



4 Tent businesses on shaky ground after camping ban



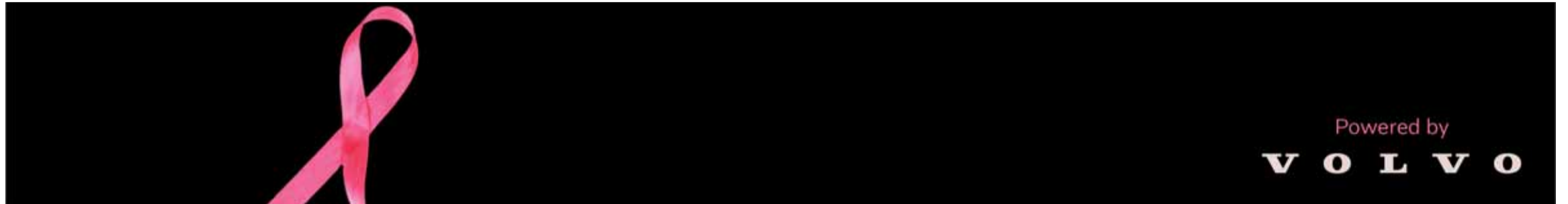
5 Privacy fears over world-first Singaporean face scan plan



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16 West Ham hit back to draw 3-3 at Spurs on Bale return



Health ministry says flu shots only for Kuwaitis

Assembly panel approves amendments to law to cut expat numbers

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The health ministry announced that vaccinations for the winter season will be limited to Kuwaitis only at polyclinics for the time being, in light of the current circumstances amid the coronavirus pandemic. The health ministry has imported 400,000 doses of vaccines and distributed more than 100,000 doses of influenza vaccines and 70,000 doses of pneumonia vaccines to 34 clinics and vaccination centers around the country.

The ministry said it administered around 150,000 doses of flu vaccines and 75,000 doses of

pneumonia vaccines last year, adding it is expecting an increase in the number of people seeking flu shots this year. The health ministry launched its seasonal winter vaccination campaign against seasonal flu and pneumococcal pneumonia on Oct 15, with officials urging the public to get vaccinated at the nearest health center.

After reports of crowding and long lines as people rushed to health centers, there were calls on social media to limit flu shots to Kuwaitis only. But the latest decision by the ministry was met with outrage online, with a Kuwaiti doctor labeling the provision of healthcare based on nationality "one of

the worst forms of racism".

Meanwhile, the National Assembly's human resources development committee yesterday approved amendments to the population law proposed by the government and MPs ahead of the debate in the Assembly tomorrow. Head of the committee MP Khalil Al-Saleh said the panel's decision was unanimous, but he did not provide details of the amendments, which will be taken up for debate in the Assembly in the second reading of the law.

The law was approved by the Assembly in the first reading about two weeks ago, but the 12 Cabinet members present voted against the law. The

law aims at reducing the number of expats in the country gradually over the next five years. It also wants the government to set a ceiling for the number of expats needed by the country and also calls for setting quotas of various expat communities.

Local media said the government objected to two main points - it does not want the law to oblige the government to set a ceiling for expats and also objected to the proposed quota system. MP Saleh said the committee met last week with four ministers and 15 government agencies related to the population issue and heard their viewpoints on the law.

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Iran says arms embargo lifted

TEHRAN: Iran said a longstanding UN embargo on arms sales to and from the Islamic republic expired yesterday in line with a 2015 landmark nuclear deal with world powers from which Washington has withdrawn. As Tehran celebrated, however, Washington argued that arms sales to Iran would still violate UN resolutions and threatened sanctions on anyone making such sales. Iran has hailed the expiry as a diplomatic victory over its arch enemy the US, leaving the way open to purchase weapons from Russia, China and elsewhere. —AFP

Erekat taken to hospital

JERICHO: Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Israel yesterday for treatment of a worsening case of COVID-19, the Palestine Liberation Organization said. Witnesses said Jerusalem-born Erekat, 65, was on a stretcher when he was placed inside an Israeli ambulance outside his home in Jericho, in the occupied West Bank. He was rushed to Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center. There is heightened concern over Erekat's vulnerability to the illness because he underwent a lung transplant in the United States in 2017. — Reuters



Saeb Erekat

Virus survives 9 hrs on skin

TOKYO: The coronavirus remains active on human skin for nine hours, Japanese researchers have found, in a discovery they said showed the need for frequent hand washing to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The pathogen that causes the flu survives on human skin for about 1.8 hours by comparison, said the study published this month in the Clinical Infectious Diseases journal. Both the coronavirus and the flu virus are inactivated within 15 seconds by applying ethanol, which is used in hand sanitizers. — AFP

Prayers allowed in Grand Mosque

CAIRO: Saudi Arabia allowed its citizens and residents inside the kingdom to perform prayers in one of the most holy religious sites in Islam, Al-Haram Mosque in Makkah, for the first time in seven months, state television reported early yesterday. Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia allowed citizens and residents to perform the umrah pilgrimage at Islam's holiest sites, Makkah and Madinah, after a seven-month pause due to coronavirus concerns. — Reuters

Israel, Bahrain formalize ties

MANAMA: An Israeli delegation accompanied by the US treasury secretary arrived in Bahrain yesterday to formalize nascent relations and broaden Gulf cooperation that Washington has promoted as an anti-Iran bulwark and potential economic bonanza. Bahrain followed the United Arab Emirates in agreeing last month to normalize ties with Israel, stunning Palestinians who had demanded statehood before any such regional rapprochement.

The breakthrough, overseen by US President Donald Trump, is a foreign policy flourish ahead of his re-election bid next month. For the US allies, it is a chance to close ranks on Iran more overtly. The Israeli delegation, which flew on an El Al Israel Airlines charter flight from Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, was accompanied by US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in public remarks to his cabinet, said the delegations would work on cooperation agreements and "establishing the peace treaty". Israel and Bahrain signed a "Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and

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MUHARRAQ, Bahrain: Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Zayani (center), Head of Israel's National Security Council Meir Ben-Shabbat (right) and US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin take part in a joint press conference at Bahrain International Airport yesterday. — AFP

Israeli-UAE joint song a YouTube hit

JERUSALEM: The scene cuts from Dubai to Tel Aviv, the lyrics switch from Arabic to Hebrew to English and the song is a slightly kitsch electro-pop duet by artists who, for now, remain apart. The normalization of ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates has produced its first musical collaboration: "Ahlan Bik", or "Hello you" in Arabic.

"This is a historic moment," said Israeli singer Elkana Marziano, whose

duet with Emirati artist Walid Aljasim has clocked more than 1.1 million YouTube views since it was posted on Sept 30. Marziano, 28, is a former winner of Israel's version of The Voice, a singing competition TV show, and an Arabic speaker influenced by the Mizrahi culture of Jews from the Arab world.

He told AFP that he and Aljasim had collaborated over the Zoom video-conferencing service, with some parts of the song recorded in Dubai and others in Israel. "The understanding was immediate," Marziano said of the partnership. One online commentator, who posted under the name Shaked Sharon, said: "With this song, you feel the new Middle East."

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GIV'AT SHMUEL: Israeli singer Elkana Marziano sings along with a video clip of a song on which he worked in collaboration with Emirati artist Walid Aljasim (image on screen) in his home in this central Israeli city on Oct 15, 2020. — AFP

Saudi woman makes largest coffee painting

JEDDAH: A Saudi artist has created the world's "largest coffee painting", becoming the first woman from the country to achieve a record title single-handedly, the Guinness World Records announced yesterday. Ohud Abdullah Almaliki used expired coffee to illustrate renowned leaders from the kingdom and the neighboring United Arab Emirates for the 220 sq m piece.

"It took me 45 days of continuous work to complete, under the watchful eyes of two witnesses, video recording and drone footage," Almaliki said, according to a Guinness World Records statement. The artwork, titled "Naseej 1" (meaning "Woven Together") was created in the Saudi city of Jeddah on a canvas of seven connected cloths.

It features the founding fathers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE - the late King Abdul Aziz bin Saud and the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, respectively. Below them is a series of smaller portraits of other leaders from the two Gulf countries, while the

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JEDDAH: A handout picture released by the Guinness World Records yesterday shows the world's largest coffee painting by Saudi artist Ohud Abdullah Almaliki depicting the founding fathers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir's envoy delivers letters to Saudi King, Crown Prince



RIYADH: Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah delivers to Saudi minister of state Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al Saud a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — Amiri Diwan photo



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah meets Saudi minister of state Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al Saud.

RIYADH: Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, handed a written message yesterday from the Amir to a senior Saudi official; addressed to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Sheikh Mohammad, also the Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs, handed another letter to the Saudi senior official from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, addressed to the Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz.

Contents of the two letters tackled the good brotherly relations between the two countries, means of boosting the ties at various levels, issues of common concern and latest developments on the regional and international arenas. The representative of His Highness the Amir handed the two letters in person to Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al Saud, the cabinet member and minister of state of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. — KUNA

Foreign Minister receives Thai envoy's credentials



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah receives the credentials of Thailand's new Ambassador to Kuwait Rut Thammamongkol. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday Rut Thammamongkol who presented a copy of his credentials as Thailand's new Ambassador to Kuwait. Sheikh Dr Ahmad wished the new envoy best of luck in his new tenure, and for relations to further progress and prosper, a foreign ministry statement said. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran and deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's office Ahmad Al-Shuraim attended the meeting. — KUNA

Sudan praises Kuwait's humanitarian initiatives

KUWAIT: Sudan's Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulmunem Al-Ameen praised the humanitarian aid Kuwait offers to countries in need, especially the efforts it exerted lately in Sudan. In a meeting between the diplomat and Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer yesterday, he expressed his deepest thanks to the medical and relief aid Kuwait offered lately to Sudan through KRCS. Ameen praised the "deep-rooted and historic" relations between Kuwait and Sudan.

Dr Sayer said that KRCS is always ready to consider any service for people in need in Sudan, in coordination with Sudan's Red Crescent, endorsing the distinguished ties between both nations. All humanitarian aid offered to Sudan come in response to the instructions of the Kuwaiti political leadership to offer rapid rescue to



KUWAIT: Sudan's Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulmunem Al-Ameen meets Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer. — KUNA

people in need all over the globe. Since the outbreak of Sudan's floods, KRCS rushed to offer urgent aid, sending airplanes loaded with food, medications, and tents to

the damaged regions. Dr Sayer also during the meeting explained all forms of humanitarian aid offered by the society inside Kuwait and abroad. — KUNA



MAKKAH: Saudis and expats perform Fajr prayers at the Grand Mosque for the first time after easing months-long COVID-19 restrictions. — AFP

Saudi woman makes largest...

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whole work is bordered in the traditional "Al-Sadu" style of Bedouin decoration. "My aim is to remind the world of the centuries-old entente between the two nations," Almalki said.

The artist used approximately 4.5 kg of expired coffee granules to complete the painting, according to the Guinness World Records statement. Almalki expressed hope that her accomplishment "will contribute to empowering the women in Saudi Arabia and beyond". It is the first time a Saudi woman has achieved a record alone, Guinness World Records said, though others have taken part in previous attempts. In 2015, 8,264 women came together in Riyadh to make the largest "human awareness ribbon", to raise awareness about breast cancer. — AFP

Israeli-UAE joint song a...

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While some YouTube commenters have celebrated "Ahlan Bik", others have condemned the song and Israeli-Emirati normalization, while calling for the creation of a Palestinian state. The song was written by Doron Medalie, who also wrote "Toy", which won the 2018 Eurovision contest in Israel. The chorus - "I

hear you friend far away, far away" - is repeated in the three languages, while the music video's action pivots from Marziano dancing with friends in Israel to Aljasim in Dubai.

Marziano said that peace was a common theme in Israeli music, which has regularly been in conflict with its neighbors since its founding in 1948. He said it was a "personal victory" to see young Israelis and Emiratis interacting online to discuss the song on his YouTube page, adding that he is planning a live concert with Aljasim when the coronavirus pandemic ends. "I am very moved by the idea of singing this song, and others, on the same stage (with Aljasim)," Marziano said. - AFP

Health ministry says flu shots...

Continued from Page 1

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meanwhile invited lawmakers and the government for a shortened Assembly term to be held on Oct 20 to discuss a number of laws and issues. HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is expected to open the term.

A number of opposition MPs at the weekend submitted a letter to the Assembly calling to debate

amendments to the election law after the interior and defense panel failed to discuss the proposed amendments. The letter said that since the concerned panel failed to do its job, the Assembly should debate the proposals directly and decide on them. The main amendment calls for changing the voting system by allowing voters to elect two candidates instead of one in the existing law. MPs claim that the one-vote system introduced in late 2012 has harmed the democratic process in the country and should be amended.

MP Saleh Ashour meanwhile called for a comprehensive solution to thousands of stateless people or bedoons living in the country. Any solution should focus on the humanitarian situation of the bedoons by providing them with jobs, healthcare and education among other things.

Saudi Arabia restarts prayers at Grand Mosque

MAKKAH: Saudi Arabia opened yesterday Islam's holiest site for prayers for the first time in seven months, and expanded the umrah pilgrimage to accommodate 15,000 worshippers as it relaxed coronavirus curbs. Mask-clad Saudi citizens and residents of the kingdom were allowed to pray inside the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Makkah, amid what authorities called extensive health precautions.

"Citizens and residents have performed salat Al-Fajr (dawn prayers) at the Grand Mosque today as (authorities) start implementing the second phase of the gradual resumption of umrah," the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia allowed up to 6,000 citizens and residents per day to perform the umrah - a Muslim pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time - after it was suspended in March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Under the second

stage that began yesterday, the number of umrah pilgrims was increased to 15,000 per day. A maximum of 40,000 people - including umrah pilgrims - will now be allowed to perform daily prayers at the mosque.

Under a third stage, set for Nov 1, visitors from abroad will be permitted. The limit on umrah pilgrims will then be raised to 20,000, with a total of 60,000 worshippers allowed. A raft of precautions have been adopted, according to state media. The revered Black Stone in the Kaaba - which is customary but not mandatory to touch during the pilgrimage - will be out of reach.

The Grand Mosque is to be sterilized before and after each group of worshippers. Thermal sensors have been installed to measure the body temperature of pilgrims, Makkah authorities said. The umrah usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year. Authorities said the umrah will be allowed to return to full capacity once the threat of the pandemic has abated.

Saudi Arabia hosted the annual hajj pilgrimage in late July, on the smallest scale in modern history. Only up to 10,000 Muslim residents of the country were allowed to take part, a far cry from the 2.5 million who participated last year. Saudi Arabia has recorded more than 342,000 cases of COVID-19 and 5,185 deaths since the pandemic began. — AFP

Israel, Bahrain formalize...

Continued from Page 1

Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations" at a White House ceremony on Sept 15, a document that fell short of a formal treaty.

At a ceremony with Mnuchin before take-off, US Middle East envoy Avi Berkowitz said that Israel and Bahrain would sign a joint communique "bringing forward tourism and banking and diplomatic relations". The two sides will be free to open embassies in each other's countries, Berkowitz said, adding that an Israeli embassy in Manama could open within months. "I think the opportunity is way beyond just investments," Mnuchin told reporters on the El Al flight. "It's in technology, building various different businesses - and in the case of Bahrain as well, really expanding the opportunities for them quite, quite, quite dramatically."

Israeli National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, speaking in Arabic at an arrival ceremony at Manama airport, said: "This is a great day ... We look forward, God willing, to hosting you in Israel soon." Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al-Zayani described the engagement and cooperation as "the most effective, the most sustainable means to bring about a genuine and lasting peace, one which safeguards the rights of the Middle East peoples."

Houda Nounoo, a Bahraini diplomat, told reporters the Gulf state planned to formally reopen Manama's old synagogue, which has a Jewish community of 34 people, for the Purim festival on Feb. 25. The signing of the declaration, however, drew anger among Bahrainis at home and abroad. The government of Bahrain has said the deal protects its interests from Iran. Bahrain, unlike the UAE, has a history of open politics and civil society movements, although rights have been curtailed in the past decade.

El Al Flight 973, a nod to Bahrain's telephone code, flew over Saudi Arabia, an accommodation by the Gulf's powerhouse, which has so far resisted US appeals to normalize ties with Israel. Mnuchin and the other US officials travel today to the UAE, where the accord with Israel has uncorked bilateral commerce. Tomorrow, the US dignitaries will join the UAE's first delegation to Israel.

