would continue to "awaken the critical spirit of the citizens of the republic, to emancipate them from all totalitarianism".

EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen expressed her condolences saying her thoughts were with teachers in France and across Europe. "Without them, there are no citizens. Without them, there is no democracy," she tweeted. The Strasbourg-based Assembly of Chechens in Europe said in a statement that "like all French people our community is horrified by this incident".

Muslim leaders condemned Friday's killing, which many public figures perceived as an attack on the essence of French statehood and its values of secularism, freedom of worship and freedom of expression. The litany of deadly attacks by Islamist militants or their sympathizers was devastating for France's Muslim community, Tareq Oubrou, the imam of a Bordeaux mosque, said. "We are between hammer and anvil," he told France Inter radio. "It attacks the Republic, society, peace and the very essence of religion, which is about togetherness."

Parents and teachers paid tribute to Paty, who was



Local

# Jordan lauds Kuwait's support to UNRWA during pledging conference

## Kuwait pledges \$1.5 million to UN agency aiding Palestinians

AMMAN/RAMALLAH: Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Al-Safadi commended Kuwait's backing to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to help it provide basic services to Palestinians. A ministry statement quoted Safadi as lauding Kuwait and the UK's declaration to offer \$23 million as an urgent additional financial support to the UNRWA to help it continue providing basic services in its five areas. Safadi and his Swedish counterpart Ann Linde chaired on Thursday the third strategic dialogue via videoconference to mobilize support to the UNRWA so as to aid the Palestinian refugees. The meeting was held in participation of Kuwait to discuss common efforts made to back the agency and find practical methods that ensure facing financial challenges.

Safadi stressed the necessity of providing continued services by the UNRWA until reaching a fair and permanent solution to the issue of the Palestinian refugees in line with the international law and relevant UN resolutions mainly 194 as well as a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution. Safadi warned against the humanitarian, political and security repercussions that would result from the Agency's inability to assume its UN mandate and provide its vital services to the Palestinian refugees in the five areas. He pointed out that depriving millions of refugees of their right to education, health and relief will deepen the refugees' humanitarian suffering.

### Essential services

Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah chaired the Kuwaiti delegation to the dialogue conference co-held upon a common call by

Jordan and Sweden. The conference included foreign ministers of Kuwait, Norway and Japan, as well as some senior officials from France, the UK and Germany and others.

"Kuwait is committed to the protection of Palestinian refugees to ensure their access to essential services," Sheikh Dr Ahmad said during the conference, where he announced that Kuwait would provide a sum of \$1.5 million in immediate aid to UNR-



## KFAED offers \$5.5 million to Palestine

WA in a bid to ensure the cash-strapped body's services remain uninterrupted.

The minister said his country supported the "path of institutional reform" the UN agency has pursued, praising UNRWA's determination to remain active and its commitment to its goals. Describing UNRWA as a "pillar of stability" in the region, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said it was imperative the agency is able to plug funding gaps needed to keep operating persistently. UNRWA provides essential services to Palestinian refugees across Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza.

### Kuwaiti grant

In other news, the Palestinian Health Ministry



GAZA CITY: Palestinians wearing a protective masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic attend a rally to protest the reduction of the food basket provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza City, on October 14, 2020. — AFP

announced that it received \$5.5 million from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) as part of a previously pledged Kuwaiti grant worth \$250 million. Health Minister Mai Al-Kaila said in a press statement that the ministry also obtained a grant estimated at \$5.5 million from Al-Aqsa Fund. She noted that the two grants support the ministry's efforts to combat the novel coronavirus and provide good medical services in the Gaza Strip and West Bank's governorates.

She, on behalf of President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh and the min-

istry's staff, expressed gratitude to the KFAED and Al-Aqsa Fund as well as the Islamic Development Bank for big continued efforts in providing support and grants to the Palestinian health sector. Meanwhile, Shtayyeh's advisor for Islamic and Arab funds Nasser Qatami, said that the Kuwaiti funding offered on Thursday is part of the \$250 million grant pledged by Kuwait to reconstruct the Strip. "We are very grateful to our brothers in Kuwait for their support to the Palestinian people and continued assistance to back our issue on financial and political levels," he said. — KUNA

## Official says Kuwait will remain 'country of humanity'

KUWAIT: Kuwait will remain a state of humanity embodied in the achievements of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, lawyer Kawthar Al-Jouan, President of the Women's Institute for Development and Peace (WIDP), said on Friday. This came in a speech Jouan delivered at the e-forum of the Arab Union for Sustainable Development and Environment (AUSDE) entitled 'sustainable food to face hunger in the world' that was held on the occasion of the UN celebration of the World Food Day which falls on October 16.

Kuwait has caught the world's attention, and this led to honoring the late Amir as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center,' she said. She expressed pride for Kuwait's charitable

record full of humanitarian initiatives and donor conferences for helping several vulnerable peoples. All people know Kuwait's role played in helping the most vulnerable groups in several parts of the world to recover mainly from the crisis caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

### Basic human right

Eradicating hunger and malnutrition is a basic human right, she said, pointing to the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted on November 16, 1974. Food will remain the essence of life on which the societies are established, she stressed. The 'initiative against hunger' highly succeeded in directing efforts by local, regional and international humanitarian organizations to combat hunger last year,

she said. She pointed out that the initiative came in line with the second goal of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN in order to eradicate hunger and help those facing hunger in the world.

Jouan said the initiative's programs and projects include small-sized schemes, soft loans, productive and animal farms, bread, food industry, irrigation, dams, water plants, reservoirs, wells, land reclamation, food and nutritional supplements for the orphan, vocational rehabilitation and other projects. She pointed to Kuwait's pledges that hit \$1.5 billion and others estimated at \$300 million as well as its backing to humanitarian situation in Syria with \$188 million. She stated that the State of Kuwait pledged \$300 million in the fourth donor conference on Syria held in 2016 and Kuwait's charitable organizations pledged \$61 million. Secretary General of AUSDE Ashraf Abdulaziz opened the forum Friday evening that includes a group of officials, specialists and those interested in development from a number of Arab countries. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George visited Kuwait Times recently and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### News in brief

#### Fintas polyclinic timings announced

KUWAIT: The Health Ministry announced new timings for visiting the Fintas polyclinic, which are different based on nationality. Kuwaiti citizens living in Fintas, Eqaila, and Mahboula are received in the morning period at the Fintas specialized polyclinic, and at the evening period at the Fintas polyclinic. Meanwhile, expats living in Fintas, Eqaila, and Mahboula are received at the Fintas polyclinic during the morning and evening periods.

#### Oil price falls

KUWAIT: Kuwait oil price dropped six cents to \$41.54 per barrel Friday against \$41.60 pb Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. In international markets, forward contracts of the Brent crude oil dropped 23 cents settling at \$42.93 pb. Meanwhile, identical deals of the intermediate West Texas crude declined by eight cents to settle at \$40.88 pb. —KUNA

#### Cable thieves caught

KUWAIT: Police arrested eight Arab men who stole high voltage power cables from a company located west of Mubarak Al-Abdullah area, the Interior Ministry announced. The company manager had complained about the theft of cables worth KD 1,918, and investigations led to a person who was arrested, and investigations with him then led to the other seven, the ministry explained in a statement. The suspects led police to locations where they stashed the stolen material. The suspects were referred to concerned authorities for further action.

#### Boat stranded near Failaka

KUWAIT: Firemen rescued seagoers who were stranded on a boat near Failaka Island over the weekend. Salmiya Sea Fire Station dispatched rescuers to the scene in response to an emergency call, and they found out that the boat was damaged and water had leaked into it. All individuals onboard were rescued and taken to the Yachts Club, Kuwait Fire Force said in a statement.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.





## Local

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## Pakistan President congratulates Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday received congratulations from Pakistani President Arif Alvi, on His Highness' ascension of power. President Alvi expressed sincere felicitations to His Highness the Amir on the new post, wishing him everlasting well-being. In reply, His Highness the Amir sent a letter of thanks, appreciating President Alvi for the heartfelt sentiments and lauding the deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Pakistan. His Highness the Amir wished the Pakistani leader good health. — KUNA

## Terrorism grave danger to peace: Kuwaiti Minister

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said that terrorism "continues to pose a grave danger and a threat to international peace and security." The minister was heading Kuwait's delegation at the First Antalya Diplomacy Forum, held remotely on Thursday, which discussed efforts to combat terrorism under pandemic conditions. Kuwait's foreign minister stressed the importance of maintaining the positive results recently, achieved by the international community, in combating terrorism and monitoring the latest developments regarding these accelerating international changes. He also recalled Kuwait's role in supporting these efforts by continuing to extend a helping hand to the peoples of the world, providing support worth \$290 million dollars during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to ensure the continuity of combating the spread of the pandemic, in continuation of its relief role for impoverished and refugee communities around the world, and working to strengthen the elements of security and stability in conflict zones, he explained. This matter necessitates the strengthening of international partnerships and cooperation to achieve additional successes, particularly to eradicate terrorism, halt its funding sources and to provide full support to achieve security and stability in conflict zones, he added. The event was held under the joint auspices of the foreign ministers of Turkey and Malta, Mevlut Cavusoglu and Evarist Bartol. — KUNA

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: People lined up outside the Bayan polyclinic yesterday to take their flu vaccines. The Ministry of Health had launched on Thursday its vaccination campaign against winter diseases, including the seasonal flu and pneumococcal pneumonia. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Syed Sajjad Haider visited Kuwait Times recently and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait reports 4 deaths, 739 COVID-19 cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday reported four deaths and 739 new cases due to COVID-19. The figures took the country's death toll up to 694 and the caseload to 115,483, health ministry data showed. According to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, the number of people hospitalized with the virus stands at 7,681; 139 of whom in intensive care units. Dr Sanad added that 5,701 swab tests were conducted in the past 24 hours, with a total of 823,206 so far. Meanwhile, some 613 people recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours to raise the total to 107,108, the ministry had earlier said. Urging the public to be mindful of health precautions, Dr Sanad said following social distancing measures is of the most important means to curb the spread of the virus. —KUNA

## Firemen battle Jahra tire dump blaze

KUWAIT: Firefighters extinguished a huge blaze at a scrap tire graveyard in the northwestern Jahra Governorate, Kuwait Fire Force said. The fire had

erupted Thursday afternoon and quickly extended to a large area of the tire scrapyards which extends over an area of one million square meters. But fire-fighting squads of four fire stations rushed to the site and managed to isolate the fire in an area of 25,000 squares meters, before totally extinguishing it later. No human casualties were reported, KFF said, noting that an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.



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Tired but defiant: Hundred days of protests in Bulgaria

## With iffy Wi-Fi, Venezuelan school kids struggle to join classes

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BANGKOK: Pro-democracy protesters wear ponchos and use umbrellas to shelter from the rain in Wongwian Yai as they continue to defy an emergency decree banning gatherings. —AFP

# Thai protesters return after clashes

## Escalation in police tactics has not cowed burgeoning youth-led movement

**BANGKOK** Thousands of Thai pro-democracy protesters massed in multiple locations across Bangkok yesterday, defying an emergency decree banning gatherings for the third consecutive day after confrontations saw riot police use water cannon on peaceful demonstrators. But the escalation in police tactics has not cowed the burgeoning youth-led movement, which is demanding the resignation of a premier first brought to power in a military coup and reform of the kingdom's powerful monarchy. "I'm concerned for my safety but if I don't come out, I have no future," said business student Min, 18, equipped with a helmet and gas mask as she arrived in Bangkok's northern Lat Phrao district where more than 2,000 protesters took over a major intersection. They raised a three-finger salute as passing vehicles honked in support and flashed a thumbs-up at the mostly black-clad protesters.

The Lat Phrao location, as well two others across Bangkok, was announced an hour before the scheduled protest time - with organizers outsmarting authorities who had closed roads to two suspected venues that ended up not being used. Across the Chao Phraya river, around 2,500 rallied in the western Wongwian Yai district chanting "Long live the people, down with dictatorship", while in southeastern Udomsuk another 5,000

brought busy traffic to a standstill.

Carrying signs saying "You can't kill us, we're everywhere" and "Stop hurting people," more than 10,000 protesters had so far gathered across the three locations, according to AFP reporters on the scene. For the mostly-young demonstrators, Friday's crackdown was a big learning curve, said Aim, whose friends were blasted with stinging liquid when police fired water cannon. "We had no armor, just umbrellas," said the 25-year-old public servant, grasping a pair of goggles.

The Free Youth, one of the movement's main organizing groups, had warned protesters in an online post to be "prepared both physically and mentally... and to cope with a crackdown if it happens". "I'm ready to fight," said 20-year-old Tortor, carrying a backpack stuffed with a gas mask. Operators of both the Skytrain and underground rail networks had shut down services city-wide to prevent protesters from joining.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha announced Friday an emergency decree banning gatherings of more than four people would be imposed for at least a month. The former army chief, who masterminded a coup in 2014 before being voted into power last year in an election protesters say was rigged in his favor, also rebuffed calls for his resignation.

**'You're a tyrant'**

At least 65 prominent protesters have been arrested since Tuesday, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights told AFP yesterday, as authorities escalated a crackdown on months of slowly building unrest. Eight have since been released, including activist Tattap "Ford" Ruangprapaikitseree, who was bailed on Saturday after his detention the previous night. He quickly went on Facebook to denounce the use of violence against unarmed protesters. "The government is no longer legitimate. Prayut Chan-O-Cha, you're a tyrant," he said in a livestream.

Two other activists were arrested Friday under a rarely used law banning "violence against the queen" after they joined a group Wednesday that surrounded a royal motorcade carrying Queen Suthida, flashing a pro-democracy salute as the car drove by. Both men, one of whom has been released on bail, could face life in prison if convicted.

At least three protesters sustained slight injuries and five officers were admitted to the police hospital in Friday's clashes, authorities said. The government insisted the use of force had been lawful to stop those trying to "create divisions" in the country. "There was no victory or defeat for either side. It's a defeat for all Thais," government spokesman

Anucha Burapanchaisri said in a statement.

**Royal reminder**

The pro-democracy movement is making an unprecedented challenge to the kingdom's powerful monarchy. Protesters are demanding the abolition of a strict royal defamation law, which carries jail sentences of up to 15 years per charge, and for the monarchy to stay out of politics. The institution currently wields enormous influence and is flanked by an arch-royalist military and billionaire clans.

Since ascending the throne in 2016, King Maha Vajiralongkorn has taken personal control of the palace's vast fortune - worth an estimated \$60 billion - and moved two army units under his direct command. The king has yet to address the civil unrest directly, but during a ceremony broadcast on Friday, he told his subjects that Thailand "needs people who love the country, people who love the institution of the monarchy". The government insists the reforms to the royal family are off-limits, but this position was becoming untenable, said International Crisis Group analyst Matthew Wheeler. "The degree of repression necessary to effectively reinstate the prohibition, including online, would tarnish both the government and the monarchy." —AFP

## Lebanon protest movement marks 'harrowing' year



BEIRUT: Lebanese activists erect a metallic monument on Friday with 'October 17' written on it in Arabic in front of the devastated port where a massive explosion took place more than two months ago. —AFP

BEIRUT: Lebanon marked the first anniversary yesterday of a non-sectarian protest movement that has rocked the political elite but has yet to achieve its goal of sweeping reform. A whirlwind of hope and despair has gripped the country in the year since protests began, with an economic crisis and a devastating August 4 port explosion pushing Lebanon deeper into decay. Two governments have resigned since the movement started but the country's barons, many of them warlords from the 1975-90 civil war, remain firmly in power despite international as well as domestic pressure for change.

Yesterday, dozens of people brandishing placards and Lebanese flags gathered in Martyr's Square in the heart of Beirut. The demonstrators planned to march towards the port - the site of the devastating explosion, which has been widely blamed on the alleged corruption and incompetence of the hereditary elite. There they were to hold a candlelit vigil near ground zero at 6:07 pm, the precise time when a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate fertilizer exploded, killing more than 200 people and devastating swathes of the capital.

Activists have installed a metallic monument at the site to mark the anniversary of their Oct 17 "revolution". "We still don't recognize" our leaders as legitimate, said one prominent protester, who gave her name only as Melissa. "We are still on the street... standing together in the face of a corrupt government," the 42-year-old said.

