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Local airlines propose plan for quarantining in Kuwait

500,000 have benefited from Shlonik app • Kuwait records 813 new COVID cases, 7 deaths



KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Chairman Ali Al-Dukhan tours Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 4 yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways have proposed a plan to local authorities to allow passengers to spend their quarantine period in Kuwait instead of a third country, Kuwait Airways Chairman Ali Al-Dukhan announced yesterday. According to the plan, each airline will carry out necessary health tests on arriving passengers at its respective terminal, including PCR tests. The passenger would then be allowed to enter Kuwait directly and tested again before the end of their quarantine period.

This will allow flights to operate 24 hours a day, which will help boost revenues of aviation companies and relevant state departments, Dukhan said during a tour of Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 4 yesterday. Currently, passengers from 34 countries are not allowed to enter Kuwait unless they spend a 14-day quarantine period in a third country.

Dukhan said the proposal will ease procedures for travel and implementation of health protocols will be smooth and flexible. It will also allow for the airline to slowly reintroduce destinations it had halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said Kuwait Airways is keen on following cautionary guidelines by having its employees wear masks, implementing social distancing, providing sanitizers and displaying health instructions at the airport and onboard aircraft. Planes are sanitized after each flight, along with buses, equipment and luggage carriers.



Dukhan said Kuwait Airways and the aviation sector in general are going through tough circumstances due to the coronavirus pandemic, which had a major impact on this sector after operations were halted and customers had to be refunded.

Meanwhile, the Shlonik application is one of the most important technological developments Kuwait. **Continued on Page 2**

News in brief

450 kg of meth seized

MANAMA: A British warship has seized more than 450 kg of methamphetamines in the Arabian Sea, a record for the multi-national flotilla patrolling international waters around the Gulf. Crew on board the Royal Navy frigate HMS Montrose confiscated the drugs from a "suspicious vessel" during a counter-narcotics operation, the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) said in a statement yesterday. — Agencies

Saudis launch AI strategy

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia yesterday launched a national artificial intelligence strategy aimed at making it a global leader in the field as it seeks to diversify its oil-based economy. The National Strategy for Data and Artificial Intelligence (NSDAI) will seek to attract \$20 billion in foreign and local investments by 2030, a NSDAI statement said. — Reuters (See Page 2)

Pollution killed 500K newborns

WASHINGTON: Air pollution killed 476,000 newborns in 2019, with the biggest hotspots in India and Sub-Saharan Africa, according to a new global study which said that nearly two-thirds of the deaths came from noxious fumes from cooking fuels. More than 116,000 Indian infants died from air pollution in the first month of life, and the corresponding figure was 236,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the State of Global Air 2020. — AFP

Iran tests air defense systems

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday tested home-made air defense systems during military exercises, state media said. The maneuvers took place in "an area covering half of the country's surface", Irnews website reported, adding targets at medium and high altitudes were shot down by Iran's Khordad 3 and Khordad 15 air defense systems and that fighter jets took part in the maneuvers. — AFP

India to roll out quick, cheap test

NEW DELHI: A fast and cheap paper-based coronavirus test will soon be available across India, with scientists hopeful it will help turn the tide on the pandemic in one of the world's worst-hit nations. India has recorded more than 7.5 million infections, second only to the United States, and the outbreak has spread from densely packed megacities like Mumbai to rural communities with limited medical services.

The locally developed Feluda, named for a detective in a famous

Indian novel series, resembles a home pregnancy paper-strip test and delivers results within an hour. Researchers are optimistic that its low cost and ease of use can help stem the pathogen's spread in poor and remote areas.

"This test doesn't require any sophisticated equipment or highly trained manpower," said co-creator Souvik Maiti, a scientist at New Delhi's CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB). "There are lots of remote parts of India where you do not have any sophisticated laboratories... (The test) will be much easier to deploy; it will have much more penetration."

India currently diagnoses COVID-19 with either RT-PCR tests, which are highly accurate but require

Continued on Page 2



NEW DELHI: A researcher holds a sheet with paper strip samples for coronavirus tests at a laboratory on Oct 7, 2020. — AFP

Peru unveils cat etching at famous site

LIMA: A giant 2,000-year-old figure of a feline that was on the brink of disappearing will be the new cat's meow when Peru's remarkable Nazca Lines attraction reopens to tourists in November. The geoglyph is around 37 m long and was recently discovered by a drone on a hillside, the culture ministry said. "The figure was barely visible and was about to disappear due to the effects of natural erosion as it's on a fairly steep slope," said the ministry.

A group of archeologists took on the job of cleaning and preserving the geoglyph, which shows a cat with its body in profile but its head front on. The lines making up its outline were mostly well defined and 30-40 cm wide. Experts say its stylistic features mean it is from the late Paracas period, more than 2,000 years ago and older than the other famous Nazca figures such as the mockingbird, monkey, and spider.

"Feline representations of this type are common in the iconography of ceramics and textiles of the Paracas society," said the ministry. The people that formed the Nazca civilization in that area of southwestern Peru lived there from 200 to 700 AD, but the cat dates from 200-100 BC. The Paracas culture lived in the area from 800-100 BC



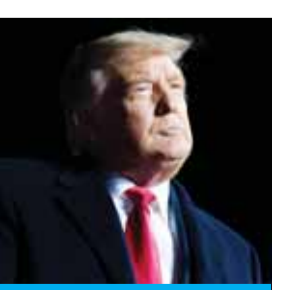
This undated handout picture shows a giant cat figure etched onto a slope in the desert near the town of Nasca in southern Peru. — AFP

and is believed to have been responsible for the Palpa Lines, which are similar to but less famous than the nearby Nazca ones.

The Nazca Lines, most of which are only visible from the sky, were made by people making incisions on the desert floor to leave different colored dirt exposed. They are made up of thousands of lines including geometric patterns as well as the more famous animal figures. The reason for their creation is unknown but some theories include astrological and religious significance, as well as indicators of water sources. The area, some 350 km south of Peru's capital Lima, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. — AFP

Trump records show Chinese bank account

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump spent years cultivating business projects in China, where he maintained a previously unknown bank account, The New York Times reported Tuesday, as the US president attempts to portray election rival Joe Biden as weaker on Beijing. Trump has spent recent days promoting a murky claim that Biden's son Hunter sold access to his father in Ukraine and China when he was vice president under Barack Obama.