Israel and the UAE will sign a deal tomorrow to allow 28 weekly commercial flights between Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Israel's Transportation Ministry said yesterday. Though less oil-rich than the UAE, Bahrain - host to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet - has geostrategic significance. A Sept 13 report by Israel's Intelligence Ministry saw potential for defense cooperation with Bahrain, describing it as threatened by "Shiite political sedition, directed by Iran and its proxies". A Bahraini source said a priority for Manama would be cybersecurity cooperation, after a decree issued by the king last week to set up a National Cybersecurity Centre, and tapping Israel's ecosystem for business start-ups. — Agencies

Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials at Seif Palace



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



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

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



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



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



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

News in brief

N Macedonia President congratulates Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a letter from President of North Macedonia Stevo Pendarovski to congratulate him on his assumption of office. Pendarovski commended the close relationships between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of North Macedonia, and wished His Highness the Amir success in his new office. His Highness the Amir thanked President Pendarovski, in a cable, for his congratulations, and said he was looking forward to further cementing relations and cooperation in all domains. His Highness the Amir wished Pendarovski good health and for North Macedonia development and prosperity. —KUNA

Pakistani Premier congratulates Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable from Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan to congratulate him on his assumption of office. Khan wished His Highness the Amir success in leading the development in the State of Kuwait, and said he was looking forward to further strengthening ties between the two countries. His Highness the Amir thanked Khan, in a cable, for his congratulations, and commended the historic relationships between the two countries. His Highness the Amir expressed desire to further cementing cooperation in all fields, and wished Khan good health and for Pakistan development and prosperity. —KUNA

Cape Verde's President expresses condolence

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable of condolence from Jorge Carlos Fonseca, President of Cape Verde, on the demise of late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In his cable, President Fonseca praised the virtues of the late Amir and his humanitarian ventures. Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent Cape Verde's President a cable in reply, expressing gratitude for his warm sentiments. — KUNA

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Kuwait's tent business hit hard by COVID-19

Spring camps canceled as preventive measure against disease



KUWAIT: Tent makers are seen inside their shop at the tent market in Rai. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Cabinet has banned camping in the desert and pitching tents outside residential homes as part of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Kuwait Times spoke to owners of tent businesses, who said they respect the decision of the Cabinet amid the prevailing circumstances.

"Of course we are sad that we cannot take advantage of the spring season or busy winter days. That is why we are not making many prefabricated tents this time. Our business is down this season by almost 70 percent," said Yasser Ali, a Pakistani co-owner of a tent shop at the tent market in Rai near the Friday Market. Ali said business hasn't recovered since they reopened in July after the lockdown. "We cut our staff and I only have one assistant now. I allowed my workers to transfer to other jobs. I know we cannot rely on the income from the shop now - very few customers are coming to make tents or order material for tents," he said.

"Normally our services include everything - from setting up tents to the materials needed for tents. Some Kuwaitis like to have a tent in their backyards - those are the few customers we've got. But they are few and we have many shops here," Ali said.

"I have been working here for the past 12 years, and this is the only time as far as I can remember that business is this slow. I am praying for a miracle, because if there are no changes in the coming two months or so, I am planning to go back home to Islamabad and try my luck in business there," Ali said.

While Ali was speaking with Kuwait Times, a customer dropped by looking for an awning for his villa, but when he learned the price, he left without buying anything. "That is the problem now - they want cheap prices in the middle of the pandemic. They know we do not have any sales, and when you tell them your price, they will try their best to reduce it to a ridiculous amount. We cannot give away our products - we need money to pay the salaries of our workers and at least eat," he said.

Kuwait condemns France stabbing

KUWAIT: An official source at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday emphatically condemned and denounced a recent terrorist stabbing incident in a Paris suburb, in which a French citizen was killed. "This crime is deemed a blatant breach of all religious and human values," the source said in a statement. The source added that Kuwait stands by France in all its measures to safeguard its security and to ensure the safety of its citizens, while voicing sincere condolence and sympathy with the victim's family. — KUNA

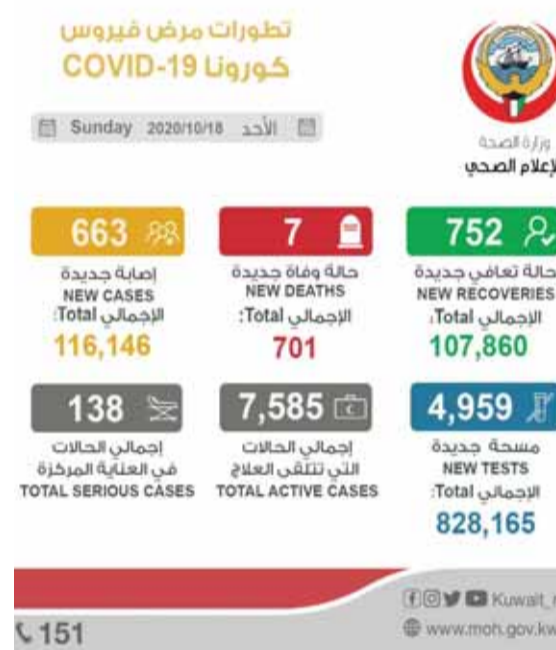


Kuwaitis in France urged to stay home during curfew hours

PARIS: Kuwait called on its nationals in France on Saturday to fully comply with COVID-19 safety measures, namely a night-morning curfew. Authorities in France implemented a 9pm-6am curfew as of Saturday night in several regions and cities across the country, Kuwait's embassy in Paris warned in a statement. These include the likes of Ile-de-France, a region which includes the capital, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, Montpellier, Rouen, Toulouse and Saint Etienne. Kuwaiti nationals were urged to stay indoors during curfew hours and contact the embassy in the event of an emergency at these numbers: 425-235-147-0033834-673-670-0033. On Wednesday, French President Emmanuel Macron introduced strict measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus, namely the curfew along with a public health emergency across most parts of the country. — KUNA

Kuwait's COVID-19 death toll up to 701; seven in one day

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday reported seven deaths due to COVID-19 and 663 new infections. The figures took the country's death toll up to 701 and the caseload to 116,146, health ministry data showed. According to ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, the number of people hospitalized with the virus stands at 7,585; 138 of whom in intensive care units. Dr Sanad added that 4,959 swab tests were conducted in the past 24 hours, with a total of 828,165 so far. Meanwhile, some 752 people recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours to raise the total to 107,860, the ministry 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



In my view

The traffic dilemma



By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

I must start by thanking Allah Almighty for being still alive on the face of this earth and still being able to hold a pen and move it to form words next to each other and come out with sentences that you read. No my friends, I am not a coronavirus survivor as I did not catch it - at least not yet - and I pray to God to spare me the agony. In fact I am a street wars survivor!

I was driving in Salmiya when all of a sudden a speeding car cut in front of me. The driver then hit the brakes to avoid running a red light. All the while I was doing my best to avoid colliding with him. And as if this was not enough, the driver came to me to give me advice to pay attention and be careful, saying: "You have eyes, use them!"

His comment made me wonder what mistake I made and I thought about it for a while. But believe me I was not speeding, I did not change lanes dangerously and I was respecting the lanes to the letter of the law! Anyhow, my response was a smile, and I told him to please do the same.

Another day, I was driving on a major highway at the speed limit of 120 km/hr when someone driving at very high speed forced me and others to move to the right-hand lanes. But he himself moved right and exited, and almost created a tragedy as he was about to hit a motorcycle. Believe me, we were scrambling on the road like panicked rabbits to avoid hitting each other because of the actions of one driver.

It is unfortunate that this behavior can be seen in various areas by drivers of different age groups and backgrounds. I know the traffic dilemma has been constantly on the minds of concerned officials over the years, and many solutions were implemented. Some worked well and others were not so successful, but here I am speaking to my fellow motorists.

I drive a lot during the week and cover vast areas of Kuwait. I see various driving habits and behaviors on the streets, and I do insist that a significant percentage of the problem is our behavior, and if we follow the rules and respect the rights of others on the road, the problem will not be as bad.

I am saying this out of practical experience - there is a roundabout close to where I live and traffic is always congested there because the majority of drivers act as if each owns the road. But when traffic patrols come there and stay for a while, traffic moves smoothly and things become fine! So let us all cooperate with each other, follow the rules and help authorities to make things easier. It is in our hands, and yes we can do it! Yes we can.

PS: I am not a perfect driver, of course, but I try my best - I try hard and courtesy is always on my mind!

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KUWAIT: The Green Environmental Hands Team organized a blood donation drive in memory of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Kuwait Central Blood Bank yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

IWG holds 2nd executive board meeting

KUWAIT: The Executive Board of the International Women's Group held its second meeting for the year 2020-2021 on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at the residence of Ambreen Mustafa, the

group's president and wife of the Pakistani Ambassador. This meeting was an opportunity to exchange views and discuss several matters related to the activities on this year's agenda. One of the main topics discussed was finalizing the launch of IWG's new website: aimed at sharing the group's news and activities with its members, and also introducing a new generation of ladies to the 30-year history of the International Women's Group through photos, videos, links and posts. To commemorate the launch, The Crown Plaza Hotel designed a specially prepared cake with the distinctive IWG blue and white logo for the meeting.





Armenia, Azerbaijan truce breaks down within hours

Biden leads Trump, but can US polls be trusted this year?

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SINGAPORE: This photo taken on Oct 1, 2020 shows a staff member of government technology agency GovTech demonstrating the use of facial verification technology to access government services on a computer at a community center. — AFP

Singapore face scan plan sparks fears

Privacy advocates alarmed by 'intrusive system vulnerable to abuse'

SINGAPORE: Singapore will become the world's first country to use facial verification in its national ID scheme, but privacy advocates are alarmed by what they say is an intrusive system vulnerable to abuse. From next year, millions of people living in the city-state will be able to access government agencies, banking services and other amenities with a quick face scan. This biometric check will do away with the need to remember a password or security dongle when performing many everyday tasks, its creators say.

It is part of the financial hub's drive to harness technology, from ramping up the use of electronic payments to research on driverless transport. "We want to be innovative in applying technology for the benefit of our citizens and businesses," Kwok Quek Sin, who works on digital identification at Singapore's technology agency GovTech, told AFP.

Facial verification has already been adopted in

various forms around the world, with Apple and Google implementing the technology for tasks like unlocking phones and making payments. Governments have also deployed it at airports for security checks on travellers. But Singapore's rollout is one of the most ambitious yet, and the first to attach facial verification to a national identification database. The technology captures a series of photos of a person's face in various lights.

These images are matched with other data already available to the government such as national identity cards, passports and employment passes. Safeguards ensure the process is secure, said Lee Sea Lin of digital consultancy Toppan Ecquaria, which is working with GovTech to implement the technology. "We want to have assurance that the person behind the device is a real person... and that it is not an image or a video," Lee said.

The technology is being integrated into the country's digital identity scheme and is being trialed now at some government offices, including the tax authority and the city's pension fund. Private firms can sign up to the initiative, and Singapore's biggest bank DBS is part of the trial.

Surveillance concerns

Face scanning technology remains controversial despite its growing use and critics have raised ethical concerns about it in some countries - for instance, law enforcement agencies scanning crowds at large events to look for troublemakers. Singapore authorities are frequently accused of targeting government critics and taking a hard line on dissent, and activists are concerned about how the face scanning tech will be used. "There are no clear and explicit restraints on government power when it comes to things like sur-

veillance and data gathering," said Kirsten Han, a freelance journalist from the city. "Will we one day discover that this data is in the hands of the police or in the hands of some other agency that we didn't specifically give consent for?"

Those behind the Singapore scheme stress facial verification is different to recognition as it requires user consent, but privacy advocates remain skeptical. "The technology is still far from benign," Privacy International research officer Tom Fisher told AFP. He said systems like the one planned for Singapore left "opportunities for exploitation", such as use of data to track and profile people.

Kwok of GovTech insisted that no data would be shared with third parties and users would be left with other options, such as personal passwords, to access services. "It is not surveillance," he said. "The use is very specific." — AFP

Thai protesters defy ban for fourth day

BANGKOK: Thousands of pro-democracy protesters took over a major Bangkok intersection yesterday with posters bearing the faces of arrested activists, defying a ban on gatherings and stern warnings from authorities who have escalated a crackdown in recent days. The youth-led movement suffered several blows last week, with scores arrested after demonstrators surrounded a royal motorcade and flashed a pro-democracy salute to Queen Suthida during a Wednesday protest.

The government reacted by imposing "serious" emergency measures banning gatherings of more than four and allowing for the arrest of protest leaders, many of

whom are calling for the removal of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former military chief first brought to power in a 2014 coup. Police also deployed water cannon against unarmed demonstrators on Friday in Bangkok's central shopping district in an escalation of tactics that drew outrage across Thai society.

But the crackdown has emboldened the movement's mostly young supporters who have turned up in large numbers to daily guerrilla protests around Bangkok. The locations are announced an hour before to outwit authorities, who shut down much of the city's Skytrain and underground rail services to discourage people from joining in.

"I cannot let the students fight alone," said 24-year-old Phat, a first-time rallygoer who arrived at yesterday's protest venue at Bangkok's Victory Monument. "I want true democracy," he told AFP. Thousands descended on the major traffic thoroughfare from 4:00 pm (0900 GMT)

shouting "Free our friends" while carrying posters of arrested activists.

They include human rights lawyer Anon Numpu, Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak, and Panusaya "Rung" Sithijirawattanakul - three of the most recognizable faces in the leaderless movement who have consistently called for reforms to the monarchy. Among their demands is the abolition of a draconian royal defamation law - which shields King Maha Vajiralongkorn from criticism - and a call for the monarch to stay out of the country's turbulent politics.

Once-taboo in Thailand, the issue of royal reform demanded by protesters is one of the biggest challenges facing the kingdom's conservative military-aligned government. The social media-savvy protesters have also harnessed unorthodox ways of spreading their messages, sending alerts through newly formed groups on Telegram - a secure messaging app - and taken tips from Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests. — AFP

Vietnam landslide kills 11 soldiers, 11 more missing

HANOI: Eleven soldiers are dead and a frantic search is under way for 11 others after a huge landslide hit central Vietnam yesterday, as the country battles its worst flooding in years. Heavy rain has pounded the region for more than a week and at least 64 people have been killed in floods and landslides, according to Vietnam's disaster management authority, with concerns mounting that waters could rise further.

Rocks rained down on the barracks of a military station in Quang Tri province, with 22 soldiers believed to have been buried underneath thick mud, an official govern-

ment website said. "From 2 am, there have been four to five landslides, exploding like bombs and it feels like the whole mountain is about to collapse," said local official Ha Ngoc Duong, according to the VnExpress news site. Lieutenant General Phan Van Giang, the army's chief of general staff, warned there could be further landslides in the area and said rescuers needed to find a safer way to access the site. Eleven bodies have been recovered so far, the government said. It comes just days after 13 members of a rescue team were found dead after a failed attempt to save workers from a

hydropower plant engulfed by a landslide. The bodies of two employees at the plant have been found but 15 are still missing.

River levels in Quang Tri had reached their highest in two decades, state media said. The disaster management authority raised its risk alert warning to the second highest level on Sunday, warning of further flooding and landslides. Vietnam is prone to natural disasters and regularly suffers more than a dozen storms each year, often bringing flooding and landslides.

More than 130 people were reported dead or missing in natural disasters around the country last year, the General Statistics Office said. Cambodia has also been hit by heavy flooding and the death toll there jumped to 20 on Saturday, including six children, according to disaster management authorities. — AFP



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International

Armenia, Azerbaijan truce breaks down within hours

Karabakh rivals trade accusations of breaking new truce

STEPANAKERT: Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of violating a new ceasefire yesterday, as they tried for the second time in a week to bring a halt to fighting over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The ex-Soviet neighbors agreed to a truce from midnight following a push by international mediators for a stop to three weeks of heavy clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian region that broke from Azerbaijan's control in the 1990s.

A previous ceasefire agreed a week ago fell apart amid mutual accusations and continued fighting that has left hundreds dead and forced tens of thousands from their homes. The new ceasefire deal was announced after one of the deadliest attacks on civilians so far on Saturday, when a missile strike hit a residential area of Azerbaijan's second city Ganja, killing 13 people including small children. The two sides have described the agreement as a "humanitarian truce" to allow for the exchange of prisoners and bodies.

Armenia's defense ministry said Azerbaijani forces had violated the new ceasefire only minutes after it took effect, firing artillery shells and rockets in the early hours of yesterday. Its foreign ministry said Azerbaijan had also launched an attack in a southern area of the Karabakh frontline "demonstrating to the international community its treacherous nature, which we have been dealing with for decades".



Strike kills 13 including kids

'We can't trust them'

"Our country is ready to respect the ceasefire but the others will not... We can't trust them," Sveta Petrosyan, a 65-year-old with two sons at the front, told AFP outside her apartment. Stepanakert has come under heavy artillery and rocket fire during the fighting and most of its residents have fled to Armenia.

It was shelled again late on Friday and a few hours later the missile strike hit Ganja in Azerbaijan, leveling a row of houses and leaving 13 dead and more than 45 people injured. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev described the Ganja attack as a war crime and vowed his army would "take revenge on the battlefield". In Azerbaijan's frontline town of Terter, residents told AFP there had been some shelling around midday but that yesterday was the quietest it had been in several days.