The immediate trigger for last year's protests was a government move to tax Whatsapp calls, but they swiftly swelled into a nationwide movement demanding an end to the system of confessional power-sharing it says has tarnished public life. The country's deepest economic downturn since the civil war has led to growing unemployment, poverty and hunger, pushing many to look for better opportunities abroad.

A spiraling coronavirus outbreak since February prompted a ban on public gatherings but even without protesters on the streets public resentment has grown. The explosion at Beirut port served as a shocking reminder to many of the rot at the heart of their political system. It prompted protesters to return to the streets in its aftermath but the movement then shifted most of its energy to relief operations to fill in for what it sees as an absent state. —AFP

## Trump stumps to counter signs of Democratic surge

**MACON, Georgia:** US President Donald Trump fought Friday to recover from sinking election polls by campaigning with a hardline pitch to America's right wing, claiming at rallies in Florida and Georgia that his Democratic opponent Joe Biden would deliver communism and a "flood" of criminal immigrants. While Trump put on a brave face, the fact that he was fighting at all for the two southern states he won four years ago illustrated how much ground he has to make up against Biden in the 18 days left until the election.

With his polls sliding and US COVID-19 infections spiking, Trump is focusing entirely on his core Republican base, in hopes that highly energized supporters will turn out in huge numbers. In Ocala, Florida, the coronavirus was an afterthought. Instead, Trump tossed the large, loudly cheering crowd red meat on immigration, race, and his conspiracy theory that Biden is steeped in corruption.

## Protesters torch Kurd party offices

**BAGHDAD:** Supporters of Hashed Al-Shaabi, an Iraqi paramilitary network dominated by Iran-backed factions, Saturday burned down the main Kurdish party's headquarters in Baghdad after criticism from a Kurdish ex-minister. Hundreds of Hashed demonstrators swept past a security detail and stormed into the offices of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which runs the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq, and torched them.

Protesters burned Kurdish flags while others carried posters of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, who were killed in a US drone strike in Baghdad last January. The Hashed paramilitaries

Spicing his stump speech with lurid exaggerations, Trump claimed that the "Biden family is a criminal enterprise". He said Democrats "have nothing but disdain for your values" and "want to turn America into a communist country" - a reprise of his successful 2016 message tapping into white, working-class resentment. "It's time we sent a message to these wealthy liberal hypocrites," he told the cheering crowd in Macon, Georgia on Friday night.

Trump also dived into racially charged comments on Latin American migrants, saying Democrats will "flood your communities with illegal aliens, drugs, crime". And he lashed out at one of his most outspoken critics, the Somali-American Democratic congresswoman Ilhan Omar, saying "she hates our country" and "comes from a place that doesn't even have a government".

**Biden highlights pandemic**

Trump had still more venom for journalists, whom he called "the enemy of the people". And he seemed to acknowledge things might not go his way in the end. "Running against the worst candidate in the history of presidential politics puts pressure on me. Could you imagine if I lose?" Trump mused. "What am I gonna do?" he continued. "I'm not gonna feel so good. Maybe I'll have to leave the country. I don't know."

were formed in 2014 from mostly-Shiite armed groups and volunteers to fight the Islamic State group. Hashed has since been formally integrated into Iraq's armed forces and has representation in parliament, and it has spawned several ideologically affiliated armed groups.

Earlier this month, Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq's long-time former foreign minister and a key Kurdish power-broker, said the government needed to "clean up the Green Zone (in Baghdad) from the presence of Hashed militias". They were operating "outside the law", Zebari, a KDP member, said in comments to the US-funded Al-Hurra television.

Vian Sabry, head of the KDP bloc in parliament, condemned yesterday's attack. "This isn't a protest because protesters are supposed to be peaceful as per the constitution," she told AFP. She blamed "unaccountable factions for being behind such acts", without elaborating. On Oct 1, Kurdish authorities accused Hashed militants of firing rockets at the airport in Arbil, the capital city of Iraqi



DETROIT: Democratic Presidential candidate and former US Vice President Joe Biden speaks at a car rally at the Michigan State Fairgrounds on Friday. —AFP

Biden, meanwhile, was campaigning in Michigan where he ripped into Trump's handling of the coronavirus - the strongest issue of his campaign. "He keeps telling us that this virus is going to disappear like a miracle," Biden said in Southfield. "My lord! It's not disappearing, in fact it's on the rise again, it's getting worse, as predicted," Biden said. —AFP



BAGHDAD: Iraqi demonstrators raise portraits of slain Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani and Iraqi paramilitary commander Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis as others burn down the Kurdish Democratic Party's headquarters yesterday. —AFP

Kurdistan, where US troops are based. Around 90 rocket attacks have targeted the US presence in Iraq since the January drone strike, with several claimed by pro-Iran factions. —AFP



## International

# Tired but defiant: Hundred days of protests in Bulgaria

## 66% back protests, 44% want PM's immediate resignation

**SOFIA:** In a hundred days of sweeping and at times violent protests, thousands of Bulgarians have tightened the screws on the political elite - but this, they say, is only the beginning. "I am tired of the government's refusal to hear our demands, but I keep protesting as an act of defiance," Mila Loarova, a 39-year-old puppet theatre actress and director, snaps.

On the 100th day of protests in Sofia on Friday, several thousand people braved pouring rain to once again demand the resignation of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and his conservative cabinet, as well as the country's chief prosecutor, Ivan Geshev. They accuse the government of favoritism, dependence on powerful oligarchs and weaponizing prosecutions against political opponents - the most serious accusations Borisov has faced during his almost ten years in power.

"Our problem lies in the mere perception of what is normal. We are so used to corruption, nepotism, broken pavements, road potholes, ugly buildings, wrecked cars that for us what an ordinary European would consider inadmissible has turned into something ordinary," says Kolarova's partner, Vladimir Vasilev.



### Borisov has refused to step down

macy," Vasilev says.

years of bad governance blurred people's perception until these incidents acted "as a big hand coming out of the fog to slap you in the face and you say to yourself: Damn, this cannot just go on like that". Despite considerable pressure to resign and a storm of other allegations of high-level corruption and influence peddling, Borisov has refused to step down, saying he will remain in power until the end of his term in March 2021.

Recent polls, however, show that Bulgarians no longer see Borisov as the no-nonsense tough guy and former firefighter with a black belt in karate who communicated to voters with ease. Some 66 percent of Bulgarians back the protests and 44 percent want his immediate resignation and snap elections, while Borisov's personal approval rating dropped to an all-time low of 20.3 percent, according to a recent Alpha research poll. "This is what the protest did - it totally shifted the position of this government - from someone at the top and in power, to someone who is absolutely put up against a wall, lacking any legiti-

### 'The people awoke'

The demonstrations also consolidated ordinary Bulgarians, who realized that they were not alone in pushing for more morals, integrity and intelligence in politics, he adds. People from all walks of life - and from across the political spectrum - have joined in the evening rallies, a first for Bulgaria, and hundreds of Bulgarians living abroad have also staged protests. After weeks of calling for Brussels to turn its eye to develop-

and now has 9,000 members across 35 states, according to Manewal, a lawyer and mother of four. The women call voters on the phone daily, mail voting-reminder postcards, raise funds for Biden's campaign, post information online and were organizing a march yesterday in Stamford. They are also sending 10,000 copies of a letter to the White House telling Trump: "You do NOT know us, you do NOT speak for us, and you do NOT represent the type of leader we respect."

### 'Please like me'

At Wednesday's event, the activists made posters for yesterday's march that said "We won't go back" and "Back off my body," a reference to Trump's claim that the Supreme Court may overturn abortion laws. Unsurprisingly, the women vote overwhelmingly Democratic but they have been able to pick up a few traditional Republican supporters, although they say that is not their focus. "I don't think that we are necessarily here to change the minds of people whose minds are already made up," says 49-year-old Tarantino, who has two children. "I think what we are here to do is to get people out to vote who don't normally come out to vote," adds the non-profit executive.

White women, including those living in suburbs, played a significant role in Trump's shock election win over Hillary Clinton in 2016. According to the Pew Research Center, 47 percent of white women voted for Trump, compared with 45 percent for Clinton. Among white women without college degrees, some

should get to our ranch by December or January," gushed Chilton, whose support for Trump in the last election largely hinged on his promise to build a physical barrier along the southern border with Mexico to prevent people from crossing illegally.

Chilton and his 78-year-old spouse also heaped praise on Trump for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic - describing it as the "Chinese COVID crisis" - as well as his efforts at deregulation and his pledge to "drain the swamp". Their views reflect Trump's continued popularity in rural America, which helped lift him to the presidency in 2016 and where he still enjoys strong support among voters like the Chiltons. "I am better off, I think the country is better off and I look forward to another four wonderful years," said Chilton, a fifth-generation rancher who shook hands with Trump last year when invited to speak at the American Farm Bureau Federation conference in New Orleans. Apart from Trump's progress on building what he has described as a "big, beautiful wall" - over 300 miles of which have been built but just five miles are new - the Chiltons said they were happy with his administration's bid to reverse federal environmental policies that affected their way of life.

One notable roll back, they said, was the repeal in Sept 2019 of a major Obama-era clean water regulation

Instagram said Sanofi's flu vaccine Fluzone was 2.4 times more deadly than COVID-19. A national study from the University of Michigan found that one in three parents planned to skip the flu vaccine for their children this year, with mothers and fathers pointing to misinformation, including the belief that it is not effective, as a reason.

"Primary care providers have a really important role to play in this flu season," said Sarah Clark, research scientist at the Michigan Medicine Child Health Evaluation and Research Center, who led the study. "They need to send parents a clear and strong message about the importance of flu vaccine." But with daily COVID-19 infections rising to record levels in several US states, false information remains a barrier to people getting vaccinated. Jeanine Guidry, an assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University who studies health messaging on social media, said: "There is so much misinformation related to COVID and I really believe that that spills over" to the flu. —AFP



**SOFIA:** A couple holds a placard with a Bulgarian flag reading "thugs out" during an anti-government protest near the parliament building on Friday. —AFP

ments in its poorest member state, the European Parliament last week passed a critical resolution.

It offered "unequivocal support for the people of Bulgaria in their legitimate demands and aspirations for justice, transparency, accountability and democracy". In a failed bid to appease protesters, Borisov sacked several key ministers. But a night of violence on Sept 3, when anti-riot forces dispersed the rally by force, arrested 126 protesters and beat dozens in an unprecedented show of force only exacerbated

people's anger. "To me, one very meaningful victory of the protest... is that the people awoke and got back this will to fight for what's right," Kolarova says. As of today, however, she sees "no rosy happy end". "Like Sisyphus, it is important to go back down there every time and start pushing that boulder up again because that's just the beginning of the road and we have to walk it," she said. "We must be ready to protest for hundreds and hundreds more days in the future," Vasilev adds. —AFP

## Women aim to S.W.A.T. away Trump

**STAMFORD, Connecticut:** Donald Trump says suburban women will reelect him president, but in Connecticut female voters calling themselves The S.W.A.T. Team are campaigning against his efforts to court the crucial voting bloc. Suburban Women Against Trump was formed in early August in response to the US leader claiming that Democratic opponent Joe Biden would "destroy your neighborhood and your American Dream" with low-cost housing.

"I was just appalled by how he was trying to paint this picture of suburban women falling into his camp and being as racist as he is," co-founder Brook Manewal tells AFP at a S.W.A.T. get-together. "He paints us as afraid of losing our white picket fences, perfect little houses and perfect yards and I don't think that's the people I have run into at all."

The 43-year-old lawyer sent a late-night text message to friend and fellow Stamford resident Shira Tarantino suggesting they form an organization aimed at persuading suburban women to vote for Biden. S.W.A.T. was born as a small Facebook group. It quickly spread by word of mouth and on social media

## Rancher still 'tickled pink' by Trump

**LOS ANGELES:** In 2016, Arizona rancher Jim Chilton was so excited about the election of Donald Trump as president that he said his socks were "rolling up and down". Four years later, the 81-year-old is just as enthusiastic about the upcoming US election and has no doubt which candidate is getting his vote. "I would give Donald Trump an A plus for his work over the last four years," Chilton told AFP in an interview on video app Zoom during which he was joined by his wife Sue. "We've had some wonderful things happen and we prospered immensely."

The couple, who own a ranch on the Arizona border with Mexico and who also spoke with AFP in 2016, just ahead of the US presidential vote, said Trump still has their undying support and they were "tickled pink" at the prospect he could be reelected. "Remember how I dreamed of having a wall, well it's being built and it

## As US battles COVID, flu shot misinfo spreads

**WASHINGTON:** US health officials are pushing Americans to get vaccinated against the flu to help prevent hospitals already busy battling COVID-19 from being overwhelmed this winter, but false claims are threatening their efforts. Misinformation on social media, particularly that a flu shot will increase the risk of contracting the coronavirus or cause you to test positive for COVID-19 - it won't - is undermining the public health message.

One false claim circulating on Facebook and Instagram said a flu shot would raise the probability of COVID-19 infection by 36 percent. Another on



**STAMFORD, Connecticut:** A woman holds a photo of former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg as Suburban Women Against Trump campaign against the US president's courting of female voters in the suburbs on Oct 15, 2020. —AFP

61 percent voted for Trump compared to just 34 percent for Clinton.

The votes were pivotal in swing states such as Michigan and Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which he won by only 44,000 votes, and could be key again this time. On Aug 12, Trump tweeted that the "suburban housewife will be voting for me" on Nov 3. But at a rally in Pennsylvania on Tuesday, he sounded less sure. "Suburban women, will you please like me? I saved your damn neighborhood, okay?" he told the crowd. —AFP



**NEW ORLEANS:** In this file photo taken on Jan 14, 2019, US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Arizona farmer Jim Chilton during the annual American Farm Bureau Federation convention. —AFP

that imposed limits on pollution in wetlands and smaller waterways. The reversal of the 2015 measure, known as the Waters of the United States rule, has done away with burdens farmers and ranchers faced as relates to water bodies and wetlands on their property, the Chiltons said. —AFP



**BOSTON:** In this photo taken on Aug 29, 2020, anti-vaccine activists hold signs in front of the Massachusetts State House during a protest against Governor Charlie Baker's mandate that all Massachusetts school students enrolled in childcare, pre-school, K-12, and post-secondary institutions must receive the flu vaccine this year. —AFP

## Sarkozy hit with new Libya financing charge

**PARIS:** French prosecutors said Friday that they had charged former president Nicolas Sarkozy over claims he accepted cash from the Libyan dictatorship of Muammar Gaddafi for his 2007 election campaign. The charge for "membership in a criminal conspiracy" was brought on Monday after more than 40 hours of questioning over four days, prosecutors told AFP. It adds to charges already filed in 2018 of "accepting bribes," "benefiting from embezzled public funds" and "illegal campaign financing".

The latest charge, which can still be appealed, increases the chance of a trial for Sarkozy, who is already poised to become the first former French president in the dock on corruption charges. Prosecutors suspect that Sarkozy and his associates received tens of millions of euros from Gaddafi's regime to help finance his election bid.

Sarkozy, who was president from 2007 to 2012, has denied any wrongdoing, saying on his Facebook page Friday that his "innocence has been tarnished" by the charges, without "even the slightest proof". "I answered every question I was asked without ever being put in difficulty," he said, referring to the recent grilling by prosecutors. "I know that justice will triumph in the end."

### Suitcases of cash?

Sarkozy, 65, has been under pressure since 2012, when the investigative website Mediapart published a document purporting to show that Gaddafi agreed to give Sarkozy up to euro 50 million (\$59 million at current rates). The two leaders enjoyed surprisingly cordial ties, with Sarkozy letting the Libyan strongman pitch his Bedouin tent opposite the Elysee Palace on a state visit to France just months after his election.

But four years later, in 2011, Sarkozy was a driving force behind the international military intervention that drove Gaddafi from power. Sarkozy, a trained lawyer, has fought the claims of Libya cash by claiming presidential immunity, and by arguing there is no legal basis in France for prosecuting someone for misusing funds from a foreign country.