Donald Trump

It is Trump, however, who maintained an office in China during his first run for president, and partnered with a major government-controlled company, the Times reported.

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Local

Crown Prince praises KFAED's efforts to combat COVID-19

Sheikh Mishal meets Foreign Minister, KFAED officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Director-General Abdulwahab Al-Bader and KFAED board members. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Director-General Abdulwahab Al-Bader and KFAED board members.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah alongside Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Director-General Abdulwahab Al-Bader and KFAED board members at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness praised KFAED's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, His Highness the Crown Prince gave instructions to the KFAED director and staff on promoting international development. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad, the KFAED Director-General and board members at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

Deputy FM meets Belgian ambassador



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets Belgium's Ambassador Leo Peeters. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday met Belgium's Ambassador Leo Peeters on the occasion of the chief diplomat's assumption of his new role. The two

discussed bilateral relations and the latest regional and global developments. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ayham Al-Omar attended the meeting. — KUNA

IICO provides food to refugees in Jordan



AMMAN: Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) yesterday distributed food packages to 450 poor and deprived families in Jordan, bearing the name of the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Daihani said, from the food parcel delivery site at Hittin camp for refugees, that Kuwait will continue its humanitarian relief policies, which were established by the late Amir. Humanitarian action will also remain a feature under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he underlined.

Consequently, the Assistant Supervisor for IICO's Office in Jordan Ziad Abu Taleb said that this humanitarian campaign comes as a fulfillment from the late Amir. Each parcel distributed contained 11 essential food items, he noted. Abu Taleb added that IICO, in line with 26 accredited charitable societies in Jordan, will deliver aid to the deprived and poor families throughout the Kingdom, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees. He thanked and expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti people, along with the philanthropists in the charity for their continued benevolence and generosity. — KUNA

Trump records show Chinese...

Continued from Page 1

Trump additionally keeps a previously unknown bank account in China, controlled by Trump International Hotels Management, according to an analysis of his tax records by the paper. It is one of only three foreign nations - including Britain and Ireland - in which he does so.

The tax records show the company "paid \$188,561 in taxes in China while pursuing licensing deals there from 2013 to 2015," the Times reported. Trump

Organization lawyer Alan Garten said the company had "opened an account with a Chinese bank having offices in the United States in order to pay the local taxes". "No deals, transactions or other business activities ever materialized and, since 2015, the office has remained inactive," he told The Times. "Though the bank account remains open, it has never been used for any other purpose."

Under his "America First" banner, Trump has portrayed China as the greatest threat to the United States and global democracy. He has launched a massive trade war that has cost China billions of dollars, harangued Chinese tech firms and laid blame for the coronavirus pandemic with Beijing. Even so, in 2008 Trump attempted an ultimately unsuccessful office tower project in Guangzhou, and in 2012 he opened a Shanghai office, the Times said. — AFP

which recently earned its inventors Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Feluda has been granted government regulatory approval and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said last week it could be rolled out in the next few weeks within that timeframe. India will be one of the first countries in the world to begin mass use of such a test.

The price has not been released, but local media said it could cost around 500 rupees (\$6.80) - around a fifth of what a PCR test costs in New Delhi. The current prototype requires a PCR machine for processing, but scientists are working on a saliva or self-swabbing version that can be used at home, co-founder and IGIB scientist Debojyoti Chakraborty said. — AFP

was later expanded to include contacts of positive cases and coronavirus patients, he added.

The app allows quarantined people to enter important data and report symptoms as soon as they appear so that medical teams can discover positive cases as quickly as possible and place them under appropriate medical care, Ghimlas said. He called on all people registered in the Shlonik app to follow instructions and respond to notifications sent to them, as well as abide by quarantine procedures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Kuwait's confirmed coronavirus cases increased by 813 to 118,531 in the past 24 hours, with seven people succumbing to the disease, raising the death toll to 721, the health ministry said yesterday. It said 130 people are currently receiving intensive care out of a total of 7,894 patients hospitalized. Some 7,560 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 849,662 tests. Earlier, the ministry said 718 people recovered from the virus, taking the total number of those who have overcome the disease to 109,916.

India to roll out quick...

Continued from Page 1

advanced lab machinery, or antigen tests, which can give results in just a few minutes at a limited cost but with significantly lower accuracy. Feluda, like other inexpensive paper-based tests being developed in other countries, claims to combine the accuracy of the PCR test with the accessibility of the antigen kits.

It uses the gene-editing technique CRISPR-Cas9,

Local airlines propose plan...

Continued from Page 1

has introduced, and the health ministry has benefited from it as part of its plan to combat the spread of COVID-19. Around half a million people have benefited from this app, director of the public health department and the head of the main committee of the Shlonik application at the ministry of health, Dr Fahd Al-Ghimlas, told KUNA yesterday.

The application's aim is to follow up suspected cases of COVID-19 during home quarantine and those who are infected, Ghimlas said. The app was launched in mid-April 2020 with the aim of following up people arriving from abroad during the citizens' evacuation campaign. Its use

Saudis launch national artificial intel strategy

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday launched a national artificial intelligence strategy aimed at making it a global leader in the field as it seeks to diversify its oil-based economy. The National Strategy for Data and Artificial Intelligence (NSDAI) will seek to attract \$20 billion in foreign and local investments by 2030, a NSDAI statement said.

Speaking at the opening of the kingdom's Global AI Summit, the head of the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA) - which will spearhead the NSDAI strategy - said Riyadh would announce several AI partnerships. "Saudi Arabia will implement a multi-phase, multi-faceted plan that includes skills, policy and regulation, investment, research and innovation, and ecosystem development," the statement said.

Saudi Arabia is pushing to diversify its economy away from oil, boost the private sector and create

more jobs for Saudis under its "Vision 2030" plan. The kingdom aims to train 2,000 Saudi data and AI specialists over the next 10 years, SDAIA head Abdullah bin Sharaf Alghamdi told Reuters.

Saudi Arabia has a strong foundation for its AI ambitions, based on the country's unique scale in critical industries, and its position as an investment powerhouse. The kingdom also has a young population and a desire for large-scale programs such as Vision 2030. Upcoming Saudi megaprojects including NEOM smart city and Qiddiya entertainment capital will provide testbeds for advanced AI.