"I don't know if the ceasefire will last and I don't care," said Elshad Rezaev, 35. "They killed our women and children. All I want to do is pick up a gun and go fight them so that this is finished forever." The clashes over Karabakh that erupted on September 27

there is simply no trace of it left. The valley rolling down from the hill with the flag is covered with craggy bushes and a few low outlines of brick walls that have been blasted apart by rival forces for a generation.

'Fight to the last drop of blood'

Jabrayil's lone standing structure is a cliff-like monument equipped with running faucets that the Soviets erected to encourage "friendship and inter-ethnic peace". A machine-gun toting soldier climbed this to unfurl an Azerbaijani flag before a clutch of reporters given access to a tightly controlled press tour of recaptured lands. "Our enemy should know that Azerbaijani soldiers will fight to their last drop of blood to protect their motherland-and to sacrifice their lives if required," Colonel Elshat Habilov declared before ordering the reporters back out.

"As we liberate our occupied lands one by one, we are gaining morale, drawing ever closer to a great victory." That Aliyev's army wanted to showcase its hold on this uninhabited hill articulates Azerbaijan's desire to put behind it the trauma of the 1988-1994 war. It ended with Azerbaijan losing both Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas such as Jabrayil and the nearby district of Fuzuli running along the Iranian border. These provide access points to the southern gates of Nagorno-Karabakh and its capital Stepanakert.

with," Ardern said. The 40-year-old, who has been hailed internationally as a standard-bearer for progressive politics, admitted the need to placate minor-party coalition partners "slowed down" reform in her first term.

She also dealt with New Zealand's worst terrorist attack, a deadly volcanic eruption and the country's deepest recession in 30 years. In her victory speech late Saturday, Ardern flagged increased state housing, more renewable energy and other infrastructure investment. She also spoke of more training programs, job creation, protecting the environment and a determination to tackle issues such as climate change, poverty and inequality.

'COVID election'

Opposition leader Judith Collins conceded voters had given Ardern free rein to implement change, but said that also meant the prime minister could no longer claim her policy failures were caused by reform-shy coalition partners. "The government has got the mandate to do all the things that they've promised to do, so they can't blame anyone else for not delivering," Collins told reporters.

Campaigning during the vote centered on the

under scorching heat for a protest. Crime in this sleepy but rich farming area, 300 km south of Johannesburg, is centered mainly around stock theft, which farmers say is rampant. Murders are relatively rare. But on Oct 2, the body of 22-year-old farm manager Brendin Horner was found. He had been strangled and tied to a fence at a farm in Paul Roux near Senekal. A silver cross with his name engraved on it has been erected at the spot where the body was discovered.

Unrest

The killing of white farmers is a highly emotive issue in South Africa. Some conservative groups claim that farmers are victims of a genocide and the government is not doing enough to protect them. "This young man is paying with his life, he is going to help us solve the (crime) problem," Horner's employer Gilly Scheeper, 58, said in reference to the



An Armenian soldier stands at the frontline as troops hold positions yesterday during ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. —AFP

have left more than 700 dead, including scores of civilians on both sides. The real death toll is probably much higher, as most of the deaths have been reported among Armenian separatist forces and Azerbaijan has not released any figures on its military casualties.

Azerbaijan claiming gains

Azerbaijan says it has retaken significant territory in areas along the frontline, including two regional centres—Jabrayil and Fizuli—in a no-man's land splitting Nagorno-Karabakh proper from territory under Azerbaijani control. It also claims to have taken several areas of strategic high ground. Analysts say its

gains may be enough for Baku to declare a halt to the fighting ahead of winter, when conditions on the front will be harsh, and agree to return to the negotiating table.

It is unclear what set off the latest round of fighting but Armenia has accused Turkey of encouraging long-time ally Azerbaijan to launch an offensive to retake Nagorno-Karabakh. Ankara has also been accused of supplying Syrian fighters as mercenaries to bolster Baku's forces. France, Russia and the United States have tried for decades to mediate a resolution to the dispute over Karabakh under the "Minsk Group", but negotiations have long been stalled. —AFP

'Reclaimed ruins': Azerbaijan shows off Karabakh conquests

JABRAYIL: They conquered withered vineyards and left behind burnt carcasses of tanks to plant an Azerbaijani flag atop a barren hill on the edge of Nagorno-Karabakh—overlooking nothing at all. Fighting erupted three weeks ago between Christian ethnic Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijan over a blood-soaked patch of mountains both call part of their ancestral lands. The Azerbaijani side has spent days trumpeting military successes that give the air of an army on the move.

"If they don't leave on their own, we'll chase them out like dogs," President Ilham Aliyev said on the eve of a new ceasefire on Sunday that both sides accused the other of immediately breaking. On Twitter, Aliyev lists towns his forces have recaptured for the first time since a 1994 truce ended a war that killed 30,000 and left the region to the horror of Azerbaijani-in separatist hands. One of these towns is Jabrayil. Yet it is not just empty after being trapped in a no-mans land splitting Nagorno-Karabakh proper from territory under Azerbaijani control-

Ardern vows to deliver reform

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern vowed yesterday to "crack on" with delivering her vision following a landslide election victory, after a string of disasters frustrated reform in her first term. Ardern won a historic outright majority in Saturday's poll - the first since New Zealand adopted proportional voting in 1996 - allowing her to implement policies without support from minor parties.

After facing criticism since winning office in 2017 for not delivering on key promises such as protecting the environment and reducing child poverty, Ardern said she now had a mandate for change. The charismatic leader said the scale of the victory, Labour's biggest since 1946, meant more voters were backing her center-left party and its reformist agenda.

"I think they were endorsing the work we've done and the plan we have to go forward, and there are some areas we do want to crack on

Suspects in South Africa white farmer murder in court

SENEKAL, South Africa: Emotions ran high on Friday as two black suspects appeared in a South African court over the murder of a white farmer which has sparked racial tensions. A barbed wire fence ringed the court house in the central town of Senekal and police and a water cannon were deployed as opposing groups of white farmers and black activists gathered near the site.

Around 2,000 supporters of the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters gathered for eight hours



JABRAYIL: An Azeri soldier hangs the flag of Azerbaijan in this city where Azeri forces regained control during fighting with Armenia over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh on Oct 16, 2020. —AFP

Piles of bricks

Azerbaijan is trying to recapture the region by moving in from its southern and northern ends. Most of its military successes have come on the border area of the conflict zone. The exchanges of mortar and artillery fire on the north end around Terter are almost ceaseless and require residents to spend most of their time sheltering in basements. But Azerbaijani men in fatigues raised their fists in triumph and looked at ease as they smoked along the country road leading into Jabrayil. —AFP



AUCKLAND: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaks with senior members of parliament a day after her landslide election yesterday. —AFP

government's successful coronavirus response, with Ardern dubbing it the "COVID election". New Zealand has recorded only 25 coronavirus deaths in a population of five million, which Collins said boosted Ardern's standing in an electorate anxious about the pandemic. —AFP

attention brought to the case.

Scheeper has hired private investigators to run a parallel probe into the death "because police here are corrupt". The motive for the murder has not been established, but a police officer who is investigating the case said the farmer's wallet went missing after the attack. A dozen policemen guarded the court house on Friday, dressed in bulletproof jackets and armed with assault rifles. Elsewhere around the court's precincts, police patrolled in cars and from a helicopter.

The two suspects - Sekwetja Mahlamba, 32 and Sekolo Mlatlalets, 44 - wore grey jerseys as they appeared for their bail hearing. One of them has previously been arrested 16 times and convicted four times for stock theft and housebreaking. "I don't think that they should get bail because of the seriousness of the offence," investigating police officer Gerhard Peter Myburgh told the court. —AFP

Lithium, Morales and cocaine: What is at stake as Bolivia votes?

LA PAZ: As Bolivia readies to vote in a defining election, a number of key issues are on the table, including the country's huge lithium deposits, the role of unseated ex-leader Evo Morales, and policy on farming coca, the raw ingredient of cocaine. Yesterday's presidential ballot is a delayed re-run of a fraught and later voided vote in 2019 that sparked off deadly protests and led to the resignation of leftist Morales after a near 14-year rule.

Who are the front-runners?

The two front-runners this time are Luis Arce, the candidate for Morales' socialist MAS party, who would tilt the country back towards the left after a period of conservative interim government. Arce's main challenger is centrist ex-President Carlos Mesa, who led the country from 2003 to 2005, and came second in last year's vote. Arce, a long-time economy minister under Morales, leads Mesa in opinion polls, though not by enough to win outright yesterday. A candidate needs at least 40% of valid votes in the first round and a ten point lead to avoid a second round run-off. A second round, if needed, would take place on Nov. 29, with polls indicating a potential narrow win for Mesa.

What will happen to Evo?

Mesa and Arce would take very different paths over Morales, a divisive figure in Bolivia who is currently living in exile in Argentina. He is being investigated by state prosecutors in Bolivia over accusations of corruption, sexual abuse, and fraud, all of which he denies. Mesa has said that in his government "the crimes of Evo Morales would not go unpunished," while Arce has left the door open for him returning to politics, though said he would have to first resolve pending issues with judicial authorities.

Coca policy

MAS under Morales, a former coca growers union head, had strong support from farmers of the leaf, which is used medicinally in Bolivia but is also the raw material to make cocaine. He put a stop to US drug enforcement operations in the country. Both candidates say there must be a fight against drugs. Arce says traditional growing areas must be protected by law, while Mesa has said there needs to be a stronger line on controlling legal production.

US ties

Bolivia's relationship with the United States soured under Morales, though it has warmed under the interim government of President Jeanine Anez, who is not running in election. There has been no US ambassador in Bolivia since 2008. Arce has pledged to "work with everyone," though the close involvement of Morales in his campaign would likely hinder US ties. Mesa, meanwhile, says there is no reason not to "resume full ambassadorial-level relations" with the United States.

'WHITE GOLD'

Any new government would need to tackle the question of lithium, the ultralight metal key to making batteries for electric vehicles. Bolivia has one of the world's largest reserves of the 'white gold', but it has been largely untapped. "We intend to turn Bolivia into a competitive producer that fully develops the salt flats and ensures its participation in the global lithium value chain," Mesa has said. Arce said he wants to create 130,000 new direct and indirect jobs by 2025 via the industrialization of lithium. —Reuters

International

Paris under curfew as Europe battles soaring virus caseload

Governments step up efforts to slow the surge in infections

PARIS: Millions of Europeans faced tough new coronavirus restrictions yesterday as governments stepped up efforts to slow the surge in infections, after the World Health Organization reported a "very concerning" 44-percent rise in European cases over one week. From Saturday evening, Paris and several other French cities go under a nighttime curfew that will last at least a month. England is banning mixed household gatherings in the capital and other areas, and Italy's most populous region is limiting bar openings and suspending sports events.

The need for action in France was underlined as the country recorded another record for new cases, with over 32,000 registered in 24 hours. Global cases of the disease, which has killed more than 1.1 million people around the world, have been soaring beyond levels seen in the first wave earlier this year, when many countries resorted to national lockdowns to get control of the crisis. As well as the death toll, the pandemic has wrought social and economic havoc across the world.

The United States, which has suffered the worst toll with more than 218,000 fatalities, on Friday revealed a record deficit of \$3.1 trillion in the fiscal year ended September 30. It also announced that the number of cases there had passed eight million, while global daily infections also hit a new record. In a bid to stem the worrying rise in infections and in the hope of heading off a return to full lockdowns, many governments have tightened measures to control the spread of the pandemic-even if some dissenters are fighting back in the courts.

Curfews, closures, legal battles

About 20 million people in the Paris region and eight other French cities were facing a 9 pm-6 am curfew from Saturday after cases surged in what has once again become one of Europe's major hotspots. Many

restaurant owners are unhappy at the hit their businesses will take. "Closing at 9:00 pm will have no effect (on the epidemic)," said Gerard, the manager of a Toulouse restaurant. "They're not attacking it in the right way." Britain is the hardest-hit country in Europe, with over 43,000 deaths from almost 700,000 cases.

But as the government there ramped up restrictions, banning indoor meetings between members of different households in London and several other English cities, there was growing criticism from some quarters. Under the new measures, about 28 million people-half of England's population-are now subject to tight social restrictions. Some officials in northwest England have objected to their cities being placed on the highest level of a new three-tier alert system. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has acknowledged that local restriction policies cannot be "pain free". But the hope is that these measures will be enough to head off another full lockdown. Northern Ireland meanwhile shut down pubs and restaurants on Friday for a month and extended the school holidays.

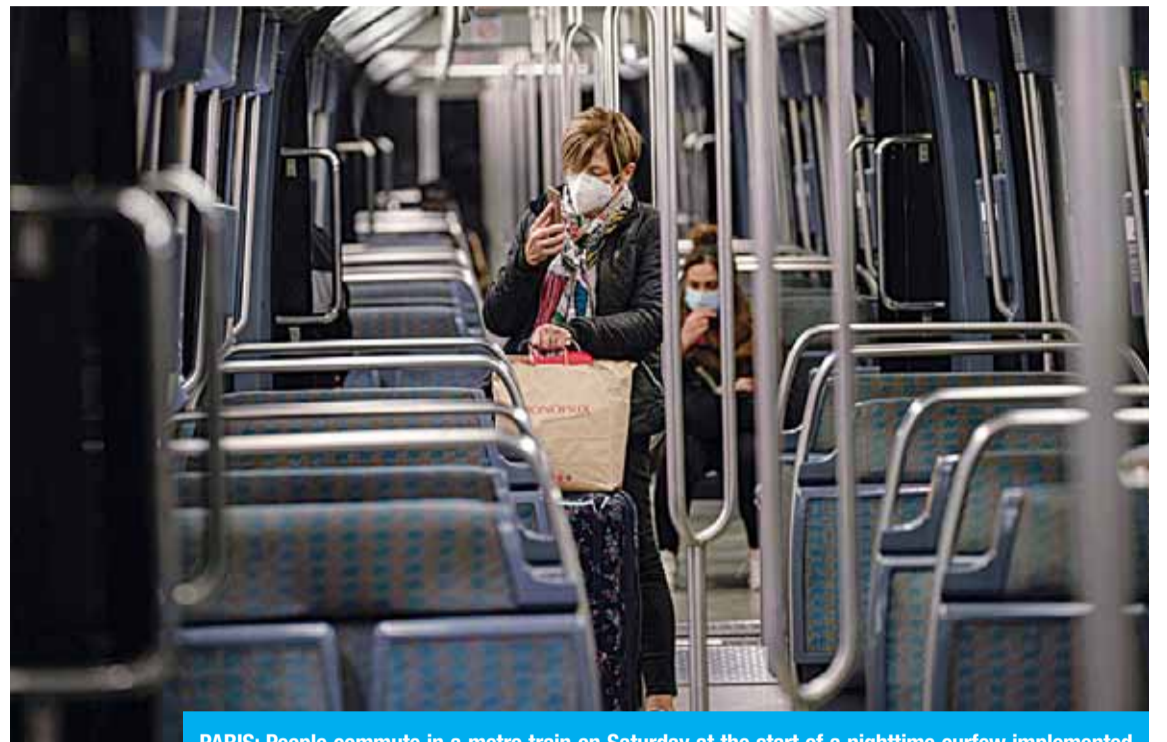
England banning mixed gatherings

Surge in cases, tighter measures

German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged citizens to stay at home whenever possible after 7,830 cases emerged over 24 hours.

"What will determine winter and our Christmas will be decided in the weeks ahead" by how people react now, she said in her weekly podcast address. But on Friday, a Berlin court overturned an order for restaurants and bars to close early, the latest legal setback for efforts by Germany's national and local governments to restrict coronavirus transmission.

In Italy, the wealthy northern region of Lombardy worst hit by the first wave of the virus in February, has ordered all bars to shut at midnight. Slovakia announced Saturday it would test everyone over 10 for the virus, as infections surged there. "Testing will be



PARIS: People commute in a metro train on Saturday at the start of a nighttime curfew implemented to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. —AFP

free of charge," Prime Minister Igor Matovic told reporters in the country of 5.4 million people, without specifying whether it will be mandatory or voluntary. Poland, the Czech Republic and Belgium have all announced daily record caseloads.

In the Czech Republic, with record numbers of cases recorded, the government has asked the army to set up a field hospital of 500 beds outside Prague. Belgium will impose its own curfew, from midnight until 5:00 am, from Monday, and will also shut cafes and restaurants for four weeks. And Poland has closed schools and colleges in major cities while restaurants will have to close from 9:00 pm. Austria, Slovenia and Hungary have all announced a surge in cases-in

Slovenia, the compulsory wearing of masks in outdoor public spaces came into effect Saturday.