Judges are also investigating claims by a French-Lebanese businessman, Ziad Takieddine, who said he delivered suitcases carrying a total of five million euros from the Libyan regime to Sarkozy's chief of staff in 2006 and 2007. After seven years of investigation efforts resulting in witness statements from Libyan officials, members of Gaddafi's secret service and from middlemen, prosecutors believe they can show that Sarkozy's campaign was indeed financed by Gaddafi.

But legal experts have said the charges may hinge on circumstantial evidence rather than the sort of ironclad proof of Sarkozy's guilt that would ensure a conviction. Sarkozy's former ministers Claude Gueant and Eric Woerth are also charged in the case, which is not the only legal headache for the former rightwing president, who is no longer active in politics. —AFP



Nicolas Sarkozy



## International

# Arrest of ex-army chief puts AMLO's plans under siege

## Move threatens to sour government relations with the military

MEXICO CITY: The spectacular fall from grace of Mexico's previous armed forces supremo has raised awkward questions about the president's reliance on the military to fight drug gangs and manage an increasing portfolio of vital civilian infrastructure. Thursday's arrest of former Defense Minister Salvador Cienfuegos in the United States at the Los Angeles airport on drug trafficking charges sent shockwaves through the political establishment and embarrassed a once highly trusted institution.

steers away from that, there's no one else to turn to right now. He doesn't have many other options left."

Lopez Obrador responded to the Cienfuegos arrest by vowing to root out military corruption - a promise which sits uneasily with the faith he previously put in Mexico's generals. Now the same military leaders the president is counting on to pacify Mexico after years of gang violence may end up sidelined in top civilian security appointments, officials say.

Before Cienfuegos' detention, speculation was growing that Lopez Obrador would appoint a general to replace Security Minister Alfonso Durazo, who has flagged his intention to run for the governorship of the northern state of Sonora in 2021. "This is a game changer," said a senior Mexican police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Lopez Obrador would have to "pay a high political price" to put a military figure in charge of the civilian body, the official added.

Then there is the question of bad blood. Charging Cienfuegos, who ran the army from 2012-18, with the very crime he was meant to be rooting out risks shaking a key pillar of the Mexican state to its core - and incurring its wrath, another government official said. "The army won't take this too well," said the official.

Lopez Obrador on Friday resoundingly backed Cienfuegos' successor at the head of the army and his counterpart in the navy, saying he had personally vetted them and vouched for their honesty. Generals have been locked up on drugs charges before. But the arrest of the army's one-time chieftain by a foreign power is a heavy



Salvador Cienfuegos

blow to the prestige of an institution that has prided itself as the principal guarantor of stability in the country since the Mexican Revolution a century ago.

In part this is because successive Mexican presidents, who can only serve a single six-year term, have opted to chop and change alternative, civilian police institutions rather than build on what their predecessors began, critics say. Yet that was often a reaction to the perceived corruption inside those bodies, as evinced by the Dec 2019 arrest of former Security Minister Genaro Garcia Luna by US officials for allegedly taking bribes from the Sinaloa cartel. Garcia Luna denies the charges. Ironically, Lopez Obrador said the arrest of Cienfuegos flowed from that probe.

### Negative spiral

Lack of civilian alternatives to the military risks creating a negative long-term spiral, analysts say. Alejandro Hope, a former Mexican intelligence official, said if security is handed over to the military, there is no point in investing in the training of civilian commanders. "After a few years, there are no civilian commanders to turn to and there is no alternative but to leave the responsibility to the military," he wrote in the El Universal newspaper.

Once an outspoken critic of the military himself, Lopez Obrador has bolstered the armed forces' economic interests by tasking the army to build a \$3.2 billion airport for Mexico City. He has also ordered the navy to take over the running of key ports that Mexican cartels have infiltrated. In his political declarations, Lopez Obrador is often at pains to exalt the esprit de corps and probity of the army, despite ample past evidence of corruption. Some people close to the government were even privately celebrating Cienfuegos' detention, saying it only confirmed their suspicions about rot in the military. "This breaks with the historic pact of impunity that protected the army," said a senior member of the president's ruling party, the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA).

In a sign of the US mistrust in Mexican officials, the government in Mexico City was not kept in the loop about details of Cienfuegos' alleged crimes or the timing of the arrest. Officials expressed shock and amazement about the news. "There was no knowledge of it in security areas," one senior government official said. — Reuters

“ This is a game changer ”

It threatens to sour government relations with the military, which since President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador assumed power in December 2018 has been tasked not just with reducing violence, but also managing ports and even building an airport. "He has placed his entire political capital on making his political project work through the armed forces," said Falko Ernst, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group. "If he

## With iffy Wi-Fi, kids struggle to join classes

CARACAS: Thumbing his mobile phone, Jonathan Figueroa sits on his doorstep in a desperate daily quest for a Wi-Fi signal to download his homework. Battered by the pandemic and economic collapse, Venezuela's lost generation of schoolchildren have little chance of linking up regularly with online classes given the country's flimsy Internet coverage. The 14-year-old doesn't even have the luxury of virtual classes at his school in a poor district of Caracas, where the cost of computers is out of reach for most families.

Instead, what little interaction he has with teachers is limited to voice messages and assignments delivered on WhatsApp. "It's complicated. Sometimes I don't understand anything at all," said Jonathan. In some ways, he is one of the lucky ones, because his mother's employer gave him a used tablet.

### 'Wasting time'

But amid routine power blackouts and random Internet availability, Jonathan feels overwhelmed and increasingly estranged from his school environment. "Not only am I doing my homework badly, but I'm wasting time," he said. To make matters worse, Jonathan and his mother Viviana - who share a poky rented room in a poor district - contracted the coronavirus in July.

Officially, some 85,000 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Venezuela - a country of 30 million - with just over 700 deaths linked to the disease. Those figures are challenged by the opposition and some NGOs, who claim the real figure is much higher. "We had COVID-19, and then God wanted us to get to know some people," said Viviana, recalling the solidarity of neighbors who brought them food and water as they recovered their strength. The cost of a smartphone or tablet represents years of savings for families in a country where, according to a survey by leading universities, eight out of 10 people live in extreme poverty.

### Slow connections

Venezuela's desperate economic crisis means that when the internet is working, the connection is among the world's slowest. A survey by the Speedtest site in August ranked the South American country 169 out of 174 countries in broadband speed. Paediatricians Luzmar and Francisco Rodriguez know all about weak broadband signals. Their connection in the middle-class area of Caracas where they live should be enough to enable their children to take their private school's online classes.

But instead the parents often have to drive around Caracas in search of an elusive Wi-Fi signal. "You buy them a computer, a printer, the internet, a laptop... and then because of something as insignificant as rain, nothing works anymore," said Luzmar. Their eldest son Francisco connected to his school recently from a car park outside a pharmacy, where the family managed to locate a signal. —AFP



CARACAS: Jhonatan Figueroa, 14, sits in the room he shares with his mother at the Bello Campo neighborhood in Chacao on Oct 6, 2020. — AFP



HONG KONG: Pro-democracy protester Alexandra Wong shows a Chinese public security document to the media with supporter Eddie Chu at a press conference yesterday. — AFP

## 'Grandma Wong' held 14 months on mainland

HONG KONG: An elderly woman who disappeared midway through Hong Kong's democracy protests last year resurfaced in the financial hub yesterday after 14 months away, saying she had been detained on the Chinese mainland. Alexandra Wong said she was forced to renounce her activism in writing, record a video statement saying she was not tortured, and sent on a "patriotic tour" of the country's north.

Dubbed "Grandma Wong" by her comrades and often spotted waving a British flag, the 64-year-old attended virtually every rally during the early days of the movement for greater democracy and police accountability, which kicked off in June 2019. She disappeared last August and maintained only sporadic contact with local media in the former British colony.

Yesterday she held a press conference in Hong Kong and said that, after joining an August protest, she was detained by Chinese police at the border with Shenzhen, the mainland metropolis where she has lived for 14 years. Her testimony was a vivid illustration of the opaque, party-controlled judicial system on the mainland that many Hong Kongers fear is one day coming to their restless city.

Wong said she was held by Shenzhen authorities for

## Kyrgyz leader ready to fight crime, graft

BISHKEK: Kyrgyzstan's acting president Sadyr Japarov styled himself a reformist in his first major speech to the nation Friday as he pledged to tackle crime and corruption while cementing control over the troubled country. Japarov, who is still prime minister, earlier appointed close ally Kamchibek Tashiyev as national security chief as he consolidated power in the Central Asian republic following unrest over a disputed parliamentary vote.

Japarov's rise to the top has been controversial because of suspicions that criminal networks played a key role in the unrest and because Japarov was himself freed from jail by supporters on the night of Oct 5. He appeared in parliament Friday along with outgoing leader Sooronbay Jeenbekov, who resigned the day before. Stone-faced Jeenbekov said his decision was motivated by a desire to avoid bloodshed after Japarov's supporters massed in the capital Bishkek and insisted he step down immediately.

Yet the high-speed transfer of powers to Japarov has raised European Union concerns over whether it was in line with the country's constitution. Key partner Russia has also yet to publicly acknowledge him as acting head of state. Japarov struck an upbeat tone in his

"administrative detention" and "criminal detention" for a total of 45 days, without knowing what charges she was facing. "I was afraid I would die in the detention center," she said. When her stay in custody was over, she was asked to declare into a camera that she had not been tortured by mainland authorities, and promise not to take media interviews or protest again.

She was asked to confess in writing that her activism had been wrong. "The worst thing I did in my life is to write that confession... but I had nothing to bargain with," she said. The confessions did not win her freedom immediately. She was later sent on a five-day "patriotic tour" of Shaanxi province, where she had her picture taken holding the Chinese flag, and sang the national anthem.

After that, she was told she would be released on bail pending trial for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" - a catch-all term used by the government to target dissenters. But she was given no written documents on the charges. For a year after her release on bail, she was only allowed to go back to her home in Shenzhen, and could not return to Hong Kong. Those conditions lapsed in late September. "I have no courage to step in Shenzhen again, at least for now, unless there is a radical change in the political situation," Wong told reporters.

After huge and often violent democracy protests that convulsed Hong Kong last year, Beijing launched a clampdown on its opponents in the semi-autonomous city. In late June, it also imposed a broadly worded security law that, among other restrictions, outlawed the expression of certain views. "I won't give up fighting," Wong said. "After all, there will be sacrifice, otherwise... the authoritarian system wouldn't be changed." — AFP

address, promising opportunities for youth in government and "a real fight against corruption" that will "cease to be a tool for eliminating political opponents".

Last week Japarov responded angrily to reports questioning his potential links to organised crime as part of a media campaign to "blacken my name". On Friday he said organised crime "will stop dictating its terms".

### Youth to 'shape' future

"I guarantee it. The times when it was necessary to obtain permission from a criminal to operate a business in certain regions will become the past." One person died and more than 1,200 people were injured during clashes between protesters and police after parliamentary elections on October 4, which opponents say were rigged by vote-buying schemes.

Japarov hailed the dead protester - a 19-year-old from the south of the country - for his bravery fighting the "lawlessness" of the Jeenbekov administration and promised young people "will shape the policy of our country in the coming years". Jeenbekov became the third president of the volatile ex-Soviet state to resign since Kyrgyzstan became independent of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Japarov's naming Tashiyev as security chief is key because the national security committee is an important lever of influence for Russia, as some GKNB officers train with Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). Russia said earlier this week that Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had spoken by phone to counterpart Ruslan Kazakbayev, a member of Japarov's new look cabinet confirmed on Wednesday.

### News in brief

#### Suga sends offering to shrine

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga sent a ritual offering yesterday to the controversial Yasukuni war shrine, which is seen by neighboring countries as a symbol of the nation's past militarism, especially during World War II. Yasukuni honors some 2.5 million war dead, mostly Japanese, who perished in the country's wars since the late 19th century. But it also honors senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes by an international tribunal after WWII. The prime minister sent a sacred "masakaki" tree in the name of the prime minister at the start of an annual autumn festival, a shrine spokeswoman said. — AFP

#### Prosecutors find \$16m stash

GUATEMALA CITY: Anti-corruption investigators in Guatemala announced Friday they had seized \$16 million in cash stashed in suitcases at a disused house. The money, in dollars, euros and local currency quetzales, was found in 22 suitcases stacked in the bathroom of an abandoned house in the Caribbean seaside resort of Antigua, said Guatemala's top anti-graft investigator, Juan Francisco Sandoval. Sandoval, who heads the office of the Special Prosecutor against Impunity (FECI), said the stash was probably bribes that had been paid to a former civil servant. Cameras were also found at the scene, supposedly monitoring movements at the house. — AFP

#### Frenchman calls off strike

DIJON: A Frenchman who planned to refuse all food and medicine in his fight to secure right-to-die laws for terminally ill patients has called off his strike after being hospitalized, his supporters said Friday. Alain Cocq, 57, had already tried to live stream his death on social media in September, hoping to persuade President Emmanuel Macron to change France's strict laws against euthanasia. He abandoned that first bid after saying the suffering became too intense, and despite having vowed Monday to go "to the end" of his second attempt, Cocq again began accepting food and treatment. — AFP

Recent unrest in Kyrgyzstan has worried Moscow, coming as post-election protests rock ex-Soviet Belarus and clashes persist over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. But there was no indication of direct talks between Japarov and Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Japarov was spending a second stint behind bars on a hostage-taking conviction at the time he was sprung from jail. He has called the conviction - which has since been reversed by a judge - a "political order". — AFP



BISHKEK: Kyrgyzstan's recently-appointed Prime Minister Sadyr Japarov addresses the Kyrgyz Parliament at Ala-Archa state residence on Friday. — AFP



# Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2020

## China's economic recovery gathers pace

### Consumer spending gradually picking up as COVID fears eased

**BEIJING:** China's economic recovery gathered pace in the third quarter, according to an AFP poll of analysts, with consumer spending gradually picking up as coronavirus fears eased, helping a wider rebound spurred by investment and exports. Growth in July-September is expected to come in at 5.2 percent when official data is released Monday, bringing the world's second-largest economy closer to last year's 6.1 percent annual expansion, even as countries around the world struggle to contain the deadly pandemic.

With the virus now largely under control in China, most social distancing measures have been removed - and consumers have streamed back into restaurants and malls, hopped on flights and trains for domestic holidays and packed tourist districts. AFP's survey, involving analysts from 13 institutions, also forecast full-year growth of 2.3 percent, slightly above the International Monetary Fund's forecast, which tagged China as the only major economy likely to expand this year. "China's stimulus has differed from that of much of the region with its focus on the industrial sector and construction, rather than for small and medium-sized enterprises or direct payments to the unemployed," said Moody's Analytics economist Xu Xiaochun.

"Thus, China's rapid recovery is led by goods-producing industries and export shipments," Nathan Chow of DBS Bank added that the biggest boost came from investments, especially those driven by the government, while overseas demand has also improved. While consumer spending has lagged behind, it is catching up "at

least among middle- and upper-income households", and retail sales are nearing their levels of late 2019, Xu said.

But economists maintained that growth will be modest and driven mostly by production rather than services, adding that lingering uncertainty has led to an increase in savings. HSBC analysts added in a recent report that China's recovery has been "highly uneven", stressing a rebound in the private sector will be "essential for a sustainable economic recovery". Economists warned, however, that a sharp rebound is unlikely for Chinese consumer demand given the anxiety surrounding the coronavirus, while global tensions are also weighing on the external market.

Tommy Wu, lead economist at Oxford Economics, said analysts are still "waiting for signs of a more significant improvement in employment, which will underpin consumption". Consumers will remain wary about buying large amounts of goods and services during economic uncertainty, while "the external market is not likely to help the Chinese economy either", said Raphie Hayat, senior economist at Rabobank.