The kingdom has implemented a unique data infrastructure with a centralized ecosystem of resources to support government to successfully complete AI initiatives, including a National Data Bank, G-Cloud, and a whole-government analytics and AI platform.

The implementation of the NSDAI will follow a multi-phase approach, which will focus on addressing the immediate national requirements for Saudi Arabia until 2025, particularly the Vision 2030 strategic development goals. From 2025 until 2030, Saudi Arabia will focus on developing specialisms in specific areas of AI, to become one of the leading AI and data-driven economies by 2030. — Agencies



RIYADH: Guests attend the Global AI 2020 (Artificial Intelligence) Summit in the Saudi capital yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir receives Crown Prince, Speaker, Prime Minister

Member of the Libyan Presidency offers condolences



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 at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received member of the Libyan Presidency of the

Government of National Accord Abdulsalam Othman Kajman, who offered condolences on the passing of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Kajman also congratulated His Highness the Amir on assuming office. Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Chief Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah, Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Undersecretary

and Director of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Al-Fahad and Director of the Amiri Diwan Protocols Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled at Bayan Palace. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also received member of the Libyan Presidency of the Government of National Accord

Abdulsalam Othman Kajman, who offered condolences on the demise of Kuwait's late Amir. Kajman also congratulated His Highness the Crown Prince on taking the oath of office, wishing him further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir. Furthermore, Kajman offered condolences to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled in a separate meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday. — 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 member of the Libyan Presidency of the Government of National Accord Abdulsalam Othman Kajman.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets member of the Libyan Presidency of the Government of National Accord Abdulsalam Othman Kajman.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets member of the Libyan Presidency of the Government of National Accord Abdulsalam Othman Kajman.

News in brief

German Chancellor sends congratulations

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday a congratulatory cable from the Chancellor of Germany Dr Angela Merkel, on the occasion of assuming power. In the cable, Merkel hoped His Highness the Amir has unstoppable success and development in Kuwait. In turn, His Highness the Amir sent a cable in which he thanked and expressed appreciation to the German leader, wishing her the best of health, hoping Germany will have further progress and prosperity. —KUNA

Iranian President congratulates

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday a cable of congratulations from Iranian President Dr Hassan Rouhani, in which he congratulated him on the occasion of assuming power. In the cable, Rouhani hopes to continue to strengthen ties between Kuwait and Iran, hoping His Highness the Amir has unstoppable success and development in Kuwait. In turn, His Highness the Amir thanked and appreciated the wholesome message, embracing the strong ties between Kuwait and Iran, wishing him the best of health and further progress and prosperity in Iran. — KUNA

Japan PM greets

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday a cable of congratulations from Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, in which he congratulated him on the occasion of assuming power. In the cable, Suga hopes to continue to strengthen ties between Kuwait and Japan, hoping His Highness the Amir has unstoppable success and further development in Kuwait. In a reply cable, His Highness the Amir thanked and appreciated the wholesome message, embracing the strong and historical ties between both sides, wishing him the best of health and further progress in Japan. — KUNA

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Minister regulates waste management at construction sites

KUWAIT: All contractors should provide waste containers at their construction sites in order to minimize risks caused by these wastes on the environment, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Waleed Al-Jassem said yesterday. Limiting the dumping of waste in construction sites will contribute to cleaner areas and healthier environment, he said in a statement to the press. Jassem said he sent a letter to the Director General of Kuwait Municipality to oblige contractors to place containers in their construction sites to be used for their waste. Contractors violating the regulations would be held accountable, he added. — KUNA



Minister of State for
Municipal Affairs
Waleed Al-Jassem

Souq Mubarakia open without appointments

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Souq Mubarakia is open to all now without restrictions and no appointments are needed to shop or visit. Restrictions were imposed when the market reopened in July and stayed in place until early September. "The market is now open to all, but we practice social distancing and check the temperature of shoppers at all the entry points of the market," said an Indian security guard.

All entrances of Souq Mubarakia are now open. "I came just to check if Mubarakia is open to customers: the last time I came was a month ago, and they still required shoppers to have appointments," said a Filipino shopper who came from Salmiya.

The coronavirus outbreak led to the total closure of Souq Mubarakia on April 4. The market reopened on May 31, but other souqs and malls were only allowed to reopen on June 30. Souq Mubarakia is a popular shopping destination for citizens and expats alike, with its traditional shops, eateries, cafes and teahouses.

KNPC operates Clean Fuel Project's boilers at Mina Abdullah refinery

Each boiler has production capacity of 380,000 pounds per hour

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) announced operating all boilers for the Clean Fuels Project (CFP) at the company's Mina Abdullah refinery, which covers the project's needs of steam needed to operate its various units. This process is done through gas combustion operations that take into account the allowed limits of emis-

for projects and official spokesperson of KNPC. The production capacity of each boiler amounts to 380,000 pounds per hour, which can be increased when needed, to reach 420,000 pounds per hour, Ajmi added.

The boilers are the main artery for operating rotating equipment in the project, as steam is also used in heat exchange operations, he added. Ajmi stressed that the company has fully relied on its trained national cadres in operating these boilers and has thus been able to overcome many challenges due to COVID-19 spread. Last April, KNPC announced completion of CFP at Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery, while work continues to complete the remaining units at Mina Abdullah. This project, when fully operational, will develop the company's refining capabilities and enhance safety levels at Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries. The project will also support the use of energy with high efficiency, as the refineries together produce 800,000 barrels per day of high-quality oil products



KNPC spokesperson
Abdullah Al-Ajmi



that are compatible with global environmental requirements such as (Euro 4) and (Euro 5), which contributes to opening new and more profitable markets for the company's products. — KUNA



Emissions within environmental levels

sions approved by the Environment Public Authority (EPA). Operating the high-pressure six boilers enables the company to secure full production and provide units of the project with steam, said Abdullah Al-Ajmi, the executive vice president

Kuwait oil price down by 19 cents to hit \$41.27: KPC

KUWAIT: Kuwait's oil price dropped 19 cents to reach \$41.27 per barrel in Tuesday's trading, compared to \$41.46 pb on Monday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KNPC) said yesterday. West Texas Intermediate's (WTI) futures ended trading climbing by 63 cents to reach \$41.46 pb, and Brent crude futures also went up by 54 cents to reach \$43.16 pb. Meanwhile, the OPEC daily basket dropped and stood at \$41.04 per barrel Tuesday compared with \$41.38 the previous day, the organization said yesterday. OPEC said 2019 average price was \$52.43 pb.