The death toll in Iran from the novel coronavirus pandemic has crossed the 30,000 mark, the health ministry announced Saturday. By contrast, Israel is preparing to ease some lockdown restrictions from Sunday in the first phase of scaling back measures imposed last month to stem soaring novel coronavirus infection rates. Austria's Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg and Belgian Foreign Minister Sophie Wilmes became the latest politicians to test positive for Covid-19. And the Vatican announced that a case had been recorded at Santa Marta residence, where Pope Francis lives. —AFP

Biden leads Trump, but can US polls be trusted this year?

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election four years ago brought into question as never before the reliability of opinion polls. Can they be believed this time around?

What do the polls say?

With 16 days to go before the November 3 election, Democrat Joe Biden is ahead of the Republican president by 9.0 percentage points nationally, according to polling averages from the RealClearPolitics website. But in the United States, candidates win the White House not through the popular vote, but with the Electoral College. In 2016, Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton, but won enough states to garner the electoral votes needed to become president. This year, six states are seen as key to winning the White House: Florida, North Carolina, Arizona, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. But if the polls are correct, Biden also has the advantage there, although he is at times within the margin of error, ranging from 1.7 percentage points ahead in Florida to 7.2 in Michigan.

Where were the errors in 2016?

The polls on the eve of the vote correctly predicted a slight national lead for Clinton, but "the place where the polls missed were in some of those Midwestern swing states" that Trump eventually won, Chris Jackson of Ipsos Public Affairs told AFP. He said under-representation within polling samples of white residents without college degrees who voted for Trump was among the causes.

Most polling institutes say they've corrected their methodology to preclude such mistakes this time around.

Can Lindsey Graham lose South Carolina?

NORTH CHARLESTON: An epic political battle is cresting in South Carolina, where Senator Lindsey Graham, a presidential ally, is neck-and-neck with an African-American challenger two decades his junior, raising Democratic hopes of snatching a Senate seat in Trump country. Out-fundraised by Democrat Jaime Harrison, and glued to Donald Trump's hip on issues like immigration and Supreme Court nominations, Graham is under threat like never before in a state where his Republican Party has controlled the local legislature, governor's mansion and both US Senate seats for at least the last 15 years.

With Trump's fortunes sinking along with his poll numbers, Democrats are eyeing potential flips in several other states as they seek to reclaim control of the Senate. But suddenly South Carolina - a traditionally conservative bastion that Harrison describes as a legacy of the slave-holding "old South" - is in play, despite Graham's repeated claims that both he and Trump will win re-election in 17 days.

"Lindsey Graham's scared," Harrison told a crowd Saturday in North Charleston, where supporters honked their approval at a drive-in campaign event to allow social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. "He is nervous, and he should be," the 44-year-old Harrison added. "Because the people of South Carolina are about to give him a one-way ticket back home!"

Battleground states under-pollled last time have been surveyed much more closely and more often. Beyond that, pollsters note consistency: Since the spring, Biden has been ahead with an average lead which has never fallen below four percentage points. As a comparison, the Trump-Clinton polling lines crossed twice, signaling an uncertain race. Finally, in a country extremely polarized, there are far fewer undecided voters susceptible of altering the contest at the last minute.

Are there reticent Trump voters?

Some feel that there are Trump voters reticent to tell pollsters they prefer him given the controversy that surrounds the president. "The polls were wrong last time, and they're more wrong this time," Trump has said. Trafalgar Group, a polling institute favored by Republicans that seeks to employ a methodology to account for the possibility of reticence, had been one of the few in 2016 to predict Trump winning Pennsylvania and Michigan. This time, however, even they give the advantage to Biden in crucial states such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Four years ago, the businessman and political newcomer was a novelty, and such candidates are always difficult for pollsters to assess. "Everyone sort of has an opinion about him now, so there's just not quite the same level of surprise in Donald Trump," said Jackson.

But what if ...?

The New York Times has calculated that, even if the current polls, state by state, are as wrong as they were four years ago, Biden would still win. "Mr Biden is closer in our poll average to winning Texas, which would get him over 400 electoral votes, than President Trump is to winning in traditional battleground states like Pennsylvania and Nevada," the paper's Nate Cohn wrote recently.

Do uncertainties remain?

Pollsters and analysts are still careful to note that voters' intentions are not a prediction and that there is still a



(Left) US Senator Lindsey Graham addresses supporters during a get out the vote rally at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center in North Charleston South Carolina on Oct 16, 2020. (Right) Democratic candidate for Senate Jaime Harrison addresses supporters during a socially distanced drive-in rally held at The Bend in North Charleston on Saturday. —AFP

'Rise like a phoenix'

A Harrison victory would send shock waves through American politics, notably because South Carolina - where the opening shots of the Civil War were fired in 1861 - would become the first US state ever represented by two Black senators at the same time. The state's other senator, Tim Scott, is Republican. Harrison, whose aunt died of Covid-19 this year, recalled growing up in poverty, doing his homework in the dark when his family could not pay the electricity bill. "I know what hard times is," the Yale graduate and former head of the South Carolina Democratic Party said, invoking the lilt of his grandparents who helped raise him. "On November 3, the people of South Carolina are going to close the book on the old south, and write a brand new book called the 'New South,'" one of boldness, diversity and inclusion, Harrison said as the car horns reached a crescendo.



WILMINGTON: Democratic presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden arrives at St Joseph on the Brandywine Roman Catholic Church for Sunday mass yesterday. —AFP

margin of error. Campaigns can be dynamic, with the last presidential election probably decided in the home stretch. With 16 days to go in 2016, the FiveThirtyEight site gave Clinton an 86 percent chance for victory, nearly the same as Biden now. In the United States, voter registration varies enormously, which makes it especially difficult to predict turnout.

Trump points to enthusiastic crowds at his rallies to argue that momentum is on his side, but will that translate at the ballot box? Will Democrats who were not overly enthusiastic for Clinton, who was viewed initially as having won in advance, line up behind a middle-of-the-road Biden to chase out Trump? And what effect will the pandemic have? "We have mail-in voting and early voting which are going to be at historic levels," said Jackson. "We don't know the effect that's going to have. There's a lot of really complicating factors that are entering into it that are the kind of things that are hard for polls to account for." —AFP



"And out of the ashes, we will rise like a phoenix."

Deserted parking lot

With his position at risk, the 65-year-old Graham campaigned Friday in the Palmetto State, stepping off a campaign bus bearing a larger-than-life image of the senator - only to highlight how he is being outspent by Harrison, who raised a staggering record \$57 million in the third quarter. "Help me pay for the bus!" he pleaded, only half-jokingly, to a few dozen supporters in an otherwise deserted parking lot near Charleston.

Most of them appeared to be connected to Graham's campaign or the party apparatus, offering a striking contrast to the rowdy Harrison campaign event. Why is a conservative star who has the president's ear and is helping guide Trump's nominee onto the Supreme Court in any jeopardy in ruby red South Carolina? —AFP

Diaz Ayuso: From Twitter hound to regional chief

MADRID: An outspoken hardliner who once wrote tweets for a predecessor's pouch, Madrid regional leader Isabel Diaz Ayuso has become the attack dog of the right to take on Spain's leftwing federal government. Diaz Ayuso, who turned 42 on Saturday, has hit the headlines in recent weeks for her vociferous attacks on Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez for imposing a partial lockdown on Madrid.

A member of the conservative opposition Popular Party (PP), she took office just 14 months ago, with the epidemic taking hold just over six months into her term. Responsible for Spain's wealthiest region with its population of 6.6 million, she has come under fire for not doing enough to contain the virus, which has spread like wildfire through Madrid.

But it is a charge she roundly denies, accusing the Sanchez administration of fudging the figures to justify the lockdown to slow the spread of infection. "We are suffering under the most authoritarian government in the history of (Spain's) democracy," she told El Mundo newspaper. "This government is the indisputable champion of liars," she railed, accusing it of trying to "sow chaos" as part of a leftwing plot "to change the country through the back door."

A divisive strategy

Telegenic with a wavy chestnut bob, Diaz Ayuso often peppers her speeches with libertarian references but critics say she has done nothing to address key shortages in healthcare staff and contact tracers. From the outset, she has been the poster-child of a hardline faction of the PP, savaging plans for the relocation of dictator Francisco Franco's remains from a vast opulent mausoleum as a leftwing plot to undermine national unity. "What next? Are you going to start burning down churches like in 1936?" she said after barely six weeks in office, referring to Spain's 1936-1939 civil war. Her strategy of direct confrontation has been divisive but has also won her valuable exposure, said Pablo Simon, political science professor at Madrid's Carlos III University. "In opposing the government, she's setting her own pace and many people already see her as the true leader of the opposition."

Tweeting the dog

It's been an interesting trajectory for a woman who once ran the Twitter account of Pecos, the city's "first dog", who belonged to then Madrid leader Esperanza Aguirre. "Uncontrollable. Liberal. Seductive," reads the profile of the Jack Russell terrier whose canine contemplations were conveyed on Twitter by Diaz Ayuso, who holds a master degree in political communications. Born in Madrid in October 1978, she studied journalism at the city's Complutense University. After several years dabbling in sports journalism and stints working in Ireland and Ecuador, she joined the PP's youth wing under Pablo Casado, now party leader, formally joining the faction in 2006.

She became a regional deputy in 2011 and worked her way through the ranks until Casado chose her as the surprise head of the party list for the May 2019 regional election. Although the PP lost for the first time in decades, the Socialists were unable to form a majority, with Ayuso cobbling together the region's first-ever coalition, a rightwing alliance, and cementing her position as leader. In choosing her, Casado was looking for someone "who would be controllable," Simon said, although now it was unclear whether she was "aligned with him or following her own agenda." —AFP

Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2020

Zain crowned 'Best Brand' at 2020 Telecom World Middle East Awards

Company wins the accolade for a record seventh consecutive year

DUBAI/KUWAIT: Zain, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has been awarded the 'Best Brand' accolade for 2020 at the prestigious Telecoms World Middle East Awards for a record seventh consecutive year.

This accolade was bestowed on Zain by a panel of expert judges assembled by Terrapinn, the organizers of the annual Telecoms World Middle East Conference and Awards held virtually last week in Dubai. The awards recognize outstanding performance in key telecom-related areas across the region and shine a spotlight on leading players that have contributed to making the sector one of the most dynamic globally.

Since the introduction of its inspiring brand in 2007, Zain has been the recipient of numerous brand-related awards over the years. This year's success was driven by numerous factors linked to the company's COVID-19 related digital innovation, corporate sustainability programs, and eye-catching marketing and social media campaigns that have captured the imagination of the entire region.

The Zain brand is valued at \$2.55 billion (up 9.9 percent over the previous year) by the Brand Finance Middle East Top 50 Brands 2020 annual report, which also recently noted that Zain's brand rating is AA. This remarkable valuation and recognition some 13 years after the brand's introduction is testament to the investment Zain has made in this area and more importantly the quality mobile and data services that

the brand represents.

Since March 2020, Zain has been on a mission-critical period as all Zain operations have been focused on providing meaningful connectivity during the lockdown to minimize the impact of the pandemic on socio-economic development. At the same time, Zain has double downed on digital transformation to better serve businesses, governments, and societies, granting increased digital access to essential medical, commercial, and financial services. Zain has also focused on enhancing its entire network to offer the best technology and digital services across its countries of operation, developments that are positively impacting customer experience and brand recognition. Over the past 12 months, Zain has invested approximately \$1 billion in expanding, upgrading, and rolling out 4G and 5G networks across its footprint, successfully rolling out 5G services in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

Zain recognizes that now more than ever, the entrepreneur ecosystem needs to grow as the region requires the economic diversification that arises from the ensuing innovations. Accordingly, the company is focused on numerous digital innovation and startup initiatives across operations and recently opened the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in Kuwait, a co-working hub inspired by the success of a similar facility in Jordan. The innovation centers offer numerous virtual services during COVID-19 social distancing, with the facilities geared to encourage young minds to think



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and act creatively in an open and supportive environment. The goal of these centers is to create a conducive atmosphere for entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and develop them into viable opportunities.

The strength of the Zain brand is further reflected by its growing and loyal social media audience where Zain's social media fans across its footprint count over 22 million, with Zain's Facebook counting 11.9 million followers; Twitter 7.2 million; Instagram 2.2 million; and LinkedIn 600,000. Zain's YouTube channels rack up approximately 100 million views annually.

Every Ramadan, Zain seeks to present a new message that touches upon the most relevant issues in life in its television commercials. The 2020 Zain Ramadan commercial immediately amassed significant interest across social media platforms, with the 2.35-minute-long content exceeding 34 million views to date. The Zain Ramadan 2020 Eid commercial, "Open the Doors" has garnered over 36 million YouTube views, going viral along the way. Both commercials aired to millions of viewers on regional satellite and local TV

networks across the MENA region.

Zain has rolled out various initiatives, creating opportunities for its people and the communities it serves. These include the 'Zain Youth' (ZY) empowerment initiative that focuses on creative and unique solutions in recruiting new talent to the organization and ensuring all employees work toward delivering the company's strategy. Zain's 'Gender Diversity and Inclusion' initiatives are improving the company's culture in this regard, driving the Women Empowerment program, for example. Zain's far-sighted Disability Inclusion initiative 'WE ABLE' looks to integrate people with disabilities within the company and create opportunities for them. Zain has set a goal to be Disability Inclusive by 2022.

These activities have all contributed to the further reinforcement of the Zain brand's promise and business ethos. The company aspires to unlock opportunities for customers and for the communities it serves, remaining wholeheartedly committed to the region's economic and social prosperity.

- Company's COVID-19 corporate sustainability initiatives, meaningful connectivity, and media campaigns win hearts and minds of the region
- Zain's social media fans across its footprint count over 22 million; YouTube channels attract 100 million views annually

Creditors back plan to get India's Jet Airways flying

NEW DELHI: Creditors on Saturday backed a surprise plan by a consortium to revive Jet Airways 18 months after India's biggest private airline went bankrupt with \$1.2 billion in debt.

London investment fund Kalrock Capital and Dubai-based tycoon Murari Lal Jalan proposed the rescue that was "duly approved" by a creditors' committee, Jet said in a statement to the Bombay Stock Exchange. The statement did not give details of the plan but media reports said they had offered to make a payment of about \$115 million to creditors and equity in the new firm which they wanted to concentrate on international routes.

Creditors, mainly Indian public sector banks, took over Jet in early 2019 but failed to keep it operating as its cash crunch grew. It was finally grounded in April 2019. On top of its \$1.2 billion debt to the banks, the airline also faces huge claims from 20,000 former staff, air-



ports and suppliers. Total liabilities could top \$4 billion. Kalrock Capital, founded by German entrepreneur Florian Fritsch, focuses on real estate and venture capital and has a major investment in electric car maker Tesla. Murari Lal Jalan has built up his fortune from mining, paper manufacturing and trading across several countries.

The consortium will need approval from a government tribunal and India's aviation ministry before sealing the deal to purchase the airline which would have to reclaim flight slots since given to other airlines. The move comes despite the crippling blow dealt to the global aviation

industry by the coronavirus pandemic which this year brought international flights to a near standstill.

India is still only allowing a slow resumption on domestic routes and very limited international flights.

Bad investments, financial mismanagement, competition from low-cost carriers, high oil prices and a weak rupee led to the collapse of Jet. Several former executives are under investigation for money laundering and fraud. Naresh Goyal, who set up the airline in 1992, is accused of financial mismanagement and was last year stopped from taking a flight to London at Mumbai airport. — Agencies

Airlines face tough winter as hoped-for pick-up fails

PARIS: Airlines face a long, hard winter after a much hoped for rebound from the coronavirus crisis failed to materialize, prompting savage cost cutting programs and fresh calls for government support.

"We are in a race against time. The key thing is to have the cash... we need to move quickly, very quickly," said Stephane Alberthe, managing partner at Archery Strategy Consulting. Airline revenues plunged 80 percent in the first six months of the year, according to industry body IATA, but they still had fixed costs to cover-crew, maintenance, fuel, airport levies and now aircraft storage.

After a slight recovery in July as coronavirus restrictions were eased, traffic fell again in September while bookings for the winter season-which begins October 25 — are down 78 percent compared with a year earlier, promising more hardship to come. One of the biggest disappointments has been the absence of highly lucrative business class travellers who prefer now to rely on tele-conferencing rather than run the risk of catching the virus. Repeated efforts to reassure passengers that air travel is safe have failed to make much of a difference while government restrictions, including quarantines of up to 14 days for returning passengers, have only added to the pressures on the battered airline companies.

"The risk of contracting Covid-19 during air travel is really very, very low," says Dr David Powell, medical consultant for IATA.