"China's tensions with several countries are increasing, while some of its trading partners are experiencing second wave outbreaks of the virus." This could boost certain exports such as protective equipment and electronics but the effect will "likely be more than offset by generally weaker external demand", he added. Wu said the pace of recovery is likely to slow in the last three months of the year, as credit to real estate and infrastructure investment decelerates. — AFP



**BEIJING:** People wearing face masks as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus commute during rush hour in Beijing. — AFP

## Boeing shares climb after regulator says 737 MAX 'safe'

**NEW YORK:** Boeing shares climbed on Friday following a report that the European air safety regulator is ready to allow the 737 MAX jet to return to the skies after its worldwide grounding. Shares in the US aviation giant were up 2.5 percent around 1745 GMT after Patrick Ky, executive director of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), told Bloomberg the plane could start flying before the end of the year. The 737 MAX was grounded globally in 2019 after crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia killed 346 people, plunging Boeing into crisis as the MAX underwent a lengthy review process.

Ky said Boeing would add a new sensor to the plane to prevent the types of problems that contributed to the crashes but that the plane could resume service even before that device is installed. "Our analysis is showing that this is safe, and the level of safety reached is high enough for us," Ky said in an interview. "What we discussed with Boeing is the fact that with the third sensor, we could reach even higher safety levels." The EASA completed test flights on the plane in September and is expected to issue a draft airworthiness directive in November, after which there will be four weeks of public comment, Bloomberg reported.

The regulator also has asked Boeing to install a



**SEATTLE:** A Boeing 737 MAX 8 airliner piloted by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Steve Dickson lands following an evaluation flight at Boeing Field in the Seattle, Washington. — AFP

"synthetic sensor" that would aid pilots should they face a malfunction in the angle of attack sensors, which occurred in both crashes. Existing 737 MAX models will be retrofitted with the new technology. The US Federal Aviation Administration also is working to return the plane to service, conducting test flights and releasing pilot training protocols for the aircraft earlier this month with a public comment period open through November 2. The agency called that "an important step" but said "several key milestones" remain before the plane can return to service. — AFP

## Andorra becomes IMF 190th member

**WASHINGTON:** Europe's tiny Andorra formally joined the International Monetary Fund on Friday, becoming the crisis lender's 190th member state as the tourism and trade-dependent principality struggles with the coronavirus pandemic. The IMF said in a statement that Andorra's initial quota - the capital subscription that determines its voting power and access to financing - is 82.5 million Special Drawing Rights, or about \$116.4 million.

"Andorra faces both short-term and long-term challenges common to European and other IMF member countries which have been aggravated by the (coronavirus) pandemic," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in a statement after a signing ceremony with Elisenda Vives Balmana, Andorra's ambassador to the United States, Canada and Mexico and the United Nations. "The IMF stands ready to work closely with the authorities and people of Andorra in achieving their post-pandemic growth and development objectives in cooperation with other partners in the international community," she added.

Fitch Ratings said in July that Andorra would experience a deep recession in 2020, forecasting GDP to contract by 11.4%, with a 50% drop in tourist entries. Nonetheless, Fitch affirmed Andorra's BBB+ investment-grade sovereign debt rating, forecasting a return to 4.3% growth in 2021. As an IMF member, the principality's government will get an annual review of its economic prospects



**WASHINGTON:** In this file photo, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and World Bank Group President David Malpass bump elbows at the end of a joint press briefing on COVID-19 in Washington, DC. — AFP

and policies by Fund staff, technical policy advice and full participation in IMF and World Bank spring and annual meetings.

According to World Bank data, Andorra had a 2019 population of 77,142 and GDP output of \$3.15 billion, qualifying it as a "high-income" country. While it uses the euro currency, it is not

a part of the euro-zone or the European Union and does not have its own central bank. The IMF said trade and tourism comprise close to 40% of Andorra's economic output, with almost 8 million visitors to its ski slopes and mountain trails in 2019. Financial services account for another 20% of its GDP. — Reuters

## Detecting slave-made goods from China is growing harder: US

**XINJIANG:** Major brands face a growing challenge to root out forced labor in Chinese supply chains, the top US anti-human trafficking official said Friday, as the United States stepped up the blocking of imports of goods made in Xinjiang. Ambassador-at-Large John Richmond said reports that forced labor by the Chinese government had spread beyond Xinjiang to other provinces complicated the process of due diligence for global firms. "It is increasingly difficult for well-intentioned international companies to track exactly which products in their supply chain are made with forced labor," Richmond told a Zoom call with journalists.

He added that the United States would continue its efforts to connect companies with activists and nonprofits to help call attention to abuses. "US companies do not want to unwittingly support forced labor and neither do US consumers," Richmond said. The Xinjiang region in northwest China is home to a large population of Uighur people, a Muslim minority that has faced mass detention in Chinese government camps. An Australian think tank earlier this year found that tens of thousands of Uighurs were moved to work in factories in other parts of China.

Another program in rural Tibet, where workers are being transferred into military-style training centers, was reported by Reuters in September and defended by officials in Chinese-administered Tibet this week. China's government has denied mistreatment of the Uighurs and the presence of forced labor in Tibet. A representative for the Chinese Embassy in the United States said all workers in Xinjiang entered into contracts with employers and that the issue of forced labor there was a rumor created by anti-China media.

"Such a rumor has not a shred of fact in it," the Chinese representative said via email. The US government's criticism of China comes at a time of bilateral trade tensions between the two countries. Separately on Thursday, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said it had detained the import of 32 cartons of women's leather gloves from Xinjiang on the suspicion they were made with forced labor. CBP has issued 13 orders to block goods it suspected were made with forced labor in fiscal year 2020, including eight on goods from China.

Some activists have asked for a broader detention order on goods from Xinjiang, but Richmond declined to say whether he was in favor of it. "We obviously want to consider the merits of that, but what we want to do as the United States is send a clear message that products that are made with forced labor are not going to be allowed to come into the United States," he said. A committee of lawmakers in Britain on Friday wrote to several leading brands to ask about their sourcing and whether they were profiting from the forced labor of Uighurs in Xinjiang. — Reuters



## Business

# Fastest-ever growth in global virus cases as US tops 8 million

## US government budget deficit surges 281% to \$3.1 trillion

PARIS: Coronavirus cases in the United States topped eight million Friday as the world saw the highest-ever number reported in a single day, while European countries tightened measures to control the pandemic's spread. The running US case tally from Johns Hopkins University is the highest in the world, followed by India at 7.4 million cases and Brazil with 5.1 million. America has also suffered the most coronavirus deaths of any country, at over 218,000.

Worldwide, more than 400,000 new cases were reported on Friday alone, according to an AFP tally based on official data - a figure only partly explained by increased testing since the first wave of the pandemic in March-April. Across Europe, the average number of daily infections leapt 44 percent in a single week to over 121,000. "It's terrible. It feels to me like being back in March," said Hocine Saal, head of the emergency service at the hospital in the Paris suburb of Montreuil, adding that rising numbers of non-coronavirus patients made coping "really difficult".

On Friday, Paris and other French cities marked their final night before an anti-virus curfew comes into effect, and Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Georges Gilkinet said bars and restaurants would be closed for four weeks starting Monday as "our hospitals are clogged." But in neighboring Germany a Berlin court overturned nighttime restrictions. In England, millions of people were just hours away from stricter measures, including a ban on household mixing, while bars and restaurants closed in Spain's northeastern region of Catalonia. In Greece, the densely populated northern area of Kozani went into a new lockdown.

By imposing restrictions in certain regions only, or only during certain hours of the day, governments are trying to slow the spread of the pandemic while sparing their battered economies a damaging full-scale

lockdown. In the US, the government said its budget deficit in the year to September surged 281 percent to \$3.1 trillion, after Washington massively increased spending to support activity through the outbreak. The previous record was \$1.4 trillion in 2009, during the global financial crisis. On Friday, the number killed by the coronavirus so far topped 1.1 million worldwide, from almost 39 million cases.

### Vaccine hopes

Meanwhile, hopes for one of the most promising coronavirus treatments, the antiviral drug remdesivir, were dashed when a study backed by the World Health Organization found it does little to prevent deaths from the disease. But pharma giant Pfizer said that if safety data expected in the third week of November are positive, it will apply for emergency use authorization in the US for its coronavirus vaccine. Massachusetts-based Moderna has already said it aims to apply for authorisation for its candidate on November 25.

Funded by the US government, both companies have been running large-scale Phase 3 clinical trials since July and have already begun producing doses, with tens of millions potentially available by the end of the year. But experts warn that even when vaccines are approved, it will take many months until they are widely available. "We are operating at the speed of science. This means we may know whether or not our vaccine is effective by the end of October," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla wrote in an open letter.

### Backlash grows

In France, the curfew affecting some 20 million people in Paris and eight other cities was due to start at midnight, and then come fully into force later

Saturday from 9:00 pm to 6:00 am over the coming weeks. While it has broad public support, officials are worried about the heavy social and economic costs of a measure set to last at least a month.

In many European countries, infection controls have led to a backlash from defiant local authorities and businesses desperate to make ends meet. Marseille's mayor Michele Rubirola - herself a doctor - said the curfew resulted from the French government's insufficient efforts to bolster hospital systems, costing residents "their daily pleasures (and) their freedom", and also harming hospitality businesses. Similar unease was felt in England where London and seven other areas were facing new restrictions from Saturday, riling leaders in hard-hit northwest England, especially Manchester.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged the restrictions were "far from a pain-free course of action". "But I must stress the situation in Greater Manchester is grave and it worsens with each passing day," he added. Over in Berlin, irate restaurant owners successfully challenged in court an order to close bars and eateries from 11 pm. Judges said "it was not apparent" such a measure could help fight coronavirus. The suspension echoed a similar court ruling in Madrid earlier this month that cancelled restrictions on 4.5 million people in and around the capital.

In Barcelona, people working in hospitality took to the streets, banging pots and pans and throwing eggs at the town hall after bars and restaurants were shut. And in Brussels, Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin had to leave an EU summit after coming into contact with an infected person. The infection risks prompted some leaders to urge the bloc a return to virtual meetings, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel has already cancelled a summit in Berlin on November 16. — AFP

## Oil market focus set to pivot back to Mideast

By Paul Hickin, Director, S&P Global Platts

Middle East oil is regaining an edge in its supply battle with US shale. Low prices and a slump in global demand caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are slowly tilting the scales back in favor of some of OPEC's low-cost producers.



This could mean the oil market is increasing its dependency on generally heavier crudes from some of the key Gulf exporters after many buyers had diversified their refining portfolios to take a greater share of lighter US grades.

However, the outcome of the US election, second-wave of the pandemic and potential return to the market for Libya's crude, could again upset the delicate balance between supply and demand for both sides. US crude producers have been hit hard by prices slumping around \$40/b. Output of crude and condensate from the light sweet crude producer may not start to recover until the second half of 2021 as the substantial drop in fracking crews and rig counts since March takes its toll.

S&P Global Platts Analytics predicts US output averaging just 10.24 million b/d in 2021, compared with 11.38 million b/d this year. The forecast is well below the runaway 13 million b/d pre-COVID-19 peak. The growing number of bankruptcies in the US shale sector is another sign of stress. Midcap producer Oasis recently filed for Chapter 11 protection, part of a growing trend among companies producing marginal US barrels. Chesapeake and Chaparral Energy filed earlier this year, while Whiting Petroleum emerged from Chapter 11 and completed its financial restructuring recently.

The fragile state of US shale producers could mean the majority of supply growth next year will be driven by OPEC+, leaving the market exposed to its policy changes and providing a heavier sourer diet. The oil producer alliance is currently unwinding from its original 9.7 million b/d output cut deal, which is scheduled to taper down to 5.8 million b/d from January next year. However, compliance with its quotas is another uncertainty weighing on market fundamentals.

### Libya, Venezuela and Iran

Libyan production, which has been frozen from the market by internal strife, is poised to make a major return. Exports could reach 500,000 b/d or more in a matter of months if a fragile peace between warring factions holds. Output was as low as 110,000 b/d in early September before the UN-backed Government of National Accord and the self-styled Libyan National Army agreed a formal truce to restart pumping.

However, the path back to sustained production remains fraught with uncertainty. Meanwhile, the outcome of the US election could change the fate of Iran and Venezuela, both hit by sanctions. Platts Analytics sees potentially 3 million b/d of additional heavy sour crude hitting the market from the pair in the next couple of years if a breakthrough in geopolitical talks is made. Even without the extra Iranian and Venezuelan barrels, three-quarters of output growth in 2021 is likely to come from the Middle East, with around 3 million b/d of additional supply hitting the market, according to Platts Analytics. Middle East crude is the mainstay supply for refineries in Asia, where economies such as that of China are recovering quicker from the demand slump caused by the pandemic.

Saudi Arabia, for example, pumped just 8.99 million b/d in September, according to the Platts survey in line with its quota, which suggests the OPEC kingpin has plenty of wiggle room to add further barrels when desired. Platts Analytics predicts oil demand growth of 6.3 million b/d next year, assuming a global economic upturn, which would still be around 2 million b/d, shy of 2019 levels.

Despite this expected demand growth, extra supply may keep a lid on oil prices. OPEC+ producers may benefit from low-lifting costs and faster growth in key consumer markets in Asia but prices are likely to remain below levels that would satisfy the budgetary break-evens that their economies require. Platts Analytics sees fundamental weakness in the prompt Dated Brent structure for now with prices in the lower \$40/b range. More supply is a victory of sorts for Middle East producers over shale, but a Pyrrhic one at that.

## Gulf Bank announces 3rd Al-Danah quarterly draw winner

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held the year's third quarterly Al Danah draw on 15th October 2020, announcing Badreya Ahmad Ibrahim Alawadh as the lucky winner of the KD 250,000 cash prize. Al Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total

chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met.

Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2020 quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's branches, transfer online, place queries through the official Gulf



Bank WhatsApp service on 65805805 or call the customer contact center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can visit the website to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.

## Ooredoo Kuwait takes part at Forbes Middle East digital roundtable

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, participated in the second edition of Biztech Talk hosted by Forbes Middle East in partnership with Gulf Business Machines (GBM), a leading end-to-end digital solutions provider. The digital roundtable titled "Vision 2035: Kuwait's Journey to Digitalization" took place on Tuesday, 13 October 2020 and focused on Kuwait's aspirant strategy to turn itself into a regional financial, commercial, and cultural hub.

The world is living in a digital age where people's daily lives are depending more and more on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) applications. Utilizing digital services is not leisure anymore, it is critical to stimulate economical and cultural developments. Thus, leaders in different sectors in Kuwait encourage collaboration between private and public sectors by adopting advanced digital services and solutions.

Ooredoo have started its digital journey in 2016 by building the blogs to help customers to start the journey themselves. Ooredoo gained the first-mover privilege through the acquisition of ISP FASTelco, via its Ooredoo Kuwait unit in 2016, which brought new solutions and services to businesses in the country including: high internet speed, and dedicated and multi-homed internet access with high performance and reliability levels.

In 2017, Ooredoo built its first business to business (B2B) data center in Kuwait to provide the managed services and cloud services to their customers helping them to commoditize their IT and focus on their digital initiatives from a business perspective that will positively impact their customer experience. Today, and through Ooredoo's unparalleled digital services and solutions, they are able to attract many investment companies to start their businesses in the country which goes in line with Kuwait vision 2035,

## Forbes Middle East

and Ooredoo's strategy "Digitize to Differentiate" taking us towards a new digital Kuwait.

In light of improving business excellence, and reduce expenses, Ooredoo Kuwait started providing the managed services which allows organizations to outsource the responsibility of certain information technology operations, including maintaining and solving IT systems and functions. Ooredoo also offers the cloud services which are designed to simple, affordable access to data, resources, and applications, without the need for internal infrastructure or hardware.

The phenomenon of digitalization and particularly digital transformation fundamentally change the way individuals in their organizations work, it changes their mindsets and creates a culture that fosters the change. Accordingly, it is critical to provide a stable foundation in order to build this culture protecting the organization's most valuable assets.

With this in mind, Ooredoo Kuwait offers cybersecurity solutions that aim to provide corporates full-scale information and data protection solutions. Experts at Ooredoo Kuwait can tailor these services to meet the organizations' needs today, tomorrow, and in the future, allowing them to experience advanced service levels to overcome any cyber-crimes. With the changing connectivity needs, the need for a newer generation of mobile networks raised, so the fifth-generation (5G) cellular network technology came to light.