OPEC said in a recent report that global demand for its crude in 2020 dropped by around seven million barrels per day to \$22.4 million bpd. It anticipated international demand on its crudes to increase by 5.6 million bpd to 27.9 million bpd in 2021. The Joint Ministerial Market Monitoring Committee had earlier this week reaffirmed commitment of OPEC and non-OPEC countries to the OPEC+, which aimed cutting nine million barrels per



day to restore stability in oil markets.

The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela). — KUNA

Indian government applauds ICSG for community service

KUWAIT: Visiting Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan praised and thanked the Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) for their selfless service to distressed Indian community members impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown in Kuwait.

Minister Pradhan told a select gathering of community members that the government of India appreciated and thanked ICSG's efforts in coming to the aid of their fellow countrymen in times of crises. Indian Ambassador Sibi George also expressed his gratitude to ICSG committee for rising to the occasion. The Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) which was set up by the Embassy of India worked tirelessly during the lockdown and curfew periods distributing more than 16,000 food kits equivalent to half a million cooked meals.

The committee with its team of volunteers reached out to people in distress with the support of Indian Embassy and Najat Charitable

Society, and the group were able to serve the needy. ICSG is continuing to support and help even during these times as many individuals are still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

During a previous interaction with ICSG members Ambassador George complimented ICSG committee for their noble efforts and requested them to continue their help to the community, as the impact of the pandemic was not yet over. The committee also thanked and acknowledged the wholehearted support of the embassy of India.

Minister Pradhan in his address to the group also pointed out the great opportunities that were available for overseas Indians to invest and reap benefits as part of the Indian growth story. He added that the COVID-19 crisis had greatly impacted businesses world over, and that India was gearing up for the post-COVID boom expected to take place next year.

Beach, parks only outdoor outlet for families

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Many major entertainment spots for children are yet to reopen due to the coronavirus pandemic. Entertainment arcades located inside malls are closed, along with cinemas, and there is no indication when they will reopen. Even the nation's only zoo in Omariya is closed until further notice. These facilities can only reopen when the government activates phase 5 of the plan to return to normalcy.

Given the circumstances, the seaside and gardens are the only source of outdoor entertainment for children in Kuwait. These places have a lively atmosphere during mornings and evenings, especially on weekends. "Children are bored in the house, especially

when they have no online classes. They want to go out but I always remind them of the dangers. The problem is they are now glued to gadgets - they do not want to put down their devices," said Janice Sanera, mother of two boys aged 11 and 6. "My boys are really active - they love outdoor activities," she told Kuwait Times.

Sanera said her children's relationships with their peers have been affected. "My kids miss playing with their friends. I don't allow them to interact with other children whom I don't know - I feel it is very unsafe for my kids. If I go to malls, I don't allow them to touch anything. We only go to malls when necessary; other than that, I feel safer at home. When we head to the seaside, I tell my husband to go far from the crowded Marina Crescent. I don't care if people say I am paranoid - I just want my kids to be safe," she said.

"I hope they open the zoo soon. I want my kids to see the animals - it's been a while since we visited the zoo. This pandemic has brought everything to a standstill, and it's really hurting and affecting our kids. This year has been very bad for everybody - we all pray for better months to come and hope the New Year will improve the lives of everyone," said Sanera.



ICSK introduces robotics, AI classes

KUWAIT: The world today is moving more and more towards a virtual digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this transformation. In order to keep pace with time and the current realities, ICSK has introduced a virtual robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) program for its students of class I to IX. A leading robotics manufacturing company with excellent trainers has been invited to conduct these classes for the students.

This is in line with the vision of ICSK to develop a deep intellectual thinking among its students and

try and bring the best to its students to nudge its children outside their comfort zone and take up realistic challenges of future world of their time. There has been a fantastic response from students and parents. Children in small batches, right from grade I can be seen enjoying their lessons with teachers who patiently resolve their doubts.

"We are thrilled to take this small step with our children so that they can make a giant leap confidently into their future," said the principal and senior administrator, Dr V Binumon. "Coding is soon going to be an essential requisite skill of literacy and we do not want our children to lag behind in this new era of education. Thanks to the vision and efforts of ICSK management to introduce advance educational practices in school and move ahead with time," he added.