Testing, key to recovery

The industry as a whole is hoping that the introduction of airport testing systems will restore passenger confidence and reduce if not completely remove the need for damaging quarantine regimes. There are already trial systems in place in several major airports around the world and on Friday France announced it would introduce quick, antigen-based testing by the end of the month.

"We are going to launch these tests at the airports, especially for departures to the United States or Italy and for arrivals from countries on the red list (of high rates of infection)," French Transport Minister Jean-Baptiste Djebbari said on CNews TV channel. "That way we will not have any more people arriving on French territory without having been tested," he added.

Hong Kong and Singapore meanwhile have announced they plan a "travel bubble" to allow unrestricted flights. Tests may help but given the damage already done and the likelihood of more to come, IATA continues to press the alarm bell, seeking more government help to keep the airlines afloat until there is at least some return to normality.

Up to now, IATA estimates governments have provided \$160 billion dollars in aid, loans and tax breaks so that airlines can cover current costs. But after a disastrous summer, usually the busiest part of the year when they build up their cash reserves, airlines are not going to be able to do that during the winter, IATA head Alexandre de Juniac has warned repeatedly. — AFP

Anti-Amazon Shopify takes flight

TORONTO: The pandemic has forced businesses worldwide to pivot online to survive, and many have turned to Shopify, a Canadian company that has emerged as a thriving alternative to Amazon. Founded 15 years ago in Ottawa, Shopify allows businesses to create an e-commerce site in just a few clicks. Already growing with more than one million e-stores at the end of 2019, its user base has exploded.

"The retail world that would have existed in 2030 has really been pulled back into 2020," Shopify president Harley Finkelstein said in an interview with AFP.

"It feels like COVID has permanently accelerated the growth of online commerce." Amid a lockdown of bricks and mortar stores, online commerce has boomed this year. Consumers have grown accustomed to buying over the internet, and industry giants, led by Amazon, have seen sales rocket. At the same time, many businesses that did not have a presence or a direct online sales channel took the plunge as the pandemic took hold.

Popular with entrepreneurs, Shopify



Amid a lockdown of bricks and mortar stores, online commerce has boomed this year. — AFP

saw the number of new stores created on its platform jump 71 percent in the second quarter compared to the previous one. One of these new e-merchants is Tariq Al Barwani, creator of Plentea, a tea bar in Toronto that remained open in March at the start of the lockdown. But with only a handful of customers a day, the situation quickly became untenable, forcing him to go out of business in May.

The same month, supported by a municipal program helping small businesses affected by the crisis to go digital, he opened a store on Shopify. "It took us a week," he recalls from his living room,

overlooking Lake Ontario, where he now works. "If you are used to going on the internet, it is easy to understand."

Shopify has become a resounding success far from Silicon Valley. It was co-founded in 2006 by Tobias Lutke, a young German who'd moved to Canada for love and designed the software originally to sell snowboards over the internet. Hailed for its simplicity, it has seen the number of stores on its platform grow from 150,000 in 2014 to over one million-in 175 countries-in 2019, asserting itself in the eyes of many independent merchants as an alternative to Amazon. — AFP



In this file photo, United Airlines aircraft are seen on the tarmac at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Business

US retail sales blow expectations in Sep as dark clouds gathering

Govt money runs out and companies continue to lay off workers

WASHINGTON: US retail sales accelerated in September, rounding out a strong quarter of economic activity, but the recovery from the COVID-19 recession is at a crossroads as government money runs out and companies continue to lay off workers.

New coronavirus cases are also surging across the country, which could lead to restrictions on businesses like restaurants, gyms and bars, and undercut consumer spending. The economy is already shifting into lower gear. Other data on Friday showed an unexpected drop in output at factories last month.

"Although sales growth is strong, it will slow through the rest of this year and into next year," said Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "The slowing will be even larger if Congress does not pass another stimulus bill. Unemployment remains pervasive throughout the US economy."

Retail sales jumped 1.9 percent last month as consumers bought motor vehicles and clothing, dined out and splashed out on hobbies. That followed an unrevised 0.6 percent increase in August. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales would rise 0.7 percent in September. Some said September's surge was likely exaggerated by difficulties stripping seasonal fluctuations from the data after the shock caused by COVID-19. Unadjusted retail sales fell 2.8 percent after dropping 1.0 percent in August.

Retail sales have bounced back above their February level, with the pandemic boosting demand for goods that complement life at home, including furniture and electronics. An aversion to public

transportation has boosted motor vehicle purchases. Retail sales rose 5.4 percent on a year-on-year basis in September. They account for the goods component of consumer spending, with services such as healthcare, education, travel and hotel accommodation making up the other portion.

Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, sales increased 1.4 percent last month after a downwardly revised 0.3 percent



Manufacturing production falls 0.3%

drop in August. These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product. They were previously estimated to have dipped 0.1 percent in August.

Economists have attributed the strength in retail sales to fiscal stimulus, especially a weekly subsidy paid to tens of millions of unemployed Americans. September's robust sales reinforced expectations for record consumer spending and economic growth in the third quarter. Growth estimates for the July-

and other forms of insurance.

If it doesn't pass, the drivers would be classified as employees and thus entitled to all the benefits laid out in California labor law. Supporters in the "Yes" camp are warning of mass job losses if they lose as the companies could not afford to keep on all their drivers and say others will quit because they will automatically have less flexibility.

While supporters argue the bill would mean increasingly hard-pressed drivers are guaranteed to earn between \$25 and \$28 per hour, critics cite a University of California study showing that compensation equates to only \$5.64 per hour after subtracting unreimbursed costs, taxes and waiting time.

The measure has divided drivers, some of whom want the benefits of regular employment while others such as Sergei Fyodorov enjoy the flexibility of being able to work on weekends or whenever he chooses to pick up extra income. "If you make a living out of it, great, but for me it's supplemental income and flexibility," said Fyodorov, who has a regular job as a project manager at a tech company.

"Let's say Proposition 22 does not happen. I can guarantee that Lyft, Uber and all these services will lay off at least 80 or 70 percent of the drivers and the main thing is that we're not going to get the flexibility," Geoff Vetter, a spokesman for the "Yes" campaign, said hundreds of thousands of jobs would be lost across a global industry headquartered in California, arguing many drivers would quit

industries, starting with the food and beverage industry."

Every brand can have its fair share of the wellness cake. Another important conclusion of the report is that every brand can grow through wellness. Wellness is no longer a luxury sector of spas, nor the preserve of wellness brands; consumers are very clear about it:

- 73 percent say brands need a wellness strategy as part of their core mission
- 67 percent say there should be more wellness options, regardless of what they are shopping for
- 52 percent expect cars, banks or airlines to offer wellness options-almost equal to the snack foods category (56 percent)

Consumers expect every brand to contribute to their wellness. And 59 percent agree it's worth paying more for wellness options.

Social and purpose, the new frontiers of wellness

While healthy meals, good sleep and time to relax remain critical wellness priorities globally, this study finds that wellness is now less self-centered. In 2020, wellness has 4 facets: physical, psychological, social and purposeful. More and more, people tell us they can't feel well if they don't feel connected or if they don't contribute to making the world a better place.

- 71 percent say a wellness brand should make a positive difference
- 60 percent say it should give them a sense of purpose
- 53 percent say a brand should help them feel connected

This opens many opportunities for brands to form closer bonds with their consumers through activating purpose. Upgrading a brand's social strategy through the lens of wellness can lead to richer and more personalized connection and more successful social commerce.

Closing the authenticity gap to reap growth opportunities

Wellness washing is a significantly growing sentiment among consumers, and we found only 41 percent agree that brands which make wellness promises are usually believable. Further, 53 percent say they find it hard to tell the difference between real and fake wellness claims. People want authentic stories, ingredients they can understand, benefits they can believe and most important, brands that deliver on their promises to develop a strong competitive edge.

The wellness economy offers some of the most exciting growth prospects in consumer goods marketing, and Covid-19 will only accelerate this phenomenon. But there is a profound and urgent need to reframe the wellness offer and close the wellness gap for consumers. The Ogilvy Wellness Gap study helps brands find their growth opportunities in the new frontier of wellness.



SANTA MONICA: In this file photo, people shop in Santa Monica, California. Spending on clothing, cars and sporting goods pushed US retail sales above expectations in September, government data said.— AFP

September quarter are as high as a 35.2 percent annualized rate. That would recoup roughly two-thirds of the output lost because of COVID-19. The economy contracted at a 31.4 percent pace in the second quarter, the deepest decline since the government started keeping records in 1947. US stocks bounced from three straight days of losses on the retail sales data and Pfizer's announcement that it could apply for emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate as early as November.

Last month, sales at auto dealerships surged 3.6

percent. Receipts at restaurants and bars increased 2.1 percent. Receipts at clothing stores jumped 11.0 percent. "Some of the gain may have reflected increased demand from back to school sales, but with most schools remote learning the reported strength seems dramatic and likely unsustainable," said Kevin Cummins, chief US economist at NatWest Markets in Stamford, Connecticut. Even with September's gains, sales at bars, restaurants and clothing stores remain well below their pre-pandemic levels.— Reuters

Contractors or employees? Uber drivers split

OAKLAND: Ahead of a referendum that could upend the whole gig economy, Uber driver Karim Benkanoun says his relationship with the rideshare giant must stop being a one-way street. "If you're a driver with Uber or Lyft, you're nothing," said Benkanoun as he speaks of how he will vote in California's Proposition 22 referendum.

"They don't consider us as employees, they consider us as independent contractors but we have no say in the contract.

"It doesn't work this way and it has to change." Proposition 22, which is being put to voters on the same day as the November 3 presidential election, will determine whether California's government can enforce a law which became effective this year requiring on-demand companies to treat drivers as employees, instead of independent contractors. Were the referendum to be approved, drivers would remain independent contractors but Uber and Lyft would pay them a number of benefits promised as part of a compromise package, including a minimum wage, a contribution to health care



Uber driver Sergei Fyodorov discusses why he supports a yes vote on Proposition 22 in Oakland, California.— AFP

if they have to work set hours.

"With Proposition 22, we're trying to recognize first that these drivers want to remain independent contractors-more than 70 percent of drivers say they want to remain independent contractors because it gives them flexibility and choice-while also getting new benefits like a minimum guarantee (for wages) and health care," said Vetter. Benkanoun, who began working with Uber in 2012, says he used to make between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a week but is now lucky to make \$500 before expenses despite working a seven-day week with demand shrunk by the COVID-19 pandemic.— AFP

Consumers expect all brands to provide wellness offerings: New Ogilvy study

KUWAIT: The \$4.5 trillion global wellness economy - growing twice as fast as the global economy - is now so pervasive that for 73 percent of global consumers, wellness is now considered an essential element of a brand's strategy. The Ogilvy Wellness Gap study released today has, for the first time, quantified the gap between consumers' wellness expectations of brands and how they judge delivery against those expectations in seven key sectors - food, snacks, skincare, airlines, hotels, cars and banking.

Ogilvy surveyed 7,000 consumers from 14 countries across 4 continents to gain new insight into how they see wellness in 2020 and to help marketers close the glaring opportunity gaps as they look to growth their businesses. This global research was conducted in April 2020 at a time when wellness declined rapidly for many, placing an increasing significance on wellness as we move into 2021.

In 2020, 77 percent of people say wellness is very or extremely important to them. Yet, consumers are still hungry for more: Hungry for more wellness-80 percent of people want to improve their wellness; Hungry and expecting-75 percent feel brands could do more for their wellness; Hungry and frustrated-only 46 percent feel that brands take their wellness as a priority.

Take major wellness industries like food and skincare, which have innovated and grown around wellness for the last two decades. Yet only 41 percent of global respondents agree the food sector and 53 percent agree the skincare sector is doing all it should to help them with their wellness. "Every brand can be a wellness brand now. Wellness is in many ways the more tangible benefit of 'purpose.' We think this is very good news for brands. It shows that wellness remains an opportunity for double digit growth by meeting numerous consumer expectations to close the gap," said Marion McDonald, Ogilvy's Global Health & Wellness Practice Lead.

Discussing the implications of this study, Benoit de Fleurian, Ogilvy's Global Planning Lead for Health & Wellness said, "Wellness has created new conversations, new expectations, new purposes - both for companies and individuals. Wellness has inspired new businesses, new brands, new products, new services, new experiences. Wellness has seen companies pivot their strategy, business and portfolio. Wellness has started to revolutionize entire

Ooredoo Kuwait takes pride of its all-new 'Shamel Pro'

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, has launched the all-new "Shamel Pro", Shamel's new tariff plans which give customers unlimited benefits ranging from 5G internet, local minutes, roaming internet, and valuable gift vouchers.

"Shamel Pro" embodies diversity and boasts an eclectic mix of different young lifestyles, and preferences, and the three different benefit plans fit perfectly into this ethos, bringing something very unique to customers. This addition to Ooredoo's portfolio emphasizes their desire to create a product that appeals to as many enthusiasts as possible and engages with the entire community.

Cementing Ooredoo's position as the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, "Shamel Pro" features an expansive series of tariff plans to suit everyone, and creates the best-in-class customer experience with its three different plan benefits: Shamel Pro 25, Shamel Pro 35, and Shamel Pro 45 which offer customers the option of choosing one complimentary device along with more additional benefits.

Starting at KD 25, "Shamel Pro" features various qualities including: getting the latest devices, enjoying premium numbers, allowing flexible device installments in which customers can choose the installment period ranging from 3 to 36 months, no Pay-As-You-Go (PAY-GO) charges in which extra charges will not be applied when customers exceed local talk time and SMS usage of their base plan, purchasing any device on cash at the best price in the country, and more. Hence, "Shamel Pro" will be available to both new and existing Ooredoo Kuwait customers with monthly plans starting at just KD 25 for non-stop 5G internet, non-stop local calls and roaming internet, and valuable gifts from "Shamel Pro" partners including: Anghami, STARZPLAY, OSN, PUBG, Google Play, iTunes, and more.

Abdulaziz Al-Babtain expressed his pleasure at the new product and said: "Today, we live in the age of the customer, in which the notion of competitive advantage has been reevaluated. In an increasingly global and competitive market where customers have so much choices than ever before resulting in sky-high expectations, customers are the ones in control. Indeed, nowadays the only source of gaining and sustaining competitive advantage is the obsession with understanding, delighting, connecting with, and serving customers. Ooredoo Kuwait, embrace a customer-obsessed mentality by listening to their customers, and then constantly testing, improving, and personalizing the customer experience" said Al-Babtain. "Customer-obsession is organizational culture, and at Ooredoo Kuwait we ensure every employee is obsessed and dedicated to creating a unique customer experience. Through the all-new "Shamel Pro", we are bringing the voice of the customer, and I am personally very happy to round off this year with it," added Al-Babtain.

In a class by itself, the distinctive product is launched to target customers across the country who desire non-stop local calls, non-stop internet usage at high consistent speeds to satisfy their entertainment, gaming, or personal related online needs whether locally or when traveling the world. Ooredoo Kuwait continually aims to further uplift its customers' online journey with unlimited benefits and complimentary gifts that inspire creativity and ignite passion.

The launch of the product is not only in line with Ooredoo's long-term vision to enrich people's digital lives, but also an ideal opportunity to demonstrate Ooredoo's achievements in the telecom sector to the world. Customers can view Ooredoo's products, services, and exclusive offers and their subscription data online through the MyOoredoo application and the company official website www.Ooredoo.com.kw in addition to contacting the call center through 121 around the clock for all enquiries and services.

Malawi migrants return from SA empty-handed

BLANTYRE: Siphath Simali imagined that when she finally got back to Malawi she would return with pride and enough earnings from South Africa to support her two children and start a small business. Instead, the 28-year-old former domestic worker was bussed home empty-handed and shamefaced, one of a thousand to return last month after mass job losses in South Africa's lockdown.

Nearly 10,000 Malawians have made the long journey home from South Africa since May, according to Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs, with more due in coming months as the coronavirus eats deeper into the world economy. "I have nothing now," said Simali after she was spewed out of a packed bus and joined the rush for a nearby tap, parched by her three-day journey.

Some of her fellow passengers had spent their final rands on a bus ticket back, deciding it was better to be jobless at home, despite the indignity of returning empty-handed. The government paid for Simali's passage home after she had spent months locked in a South African repatriation center, her documents expired along with all her savings. "I was struggling. We didn't have enough to eat. All the things that I bought from my earnings I left them behind when I was detained," Simali told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at the Mwanza border, an entry point into the country from Mozambique.

The coronavirus pandemic has decimated livelihoods across the globe, and with 85% of jobs in Africa classed as "informal employment", the 55-nation African Union estimates some 20 million jobs will be threatened by the pandemic. In a pre-COVID-19 world where people followed the money, South Africa was a jobs magnet for nearby economies that could not support their own populations.—Reuters

Business

stc Group participates in Virtual Capacity Middle East 2020

Expansion of wholesale footprint across Kuwait, Iraq exhibited by stc

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that the stc Group participated as a diamond sponsor in the Virtual Capacity Middle East 2020. stc Group showcased a range of its solutions at the event, which witnessed the largest turnout in the past 15 years with over 2,200 regional and global connectivity leaders from across the globe.