5G technology mirrors higher data speeds at lower latency and improved data throughput to handle more synchronized connections without causing delays or disruptions. Public safety, privacy, healthcare, education, and public infrastructure are only a few of the areas where policy and regulatory modernization are essential for a 5G-ready world. It is worth mentioning that Bilal Agha, Director B2B Marketing, represented Ooredoo Kuwait during the inspiring digital roundtable.

## World Bank should keep pumping out aid, review capital adequacy

WASHINGTON: The World Bank should push ahead with its efforts to deliver \$160 billion in coronavirus aid by June 2021 and explore additional emergency financing and debt relief for developing countries, the bank's steering committee said on Friday. In a communique, the joint World Bank and International Monetary Fund Development Committee said the "bold and decisive" response should be accompanied by a review of the World Bank Group's financial capacity beyond the current fiscal year to ensure that it remains "adequately capitalized to fulfill its mandate."

The statement said that the IMF has provided some \$100 billion in assistance to over 80 countries during the pandemic so far. It also urged the IMF "to deploy all available tools and resources to help members achieve a durable exit from the crisis while building more resilient and inclusive economies." The statement said that World Bank support for more than 100 countries has totaled \$45 billion so far, including \$11 billion from its private sector arm, the International Finance Corp and \$2 billion from its Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

On Wednesday, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin warned the World Bank to manage its financial resources "judiciously and transparently." He said the bank should prioritize funds for poor countries with the greatest needs, not those with robust access to market financing, "so as not to burden shareholders with premature calls for new financing," Mnuchin said.

The World Bank shareholders in 2018 approved a \$13 billion capital increase that mandated the bank wind down lending to wealthier middle-income countries, such as China, to shift resources to needier countries. The Development Committee, made up of 25 finance ministers and central bank governors representing World Bank and IMF major shareholding countries, including Mnuchin, said the World Bank and other multilateral development bank should "explore additional proposals for COVID-19 emergency financing" for the poorest countries. — Reuters



## Business

# EU funds drive rethink in East Europe on climate

## West European states lead push for 'green' economy

LONDON: East European nations are thinking more seriously about how to reduce carbon emissions to make use of a 750 billion euro (\$880 billion) European Union economic recovery fund, the EU's top climate official said on Friday. The bloc has set up the Next Generation EU war chest to support economies hammered by the coronavirus crisis, with a focus on helping shift the EU's 27 nations away from using fossil fuels and improving energy efficiency.

East European nations are among the biggest users of coal in the bloc and have been slower than richer nations, such as Germany, in drawing up plans to shift away from the fuel. "I see quite a sea change, also in Central and Eastern Europe, in terms of the climate crisis," European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans told Reuters in a live interview.



East European still among EU's biggest coal users

"If they delay and don't link it with the financial possibilities offered by Next Generation EU, they might lose out in terms of the support they can get from Europe, so I think that is speeding up their thinking," he said after an EU summit that edged towards a

deal on climate targets. Germany, France, the Netherlands and other states in West Europe are pushing for investment to help a "green" economy emerge after the pandemic-induced slump. But Poland and the Czech Republic worry that racing to reduce emissions could harm communities dependent on activities such as coal mining.

The European Commission has said 37% of the Next Generation EU package should back projects to help reduce greenhouse gases. Timmermans said Russia, a major gas supplier to Europe, remained "a particularly tough nut to crack" on the issue of emissions but he said Moscow expected the energy transition to change its position on the world stage.

"Sometimes in Europe people think we depend on (Russia) because they deliver the gas to Europe, but I would rather see it the other way around: they depend

on us because we are buying their gas," he said. "Our economy is more diversified and our dependency on fossil fuels will diminish. Our position vis-a-vis Russia will become stronger and stronger and they know this perfectly well."

The EU wants to renovate buildings to save energy and emissions, an area Timmermans said could make a huge difference in Central and Eastern Europe where "so much of the housing is still heated with coal, or wood even." He called for swift climate action by Europe, which has positioned itself as a leader in climate action while contributing about 9% of global carbon dioxide emissions. "We have a huge opportunity. To say it in blunt terms, we could screw this up in a terrible way, but we could also make this a success for our society and bring back a bit of optimism if we show that we will leave no one behind." — Reuters

## Pound wobbles as UK gets ready for 'no-deal' Brexit

NEW YORK: The British pound wobbled Friday, boosting London stocks, after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned he was ready to walk away from European Union trade talks and prepare for a "no-deal" Brexit. Sterling fell below \$1.29 before crawling back after Johnson accused the EU of failing to negotiate seriously—and declared Britain should "get ready" for an Australia-style agreement based on World Trade Organization rules from January "unless there is a fundamental change of approach" from Brussels.

A Johnson aide ramped up the rhetoric by adding that trade talks were over unless Brussels "fundamentally shifts its position." Their comments came after an EU summit this week demanded Britain urgently give ground on fair trade rules to unblock post-Brexit negotiations. "Sterling fell sharply on comments from PM Boris Johnson calling for the UK to prepare for a no-deal exit in January and accusing the EU of not negotiating seriously," said Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson.

Analyst Craig Erlam at Oanda commented that "the market is broadly taking it for what it is, one final push at concessions from the EU." But he added: "It would be terrible for all of this to end without a deal after four years of work and in the midst of a pandemic when businesses are already pushed to the brink." Johnson's comments helped propel the London stock market 1.5 percent higher at the close, but Wall Street ended in an uninspired fashion with the Dow gaining 0.4 percent and the Nasdaq slumping by the same amount.—AFP

## In Guinea, poverty tests Alpha Conde's economic record

CONAKRY: Fatou Conte and Diabate Famoro, two low-income workers in Guinea's bustling seaside capital Conakry, are divided on President Alpha Conde's economic success, just one illustration of the controversy over his bid for a third term. The 82-year-old is running in Sunday's election in the West African state after having won two past ballots partly on promises to deliver jobs and electricity to the impoverished nation. But Sunday's election comes after months of unrest in Guinea. Conde pushed through a new constitution in March that allowed him to sidestep two-term limits, defying months of mass protests against the move. Still mired in poverty after a decade in power, Conde's management of Guinea's economy is a major campaign issue. "Since Conde, we've had light," said Fatou Conte, a 41-year-old bread vendor and supporter of the president. Diabate Famoro, a struggling 33-year-old boilermaker, is less enthused. Power cuts are constant, he says.

In Conakry, huge campaign posters of Conde, decked in the yellow colors of his party, hang by the hectic roadsides. They bear the slogan, "shared prosperity". Posters of his main contender, opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo—who was also at the forefront of resistance to a Conde third term—read "change is now". A former opposition activist, Conde became Guinea's first democratically-elected president in 2010 and was re-elected in 2015. Rights campaigners accuse of him of veering towards authoritarianism, however. Security forces have killed dozens of anti-Conde protesters since October last year, for example.

### 'We have light'

Conde says he inherited deep economic problems when he came to office in 2010. "The central bank didn't have one month of reserves, inflation was at 21 percent," he told French daily Le Monde last year. The country was then hit badly by West Africa's Ebola outbreak, which killed some 11,000 people in Guinea between 2013 and 2016. Conde nonetheless pursued mining reforms and launched large infrastructure projects, with his government pointing to thousands of jobs created in the extractive industries. Guinea is home to the world's largest reserves of bauxite, the ore used to produce aluminium. The country also has rich deposits of iron ore, gold and diamonds, and is known as the 'water tower' of West Africa for its abundant fresh-water supplies.

As well as focusing on mining, Conde has embarked on an ambitious program of dam building to harness hydroelectric power. The largest dam—the huge Chinese-financed Souapiti project—is expected to meet Guinea's electricity needs when completed, possibly this year. There are also hopes to export electricity. "Since Conde, we have light, everything is stable," said Conte, the bread vendor, at a political event in the capital. As women sang songs praising the president, Conte explained that power access had been woeful under Lansana Conte, an autocrat who ruled from 1984 to 2008.—AFP

## ABK announces first summer winners

KUWAIT: In the presence of the Ministry of Commerce, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its first draw for its summer promotion titled "Spend and Win this Summer with ABK Credit and Prepaid Cards". The draw was held at ABK's Head Office with 10 lucky customers winning KD 500 each. October's winners are: Mohammad Jassim Mohd Almuhanha, Yousef Jaafar Abbas Hasan, Ameer Mohd Hassan S Zareg, Taher Omran Kamal Basha, Fahad Yousef Soud Al Sabah, Abdulmajeed Haji Hussain Alshatti, Abdulaziz Al Qatami, Fahad Mohd K Almutairat, Mohammad Talaq Farhan Alazmi, Khalid Abdulla Ahmad Alhasawi.

To participate in the remaining draws, customers must hold an ABK credit and/or prepaid card issued prior to 1st September 2020. In addition, they must complete a minimum of KD 250 total spend locally or internationally before 30th November 2020, using the following cards: - ABK Credit Cards used in local and international transactions through POS, E-Com transactions and cash. - ABK Prepaid Card used in local and international transactions through POS and E-Com transactions only.

For every KD 10 spent locally and internationally for credit and prepaid cards in the transaction period, ABK cardholders will earn 1 entry draw point into the relevant draw. 10 lucky winners will each win KD 500 next month. For more information about ABK please visit [ahli.com](http://ahli.com) or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



## Lexus delivers its five millionth luxury SUV

KUWAIT: Lexus has surpassed a milestone of 5 million global sales of luxury SUVs and crossovers. The brand, which launched in 1989, offered its first SUV (the LX) back in 1996. Two years later the RX was introduced, paving the way for the luxury crossover segment that would become the single most popular category for premium car buyers. As consumer tastes evolved globally, Lexus added the

rugged GX SUV, NX mid-size crossover and UX urban crossover to its range. Now representing about two-thirds of total Lexus sales, the Japanese luxury brand offers its SUV and crossovers in 90 markets around the world.

Over the years, each SUV and crossover model has helped propel the brand forward by blending bold design, adventure capability, renowned Lexus craftsmanship and sophisticated technology into a unique utility vehicle package that results in ever-increasing numbers of loyal Lexus customers. The Lexus crossovers (RX, RXL, NX and UX) have enjoyed popularity globally with the availability of both full hybrid and petrol drive trains. First launched with the game-changing RX 400h hybrid SUV in 2005, hybrid sales today account for about one third of Lexus' global SUV volumes.

## ALSAYER Holding wins 1st runner up of 13th Arabia CSR Awards

KUWAIT: Under the patronage and in the presence of HE Eng Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and member of the Executive Council of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah, the winners of the 13th prestigious cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards were honoured by the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) at one of the first public physical events post the COVID-19 outbreak in the world on 06.10.2020.

Regarded as the 'Green Oscars of the Middle East', the awards recognised the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of 20 green champions from across the region. They



were selected from entries from nine countries in the Middle East, covering 34 sectors, including 'Automotive Industry'. ALSAYER Holding was announced as the 1st Runner up of 13th Arabia CSR Awards in the Middle East in the large business category for the third year in row.

According to Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member & Chairman of Sustainability Committee: "we are proud to be among the 20 'green champions' in the Middle East winners who were adjudged based on international benchmarks such as the UN Global Compact principles, Global Reporting Initiative Standards, the European Foundation for Quality Management model and the UN Sustainable Development Goals based on ALSAYER Sustainability Report 2018-2019 and our commitment to encourage and dare our stakeholders to embrace sustainability in all elements of their day-to-day lives by working together and to create lasting, positive change for everyone today and in the future".

"It was a little bit challenge to move on during Covid-19 crisis which presented the greatest challenge in a

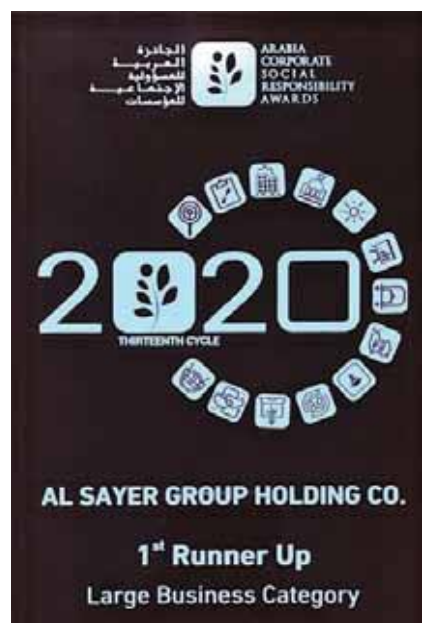


decade for the automotive sector to guarantee the wellness of our customer, employees and all our stakeholder. The crisis highlights the need for urgent action to cushion the pandemic's health and economic consequences and set the stage for a lasting recovery, we all need to be proactive to successfully defeat COVID-19. Let's find a way to connect, and let's work through the issue together".

Congratulations the winners, Habiba Al Mar'ashi, President & CEO of ACSRN said, "Since the inception of the Arabia CSR Awards in 2008, we have been building the foundation and accelerating the growth of CSR and sustainability best practices in the region. It has been a glorious journey of exploring, commending and sharing the best

practices nationally, regionally and globally.

"As we address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and work towards the new reality, the Arab region has yet again proved its perseverance and persistence in undertaking CSR initiatives to enhance the welfare of the community and to preserve the environment while at the same time ensuring the sustainability of their operations and businesses. These are vital requirements today and the efforts that the various organizations put into promoting their committed CSR activities deserves recognition. Irrespective of the size or the sector they are operating in, they have shown an unwavering focus on making the world a better place to live through closer collaboration."





# CLINIC PAGE



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- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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Luis Manuel Bejarano, president of the 'El burrito Feliz' (The Happy Donkey) association in Andalusia, hugs a donkey at the "Bosque Encantado" (Enchanted Forest) in Hinojos, south of Spain.



'The Happy Little Donkey' offers free donkey therapy sessions to medics fighting Covid-19.



The idea is to help medics distress a little through spending time with the donkeys in a natural environment. — AFP photos

## WHAT'S UP DOC? DONKEY THERAPY EASES SPAIN MEDICS' STRESS

Walking into a dusty paddock, a young nurse is quickly surrounded by a group of donkeys gently nudging her for attention as she strokes their soft noses and feeds them carrots. When someone places a 10-day-old colt in her arms, Monica Morales squeals with delight, visibly relaxed after a few hours unwinding at El Burrito Feliz—"The Happy Little Donkey"—an association offering free donkey therapy sessions to medics fighting the virus. Known as animal-assisted therapy, such encounters can help with a range of physical and mental disorders, including stress, depression and anxiety. Although such therapy is more associated with horses, experts say donkeys are better suited to helping mental or emotional disorders given their gentle nature and intuitive respect for personal space.

"The situation is quite overwhelming, what we went through before is now happening again," says Morales, 25, who spent months working in a Madrid hospital when the pandemic hit. She is now based in the south as Spain faces a second wave. "There are more and more patients, and growing tensions

among colleagues so being here with these donkeys is really helping." Located by a sprawling forest on the edge of Andalusia's Donana National Park in southern Spain, El Burrito Feliz is a non-profit association with 23 donkeys that have worked with Alzheimer's patients and children with problems. The "Doctor Donkey" project began in late June as a way of offering respite to frontline workers battling a virus that has killed some 33,400 people, infected more than 900,000, and left medics traumatized and exhausted.

### Japanese forest therapy

"The huge stress created through the daily struggle with Covid-19 exhausts them, so here they can be strengthened through therapy with the donkeys," explains Luis Bejarano, 57, who runs El Burrito Feliz. "They can recharge their batteries to keep fighting another day." Bejarano says the idea came from a book about Japan's therapeutic forests where people spend time among trees to reduce stress and depression as an alternative to therapy. "The situation generates a lot of anxiety and stress because of the risk of getting infected,

or passing it on to colleagues, family members or other patients who are more fragile than usual," says 31-year-old oncologist Mari Paz Lopez. And the risk of falling ill is very real, with one in 10 of Spain's healthcare workers getting infected—twice that of the general population and one of the highest rates in the world. "We've not been offered any psychological help although I know it exists in other places," says Lopez who works in the southern city of Jaen and heard about the donkey therapy through television.

After an hour wandering through the forest with a donkey called Magallanes, she admits to feeling a lot more relaxed. "They're animals that inspire a lot of tenderness and that generates a lot of emotional well-being... and you forget about the day-to-day. I'd definitely recommend it."