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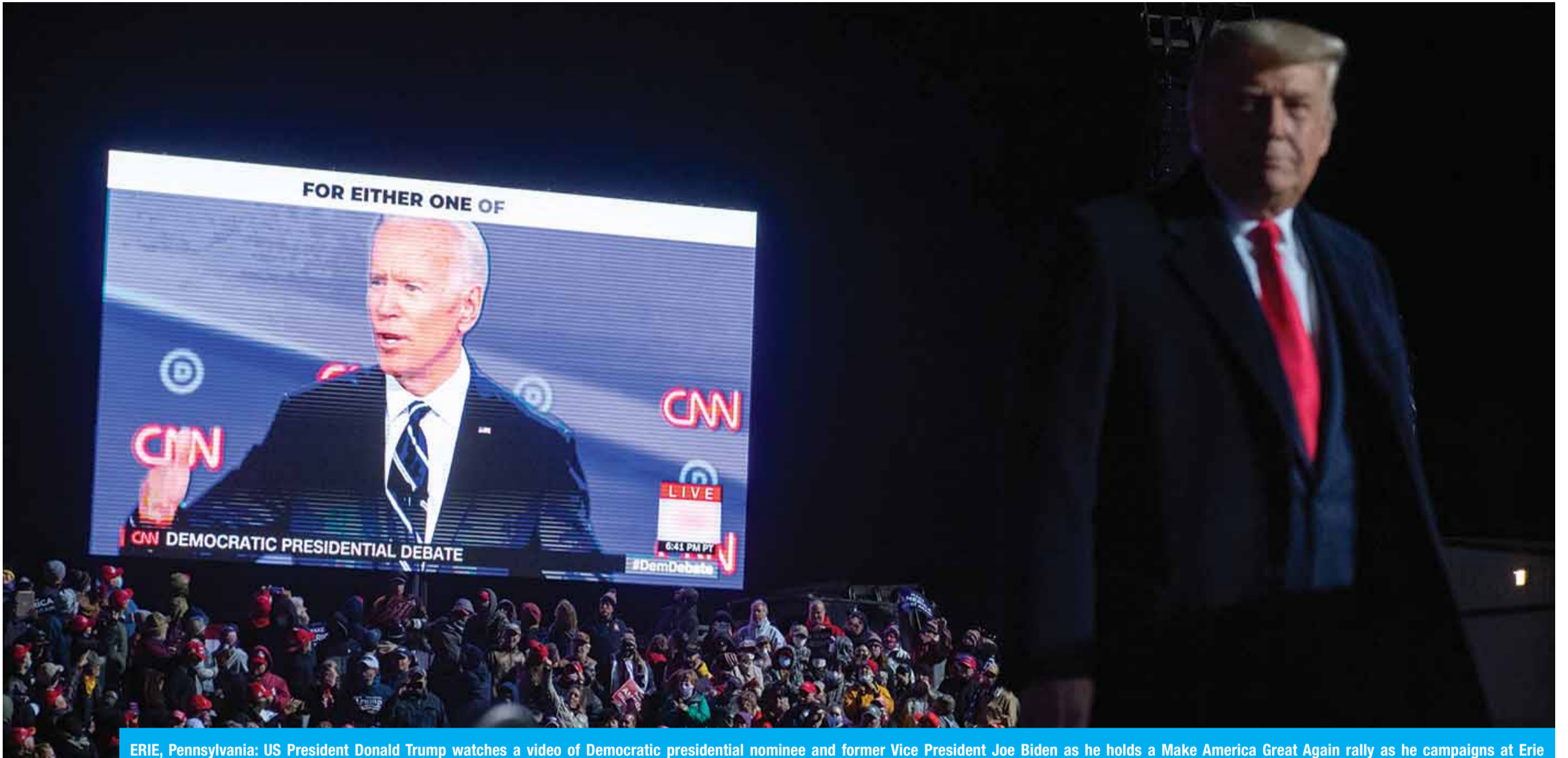
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French-born US citizen is Trump superfan at 95

Tension, defiance in trenches of Karabakh



ERIE, Pennsylvania: US President Donald Trump watches a video of Democratic presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden as he holds a Make America Great Again rally as he campaigns at Erie International Airport on Tuesday. — AFP

Trump remakes US approach to world

Real estate mogul has constantly prioritized US commercial interests

WASHINGTON: With his insults of US allies, soft spot for autocratic rulers and contempt for international agreements, US President Donald Trump has turned US foreign policy on its head over a chaotic four years. But behind the bombast, is there in fact a "Trump Doctrine", a method behind the madness on which voters will decide on Nov 3?

Trump has embraced the term "America First", reflecting his campaign promises four years ago of curbing immigration, confronting a rising China, winding down "endless wars" and renegotiating trade deals that the tycoon charged had hurt US workers. Colin Dueck, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and author of "Age of Iron: On Conservative Nationalism", said that Trump's worldview has on some core issues been strikingly consistent. "I think there is a kind of Trump Doctrine, even though it obviously doesn't fit the usual DC pattern at all," Dueck said.

Dueck noted that Trump has constantly prioritized US commercial interests and, when not appearing alongside the security establishment, has questioned the need for military deployments, most recently vowing to speed up the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. In style, the real estate mogul - who has boasted for decades of his negotiating skills - has shown a willingness to engage widely, putting out not just barbed tweets but also eyebrow-raising praise.

The rhetorical whiplash has been no more stunning than on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, with whom Trump said he "fell in love" a year after he mocked him as "Little Rocket Man". "He's open to negotiating with almost anybody other than ISIS," Dueck said of Trump. "The up-and-down ladder of escalation is

characteristic." Even if Trump is not known to be a student of history, Dueck said that Trump was reviving a pre-Cold War US approach to the world.

Leaders of Trump's Republican Party a century ago similarly ran on the "America First" slogan - slamming the brakes on immigration, rejecting the fledgling League of Nations and vigorously promoting economic goals. "The US as an independent actor, not thinking of multilateral commitments of having primary importance, and just looking at the world from the point of view of does this serve American interests narrowly defined - it was a dominant strain of American foreign policy for generations prior to World War II."

Trump achievements?

Trump, who is trailing in polls to Democrat Joe Biden, is highlighting several international wins in recent months after disappointments earlier in his term. In September, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to recognize Israel, a coup for the Jewish state - a major cause for the Republicans' evangelical Christian base - as Gulf Arabs and Israel both rally behind Trump's campaign against Iran.

Afghanistan's government and the Taliban have opened peace talks, although there has been no visible progress, and the administration has found limited but growing success in coaxing nations to reject China when adopting fifth-generation Internet. But relations have hit rock-bottom with European allies, which resent Trump's coarse approach and his rejection of international diplomacy -including of the Paris climate accord at a time when temperatures are rising dangerously.

Iran has stepped up nuclear work and flexed muscle around the region even as its economy is devastated by US sanctions unilaterally imposed by Trump. A Pew survey found that views of the United States in other wealthy nations had plunged to historic lows over doubts on Trump's leadership, especially over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thomas Wright, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said that Trump had few real achievements and that his foreign policy was largely "flirting with catastrophe". Gulf Arabs had already been warning to Israel for a decade, while the tougher approach on China is part of a bipartisan consensus in Washington, Wright said.

Impact beyond election

On the flip side, Trump has for the first time raised questions about US commitments to the NATO alliance and aggravated the impact of the COVID crisis, Wright said. "I think there's uncertainty about America's role in the world that wasn't there before," Wright said. "With a combination of Trump and COVID, we don't really know if we're ever going to go back to sort of a more open global economy," he said.

Even if Trump loses, his impact will likely be long-lasting for the United States and the world. He has shattered a Republican consensus, barely questioned in his party during George W Bush's presidency, of supporting robust military action, unfettered free trade, at least modest immigration and democratic values abroad. "Trump couldn't have won on his own," Dueck said. "He needed millions of people to nod their heads and say, actually, yeah, why are we continuing to operate on autopilot?" — AFP

governor's spokesman Attaullah Khogyani told reporters. "Unfortunately this morning tens of thousands of people had come to the football stadium which led to the tragic incident," Khogyani said.