During the virtual event, stc Kuwait exhibited the expansion of its wholesale footprint across Kuwait and Iraq through its wholly owned subsidiary, Qualitynet. Reinforcing its position as the preferred regional and international connectivity partner, stc Kuwait showcased its wide portfolio, Qualitynet's business, Wholesale portfolio (Kuwait and Iraq), as well as regional and international connectivity services that are offered in

collaboration with globally renowned partners. The company also announced its unique position of being the first telecom operator to offer unlimited 5G roaming for all its postpaid, prepaid and enterprise customers across all GCC Countries.

In its statement, stc recognized the Capacity Middle East as a valuable platform that is enriched by the views of attending senior officials who are experienced in different fields across the industry. The Company's active participation in the event came as an opportunity to showcase stc's path towards enabling digital transformation by leveraging its advanced infrastructure and integrated set of offerings. The platform also provided stc representatives with an excellent opportunity to network and share knowledge with some of the leading telecom players in the region and internationally.

stc Kuwait stated that as it expands its footprint across the region by collaborating with

internationally recognized entities, the Company will continue to introduce new opportunities to customers that will help shape and accelerate the path towards digital transformation. The reliance on digital and connectivity solutions has witnessed a great leap since the beginning of the pandemic, and it is up to the operators to deliver these solutions in a way that meets each customer's unique demands.

The 'Virtual Capacity Middle East 2020' enabled the Group to showcase its range of wholesale and business solutions, offerings, and capability to deliver pioneering solutions that satisfy the local and regional market demand. As a leader in its industry, stc aims to progressively elevate the user experience for both individuals and enterprises.

stc thanked the organizers and senior officials who participated in the virtual event. The Company expressed that it will continue to par-



ticipate in industry focused events that shed light on key market developments while allowing industry leaders to showcase some of the innovative and ground-breaking technology that will be shaping the world for the future generations.

Italy approves new stimulus package to help virus-hit economy

MILAN: Italy has approved a new stimulus package in its 2021 budget to foster an economic rebound from the recession caused by the coronavirus crisis, a government statement said yesterday after a late-night cabinet meeting.

The ruling coalition, led by the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and center-left PD party, agreed a preliminary version of the stimulus package, a government source said, leaving final details to be hammered out. Among measures to support the health and education system, the government will set up a 4 billion euro (\$4.7 billion) fund to compensate companies worst hit by coronavirus lockdowns.

The budget also extends temporary lay-off schemes for companies with workers on furlough and offers tax breaks to support employment in the poor south of the country. Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is expected to also announce new measures to curb the steady spike in COVID-19 cases over recent weeks today. One of the European countries worst hit by the pandemic, Italy has forecast a 9 percent economic contraction for 2020 and a budget deficit equating to 10.8 percent of gross domestic product.

The expansionary package is expected to keep Italy's deficit next year to 7 percent of economic output, up from a 5.7 percent forecast in April, reflecting the additional spending.

Italy has forecast economic growth of 6 percent in 2021. Expansionary measures next year will total 40 billion euros, including cheap loans and grants from the European Union's Recovery Fund, Gualtieri told lawmakers this month. —Reuters

Unilever makeover: 'Woke-washing' or the real thing?

THE HAGUE: Unilever, the maker of brands ranging from Ben & Jerry's ice cream to Dove soap, is trying to win over customers with a socially responsible makeover, but activists say that some of it is just cosmetic.

The Anglo-Dutch consumer giant has introduced a series of initiatives aimed at making it, in its own words, the world's most sustainable company, while also taking a position on issues such as racism.

The firm, which releases third quarter results this week, has recently promised to halve its use of plastic by 2025, eliminate the use of fossil fuels in cleaning products by 2030, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2039. But the multinational behind Marmite yeast spread, Lipton tea and Knorr soups is "still a big polluter", says Meike Rijkssen, campaigner for plastic at Greenpeace Netherlands.

"We recognise that Unilever is doing more than most companies, but it is by far not enough," she told AFP. Unilever remains the fourth biggest producer of plastics polluting the planet, behind Coca-Cola, Nestle and Pepsico, according to a report in 2019 by Break Free from Plastics, a global coalition of NGOs. Greenpeace urged the firm to invest in renewable materials across its activities and to eliminate single-use plastics.

'Take action'

Unilever has argued that "responsible" corporate behavior is good business, since it will attract young, more environmentally-conscious customers. "We make sure that our brands take action on the issues that consumers care about," Marlous den Bieman, media relations manager for Unilever Benelux, told AFP. Chief executive Alan Jope has himself said that "woke-washing is beginning to infect our industry", warning against companies promising action on social and environmental causes without following through. Unilever was one of the first major firms to join a boycott on advertising on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the US until the end of 2020 due to the "polarized election period" there. —AFP

ABK launches 'Save and Win' campaign

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is committed to driving initiatives to boost levels of financial literacy among the country's youth and has launched the 'Save and Win' campaign, focused on instilling the value and importance of adopting saving habits early in life.

ABK's 'Save and Win' draw campaign for its A+ Student and Bedayati account holders will run from October 2020 until June 2021 every month. Active A+ Student and Bedayati account holders will have the opportunity to win a digital tablet and can avail the BUY 1 GET 1 FREE promotional deal and enjoy tickets at any VOX Cinemas across the country

when using their ABK debit cards.

The eligibility criteria to participate in the 'Save and Win' campaign includes customers aged between 0-8 years old with a minimum balance of KD 100, and customers aged between 18 - 25 years old, with a Student allowances transferred to their A+ account. New customers will be included if they open the respective account within the campaign period. Existing customers that meet the eligibility criteria are automatically entered into the monthly draw. Customers are only eligible to win once during the campaign period. The easy-to-operate A+ Student and Bedayati Account is a valuable tool for parents who would like to instill saving habits in their children, teaching them how to manage their personal finances through smart-money management. Customers can benefit from monthly interest paid into the account, no minimum balance require-



ments and no maintenance fees - important elements for young savers on limited allowances. Furthermore, it also provides account holders with an ATM card, exclusive promotions and 24/7 access to the account with

ABK's simple, fast and secure e-banking channels.

Starting from October, the first draw will take place on 19th November, 2020 followed by eight more monthly draws until July 2021.

Traders trickle back to Wall St after lockdown

NEW YORK: The life of a Wall Street trader was once one of business trips and work dinners, but now it is anything but. The culprit, as with so many of the economic and financial disruptions the United States has faced over the past months, is the coronavirus pandemic, which has rendered life for the brokers, bankers and businesspeople fueling the world's largest economy much more lonely.

People working on high-priced transactions like IPOs, bond deals or mergers and acquisitions "used to travel a lot to meet with clients" who would typically only sign agreements in-person, recalls Karl Haeling of LBBW bank. "Now they would very happily give mandate without seeing you," said Haeling.

Wall Street sits in the heart of New York City, an early epicenter as the US COVID-19 outbreak turned into the world's worst, with more than 218,000 deaths and eight millions cases nationwide as of this week. The pandemic's intensification in March temporarily cleared the market makers from the New York Stock Exchange's boisterous floor and forced traders across Wall Street to retreat indoors, relying on their phones, email and instant messaging systems to talk with clients.

"People are doing brainstorming on these various video platforms and they are coming up with product ideas remotely," said Daniel Alpert, founding managing partner at investment bank Westwood Capital. But that hasn't held

indices back: the Nasdaq and S&P 500 have both recovered from their massive plunges in March, while the Dow has also regained most of its strength, though millions remain jobless and unemployment is at a high 7.9 percent.

Trickling back

Aided by a secure internet connection, Haeling holds 30-minute meetings twice per day to keep up with colleagues about the markets, politics and the omnipresent coronavirus threat, a work-from-home routine he says suits him fine. "I went back (to the office) for three days in the summer because of a storm which cut the power out at home, and I realized how inefficient it is because I spent three hours on the train," Haeling said.

But even with the virus still a threat across the US, traders are slowly trickling back to Wall Street. The New York City Economic Development Corporation estimates there are 460,000 people employed by the financial sector in the city, and their work is considered an essential service under state law. The New York Stock Exchange reopened in May with traders donning masks and separated by plexiglass, while Alpert started working from his office again at the end of June. But rather than the 15 or so people who usually show up to his office, it's just Alpert and occasionally another partner.

Earlier this month, he attended his first in-person business lunch since the coronavirus's arrival, "outside, of course," and closed a recent deal with around eight people in the same room.

"There are just some times when you really do need the high speed interaction," he said.

BNP Paribas, which had a few cases



The Charging Bull, sometimes referred to as the Wall Street Bull, a bronze sculpture in the Financial District of Manhattan with a facemask in New York. —AFP

of employees testing positive for the virus or suspecting they had it, has let about 10 to 15 percent of their staff return. Visitors are banned in the office, but in a tour given to an AFP journalist over live video, traders could be seen scattered over a long line of desks and separated by plexiglass, with floor markings encouraging people to socially distance. "Anything is on the table to give our employees flexibility," said Kevin Abraszek, the bank's head of human resources change and transformation.

Forever changed?

Staff at other banks have returned as well. JPMorgan Chase asked all its head of brokerage and sales divisions who were still teleworking to return to the office by the middle of September,

with exceptions for medical conditions or childcare needs. But only about 20 percent of its employees show up, and who reports to the office often differs by the day.

At investment bank Goldman Sachs, about 30 percent of staff are in the office. Outside of Lower Manhattan's skyscrapers, there's no doubt the neighborhoods aren't back to their former selves. Traders in their uniforms of sleeveless fleece vests no longer flock Wall Street each morning, and industry officials acknowledge it may take a while longer before normalcy returns.

"We are trying to instill a longer-term new... working culture in which working from home will remain part of what we do," Abraszek said. "It is just a question of how much that will be." —AFP

China passes export law covering tech

BEIJING: China has passed a new law restricting sensitive exports to protect national security, a move that adds to policy tools it could wield against the US as tensions—especially in technology—continue to rise. The law, which China's top legislature passed on Saturday, comes into effect on December 1 and allows Beijing to "take reciprocal measures" against countries that abuse export controls and pose a threat to national security.

Technical data related to items covered will also be subject to export controls, according to the published text of the law. Beijing's latest measure gives it more room to hit back in US President Donald Trump's war on Chinese tech firms, with the White House moving against popular platforms and major companies—including apps

TikTok and WeChat, tech giant Huawei and chip-maker Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. The new law, "formulated to safeguard national security and interests", adds to China's regulatory toolkit which also involves a restriction catalogue of tech exports and an unreliable entity list.

"Where any country or region abuses export control measures to endanger the national security and interests of the People's Republic of China, (it) may take reciprocal measures," the law states.

It adds that Chinese authorities will formulate and adjust an export control list of items to be published in a "timely manner". Foreign individuals and groups can also be found liable for violating export control rules. The economic relationship between Beijing and Washington has been roiled by Trump's unprecedented campaign of tariffs, threats of bans and sanctions on Chinese tech firms.

With Trump facing a tough re-election campaign ahead of polls next month, US officials have described measures against China as national security safeguards—prompting a backlash from Beijing.



BEIJING: The new export law takes effect in December and allows Beijing to "take reciprocal measures" against countries that abuse export controls and pose a threat to national security.

In September, China launched a long-expected "unreliable entities list", widely seen as a weapon to retaliate against the US which has used its own "entity list" to shut Huawei out of the US market. The month before that, China's commerce ministry stepped up rules on technologies restricted for export, adding "civilian use" to the list. —AFP

Classifieds

Monday, October 19, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 18/10/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	36 °C	26 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	37 °C	18 °C			
ABDALY	38 °C	19 °C			
BUBYAN	34 °C	19 °C			
JAHRA	38 °C	23 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	34 °C	28 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWAISIB	36 °C	20 °C			
WAFRA	37 °C	19 °C			
SALMY	37 °C	20 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	10/19	Hot to rather hot	37 °C	17 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	10/20	Rather hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	36 °C	16 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	10/21	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	36 °C	16 °C	NW-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	10/22	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	35 °C	15 °C	NW-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:32
Sunrise	05:52
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:49
Sunset	17:15
Isha	18:32

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	37 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	56 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

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Qualified as a Marine Engineer with minimum 15 years' experience. Should be able to maintain a fleet of Tugs and other vessels. Knowledge of repair & maintenance of various marine engines & ship borne machinery & equipment. Transferable residence. Salary based on Experience.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ashok Kumar Nayunipati S/o Nayunipati Ramachandraiah holder of Indian Passport No. N8639837 & Civil ID No. 280112003117 has changed my name from Ashok Kumar Nayunipati to Ashok Kumar Nayanapati (Ashok Kumar - Given Name and Nayanapati - Surname) hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Ashok Kumar Nayanapati. (C5805) 16-10-2020

Airlines

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

Word Search



Al Capone 1899 - 1947



"Do I do business with Canadian racketeers? I don't even know what street Canada is on."

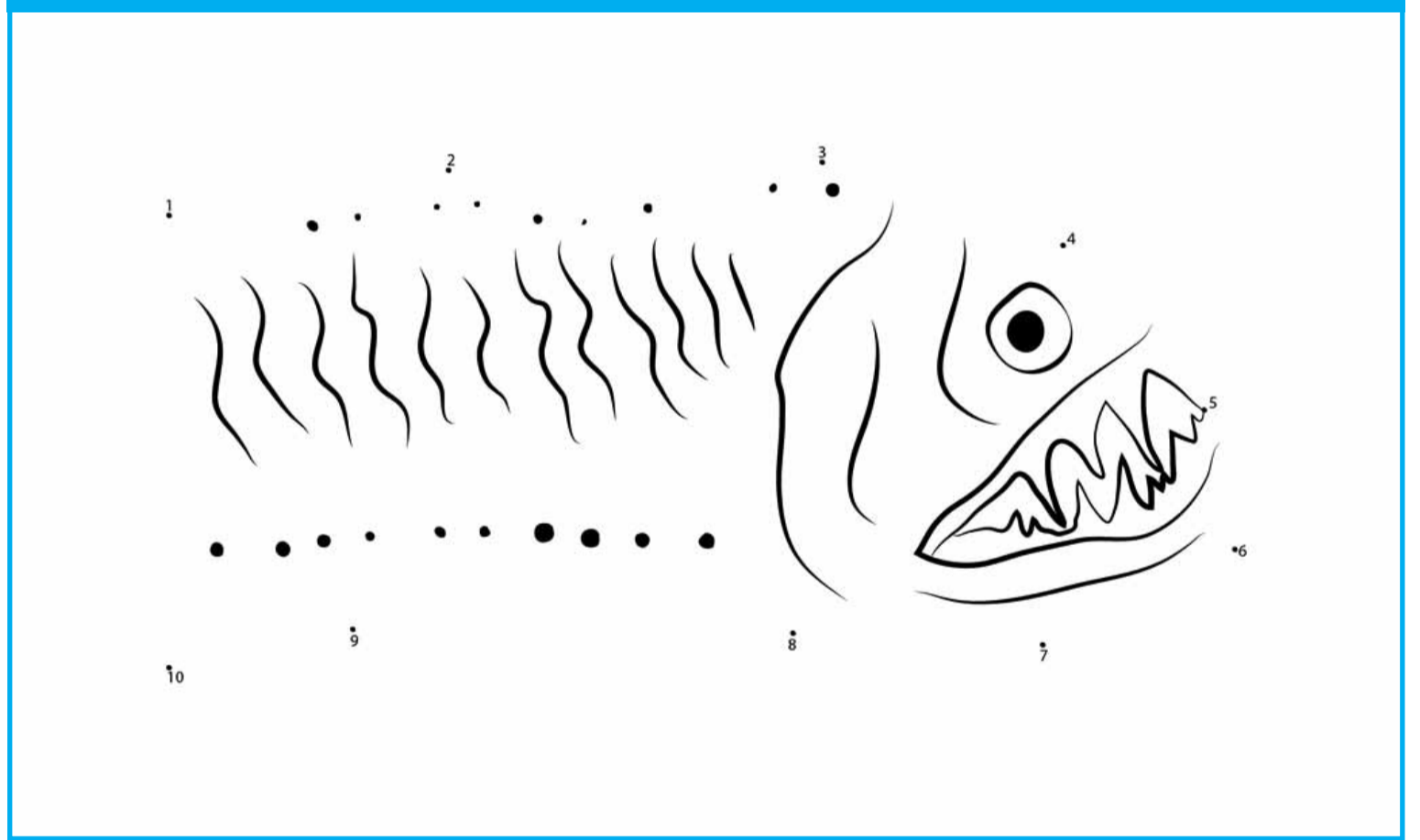
DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