### Physiological changes

After befriending one of the donkeys, a visitor will go on a guided walk and when confident, they can go back into the forest alone with the donkey and stay as long as they like. Back at base camp, they prepare food for the ani-

mals, and then there is the option of a "donkey bath"—entering the paddock for an immersive experience with the herd. "Donkeys are very relatable animals and doing it in a natural environment increases the benefits," says psychologist Maria Jesus Arque, who consulted on the project. By being in a forest and having contact with an animal, "something happens that allows you to express yourself with another being that does not judge," she told AFP. Studies show that animal-assisted therapy triggers changes at a physiological level, activating oxytocin, connected to experiencing pleasure, increasing endorphins and reducing cortisol in the blood which is a product of stress, she said. "And a 30-minute walk in a natural environment, like a forest, changes the mood."

### Painful memories

At her surgery in Madrid, Dr Nieves Dominguez Aguero, 49, has a pencil sketch of a nurse nuzzling up to a donkey by Cuban graphic artist Ramses Morales Izquierdo as a reminder of her visit in summer. Talking about the horrific memories of spring still moves her to tears as she recalls patients left in the

corridors because of the lack of beds and those who died without being able to see their loved ones. "It's very hard, not only because of the pandemic and the infection itself, but because of people's situations. Unlike in hospital, when you're a family doctor, you know all about these people, their lives and families." Spending a few hours with the donkeys was surprisingly helpful.

"It was wonderful, really great," she laughs. "Being with the animals helps you relax a bit and the forest is spectacular. It's just a shame it's so far away." So far, 25 doctors and nurses have visited the project, although the pace has slowed as cases have spiraled and Spain's medics have found themselves battling one of the highest infection rates in the European Union. Although the project was only supposed to run until November, Bejarano is extending it and even considering installing lodgings so people can stay overnight. "It might go on for years. Let's hope not but if that's what's coming, we must accept it." — AFP



## Bhanu Athaiya, first Indian to win an Oscar, dies at 91

Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, the first Indian to win an Oscar, passed away in Mumbai on Thursday aged 91, the Press Trust of India reported, citing her daughter. Athaiya, who won an Academy Award for her work in Richard Attenborough's 1982 epic "Gandhi", had a prolific career in India, working on some 200 films, including Bollywood classics such as 1965's "Guide" and 1980's "Karni" ("Debt"). A trained fashion illustrator, she began designing costumes for films in the 1950s, later telling the Indian Express daily that she saw her career as "a way to express myself and let my imagination soar".

By the time Attenborough was ready to make his magnum opus, Athaiya had already made a mark in the Hindi film industry, working with some of its top stars including Hema Malini and Mumtaz. In the foreword to her book "The Art of Costume Design", Attenborough wrote: "It took me 17 long years to set up Gandhi, my dream film, and just 15 minutes to make up my mind that Bhanu Athaiya was the right person to create the many hundreds of Indian costumes that would be required to bring it to the screen." The only Indian woman to win an Oscar, she continued to work well into her seventies and was honored with the National Film Award for her work in the 1991 mystery "Lekin..." ("But...") and in the 2001 Oscar-nominated epic "Lagaan" ("Tax").

Her last film was the 2004 social drama "Swades" ("Motherland"). Recalling her Oscar win, she wrote in her book: "When they called my name, I was in a daze. I don't even recall who handed me the award. All I managed to say was 'This is too good to be true.'" In 2012 she returned her trophy to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for safe-keeping.— AFP

## 'Cold Hawaii': Danish coast surfs on virus wave

On Denmark's rugged western coast, far from paradise islands in the tropics, "Cold Hawaii" has become the place to be for surfers stranded by travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic. As the name suggests, surfers seeking out the perfect wave near the town of Klitmoller are not put off by chilly waters or nippy air, nor the lack of palm trees. This raw and rugged coastline, often under grey and bleak skies, has drawn a growing number of board aficionados in recent years. Covid-19 has "really created a big boom," says Mor Meluka, a 34-year-old Israeli who settled here with his family 11 years ago. Surfing enthusiasts from Denmark and nearby countries "used to travel the world", but now, "since they can't go anywhere we are definitely experiencing more guests than usual," he tells AFP.

Together with his wife Vahine Itchner, Meluka runs the "Cold Hawaii Surf Camp", a surf school that employs 15 instructors in the summer months and continues to give daily lessons even in the off-season. "You can't really know what kind of waves you're going to get. It's always different waves. If you go to a perfect surf place like Bali or Tahiti, you know exactly how the wave is going to break. Here, it changes all the time," says Itchner, who moved to Denmark at the age of 10 from Tahiti.

### Surf life is 'hygge'

A new addition to the world's surfing hot spots, it has yet to be invaded by the masses. Klitmoller, a town of just 1,000 inhabitants, is an unexpected destination for surfers, due to its geographic location and the absence of any surfing tradition. One of many fishing villages that dot the Jutland coast, the spot has long been popular with wind-



This aerial view image shows surfers from a local Surf Camp gather around their instructor ahead of a surfing session.

surfers. Surfers started coming in the 1990s, with locals initially eyeing the newcomers with suspicion. "It was new for the locals ... The fishermen had to share the ocean," she explains. "But a surfer with a board doesn't require so much space."

Nowadays surfing is an integral part of the local culture—and is even part of children's schoolday, with surfing lessons on their schedule. Sjoerd Kok was one of the early pioneers. A 42-year-old Dutch computer programmer, he moved here 17 years ago "for the surfing". His enthusiasm hasn't waned a bit, as interest in the town continues to soar. "A couple of years ago I told myself this is the peak... But no, it still expands." Itchner and Meluka say they expect surfing to take off across Denmark, a

windy country already known for its kitesurfing. "It's going to become a famous surf spot!" boasts Itchner. In the land of 'hygge'-the Danish concept of cosiness and comfort that promotes a sense of well-being in daily life-

Klitmoller epitomises the art form better than any other place. "The right word is the word 'cosy': to go surfing and then go home and light a fire and drink a hot chocolate." — AFP



This aerial view image shows surfers from a local Surf Camp with their instructors as they warm up ahead of a surfing session in Klitmoller, Denmark.



This aerial view image shows surfers from the Cold Hawaii Surf Camp during a surfing session.



People surf in Klitmoller, Denmark.





Lifestyle | Features



Actors perform the play "Kaldirim sercesi" about the life of French singer Edith Piaf at an open air theatre in Istanbul. — AFP photos



# Turkey's ailing theatres fear politics at play in virus funding

Asmali Sahne, an independent theatre in Istanbul, applied for desperately needed state funds as it tries to survive the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, but its request was turned down. The co-founder of the theatre in Istanbul's bohemian Beyoglu district and other playhouse owners and actors suspect politics of playing a role in the delivery of relief funds. They claim that independent theatres and those associated with the opposition are being left out, putting their future at stake. Asmali Sahne felt sure it was ticking all the boxes by producing a Turkish play by a Turkish female writer. It was the theatre's third attempt to win the funding and hoped for 108,000 Turkish lira (\$13,600) but it was given a vague reason for being refused. "We met all the criteria but we failed once again," co-founder Muharrem Ugurlu told AFP.

"For the first time in six years since we were founded, we are discussing whether or not to bring down the curtain," he said. "The appropriation process is not transparent, and this makes me wonder if politics plays a role." One of Turkey's most popular stage actors, Genco Erkal, agrees. He has not even bothered to ask for virus rescue funds for his theatre as he thinks he would not stand a chance. "It's all about politics," the 82-year-old told AFP, shielding from the virus at home. "Theatres known as being part of the

opposition, including our Dostlar Theatre, have not benefited from funds for years," he complained. The Dostlar Theatre has long had a reputation for supporting the political opposition to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erkal says he believes that even less controversial theatres are now losing out because "companies close to the government" have started using an increasingly opaque system to bid for cultural state aid. "It appears that the government is not funding the art of theatre but the people it is acquainted with," Erkal claimed. The culture ministry did not respond to AFP's requests for comment about the claims.

### Opaque system

Turkey's theatres returned from a four-month hiatus in July and have since relied on outdoor productions. But winter is coming and culture lovers who once trooped up Beyoglu's vertiginous hills for a play at Kumbaraci50 now have few options. "Kumbaraci50 is facing the threat of shutdown," the independent theatre tweeted last month. "It will take years to pay off our current debts." Co-founder Gulhan Kadim, who is also an actor and director, said her demoralized actors "no longer have the strength to say 'let's play, come what may'".

The culture ministry said last month that it had awarded a record 12 million liras (\$1.5 million) to 328 private theatre



Kumbaraci50 theatre actor and director Yigit Sertdemir poses in Istanbul.

projects, which it said was "the biggest aid delivered from past to present in a single cultural season." But actors counter that more than half of the companies bidding for assistance were either unknown in Turkey's tightly-knit theatre community, or involved in a completely different line of work. "There are a lot of construction and tourism companies on the list," Kadim said, of this year's applicants. "It is not clear who is getting the funding or how much." Erkal also said that the list included "companies doing business other than theatre." "In fact, some were founded only 15 days before the deadline to apply for funds," he claimed. Ersin Umut Guler,

founder of Istanbul's Yolcu Theatre and a board member of the Theatre Cooperative representing 62 independent theatres, said half the theatres could not apply for funds because one of the criteria was having a zero tax bill. "We demanded this condition be removed at least temporarily," he said. "Our income relies on 100-percent ticket sales. While we were playing to a 200-strong audience, this number is now as low as 70 over the pandemic restrictions."

### Censorship

For some theatres, applying for state funding represents a moral dilemma-if they do, they fear they risk having to toe the government's political line. "Regardless of the funds, who even thinks there is free speech in Turkey," Kadim asked. "The pressure felt in every other sector also exists in theatre," she said. "Censorship has become a part of daily life." Turkey ranked 154th out of 180 countries on this year's Reporters Without Borders' freedoms index. Erkal said his theatre's plays started being banned after its artists came out in support of so-called Gezi Park protests that morphed from a local dispute into a major challenge to Erdogan's ruling party in 2013. "We have been under heavy pressure," Erkal said. But Kumbaraci50 actor and director Yigit Sertdemir has no doubts that artistic ingenuity and independence will ultimately prevail.



Kumbaraci50 theatre co-founder Gulhan Kadim poses during an interview in Istanbul.

"This political power will leave and another will come. This place will shut down and another will open," the actor said. "The art of theatre will stand on its feet." Buying a ticket for Kumbaraci50's outdoor adaptation about the life of Edith Piaf, theatre lover Hasan Karadeniz was less certain. "I am very sad. The only thing I can do now is to buy a ticket," he said. "My priority tonight is to support theatre-the show itself is secondary." — AFP



Sanjay Dutt

## Troubled Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt confirms cancer diagnosis

Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt, whose life has been so colorful and tragic that it became the subject of a biopic, confirmed he has cancer following weeks of media speculation. "This is a recent scar of my life, but I'll beat it. I'll be out of this cancer soon," 61-year-old Dutt said, pointing to a scar running from his left eyebrow across the side of his head in an Instagram video posted by Bollywood hairstylist Aalim Hakim late Wednesday. Dutt also confirmed he would start shooting his next movie "K.G.F: Chapter 2" in November. In August, Dutt had issued a statement on social media saying he was "taking a short break for some medical treatment".

The Hindi-language actor, nicknamed "Deadly Dutt", served time in prison for possessing guns supplied by gangsters responsible for bombings in Mumbai in 1993 and has also battled drug addiction. Dutt shot to fame in the mid-1980s in a string of action movies in which he performed his own stunts, earning him his nickname. But the star was also struggling with substance abuse, including heroin and cocaine, that was said to have been sparked by the pain of losing his mother, Indian screen icon Nargis Dutt, to cancer. After a break he returned with a string of hits in the late 1980s and early 1990s including "Jeete Hain Shaan Se" ("We Live with Style"), "Saajan" ("Beloved") and "Khal Nayak" ("Villain"). — AFP

# ISRAEL TO HONOR POLES WHO HID POLANSKI DURING WWII

Israel on Thursday honored the Polish couple who hid Oscar-winning director Roman Polanski from the Nazis as a child, the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem said. The late Stefania and Jan Buchala received the Yad Vashem title of "Righteous Among the Nations" for those who helped save Jews during World War II. "Despite their very difficult economic situation, the couple agreed to take in the Jewish boy as their own son, and keep him safe," Yad Vashem said. Their grandson accepted the medal at the ceremony in southern Poland that has been kept under wraps for security reasons and which local media say Polanski himself attended.

The controversial film director was just six years old when Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939, triggering the war and forcing the family into the Krakow Ghetto. After his father smuggled him out through the barbed wire and got friends to take him in, Polanski was shuffled around, then sent to the Buchalas. Devout Catholic peasants with three small children, they gave him shelter for nearly two years in the village of Wysoka, asking for nothing in return. The now 87-year-old French-Polish director of "Chinatown" and "Rosemary's Baby" recalled their "astounding" kindness in his autobiography, calling Stefania "strong", "energetic" and "sensitive".



This handout photo shows medals awarded to the 'Righteous Among the Nations' displayed on a table during a ceremony for the Polish couple Stefania and Jan Buchala.

### 'Heroic' grandparents

Polanski had tried for years to track down the family to thank them-to no avail. Both Buchalas died in 1953 and the village had no news of the children. It was only in 2017 that Polanski came face to face with their grandson thanks to some detective work from the filmmakers behind "Polanski, Horowitz". Due out next year, the documentary recounts the childhood years of Polanski and his lifelong friend and fellow Holocaust survivor, photographer Ryszard Horowitz.

Producer Anna Kokoszka-Romer recounted the first meeting between Stanislaw Buchala and Polanski when



French-Polish director Roman Polanski

the grandson showed the director old photos. "Polanski was moved. As for Stanislaw Buchala, you could see his joy at finally getting to learn more about his family," she told AFP. His late father Ludwik had talked about growing up with a "brother" who moved to the US after the war. Little did he know that his childhood playmate became filmmaker Roman Polanski. Stanislaw, who is in his 60s, told the filmmakers he was proud of his "heroic" grandparents. "People should know, especially now during the pandemic, that a person can do something selfless for another."

In his testimony to Yad Vashem,

Polanski said Stefania Buchala "provided me with shelter, risking her own life and that of her family." The stakes were high. In occupied Poland, even offering Jews a glass of water was punishable by death. Poland, which lost six million citizens-half of them Jewish-during the war, has the most "Righteous Among the Nations" of any country, at more than 7,000 individuals.

### 'For the rescuers'

The filmmaker lives in France, as he is persona non grata in Hollywood and cannot return to the United States for fear of arrest. Polanski pleaded guilty to unlawful sex with a minor in California in 1977, in a plea deal after he was accused of raping a 13-year-old girl. He fled the US before sentencing. The director of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations department, Joel Zisenwine, said "the award is given to the rescuers, not the survivor". "It is about what they did in real time, risking their lives to save a nine-year-old child," he told AFP. "Nobody of course has any way of knowing what happens to people as adults. It has nothing to do with that." — AFP



This handout photo shows Polish-French film director Roman Polanski (left) attending a ceremony in the southern Polish city of Gliwice to honor the late Polish couple, Stefania and Jan Buchala, who hid him from the Nazis during World War II, in the presence of their grandson Stanislaw Buchala (right). — AFP photos



This undated handout photo made available by the Israeli embassy in Warsaw in October 2020 and taken at an undisclosed location shows Jan and Stefania Buchala with their children.



## Sports

## Photo of the day



Brighton Zeuner skates for the Red Bulletin in Huntington Beach, California. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Astros down Rays, Dodgers thump Braves to stay alive in MLB playoffs

## Dodgers win the battle of Wills

**LOS ANGELES:** The Houston Astros and Los Angeles Dodgers are not backing down in the battles for World Series berths. The Astros beat the Tampa Bay Rays 7-4 on Friday to force a decisive game seven in Major League Baseball's American League Championship Series, putting themselves on the brink of a historic comeback.