Khogyani and provincial hospital spokesman Zaher Adel put the death toll at 11 women, while Nangarhar provincial council member Naser Kamawal said 15 people had died and 15 more were injured. Eyewitness Abdul Ahad said women had been given priority to stand at the front of the crowd. In ultra-conservative Afghanistan it is customary for women to queue separately from men.

"When the officials announced that the gates were opening in the morning, everybody rushed to enter the stadium to be the first to deliver their passports," Ahad told AFP. "The women, most of them elderly, who were in the front fell and could not get up. It was chaotic."

A woman who survived the stampede recalled hearing screaming and seeing expectant mothers among those who were in the crush. "Some had miscarriages," the traumatized woman told AFP, declining to be named. "One who had been trampled gave birth there. We helped her but her baby was dead. (The mother) was injured, but alive."

Seeking medical visas

Pakistan's embassy in Kabul expressed "deep grief and sadness" over the incident. "The embassy remains committed to ensure smooth and effective management of visa applicants at our end," a statement read. "We seek the understanding and cooperation of Afghan people and authorities for better and secure management of the Afghan visa applicants."

Thousands of Afghans from Nangarhar and other nearby provinces had arrived since the early morning to apply for medical visas or to visit relatives, and hundreds of policemen had been deployed at the stadium to control the crowds. Hours after the incident, relatives were seen carrying the dead in coffins from a mortuary in Jalalabad.—AFP

11 Afghan women killed in stampede near Pak consulate

JALALABAD: At least 11 women were killed yesterday in a stampede at an Afghan football stadium where thousands of people had gathered to apply for Pakistani visas, authorities said. The incident unfolded at the stadium in Jalalabad city, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, after large crowds assembled in a bid to secure travel permission after the nearby Pakistani consulate resumed services following a seven-month hiatus due to the pandemic.

To avoid overwhelming the visa center, applicants had been directed to Jalalabad's nearby football stadium to hand over passports and paperwork, provincial



JALALABAD: Women gather outside the main entrance gate of a football stadium following a stampede that killed at least 11 women when people were applying for Pakistan visas yesterday. — AFP

Mosques in two French cities under police protection

PARIS: French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said yesterday he had asked local authorities to put mosques in the cities of Bordeaux and Beziers in southwestern France under police protection following threats or acts of violence. "Such actions are unacceptable on the soil of the Republic," the minister said in a post on Twitter yesterday.

France bleu radio reported on its website late on Tuesday that leaders of the Ar-Rahma mosque in Beziers had filed a complaint with police following hate messages on Facebook, including a call to set the mosque on fire. The threats came just days after a Chechen teenager beheaded a French history teacher for showing caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in class in a middle school northwest of Paris.

France bleu displayed a Facebook message, which has since been deleted, urging that homage be paid to the murdered teacher by torching the Beziers mosque. Prime Minister Jean Castex told parliament on Tuesday that France was in need of a law against endangering the lives of others via social media networks. — Reuters

Return to normal in abnormal world if Biden wins?

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden vows to revive the moral leadership of the United States in the world if he is elected president, but after nearly four years of Donald Trump smashing through norms, is the veteran Democrat's vision even possible? A senator for 36 years and vice president for eight more under Barack Obama, Biden will enter the White House with far more foreign policy experience than any president in decades if he beats Trump on Nov 3.

Trump has sought to turn Biden's resume into a liability and has delighted in breaking the diplomatic consensus both at home and abroad by bolting from international arrangements such as the Paris climate accord and the World Health Organization, and praising autocratic leaders.

For international partners aghast at Trump, the issue is not just him but whether US voters will keep choosing people like him, said Katrina Mulligan, managing director for national security and international policy at the left-leaning Center for American Progress. "For the rest of the world," she said, the presidential vote is also "about whether America is really what the last election suggests it was or whether that was an aberration."

Mulligan said she expects a Biden administration would move quickly to show its commitment both to international cooperation dating from the Obama years and to liberal values, with Biden already promising to convene a summit of democracies in his first year. "But (in) the bigger picture, I do not see a Biden foreign policy being a redux of an Obama-era foreign policy," she said. "The world has changed a lot. We're now 20 years away from 9/11."

Biden has promised to move toward fighting global challenges such as climate change and Covid-19, and has called for a firmer line on human rights with allies such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey, whose leaders have all wooed Trump. Celia Belin, a visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution who studies the Democrats, said that Biden has advisors who have come up with fresh ideas for a post-Trump foreign policy. But she said: "There is a risk that Biden and some of his closest aides are traditional internationalist, transatlantic Democrats who see the world as it was when they left and not as it is today."

Some common goals

Biden is unlikely to belittle foreign allies or threaten war on Twitter, but he is also not the polar opposite of Trump. Like the real estate mogul, Biden has long emphasized his negotiating skills and personal bonds with leaders rather than speaking in terms of grand geopolitical strategy. Biden also sides with Trump on several key issues. A longtime skeptic of the US war in Afghanistan, Biden has backed a withdrawal of troops.

In line with a rising bipartisan mood in Washington, Biden has also called for a hard line on China over trade, security and rights, with the two candidates trading barbs on who would be tougher. "As Europeans, we should not think that if there is a new American president, the situation is as it was before President Trump was elected," said Clement Beaune, the French minister of state for European affairs. "Some of the trends of the Trump presidency - putting pressure on the EU regarding its own security financing, being quite tough on trade, the hard game played by President Trump with China - the main elements of this, I think, will continue somehow," he said.—AFP

International

Trump traverses US as Obama steps up support for Joe Biden

Candidates to get a reality check at final televised debate today

WASHINGTON: Former president Barack Obama held his first rally yesterday in support of US election front runner Joe Biden, while Donald Trump campaigned frantically and accused his opponent, who stayed home in Delaware, of going "into hiding." Two weeks before the polls, the contrast in campaign strategies between Trump, 74, and Biden, 77, has never been more pronounced: the Republican president led another rally in the battleground state of Pennsylvania Tuesday, while Democrat Biden stayed mostly out of sight ahead of a pivotal televised debate later in the week.

Polls show Biden ahead and, with the clock running down, he appears confident.

In any case, few could ever out-campaign Trump, who has rediscovered his old energy with daily, sometimes twice-daily, rallies around the country since recovering from COVID-19 just over a week ago. His latest rally was in Erie, a former Democratic stronghold that he won in 2016, symbolizing his successful capture of the white working-class vote that had long been loyal to the left and which Biden has been trying to claw back.