ALCATRAZ
ALPHONSE
BOOTLEG
BOWERY BOYS
BRIBES
BROOKLYN
CAPONE
CHARITY
CHICAGO
CRIME BOSS

ELIOT NESS
FLORIDA
GAMBLING
GANGSTER
GREAT DEPRESSION
IRS
ITALY
JOHNNY TORRIO
LIQUOR
MASSACRE

MOBSTER
NEW YORK
PRISON
PROHIBITION
PROTECTION
RUTHLESS
SCARFACE
TAX EVASION
UNTOUCHABLES
VALENTINES DAY

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You've had a strong propensity for war lately, Aries. Your drive toward getting things done has rallied and you're anxious to make progress. The problem is that you might have to hold back a bit today, since there is a great force at work encouraging you to take a break from your current trajectory. Slow down and make a plan instead of just plowing blindly ahead toward the unknown.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Indecisiveness could be your biggest nemesis today, Cancer. The general tone of the day is apt to be quite explosive as a feeling of restriction and discipline comes into conflict with a need to fight and conquer. You might find that your go-with-the-flow, easygoing attitude is exactly what saves you on a day like this. Lay low and let someone else take the lead now.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your best plan of attack today is to not attack at all, Libra. There is enough aggressiveness out there. You don't need to add any more to the fray. Let others duke it out. Your job is to wait until the dust settles. Try not to get involved in other people's disputes. You might get dragged further into the situation than makes you feel comfortable.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Discipline and a solid plan are your friends today, Capricorn. Slow your approach and consider the consequences of your actions. This is the time to concentrate on what you need to get done and devise a plan to make it happen. There is restlessness in the air that might cause you to act hastily. Don't forget the old saying that says haste makes waste. This is an important lesson.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your balancing powers will be put to the test today when your desire to fight conflicts with your need to plan, Taurus. You might be even more indecisive than usual as a result of this internal tension. Be aware of time and the restrictions that it puts on you. Devise a plan that uses your energy in the most efficient way possible. It's especially important for you to think before you act.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your plans meet with harsh opposition today, Leo. You've been going along at a slow and steady pace, but you will find that abrasive tension arises the more you try to force your will on others. Gridlock is quite likely due to the fact that there are strong forces coming to a head. Neither one of them is in the mood to yield now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You might need to put on the brakes today, Scorpio. Your present trajectory isn't quite in line with the people and energy around you. Make sure you aren't stepping on other people's toes with your abrasive behavior. This is a day to consider a more disciplined approach. You might need to establish a better structure, so you use your energy more efficiently in general.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You might experience a bit of an internal conflict today and be you're unsure how to proceed, Aquarius. One side feels an urge to fight, while another side - a more mental aspect - asks you to keep this urge under wraps. It could be that this conflict keeps you immobile because of your lack of confidence in either camp. Try not to get stressed out over any one issue.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Try not to get too frustrated by the indecisiveness that plagues you today, Gemini. The longer you stand still, the harder it will be to get moving. The key is to find a balance between planning and forcefulness. There's an incredible need for you make progress now. If you're met with resistance, you should probably just back off for now. Fighting won't yield positive results now.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Getting your opinions out now may stir up the maelstrom even more, but ultimately, it's for the best, Virgo. There is an explosive tone in the air right now that's difficult to ignore. You need your strong will to combat the abrasive forces at work today. You have the opportunity to initiate control over the situation. Other people might be too unsure of themselves to make a move.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you've been reluctant to make a move, Sagittarius, you should consider why. What has been holding you back? Fear of failure? A negative comment from someone else? Feeling like you aren't quite prepared for the consequences of your actions? It's time to free yourself of these mental barriers that keep you from making progress. Don't let self-doubt get in the way of your plans.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

It may be hard to connect with others today, Pisces. People may be rather indecisive. On the other hand, people are apt to be more malleable. This could be a good time to take charge. Be sure that you keep in mind the best interests of all parties involved. It isn't fair for you to take advantage of people who can't make up their own minds about something.

'Their voice is vital' - Thai celebs break silence on democracy protests

A K-pop superstar, beauty queens and TV personalities are among a growing wave of celebrities backing Thailand's pro-democracy movement, sending out messages of support to millions of followers on social media. Political statements are unusual from Thai celebs, whose lucrative endorsements rely on the billionaire clans that are a pillar of the country's establishment. But some prominent figures broke cover after police fired water cannon at peaceful protesters in Bangkok on Friday. Thai-American K-Pop idol Nichkhun, better known as the "Thai Prince", told his 6.9 million Twitter followers he cannot "stand idly by" after Friday's scenes, an escalation after months of student-led protests.

"The use of violence is something I cannot watch and stand idly by," said Nichkhun, a member of ultra-popular South Korean boy band 2PM, in a message that was retweeted by tens of thousands within hours. "Violence has never helped anything. I hope everyone stays safe... and take care of yourselves." Friday's showdown was the first such use of force against the protesters, who are calling for the resignation of Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former military chief brought to power in a 2014 coup, and demanding reforms to the powerful monarchy. It followed a tense week in the Thai capital when protesters defied a ban on demonstrations, and the arrests of scores of leading activists, to return to the streets in their tens of thousands.

Nichkhun wasn't the only celebrity to speak up. Amanda Obdam, the newly crowned Miss Universe Thailand, took to Instagram with pictures of a lone protester pushing against riot police wielding their shields. "A picture says a thousand words," the Thai-Canadian model wrote. "Your job is to protect the people not harm them."

'Abuse of power'

Previously, many stars have remained conspicuously silent on hot-button issues in celebrity-obsessed Thailand, where their careers and income are closely tied to product endorsements. Alienating potential employers may be a reason—especially in a kingdom where every sector hums along under the oversight of the multi-billion-dollar business empires, traditional supporters of the



This file photo shows Thai-US K-pop singer Nichkhun Horvejkul of the South Korean boy band 2PM posing for a picture during a press conference in Hong Kong.

ultra-wealthy royal family. But business student Min, who arrived at Saturday's protest with a helmet and a gas mask, said celebrities have a moral obligation to speak up. "They are in the elite alongside the government," the 18-year-old told AFP. "Their voice is vital."

That voice grew louder this week. Another former beauty queen, TV personality Maria Poonlertarp, said in a video on Facebook that the treatment of protesters was "completely unjust". She had grown more vocal since the July disappearance of Thai pro-democracy activist Wanchalearn Satsaksit, who was kidnapped off the streets of Cambodia where he lived in self-exile. "People have been silenced from speaking up about the double standards and the abuse of power," she said in tears, switching between Thai and English. "We've had a lot of injustice going on in Thailand for decades, fighting against our government for democracy," she added. Seated next to Maria in the video was her partner Wannasingh Prasertkul, a television presenter whose parents were part of a student movement that saw a massacre in 1976 by royalist forces in Bangkok.



Miss Universe Amanda Obdam. —AFP photos

'Ignorant people are silent'

Even some celebrities who have mixed with Thailand's leaders have spoken out. Popular girl band BNK48 visited Prayut at Government House in 2018, where they officially released photos showing the normally gruff premier chatting cheerfully with the group. The visit drew ire from critics who saw it as an attempt to soften the image of the former army chief, who masterminded the 2014 coup and retained power in controversial elections last year. But BNK48 member Milin "Namneung" Dokthian left no room for doubt about her feelings in a message urging protesters to "stay safe" this week.

"We wouldn't have to say 'be safe' if we had a true democracy," she wrote on Facebook, in a post shared by fellow band-members. The support from some celebrities, and silence from others, are not lost on the young protesters. Juggling goggles and a helmet at Saturday's protest, 25-year-old Aim scoffed at those who refuse to speak up. "Perhaps they are out of touch and have grown up in a (privileged) situation," she told AFP, adding that the fans are paying attention. "We will abandon them because they are ignorant people and are silent." —AFP

British artist Banksy claims hula-hooping girl street art

The elusive British street artist Banksy confirmed on Saturday that a new artwork that appeared on a wall in Nottingham, central England, depicting a young girl using a bicycle tyre as a hula-hoop is his work. The work appeared on Tuesday on the red brick wall of a beauty salon, next to a bicycle that was locked to a metal signpost and missing its back wheel.

A picture of the work in the student area of the city was posted on Banksy's Instagram feed and website on Saturday. Banksy is known for witty artworks that often make powerful references to world affairs. His works this year have alluded to the coronavirus crisis and Black Lives Matter movement. In August, he funded a boat crewed by volunteers to rescue refugees in the Mediterranean attempting to reach Europe from Africa. —AFP



Banksy has posted an image of the artwork on Instagram. Pic: @banksy

TOKYO FASHION WEEK



Guests gather for Japanese fashion brand Requal's 2021 spring/summer collection show at Tokyo Fashion Week.



Models display creations from fashion brand Requal by Japanese designer Tetsuya Doi for the 2021 spring/summer collection at Tokyo Fashion Week.

Siberian scientists breeding foxes for pets eye human link



Tatyana Abramova, 33, and her son Timofei, 6, play with a home fox Plombir at their countryside house outside Siberian city. —AFP photos

Soaking up the sun in their garden, Sergei Abramov and his wife Tatiana are playing with their furry pet, Plombir, who is wagging his tail and winning treats for obeying his owners' commands. But Plombir, whose white fur matches the color of the beloved Soviet ice cream he was named after, is not Abramov's canine best friend. He is actually a fox, bred by Russian scientists as part of a decades-long experiment in Siberia to study how wild animals are domesticated. Plombir is happy to be led around by his owners on a leash, but, as he pulls towards chickens safe in their cage, it's clear he hasn't lost all his animal instincts. "Yes, he already tried to eat our chickens and run away," says Abramov, 32, who lives in the suburbs of Russia's third largest city Novosibirsk. His wife, biologist Tatiana Abramova, 33, admits she always wanted to live with a fox.

She concedes that Plombir is "friendly and kind" but not very obedient. "He jumps on tables, or jumps inside the fridge. He steals things and hides them," she says. Such an energetic animal is better suited to living outdoors, the couple have decided, and they set aside a spacious nook in their garden as Plombir's home.

Soviet-era experiment

He enjoys being stroked, he can do tricks and is always eager to play—unlikely characteristics for most foxes, but not surprising given that he and his ancestors were bred by scientists to be friendly pets. In 1959, Soviet geneticists Dmitry Belyaev and Ludmila Trut launched the experiment on a farm in the Akademgorodok scientific research centre near Novosibirsk. Their goal was to tame foxes and understand how these ancestors of wolves evolved into the loyal and loving dogs we know now. For decades, researchers at the farm have selected the most friendly animals for breeding. Others were put down and a small number were sold as pets.

This artificial selection "changes everything in their body", said Yuri Gerbek, one of around 15 scientists working at the center that is home to almost 1,000 foxes. In particular, this rigid selection has altered foxes' pigment and shortened their muzzles. "We are trying to understand which genes change and how they change," Gerbek explained. He added that the team

keeps wild as well as tamed foxes "for comparison". Yet due to a lack of funding, the animals are kept in old and rusting cages.

Discoveries 'yet to be made'

Belyaev died in 1985 and the experiment was nearly shuttered over a lack of funding during the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the economic crisis that followed. It survived however and has even won international attention since the emergence of DNA sequencing techniques that made it possible to study the foxes' genetic code. "The interest of the scientific community remains very strong," US geneticist Adam Wilkins told AFP. That is particularly true since the team is studying the effects of domestication on foxes' brains and in particular their levels of oxytocin, known as the love hormone.

Studies have shown that oxytocin nurtures protective behavior, empathy and feelings of love, and it could play a key role in rendering foxes better pets. But the experiment might also offer a window into human evolution—in particular an existing theory that our human ancestors domesticated themselves, Wilkins says. It is an apt comparison "because many of the changes that domesticated foxes have undergone look like possible related changes in human evolution," says Wilkins. "Important discoveries are yet to be made," he added. —AFP



Home fox Plombir lunges towards a chicken coop during a walk outside.



Tatyana Abramova, 33, plays with her home fox Plombir.



A fox cub reacts to a photographer at Belyaev fox facility.



A man strokes a fox cub at Belyaev fox facility.



Veterinary students inspect a fox at Belyaev fox facility.



An employee feeds foxes at Belyaev fox facility.

UK families gobble up teenier turkeys for Covid Christmas



Bronze turkeys are seen at Mark Chilcott's Glebe Farm in the village of Owermoigne near Dorchester, southern England. —AFP photos

Scrabbling over a treat of apples in autumnal sunshine, Mark Chilcott's feisty turkeys look pretty hefty. In fact, they're a smaller breed destined for downsized family dinners this Covid Christmas. Chilcott, a 58-year-old organic farmer, prizes quality over quantity at his mixed farm of 440 acres (180 hectares) in Dorset, southwest England. In the spring, as the coronavirus pandemic took hold, he anticipated no let-up to government curbs on how many people can mix indoors through the end of the year. So he opted in April for smaller hatchlings from the "bronze" breed of turkey, favoring hens over the larger male stags, and a shrunken flock of 1,200 birds compared to the 1,500 he reared last year.

The hens will reach about 5-6 kilograms

(11-13 pounds) in weight—half that of bronze stags, and one-third of the supersized supermarket turkeys which are the centerpiece for traditional British Christmas meals. Chilcott says that is still plenty for a gathering under the government's "rule of six" in parts of England where households are still allowed to mix. Restrictions are fast evolving, and many more families will likely be forbidden any visitors by December if infection rates remain high or rise further. "If we run out of small sizes, then people have to have crowns or joints or half turkeys," the farmer told AFP after tossing fruit to his raucous black flock, a change on their usual diet of grain pellets. "But we expect to sell out easily this year. Demand's really quite good... as far as sales go, we're ahead of last year."



Bronze turkey hens are seen at Mark Chilcott's Glebe Farm.



A bronze turkey stag is seen at Mark Chilcott's Glebe Farm.

Other farmers who took the wrong bet, hoping for restrictions to relax by the festive season, risk being saddled with oversized turkeys that could leave smaller family groups bloated with post-Yule curries and sandwiches. British Poultry Council chief executive Richard Griffiths recommends those suppliers slaughter and freeze their birds earlier, before they have grown to full size.

Crying fowl

Many farmers have already been making the switch as Britons turn away from frozen turkeys sourced from battery farms to smaller free-range ones, or opt for a more traditional goose, according to the industry council. But keen to see demand hold up on last year's sales of nine million

turkeys, Griffiths advised: "If people can't get together in large families then it might be worth taking what's available—even slightly larger birds—rather than missing out." Farmers can do their best to adapt, but some things can't be helped in the middle of a pandemic.

Customers at the Chilcott farm will miss out this year on the customary mince pie and glass of mulled cider when they come to pick up their pre-ordered turkeys. Social distancing means they must stay in their car while Chilcott, his wife or two children load their boxed order into the boot. The family, including Chilcott's parents who started the farm in the 1960s, will be working "right to the last minute" to fulfill orders before settling down to their own roast on Christmas Day.

After that, there could be a fraught few days leading up to the industry's next big deadline: January 1, when Britain could well be embarking on a "no deal" divorce from the European Union. Some British farmers are keen to escape the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, which they see as environmentally disastrous and rigged in favor of continental rivals. But Griffiths said the poultry industry is concerned about the consequences of no-deal on "just in time" deliveries across borders of eggs, newborn chicks and fresh birds. Chilcott faces a bigger challenge from the possibility of a UK-US free trade deal in the aftermath of Brexit, if it entails stiffer competition from hormone-fed or chlorine-washed US fowl. For now, he is pleased that his punt on petite poultry is paying off. —AFP

Sports

Photo of the Day



A participant performs during the Red Bull Box Cart Race in Tokyo, Japan. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Lopez stuns Lomachenko in a unification title fight

LOS ANGELES: Unbeaten Teofimo Lopez upset Vasily Lomachenko by a unanimous decision on Saturday to become the undisputed world light-weight champion in Las Vegas. Lopez defended his 135-pound IBF light-weight title and seized the WBC, WBO and WBA belts from Ukraine's Lomachenko who suffered his first loss in six years. "I am ready to take over the world," said Lopez, who won by scores of 119-109, 117-111 and 116-112. Lopez, 16-0 with 12 knockouts, became the light-weight king in a fight that appeared to be closer than the lopsided judges' scorecards indicated at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.

In the biggest fight of his career, Lopez, of the US, dominated the first half before Lomachenko came storming back in the later rounds to set the stage for a thrilling final round. At 23, Lopez is the youngest fighter to become a four belt undisputed champion. He did it in an empty MGM arena where spectators were banned because of the coronavirus pandemic. Lopez received a nasty cut over the right eye from an accidental head butt in the final round but was able to continue.