The Dodgers fended off elimination in the National League Championship Series with a 7-3 victory over the Atlanta Braves in Arlington, Texas, where Los Angeles trimmed the series deficit to 3-2. After dropping the first three games of the ALCS in San Diego, California, the Astros have won three straight. "We're relentless," Astros shortstop Carlos Correa said. "We said we didn't want to go home and we meant it."

Houston—who have played the villain in pandemic-disrupted season after a sign-stealing scandal tainted their 2017 World Series victory—are just the second team to advance to a game seven after trailing 3-0 in a series. The Boston Red Sox did it in the 2004 ALCS against the New York Yankees—and won game seven on the way to the Major League Baseball crown. Astros starting pitcher Framber Valdez gave up one run on three hits with nine strikeouts over six impressive innings. George Springer sparked a four-run fifth inning that put the Astros in control, his sharp single off Rays relief pitcher Diego Castillo scoring two.

Yuli Gurriel had walked to open the inning and Adelyns Diaz singled to left field off Rays starting pitcher Blake Snell—spelling the end of Snell's day. Martin Maldonado's sacrifice bunt advanced the runners, and Springer's ground ball to center field drove in two runs. Jose Altuve followed with a crisp line drive to left field and Springer raced around from first to score. Correa—the walkoff homer hero of Thursday's game-five victory—added another run-scoring single before Alex Bregman hit into a double play to end the inning.

Shane Bieber took over on the mound for Tampa Bay in the sixth and gave up a home run to Kyle Tucker that made it 5-1 and the Astros added two more in the seventh. Tampa Bay's frustration was evident in the bottom of the sixth, when Rays first baseman Yandy Diaz had strong words for Valdez after taking ball four from the pitcher. Maldonado tried to soothe Diaz and Correa went to the mound to encourage Valdez—who induced Brandon Lowe to hit into an inning-ending double play.

"I don't know what exactly happened," said Correa, adding his advice to Valdez was "focus ... let's go win this ball game." Willy Adames had given Tampa Bay the lead in the bottom of the second, breaking out of his hitting

## Just what 'The Doctor' ordered as Vinales dominates practice

**MADRID:** MotoGP title contender Maverick Vinales did not let the last-minute absence of his COVID-19 positive Yamaha teammate Valentino Rossi nor tricky wintry conditions cloud his performance as he topped Friday's Aragon Grand Prix opening free practice timesheets from championship leader Fabio Quartararo. Vinales is the lone Yamaha factory bike rider at this weekend's 10th leg of the MotoGP season in Spain after seven-time champion Rossi tested positive on the eve of practice after developing a mild fever.

Vinales is placed fourth in the closest championship title race run-in for years, only 19 points off Quartararo. The young Frenchman with Yamaha's satellite SRT team was one of several riders who crashed as the chilly weather caused problems with tyre temperatures making life difficult for not only Quartararo but also Johann Zarco, Marc Marquez's brother Alex Marquez, Iker Lecuona and Franco Morbidelli. All escaped injury.

Quartararo however ended the day with a smile on his face after filling second to Vinales, his SRT teammate Morbidelli third for a Yamaha-engined first day practice 'podium'. "That was a positive opening day, I fell this morning but that's fine. Our pace is good but we have a lot to improve on tomorrow (in further prac-



SAN DIEGO: Carlos Correa #1 and George Springer #4 of the Houston Astros celebrate a 7-4 win against the Tampa Bay Rays in Game Six of the American League Championship Series on October 16, 2020. —AFP

slump with a two-out run-scoring double. Manuel Margot hit two home runs off two different Astros relief pitchers—a solo shot off Andre Scrubb in the seventh and a two-run blast off Cristian Javier in the eighth that cut the deficit to 7-4. But Astros closer Ryan Pressly pitched a scoreless ninth to seal the win.

### 'Hungry' Dodgers

In Arlington, Corey Seager homered twice for the Dodgers and Los Angeles catcher Will Smith belted a three-run home run off his namesake, Braves relief pitcher Will Smith, to power the Dodgers to a series-extending victory. After the Braves chased Dodgers starter Dustin May runs in the first and second innings, six Los Angeles relief pitchers kept Atlanta's high-octane offense in check. Kenley Jansen, who has struggled recently in the closing pitcher's role, struck out three in the ninth to seal the victory.

tuce and qualifying)," the winner of the opening two rounds of the championship said.

Vinales was the only rider to drop below 1min 48sec, his lap of 1min 47.771sec achieved in the warmer afternoon placing him 0.249s ahead of Quartararo at the start of what his Yamaha team director Massimo Meregalli described as "a very strange weekend" for the team coping with Rossi joining Cristiano Ronaldo and other global sports stars in being touched by the pandemic.

"We had the bad news yesterday that Valentino is not able to join us here this weekend. It's a situation that none of us ever wanted to imagine, and he is dearly missed by the whole team." On their track showing, Vinales reported that even in far from ideal conditions "our lap times are pretty fast, the bike is working well from the first laps".

He added: "We know this track is good for us, because it has a lot of flowing corners. We just needed to improve in a few corners and we did that today, which makes me very happy. Today it was also windy here, and usually the Yamaha is very stable even then." With 'The Doctor' Rossi unable to line up on Sunday and in the continued absence of fractured arm victim Marc Marquez it means this weekend's grid is deprived of two men who between them have won 13 of the past 19 world championships.

Quartararo is in pole to be crowned his successor — he leads Joan Mir by 10 points with Andrea Dovizioso and Vinales only a further eight and nine points adrift. Despite being second in the standings Mir has yet to win a MotoGP race, although the Spaniard has tasted victory on this circuit while racing Moto3 in 2017. "It's a track that I like a lot and I'm coming to it in good

Atlanta's starting pitcher AJ Minter held the Dodgers without a run through three innings, but Los Angeles broke through against the Braves bullpen starting with Seager's solo homer in the fourth inning. Smith built the lead in the sixth, showing tremendous patience through five pitches before launching a 94 mph fastball into the left-field seats.

"Last night hurt," Smith said of the Dodgers' game-four loss with ace pitcher Clayton Kershaw on the mound. "We were coming out tonight hungry and ready to go." The Dodgers added three more runs in a seventh inning—all with two outs. Dodgers second baseman Chris Taylor was awarded first base when he appeared to be hit by a pitch, but replay showed the throw hit the knob of the bat and he returned to continue his at-bat—smacking a double that set the stage for Mookie Betts' run-scoring single and a two-run blast by Seager. —AFP



ARAGON: Monster Energy Yamaha' Spanish rider Maverick Vinales rides the fourth MotoGP free practice session of the Moto Grand Prix of Aragon at the Motorland circuit yesterday. —AFP

shape," said Mir who finished 11th in the rain at Le Mans last weekend. "I'm still close to the lead in the championship standings and I managed to rescue some points in the last race."

The long straights could be a problem for Mir too and that could leave the door open for Dovizioso, three-time runner-up to Marquez in the championship. The 34-year-old Italian is being dropped by Ducati at the end of the season. The prospect of leaving as reigning world champion could add to his motivation. Meanwhile Rossi was not the only rider forced to miss this weekend due to COVID-19. In Moto3 young Italian Tony Arbolino must quarantine after coming into contact with a fellow passenger to Spain who tested positive for the virus. —AFP

## News in brief

### NFL Patriots cancel practice

**NEW YORK:** The NFL's New England Patriots called off practice Friday after a player tested positive for Covid-19 one day after Cam Newton and two others returned from earlier virus positives. The Patriots also had a second person within the organization test positive Friday for the deadly virus, according to a post on the NFL's website, with the team awaiting re-test results to confirm the positives. New England conducted virtual meetings after wiping out the workout ahead of the Patriots' scheduled Sunday home game against Denver. The Denver game was originally set for last Sunday then temporarily moved to last Monday because of COVID-19 positive tests last week by cornerback Stephon Gilmore and practice squad defensive tackle Bill Murray last week. Patriots quarterback Newton, Gilmore and Murray all returned to practice on Thursday after being dropped from the team's Covid-19 reserve list, making them eligible to play again. —AFP

### Watford add to Derby despair

**LONDON:** Joao Pedro's strike saw Watford to a 1-0 win as Derby suffered a fifth consecutive home English Championship defeat at Pride Park on Friday. Pedro settled the match 14 minutes from time. England great Wayne Rooney could have equalized late on but shot wide, with Derby now having lost four of their opening five matches, while Watford are up to fifth place in the table. Watford had scored only two goals in four league games this season prior to this match. In a game of few chances, Derby created an opening in the 40th minute only for Duane Holmes to shoot over the crossbar from 15 yards out. On the hour, Watford had a penalty appeal rejected when Nathaniel Chalobah's shot appeared to hit George Evans on the arm. Eventually, Pedro produced a rare moment of quality when he curled in a shot from the left edge of the area. —AFP

### Spurs sign Swansea's Rodon

**LONDON:** Tottenham have signed Wales defender Joe Rodon from Swansea in a deal worth a reported £11 million (\$14 million). Rodon agreed a five-year contract with Tottenham just before the window for transfers between Premier League clubs and lower league teams closed on Friday. The 22-year-old centre-back had been a Tottenham target for several weeks and it took 10 days of negotiations with the Championship side before the transfer was finally completed. "We are delighted to announce the signing of Joe Rodon on a permanent transfer from Swansea City, subject to international clearance," a statement on Tottenham's website said. "The Welsh international central defender joins us on a contract until 2025 and will wear the number 14 shirt." Rodon started all of Wales' matches during the recent international break and will be united with compatriots Gareth Bale and Ben Davies at Tottenham. —AFP

### Thornton to divide his time

**LOS ANGELES:** Joe Thornton says he will be splitting his time during the 2020-21 hockey season between HC Davos of the Swiss league and the National Hockey League's Toronto Maple Leafs, who he signed a one-year deal with on Friday. The 41-year-old former first overall pick will begin the season with Davos before switching to the NHL, which has set January 1 as its target return date after a pandemic-disrupted 2019-2020 season. The Leafs announced Friday they signed Thornton to a one-year, \$700,000 contract, one day after Thornton said he was joining Davos. "I've been watching this, all the 'buzz', the questions about what's going to happen to me," Thornton told Tages-Anzeiger, a Swiss German-language newspaper on Thursday. "The desire to continue playing (in the NHL) is there. I will be able to prepare myself well for it here in Switzerland." —AFP

### Zverev downs hobbled Harris

**COLOGNE:** Top seed Alexander Zverev edged out South African qualifier Lloyd Harris 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 to reach the Cologne ATP semi-finals on Friday. Zverev, the world number seven and US Open runner-up, made the most of Harris struggling with a leg injury in the final set. "I have got to do a better job of keeping my focus until the end of a match. I relaxed a little bit and then he picked up his game," Zverev told atpourt.com. Zverev is through to his third semi-final of the year where he will face Alejandro Davidovich Fokina. The Spaniard battled past Dennis Novak of Austria 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 to reach his second ATP Tour semi-final. Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime defeated Radu Albot 6-3, 6-0 to reach the last-four. The third seed now faces Spanish fourth seed Roberto Bautista Agut who downed Poland's Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (7/4), 5-7, 6-0. —AFP

### Schauffele's blitz gives him lead

**LAS VEGAS:** Xander Schauffele sank seven birdies over his first nine holes en route to a second round eight-under 64 to take a three-stroke lead at the CJ Cup in Las Vegas on Friday. Starting on the back nine, the 26-year-old American birdied the 11th and then caught fire from the par-three 13th when his tee shot nearly found the cup. He went on to make the birdie putt and card more birdies on his next five holes thanks to some outstanding putting to sit 14-under 130 halfway through the 78-player event at Shadow Creek, which has no cut. "It was nice," Schauffele said of his early birdie blitz. "I had a chip-in there, two long putts. Some of those holes you're not really trying to birdie them, you're kind of just trying to leave yourself an uphill 35-footer and fortunately I made a couple of them. It was a nice stretch." After firing a 29 over his first nine holes, he cooled off after the turn but still managed one more birdie while avoiding any big mistakes. —Reuters



LAS VEGAS: Xander Schauffele of the United States lines up a putt on the fifth green during the second round of the CJ Cup @ Shadow Creek on October 16, 2020. —AFP



## Sports

# Tireless Mbappe sends PSG top with brace at Nimes

## Paris Saint-Germain defeat 10-man Nimes 4-0

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe shrugged off any lingering fatigue to score twice in his second game in 48 hours as Paris Saint-Germain defeated 10-man Nimes 4-0 on Friday to take over top spot in Ligue 1. The France forward struck the opener on 32 minutes at the Stade des Costieres and netted again late on as a weary Nimes folded following the early dismissal of centre-back Loick Landre.

Alessandro Florenzi scored PSG's second on 77 minutes and Pablo Sarabia notched a fourth for the reigning champions as PSG climbed above Rennes on goal difference after a fifth successive win. "I spoke with Kylian yesterday, he told me that he felt good and that he absolutely wanted to play," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "He's the guy who can always make a difference and he did just that." New signings Moise Kean and Rafinha made their PSG debuts with a host of players missing following the international break and just four days ahead of the visit of Manchester United in the Champions League.

Neymar sat out the trip after scoring a hat-trick for Brazil in a World Cup qualifier in Peru that did not finish until the early hours of Wednesday in Europe. However, Mbappe was handed a second start in three days having scored the winning goal for France midweek in their Nations League match in Zagreb. PSG lost Leandro Paredes to an injury inside 10 minutes. The midfielder had started both of Argentina's World Cup qualifying wins over Ecuador and Bolivia in the past week.

Landre was sent off moments later for a rash challenge on Rafinha, raking his studs down the side

of the ex-Barcelona player's ribs. Ander Herrera, cleared to return after a positive Covid-19 test, drew the first in a series of superb saves from Nimes goalkeeper Baptiste Reynet having replaced the injured Paredes. But Mbappe gave PSG the lead after he was played through by Rafinha, rounding the advancing Reynet before slotting in his third league goal of the campaign. Everton loanee Kean should have added a second but was denied by an alert Reynet, with Idrissa Gueye and Florenzi also testing the Nimes keeper.

Florenzi rattled the post twice in the second half, with a volley and header, but the Italy defender eventually gave PSG room to breathe as he nodded in Sarabia's header back across goal. Mbappe promptly grabbed his second of the night with another nerveless finish after Sarabia shredded a tiring Nimes defense. The Spaniard then caught out the hosts from a quickly-taken free-kick to smack in a fourth through the legs of Reynet two minutes from the end. Earlier, Rennes extended their unbeaten start to the Ligue 1 season despite drawing 1-1 at bottom side Dijon.

Martin Terrier put Rennes ahead in the first half with a neat finish, but Guinea-Bissau international Mame Baldé barged through the visiting defense to equalize on 54 minutes. Eduardo Camavinga, who last week became France's youngest goalscorer since 1914, came on for the last half-hour against a team who had picked up a solitary point from six matches. Flavien Tait dragged a shot into the ground that clipped the crossbar as it looped over



NIMES: Nimes' French defender Patrick Burner (left) vies for the ball with Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe during the French L1 football match between Nimes (NO) and Paris Saint Germain (PSG) on October 16, 2020. —AFP

as Rennes were held for the second game in a row. Lille or Lens could overtake PSG and Rennes with

victory in Sunday's Derby du Nord, the first such fixture in over five years. —AFP

## Pakistan's 'Gul-dozer' calls time on topsy-turvy journey

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan bowler Umar Gul, who earned the nickname 'Gul-dozer' for his rattling of stumps, has called time on his 17-year cricket career. With no crowds to bid farewell to the national hero because of coronavirus restrictions, the Twenty20 World Cup winner bowed out to a guard of honor from teammates and opponents after his final match—a disappointing defeat-in Rawalpindi on Friday. "I want to be remembered as someone who tried his best for the country and it's flattering that I was called 'Gul-dozer' during this memorable journey in cricket," the 36-year-old told AFP. It was a topsy-turvy journey for Gul, whose affair with cricket began on the crowded streets of Peshawar.

He entered the international arena exactly a month after the legendary pace duo of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis retired following Pakistan's disastrous 2003 World Cup. It was like the baton of swing bowling had been passed from one generation to another, Gul recalled. "It was tough to fill those shoes but I tried my best and it was great to lead Pakistan to the final of the Twenty20 World Cup in 2007 and then to the title two years later," he said. He finished with 163

Test and 179 ODI wickets, but he achieved his greatest success in Twenty20 cricket, the start of his career coinciding with the launch of the shortest format in 2003.