Trump's message with a fortnight left to go has boiled down to a mix of optimism, telling Americans that the coronavirus pandemic is practically over, and ever more extreme attempts to tar Biden as corrupt—even saying Tuesday that he wants the attorney general to open an investigation ahead of the election. But, underlining how hard it is for him to escape the subject of the COVID-19 crisis, Trump's wife Melania canceled plans to accompany him to Pennsylvania at the last minute, complaining of a "lingering cough" following her own bout with the virus.

This was to have been her first appearance along-

side Trump at a rally in more than a year, possibly boosting his dire standing among women voters.

Slinging dirt

After a difficult few weeks for his reelection hopes, compounded by three nights in hospital with the coronavirus, Trump believes he is storming into the final stretch with new momentum—even if published polls show little sign to support this theory. "Things are changing fast," Trump told the Fox & Friends program, claiming that his own polling showed Biden is "imploding." Both candidates will get something of a reality check today when they meet for their second and final televised debate. To try and impose some sense of order after a chaotic first clash in September, the moderator will this time switch off each candidate's microphone when their opponent is speaking, thereby trying to thwart interruptions.

In what could be seen as foreshadowing, Trump's microphone cut out briefly at his Erie rally Tuesday. When it came back on, he blamed "Crooked Hillary" for the interruption—a reference to his 2016 opponent, Hillary Clinton. At the debate Biden is sure to go after Trump for his record on the pandemic, which has killed around 220,000 Americans and, despite the president's frequent claims, is surging back rather than going away.

A New York Times report Tuesday was likely to

give Biden additional ammunition, revealing how Trump spent years cultivating business projects in China and even maintains a previously unknown bank account in the country. As for Trump, he has made clear his priority is to pursue his claim that Biden's son Hunter sold access to his father in Ukraine and China when he was vice president under Obama.

Trump upped his offensive Tuesday by calling on US Attorney General Bill Barr to investigate his "criminal" opponent "before the election." And he told Fox News that the accusation has sent Biden "into hiding."

Trump is the subject of multiple allegations of sexual assault, corruption, and also is the first president to run for reelection after being impeached. However, he won in 2016 in part thanks to the success of a last-minute push to sow doubt about Clinton's honesty. He is dusting off that playbook again. Crowds at Trump's rallies have even repurposed the old anti-Clinton chant for Biden, shouting "lock him up."

Pennsylvania push
According to a new poll from The New York Times/Siena College, Biden has a nine-point lead nationally. Although this reflects the consensus of polls, there are outliers, including IBD/TIPP, which accurately predicted the 2016 shock result and sees a much tighter race now, with Biden only 2.3 points ahead. Pennsylvania is one of the half-dozen states that



CLEVELAND: Democratic Presidential candidate and former US Vice President Joe Biden (left) and US President Donald Trump speaking during the first presidential debate at the Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio on September 29, 2020. —AFP

Trump more or less has to win to amass enough electoral college votes to hold on to the presidency. Polls show Biden ahead there, though a Reuters/Ipsos poll this week showed the gap narrowing slightly. Reflecting the state's importance, the Biden team said Obama would campaign in Pennsylvania at a "drive-in car rally" in Philadelphia, during which he will encourage early voting. Firebrand Senator Bernie Sanders, who is hugely popular with the Democrats' left wing, will go on Saturday.

A key element in this year's campaign is early voting, which is at record-high levels amid fears over the spread of the virus. So far, 34 million Americans have cast ballots, according to the independent US Elections Project. —AFP

French-born US citizen is Trump superfan at 95

CULLMAN, United States: She has seen more than a dozen presidents carve their place in US history since she arrived from France but, at the grand age of 95, Jeanette Boudreaux has made some memories of her own. And she has one last ambition: to witness Donald Trump returned to office.

When Boudreaux arrived in Louisiana from Normandy in the spring of 1946, the Trumps were still weeks away from welcoming the future 45th president into the world. But he has grown into a statesman that "beats them all," she says. Boudreaux's American odyssey is at its heart a love story: she arrived on a ship that reunited young French women with American GIs they had fallen for after the D-Day landings.

She was to marry her sweetheart-Louisiana native Allen Boudreaux—in the Deep South, but spoke almost no English. "All I could say, it was 'I love you,' stuff like that. That's it," she recalled, switching back and forth between the two languages.

"I learned from cartoons and television."

Despite her new surroundings and a "jealous" and "wicked" mother-in-law, Boudreaux says she

adapted well to life in Louisiana, a state with a strong French heritage. "It was different, but I was still happy to come here. We were dying of hunger in France," she recalled. "I saw a lot of things during the war. I was 14 when it was declared. My mother was disabled, so I had to take care of her."

Boudreaux—whose US career was in the hospitality industry—was working in a factory when the Americans arrived and pushed the Germans back from her hometown near Rouen. That's where in 1945 she met Allen, who had come from Louisiana to help liberate France. They were married the following year and built a life in his home state with their three children, until he died in his 30s. Jeanette returned to her native Normandy only occasionally for short visits to family. "I feel more American than French," she said. "This is where I have made my life. I've been here for 75 years."

"Trump supporter from the beginning"

Of all the men she has seen behind the desk in the Oval Office, starting with Harry Truman, Donald Trump is without doubt the best, she says. "Reagan was good, but this one beats them all," Boudreaux told AFP from her daughter's basement in Cullman, Alabama, where she is staying after two hurricanes damaged her home in Louisiana.

"He is superb," she adds, saying she was won over by the frank talk of the New York real estate tycoon. "Whatever he promises, he does. The ones we had before, they didn't do anything for us." Outspoken Boudreaux says she doesn't have time

him from winning.

"This is pretty unprecedented in American politics to have to be worried about whether a sitting president will accept the election results and ensure a peaceful transition of power," said Eldridge.

He is a former Democratic candidate for Congress and one of the leaders of the successful movement to legalize gay marriage. Now he is also in charge of the New York-based anti-Trump organization Stand Up America.

"This is work that I never hoped that we would have to do. (But) we have to take him at his word when he says he may not accept the election outcome. "Certainly everything we've seen from him over the past three and a half years has been a total lack of respect for democratic norms and for our election processes," he said. In a country that recently saw huge demonstrations against racial inequality following the death of George Floyd, Eldridge is focused on organizing new protests almost everywhere.