Lomachenko, defending for the fourth time the title he took from Venezuelan Jorge Linares in 2018, bristled at the decision and immediately left the ring after the scores were announced. "I think I won the fight," said Lomachenko. "But I am not going to argue it now. "In the first half of the fight he won more rounds. In the second half I took it over. I don't agree with the scorecards. " Lomachenko is an unusually slow starter and that was the case once again on Saturday. He didn't start landing meaningful combinations until the seventh or eighth round which left him with a huge hole to climb out of. — AFP

Arozarena named MVP as Rays reach World Series

Dodgers force game seven

LOS ANGELES: The Tampa Bay Rays punched their ticket to their second World Series in franchise history with a 4-2 win over the Houston Astros in a decisive game seven of the American League Championship Series on Saturday. Rookie Randy Arozarena clubbed a two-run homer in the first inning and Charlie Morton worked 5 2/3 solid innings for the Rays, who won the series 4-3 and await the winner of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Atlanta Braves clash which is also headed to a game seven on Sunday.

Arozarena belted a two-run homer in the first inning and now has seven homers in the postseason, matching his total from the regular season. He was named the MVP of the ALCS as the Rays celebrated their victory on the field at Petco Park in San Diego. "He is the best player on the planet. It's incredible," said Rays outfielder Kevin Kiermaier of Arozarena. Mike Zunino also slugged an early home run as the Rays salvaged their season and recovered from the shock of being in a winner-take-all showdown after cruising to victories in the first three games then losing three straight.

"Every night we have a different hero. Except for Randy Arozarena. He's the hero every night," said Rays Austin Meadows. The Rays' win prevented the Astros from becoming just the second team in Major League Baseball history to storm back from a 3-0 deficit. Tampa Bay reached the World Series in 2008 before losing to the Philadelphia Phillies. Rays starter Morton allowed just two hits, struck out six batters and walked one against the Astros.

Houston ace Lance McCullers struck out seven

but allowed four hits, three runs and two home runs in just 3 2/3 innings of work. Following a tumultuous offseason and a regular season in which they underperformed, the Astros regrouped in the postseason. Their 2017 World Series championship lost much of its luster after a MLB probe found Houston illegally stole opponents' signs that year. "This group of guys is so special, the way we fought back from adversity," said Astros shortstop Carlos Correa on Saturday.

Dodgers 'very comfortable'

In the NLCS, the Dodgers used another first-inning scoring burst to stay alive in the playoffs, beating the Braves 3-1 to force a decisive game. The Dodgers are one win from advancing to their third World Series appearance in four years after pulling level at 3-3 in the best-of-seven series. Game seven is in the neutral site of Arlington, Texas with a limited number of spectators allowed to attend because of the coronavirus pandemic. "Our team is feeling very comfortable," said Dodgers starting pitcher Walker Buehler. "I expect the same feeling tomorrow."

Corey Seager and Justin Turner hit consecutive home runs for the Dodgers, who trailed 2-0 and 3-1 in the series but will now play a game seven to keep their bid to win their first World Series title since 1988 alive. Seager slammed his fifth home run of the series and Turner launched a 418-foot shot to center-field as the Dodgers long-ball hitters once again took a jackhammer to the Braves' starting pitcher with three runs in the opening inning. The Dodgers scored 11 runs in the first inning of game three en route to a



ARLINGTON: Enrique Hernandez #14 of the Los Angeles Dodgers attempts to throw out the runner against the Atlanta Braves during the second inning in Game Six of the National League Championship Series at Globe Life Field on October 17, 2020. — AFP

crushing 15-3 victory.

"You have to give credit where credit is due," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "They have really good pitchers over there. They bring guys out of the bullpen with 100-mph sinkers. That's hard to get ahold of. They have experienced guys. "Sometimes

you get on rolls and you get in those situations and guys are getting big hits, and sometimes they aren't." Buehler worked six superb shutout innings, allowing seven hits and striking out six batters. He allowed no walks. Buehler didn't mind being pulled from the game after the sixth inning. — AFP

New record for Jepchirchir but Cheptegei misses out

GDYNIA: Kenyan Peres Jepchirchir lowered her own world record for an all-women's half marathon at the world championships in Gdynia on Saturday but serial record-breaker Joshua Cheptegei missed out on a medal in the men's race. The 27-year-old Jepchirchir, who also won world half marathon gold in 2016, produced a final sprint to take the women's title in 1hr 5min 16sec. That bettered the previous best set by Jepchirchir herself in Prague on September 5 of 1hr 5min 34sec.

"It's unbelievable," said Jepchirchir. "My goal was to win this race. I did not expect that I would beat the world record, but I realized that it could happen when we passed 20km. "It was a little bit windy, but the course was good for me." She came home just two seconds clear of Germany's Melat Yisak Kejeta, who smashed the European women-only record to take silver in 1hr 5min 18secs, with Ethiopia's Yalemzerf Yehualaw a further second behind.

On a cold and windy morning, a group of favorites broke away early during the four-lap race but three of them suffered falls to disappear from contention. Defending champion Netsanet Gudeta's race almost came to an abrupt stop as the leaders took a 90-degree turn on to the seafront, the defending champion taking a fall and losing several seconds to the leaders. It was a gap she would never close, the Ethiopian slipping farther behind during the third lap.

Turkey's Yasemin Can led a group of seven through 10km in 30mins 47sec after which Jepchirchir began to take control. The

Ethiopian Ababel Yeshaneh, world record holder in a mixed race (1hr 4min 31sec), then tangled with Joyciline Jepkosgei and both crashed to the ground, leaving Jepchirchir, Kejeta and Yehualaw to battle it out in the final sprint.

Cheptegei disappointment

Jacob Kiplimo took the men's race in a new championship record of 58min 49sec but his Ugandan compatriot Cheptegei, the favorite for the title, could only finish fourth. Kiplimo, who turns 20 next month, had never raced the 21.1km distance before but he showed nerves of steel as he and the Kenyan Kibiwott Kandie broke away from

the leading pack after the 15km mark. The 2017 world junior cross champion then pushed clear in the last few meters to edge Kandie by five seconds and secure his first major title. The Ethiopian Amedework Walegn took bronze, coming in another 14 seconds behind.

Cheptegei finished fourth in 59min 21sec, over half a minute behind Kiplimo, a rare disappointment for an athlete who has lit up a truncated 2020 season. "I couldn't give more than that," said Cheptegei, who set a world 10,000m record in Valencia just 10 days ago. "I have been training more for 5000m and 10,000m so I was not well prepared for it, but I'm very happy-running a sub-60 (minute) is really special for me. "My body was really going very well but I discovered I still had some fatigue in the legs." The 24-year-old had only made three outings this year but each time had broken a world record. — AFP



GDYNIA: Peres Jepchirchir of Kenya beats the World Record (1:05:16) and wins the women's race of the 2020 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships in Gdynia, Poland on October 17, 2020. — AFP

Doyle, Marquand keep romance on track

LONDON: Hollie Doyle is the "boss", according to boyfriend and fellow jockey Tom Marquand, but as far as she is concerned, he is "the romantic". However, on Saturday, honors were shared at British Champions Day at Ascot. Doyle had gone 2-0 up after the first two races—including her first Group One success on Glen Shiel in The Sprint. However, Marquand, 22 and two years younger than Doyle, fought back to level at 2-2 in the feature race, the Champion Stakes, on Addeybb, and then the last with Doyle finishing second.

"It is ridiculous. How could you write that?" said Marquand. "It will be a happy house tonight. We are so lucky to be with each other since I was 14." Marquand generously conceded that Doyle had carried the day but he has got used to it. For in his first competitive ride in a pony race he had to watch as his mount got stuck in the mud and Doyle won the contest. Doyle hails from a horse racing family—her Irish father is a former jockey and her mother rode in Arab races—while Marquand's was more centered around horsepower and car racing.

Such was Marquand's passion for riding he struck a deal with his father Richard when he said he wanted to take the family and go on a two year sailing trip. "I said I would do it pro-

vided I could ride at every place we stopped," Marquand told The Times this week. "And I did everywhere bar Morocco. I rode a Shetland pony in Corsica, an Arab Stallion up in the mountains in Sardinia and a huge big horse on the sands near Almeria." Those experiences served him well and he was crowned champion apprentice in 2015.

Doyle took a bit longer to earn her spurs on the racecourse but 116 winners last year and bettering that this week—a record for a female jockey in Britain—confirmed her meteoric rise. This season has also seen her win for the first time at Royal Ascot with her maiden success at group level coming at Newmarket.

'Pass as children'

Doyle, though, is more pleased by one thing than any other. "I am really happy at people seeing me as a jockey not a female jockey," she said. She is presently fourth in the jockeys' championship as the season nears its climax and inevitably questions arise as to whether she could actually win it some time in the future. "To be champion jockey would be an absolute dream, but we will see how it goes," she said. "I am in fourth in the table at the minute and I can't really do any more than I am doing. "I think people sometimes think jockeys sit back and think 'I might try and be champion this year', but realistically most of us are trying as hard as we can all year round." Success has not gone to the heads of the couple. "She was recognized by a taxi driver the other day!" joked Marquand. — AFP

14 Arozarena named MVP as Rays reach World Series



14 Lopez stuns Lomachenko in a unification title fight



15 Barcelona and Real Madrid both lose ahead of Clasico



Spurs rocked on Bale's return

Mitrovic suffers penalty misery; Sheffield, Fulham open accounts with draw



LONDON: Tottenham concede a third goal during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: West Ham ruined Gareth Bale's Tottenham return with a stunning late fightback from three goals down to rescue a thrilling 3-3 draw, while Fulham's Aleksandar Mitrovic endured a penalty nightmare in a 1-1 draw at Sheffield United yesterday. Tottenham were leading 3-0 when Bale came on as a 72nd minute substitute for his first appearance since joining on a season-long loan from Real Madrid. But Bale suffered a debut to forget as Tottenham capitulated in astonishing fashion.

The Wales star was one of the main Tottenham culprits as he missed a golden opportunity to wrap up the points before West Ham's Manuel Lanzini snatched a stoppage-time equalizer. Tottenham took the lead with just 45 seconds gone when Son Heung-min and Harry Kane combined to create a goal for the seventh time this season.

Kane was the catalyst, dropping deep into midfield before unfurling a majestic long pass that found Son, who cut into the West Ham area and curled his shot into the far corner. It was Kane's turn to get on the scoresheet in the eighth minute as he nutmegged Declan Rice and fired into the bottom

corner from the edge of the area. Tottenham's sizzling start featured a third goal in the 16th minute, with England captain Kane heading in from Sergio Reguilon's pin-point cross for his 10th goal of the season.

Having crushed Manchester United 6-1 in their last game before the international break, Jose Mourinho's side looked odds on for another emphatic victory. Back at Tottenham seven years after leaving for Real in a then world record deal, Bale hopes to prove he is still a world-class talent despite a long spell out of favor with Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane. But it was West Ham who were the dominant force after Bale's introduction to replace Steven Bergwijn.

Fabian Balbuena nodded in from Aaron Cresswell's cross after 82 minutes and Davinson Sanchez's headed own goal from Vladimir Coufal's delivery three minutes later left Tottenham panicking. Bale should have scored in stoppage-time, but he shot wide after bursting into the area and Lanzini made him pay with a brilliant 25-yard blast into the top corner. It was just the third time in Premier League history that a side has avoided defeat despite

trailing by at least three goals going into the 80th minute.

Mitrovic misery

At Bramall Lane, Fulham's Mitrovic fired over with his second half penalty after Jack Robinson handled. On-loan Leipzig winger Ademola Lookman put Fulham ahead in the 77th minute with a superb solo effort, beating two men before firing into the roof of the net. But Serbia international Mitrovic was penalised for a high foot on Robinson in the 85th minute following a VAR check and Billy Sharp made him pay as he drove his penalty down the middle.

Mitrovic is the first player to commit the unwanted penalty double in the same Premier League game since Mikel Arteta for Arsenal against Fulham in 2012. Fulham at least moved off the bottom of the table after taking their first point at the fifth attempt, following last season's promotion from the Championship. United also avoided defeat for the first time in five games this season. Alexis Mac Allister's first Premier League goal gave Brighton a dramatic 1-1 draw at rivals Crystal Palace.

Palace took the lead in the 19th



SHEFFIELD: Fulham's Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic (right) fouls Sheffield United's English defender Jack Robinson (left) for a penalty to Sheffield during the English Premier League football match between Sheffield United and Fulham yesterday. — AFP

minute when Tariq Lamptey was harshly adjudged to have pulled down Michy Batshuayi in the penalty area. Ivory Coast forward Wilfried Zaha sent Brighton keeper Mat Ryan the wrong way from the spot for his fourth goal of the season. But, after a poor clearance

from Palace defender Joel Ward, Argentine substitute Mac Allister fired home via a slight deflection from the edge of the area in the 90th minute. Brighton had defender Lewis Dunk sent off for a two-footed lunge on Gary Cahill in stoppage-time. — AFP

Paciencia header earns Schalke the first point

BERLIN: Bundesliga crisis club Schalke picked up their first point of the season yesterday as Goncalo Paciencia's second-half equalizer rescued a 1-1 draw at home to Union Berlin. Paciencia's 69th minute header ended a nightmare start to the season for Schalke, who began the day with no points and one goal from their first three games. After a cagey first half, Marvin Friedrich nodded in a Christopher Trimmel cross to put Union ahead shortly after the break.

Schalke coach Manuel Baum, who replaced David Wagner last month, responded by bringing on Paciencia, who leveled the scores with 20 minutes to play. After former Union player Steven Skrzybski had forced a corner on the counter-attack, the Portuguese striker found the net with a glancing header at the near post. The draw lifts Schalke off bottom spot and gives Baum's side a timely boost

ahead of next week's derby at Borussia Dortmund. Yet the seven-time German champions are still without a win in 20 league games, in a miserable run which stretches back to January.

Silva still on song

Elsewhere, Eintracht Frankfurt and Portugal striker Andre Silva continued his electric early season form with a third goal in four Bundesliga games as his side drew 1-1 away to Cologne. Frankfurt missed the chance to draw level on points with league leaders RB Leipzig after Silva's first-half penalty was cancelled out by Ondrej Duda's equalizer. The visitors dominated a scrappy first half, and were rewarded just before the break when Sebastiaan Bornauw brought down Japan international Daichi Kamada in the box.

Silva stepped up, and slotted the ball past Timo Horn to give his side a deserved lead. The Portuguese, who completed a permanent move from AC Milan last month, now has four goals from five games in all competitions. Duda leveled the scores shortly after half-time, blasting in a sharp cross from Kingsley Ehizibue to secure Cologne their first point of the season. Frankfurt now sit in fourth after four games, with only Leipzig, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund having enjoyed a better start to the season. — AFP

Sassuolo hit back to beat Bologna

ROME: Irrepressible Sassuolo scored three goals in 13 minutes as they charged back from 3-1 down to win 4-3 at Bologna in their Serie A derby yesterday, moving up to second place in the league and remaining unbeaten so far. An own goal by Takehiro Tomiyasu settled a see-saw match as Sassuolo scored four for the third game in a row. The Serie A dark horses now have 10 points from four games and sit proudly above teams such as Napoli, Juventus and Inter Milan. AC Milan lead the table with a maximum 12 points. Roberto Soriano gave Bologna a ninth minute lead when he finished off a flowing passing move, but Domenico Berardi curled in an equaliser nine minutes later after being allowed too much space on the edge of the area.

Mattias Svanberg put Bologna back in front six minutes before the break from Rodrigo Palacio's through ball, and Riccardo Orsolini dispossessed Manuel Locatelli to score their third on the hour. Filip Djuricic began the fight back four minutes later, exchanging passes with Francesco Caputo before

scoring from a narrow angle. Then Caputo, who scored on his Italy debut at the age of 33 earlier this month, headed Sassuolo level in the 70th minute after Palacio miskicked an attempted clearance from a corner.

The momentum was now with Sassuolo and they won the match seven minutes later when the hapless Tomiyasu attempted to intercept a cross and turned the ball into his own goal from six metres. Bologna have three points from four games. The goals continued to flow in two later matches. Torino slumped to their third straight defeat when they lost 3-2 at home to Cagliari despite taking a fourth minute lead with an Andrea Belotti penalty. Joao Pedro levelled from close range and Giovanni Simeone took advantage of poor defending to put the Sardinians 2-1 ahead inside 20 minutes.

Belotti levelled with an opportunist goal after the re-start but Simeone gave Cagliari their first win of the season when he scored from close range in the 73rd minute after a mistake by Torino goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu. Meanwhile, Fiorentina were held 2-2 at promoted Spezia despite scoring twice in the opening five minutes. German Pezzella headed them in front for a corner and Cristiano Biraghi doubled their lead from Pol Lirola's cross. Daniele Verde pulled one back before halftime and Diego Farias levelled in the 75th minute after Fiorentina failed to clear a corner. — Reuters