Gul was at his destructive best in England in 2009, finishing as the top wicket taker of the Twenty20 World Cup with 13. That included a mesmerizing five wickets for just six runs in the semi-final win over New Zealand. "Winning the World Cup was the highest point of my career," he said. "I remember those were very tough days and there was unrest in our country so our win brought smiles back on the faces." At the time, Pakistan's military was fighting an insurgency from militants in the northwestern region of the country.

### Bitter-sweet India memories

Gul attributes his Twenty20 skills to the early days of his love for the game. "I grew up playing 20-20-over matches in the streets and then Ramadan cricket where you look for wickets in a 20-over innings," he said. But his baptism was in Test cricket, where he became an instant hero in 2004.

In only his fifth Test, Gul destroyed a star-studded Indian batting order in a Lahore Test with figures of 5-21. His victims included the great Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag and VVS Laxman. The feat almost halted a burgeoning career, causing a stress fracture in his back. He later featured in the inaugural Indian Premier League in 2008, topping the chart for the Kolkata Knight

they have decided to suspend his contract signed on October 10 so that the player can concentrate exclusively on his defense in the case that occurred in Italy," the club said in a statement posted to Twitter.

"With great sadness in my heart, I am letting you know that I have taken the decision together with the president [of the soccer club] to suspend my contract in this turbulent time in my life," said Robinho, 36, in a video. "My goal was always to help Santos football club." "If my presence is in any way a disruption, it is better to leave and take care of my personal affairs," he said. Since news broke of his contract with Santos, the club has been under increasing pressure from fans, the media and women's groups to cut ties because of a nine-year jail term handed down by an Italian court in 2017 for a gang rape Robinho was found guilty of participating in four

years earlier.

Robinho, who was once touted as a successor to Santos' most famous player, Pele, is appealing the conviction, claiming he is innocent. But sponsors of the club had threatened to pull out if he stayed at Santos. And the television channel Globo Sports released excerpts of a recording Italian prosecutors used to secure their conviction, in which the player purportedly says, "I'm laughing because I don't care. The woman was completely drunk. She doesn't even know what happened."

Robinho was found guilty of having taken part in the gang rape of a woman in her 20s together with a group of companions in a Milan nightclub. Santos, which also incubated the contemporary star Neymar, had until now resisted pressure to part ways with Robinho, insisting that the court case was still underway.



RAWALPINDI: Teammates and opponents give a guard of honor to Pakistani cricketer Umar Gul (center) during the National T20 Cup in Rawalpindi. —AFP

Riders with 12 wickets in six games—the only time Pakistan players were allowed to feature in the world's most lucrative league.

But the 2011 World Cup semi-final against India in the one-day format turned out to be the most bitter of his career. He was targeted by the top order and finished with figures of 0-69 in eight overs for the match in Mohali, India. "Before that match I was the top wicket taker for my team so India targeted me and to add to that we lost that match," Gul reminisced. With his playing years now behind him, next for Gul is a move into coaching: "I will try to make new Bulldozers for my country... it is my duty to the nation." —AFP



Brazilian footballer Robinho

Robinho started his career there 2002 and joined Real Madrid in 2005, then went on to play for Manchester City and Milan. —AFP

## Brazil's Santos and Robinho part ways

SAO PAULO: Santos and veteran international striker Robinho said Friday they had agreed to part ways amid pressure brought to bear on the Brazilian soccer team over his conviction in Italy of having raped a young woman in 2013 when he played for Milan. Once a rising star of the game, Robson de Souza, popularly known as Robinho, had just days ago signed a 36-month contract with Santos, the side he had played for before he signed on for Real Madrid, Manchester and Milan. "Santos Football Club and the player Robinho announce that by common agreement,

## Star jockey McEvoy claims third Everest on Classique Legend

SYDNEY: Enigmatic sprinter Classique Legend gave star jockey Kerrin McEvoy a dominant third win in the world's richest turf race. The Everest, in front of thousands of cheering punters in Australia yesterday. The five-year-old gelding, trained by Les Bridge, came storming through the pack with 200 meters left to collect a whopping Aus\$6.2 million (\$4.4 million) for barely a one-minute run. On an overcast day in Sydney, Bivouac was second and Gytrash third in front of 11,000 people at Royal Randwick, the maximum allowed under coronavirus measures and the biggest in Australian horse racing since March.

Normally 40,000 fans would pack the venue, but with strict limits in place racegoers needed to pre-register their attendance, stay in designated areas and have their temperature checked on arrival. However, they were allowed to get up and cheer, returning much-needed atmosphere to a sport which, like many others, has suffered under Covid-19 restrictions. Eduardo, steered by The Everest's first female rider Rachel King, flew out of the blocks and led for much

of the way with Nature Strip on its heels, until favourite Classique Legend turned on the gas and they faded.

"I looked up at 600 (meters) and they were well in front, but full credit to my horse, he was able to really power when I asked him," said McEvoy, who won the first two Everest races in 2017 and 2018 on the now-retired Redzel. "Thrilled to get the horse over the line. It's an unbelievable feeling to win another one. Every big win is special... but this is extra special." After spending an extended period riding for the Godolphin stable in Europe, McEvoy has become one of Australia's premier riders, also winning three Melbourne Cups.

### Good genes

It was yet another success for trainer Bridge, who had his first major win in the Golden Slipper Stakes in 1983. "Some horses just get all the good genes. He's got a V8 motor," Bridge said of Classique Legend. While the Everest, with Aus\$15 million (US\$10.6 million) at stake, is the richest turf race in the world, it lags behind the Saudi Cup and the Dubai World Cup dirt races in the money stakes. But it is still a massive payday, with the established Melbourne Cup, Kentucky Derby and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe piling in comparison. Since its inception in 2017, it has progressively boosted prize money with even the horse that came last, Dollar for Dollar, walking away with Aus\$450,000. —AFP

## All Blacks and Wallabies fitness issues on Test eve

AUCKLAND: The All Blacks and Wallabies were sweating over fitness issues yesterday, the eve of their second Bledisloe Cup clash, as both sides talked up a very physical battle. Australian loose forward Harry Wilson was laid low by an apparent stomach bug and failed to make it yesterday's "captain's run" while All Blacks replacement back Rieko Ioane was nursing a troublesome hamstring injury. Wilson, on debut in last week's dramatic 16-16 draw, was an influential figure for the Wallabies as both a strong ball carrier and bruising on defense, qualities which captain Michael Hooper called for in the rematch.

The physical side of the game "will go up another level," said Hooper, who is expecting off-the-ball niggles as well, saying it was "part of most Test matches." It is not uncommon for Australia to perform well in the first Test of a Bledisloe series, only for New Zealand to lift their game in the subsequent matches to retain the trophy they have held for the past 18 years. To reverse the trend, Hooper said it was clear where the Wallabies needed to improve on their performance in the round one stalemate.

"We turned over a bit of ball at the break down, particularly when we were into their zone. We want to hold on to the ball more, recycle and get it to our players who can make some serious dents and some serious plays," he said. "Everyone's going to go up a level, and the work rate, I'm expecting that so it's good, great, can't wait." All Blacks skipper Sam Cane, said his side were equally clear about where they needed to improve and it started with the forwards needing to make their presence felt, particularly at the breakdown.

"That's Test-match footy, in a nutshell, physicality and intensity. As a forward pack, the front eight that's where we have to stand up and deliver," he said. "In every Test match the breakdown is targeted ferociously and they were good in that area last week. I thought we were good in that area as well so, talk about physicality and intensity at the breakdown, they'll be hugely important." The All Blacks have added the uncapped Peter Umaga-Jensen to their squad as possible cover for Ioane if he is unable to play. If Wilson is confirmed as a late withdrawal then Pete Samu, who was dropped after the first Test, is likely to get a recall. —AFP



AIX-EN-PROVENCE: Bristol Bears Jordan Crane (right) and Bristol Bears centre wing Alapati Leiua (left) holds the trophy aloft as they celebrate victory after the European Rugby Challenge Cup final match between Toulon and Bristol Bears on October 16, 2020. —AFP



**14** Astros down Rays, Dodgers thump Braves to stay alive in MLB playoffs



**15** Santos, Robinho part ways amid pressure over rape conviction



**15** Tireless Mbappe sends PSG top with brace at Nimes



## Liverpool denied derby win

### Chelsea held in six-goal thriller



LIVERPOOL: Everton's English defender Michael Keane (left) scores his team's first goal during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Liverpool yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Liverpool were denied a cathartic victory against Premier League leaders Everton by VAR and Chelsea drew 3-3 with Southampton on another day of breathless drama in the English top-flight yesterday. Manchester City beat Arsenal 1-0 as Pep Guardiola got the better of former assistant Mikel Arteta, while misfiring Manchester United prepared to take on Newcastle in the late kick-off.

Jürgen Klopp's champions were desperate to atone for their 7-2 mauling against Aston Villa before the international break but were forced to settle for a 2-2 draw after Jordan Henderson's late strike was chalked off for offside. Everton, who have not beaten Liverpool since 2010, remain three points clear of their Merseyside rivals at the top of the table after a number of controversial calls went their way at Goodison Park. But Klopp was mystified that Henderson's potential winner in added time against 10-man Everton was ruled out for a barely perceptible offside decision against Sadio Mane.

He was also at a loss to explain how Everton

goalkeeper Jordan Pickford had not been dismissed and had not conceded an early penalty for a knee-high challenge on Virgil van Dijk. "There were a number of big moments in the game," said a baffled Klopp. "The only situation I saw back is the Henderson goal and I didn't see offside. The picture I saw is no offside, but it was offside because somebody decided it." Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with his side's performance, even though they were denied a fifth straight Premier League win.

"We competed with them," he said. "We were 1-0 down and equalized, 2-1 down and equalized. It was a good test and I have a good feeling. "To know we can compete with the champions of the last season it gives us more confidence for the future." Sadio Mane, who missed the Villa Park mauling after testing positive for coronavirus, put Liverpool ahead in the third minute. But the pivotal moment in the match came when Van Dijk was on the receiving end of a dangerous late lunge from Pickford inside

the box minutes later.

However, no penalty was awarded after a VAR review because Van Dijk had been marginally offside and Pickford was lucky to avoid a red card. The Dutchman was substituted and his towering presence was missed at the other end as Michael Keane equalized in the 19th minute. Mohamed Salah put Liverpool back in front 18 minutes from time but Dominic Calvert-Lewin netted his 10th goal of the season to pull Everton level again. Richarlison was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle on Thiago Alcantara in the 90th minute and Everton were grateful for the intervention of VAR in the final seconds.

#### Chelsea drama

Chelsea looked to be in total control after cruising into a 2-0 lead against Southampton at Stamford Bridge, courtesy of new signing Timo Werner's first Premier League goals. But a goal from Danny Ings shortly before half-time and a sec-

ond-half strike from Che Adams wiped out their lead. Frank Lampard's side rallied immediately to regain the lead, Werner teeing up Kai Havertz for a neat dinked finish to make it 3-2.

But Southampton were not to be denied and Jannik Vestergaard bludgeoned home an added-time equalizer for Saints from a free-kick that Chelsea failed to clear. Lampard said his side had to tighten up at the back after conceding three goals for the second time this season. "We are seeing lots of goals across the league and no manager is happy," he said. "I don't know why it is."

There are attacking players in this league and maybe pre-season and lack of working time plays a part. But we have to get better at it." City returned to winning ways after an indifferent start to the season, courtesy of a first-half goal from Raheem Sterling. Aguero drove forward and fed Phil Foden on the left, with the England midfielder cutting in to shoot. Bernd Leno could only parry his effort, which fell kindly for Sterling to sidefoot home. — AFP

## AC Milan take top spot

**MILAN:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic struck twice in his first match back after recovering from coronavirus yesterday as AC Milan beat city rivals Inter Milan 2-1 to take top spot in Serie A ahead of Atalanta who slumped 4-1 at Napoli. Ibrahimovic had not played since September 21, but bagged his second brace in as many league matches this season as Milan claimed their first derby win since January 2016. Milan have now won their opening four Serie A matches for the first time since the 1995-1996 season when they won the title under Fabio Capello.

The 39-year-old Ibrahimovic stamped his mark on the game early, having also scored back in February only for Inter to win 4-2. He missed a penalty after 13 minutes but turned in the rebound, with a perfect Rafael Leao cross setting up the Swede for the second three minutes later. Romelu Lukaku pulled a goal back for Inter Milan after half an hour for his fourth goal in as many matches.

Antonio Conte's Inter were hit by six absences due to Covid-19 and missed chances, with Lautaro Martinez header cleared off the line and Lukaku sending a header wide before the break, while Gianluigi Donnarumma denied the Belgian

just before the final whistle. AC Milan are top of the table with maximum 12 points, three ahead of Atalanta who fell to third-placed Napoli. Inter Milan are sixth with seven points from three games.

#### Lozano double

In Naples, Hirving Lozano also struck twice as Napoli powered back days after they were punished for failing to turn up for their last Serie A game against Juventus. Napoli were handed a 3-0 defeat and one-point deduction for not travelling to Turin earlier this month after recording two cases of coronavirus. But Gennaro Gattuso's side picked up where they left off before the controversy, with a third win in as many league games they have played. "I've heard say that we didn't want to go (to Turin), it's not true," said Gattuso. "I'm more angry than anyone that we weren't allowed to go."

Napoli maintained they had to remain in isolation on local health authority instructions. "Juventus are a team under construction," continued Gattuso. "I had the feeling that we could play that match like we did today." Mexican forward Lozano scored two quick-fire goals in the first half, having also picked up a brace in Napoli's previous completed match - a 6-0 win over Genoa also at the Stadio San Paolo. Matteo Politano blasted in a third after half an hour with Victor Osimhen grabbing his first Napoli goal just before the break. — AFP

## Real Madrid lose to Cadiz

**MADRID:** Zinedine Zidane made four substitutions at half-time yesterday but could not spark Real Madrid into life as his team slipped to a 1-0 defeat by newly-promoted Cadiz in La Liga. Sergio Ramos was the only enforced change at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium as Madrid's captain spent the second half in the stands with ice strapped around his left knee. Madrid said the injury was not serious but it puts in doubt Ramos' involvement in their first Champions League game against Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday, as well as the Clasico three days later.

If Barcelona's players were watching, they might well feel this Madrid are there for the taking when they meet at Camp Nou next weekend. A prolonged absence for Ramos would cap a deflating night for the reigning Spanish champions, whose dreary display certainly hands an early boost to their title rivals. Atletico Madrid had earlier beaten Celta Vigo 2-0, with Luis Suarez opening the scoring at Balaídos, while Barca were about to face Getafe.

This is Cadiz's first season in the top flight in 14 years and their first victory over Real Madrid in 29, yet they could have won by more. Their reward is second place in the table, denied a place at the top by their



MADRID: Cadiz's Argentinean goalkeeper Jeremias Ledesma stops the ball during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid CF and Cadiz CF yesterday. — AFP

opponents only on goal difference. Isco, Luka Modric and Lucas Vazquez were the other three players to be hauled off by Zidane, who was reacting to an abject display from his side in the first half. Eder Militao, Casemiro, Fede Valverde and Marco Asensio came on while a surprised-looking Toni Kroos also departed in the second period, replaced by Luka Jovic.

But Madrid's performance hardly improved and by the end they had managed just two shots on target. Cadiz could have been three up in the first quarter of an hour as Ramos prevented Alvaro Negredo's finish from rolling in before Negredo created

the opener. His cushioned header put through Anthony Lozano, who skipped beyond Madrid's sleepy defense and poked over the onrushing Thibaut Courtois.

Madrid might have equalized in the second half as Vinicius Junior headed wide of an open goal and Karim Benzema rattled the crossbar with a long-range shot. But Cadiz were not overly troubled. Earlier, Suarez partnered Diego Costa for the first time and scored as Atletico Madrid beat struggling Celta Vigo 2-0. But the Suarez-Costa combination came to an early end as Costa was forced off injured in the second half. — AFP