The Protect the Results coalition has laid the groundwork for nearly 250 rallies, from Las Vegas to New York and Maine to Florida. The group brings together more than 100 organizations, in

four years of Trump's efforts to restructure and even dismantle alliances, including threatening NATO.

"America's network of allies and partners provides us an asymmetric advantage our adversaries cannot match," Esper said Tuesday, calling the network "the backbone of the international rules-based order." "China and Russia probably have fewer than 10 allies combined," he added.

He said China uses coercion and financial entrapment to build its alliances with weak countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. "The smaller the nation and the greater its needs, the heavier the pressure from Beijing," he said.

He cited visits he has made to build defense relations with Malta, Mongolia and Palau, as well as US plans for a greater defense presence in Eastern Europe, including basing troops in Poland.

And he underscored the need to build closer ties to "like-minded democracies such as India and Indonesia" adding "they all recognize what China is doing." A key part of this effort is to expand US arms sales, to both help allies improve defense



Polls show Biden ahead

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Pennsylvania push
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Jeanette Boudreaux (left) is seen with her daughter Jacqueline Schendel in Cullman, Alabama.

for Trump's Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

"There is something with that man, he has made a lot of mistakes," she said, concluding that a Democratic victory could plunge the United States into chaos.

"They do worse for us. Around my age, I think of my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren," she said from behind the blue mask that she paired with a matching striped sweater.

"Democrats, they want to give everything for free, but after taxes are raised," she complained. Boudreaux repeats the kind of conservative rhetoric often seen on Fox News, to which she is frequently tuned. And she is proud to own a signed photograph of the president. —AFP



ERIE, Pennsylvania: US President Donald Trump addresses supporters during a Make America Great Again rally as he campaigns at Erie International Airport in Erie, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday. —AFP

particular ones campaigning for the environment and women's and LGBTQ rights, but also at least one group of anti-Trump Republicans. They represent tens of millions of people, according to Eldridge. —AFP



In this file photo Secretary of Defense Mark Esper speaks at a press conference with British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace (out of frame) in the briefing room at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. —AFP

capabilities and to bolster the US defense industry against competition from Moscow and Beijing, Esper said. —AFP

US election 2020: Two weeks to go

WASHINGTON: One candidate for the White House is crisscrossing the United States; the other is at home, preparing for the final debate. Here is a look at what's happening on the American campaign trail on Tuesday, two weeks before Election Day on November 3:

Biden calls it a day, at breakfast

The campaign of Joe Biden, the former Democratic vice president who is running against Donald Trump to win the Oval Office, announced early in the day that the 77-year-old had no public events on his schedule. That raised questions for some about his health and about his strategy going into the home stretch, but he was believed to be preparing for his final debate with the Republican incumbent. "Has anyone seen Joe Biden?" quipped Trump's campaign team on Twitter, coining the hashtag #WhereIsJoe.

Trump in Pennsylvania, without Melania

While Biden remained at home, the 74-year-old Trump headed to Pennsylvania, a battleground state he won in 2016 and which is key to his reelection bid. Trump, who trails Biden in the polls, has ramped up the rhetoric as his campaign enters the home stretch, attacking the Democratic former senator on multiple fronts—especially hammering away at the allegation that Biden is corrupt.

His attack centers on a conspiracy theory about the Biden family's business activities. According to Trump, Biden's son Hunter sold access to his father in Ukraine and China when he was serving as vice president to Barack Obama. Trump was hoping to have his wife Melania by his side at the event in Erie, Pennsylvania, but the first lady opted not to travel, citing a "lingering cough" that remains since her bout of coronavirus. The campaign hopes that she can help her husband win some key votes among suburban women.

NYT reveals Trump's Chinese business pursuits, bank account

In a new report The New York Times revealed Trump spent years cultivating business projects in China where he even has a previously unknown bank account. The news comes as the US president attempts to portray Biden as soft on Beijing, while himself brandishing an "America First" banner, portraying China as the greatest threat to the United States and global democracy. The Chinese account, controlled by Trump International Hotels Management, is one of only three the president maintains in foreign nations—including Britain and Ireland—according to an analysis of his tax records by the paper. The records show the company "paid \$188,561 in taxes in China while pursuing licensing deals there from 2013 to 2015," the Times reported.

Biden leads in polls, but gap narrowing

According to the latest poll from The New York Times and Siena College published Tuesday, Biden leads Trump 50 percent to 41 percent among likely voters. Trump does not have an edge over the challenger on any major issues at stake in the election, from his handling of the coronavirus pandemic to the economy, seemingly leaving him little breathing room to make up the difference in time.

But according to another poll by Investor's Business Daily and the TechnoMetrica Institute of Policy and Politics (IBD/TIPP), the gap between the two septuagenarians has narrowed considerably, standing at just 2.3 percentage points — 48.1 percent for Biden to 45.8 percent for Trump.

The IBD/TIPP poll was one of the few to predict a Trump victory in 2016. Its latest polling shows Republicans rallying behind Trump, and Biden losing some support among unconvinced Democrats. —AFP

Protesters ready in case Trump refuses to accept election result

NEW YORK: Sean Eldridge says he's "preparing for the worst" in case President Donald Trump tries to undermine the results of next month's vote or refuses to accept a victory for the Democrats. The 34-year-old is one of the organizers of a coalition planning protests across the United States if Trump loses to his election rival Joe Biden but refuses to concede.

The White House incumbent has repeatedly refused to say whether he would cede power peacefully in the event of defeat in the presidential vote on November 3. He has suggested that massive voter fraud involving the tens of millions of ballots sent by mail this year and early voting due to the coronavirus pandemic could prevent

Pentagon stresses stronger alliances to counter China, Russia

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper revealed a fresh drive to strengthen US alliances with "like-minded democracies" in part through arms sales in an effort to curb the global influence of Russia and China. Esper said the Pentagon would systematically monitor and manage its relationships with partner countries, aiming to find ways to coordinate militaries and also to advance US arms sales.

The initiative, called the Guidance for Development for Alliances and Partnerships (GDAP), comes just two weeks before the presidential election that, if President Donald Trump loses, could see Esper replaced in January. It also came after nearly

International

Lagos locked down, army under scrutiny after protesters fired on

Millions placed under curfew in three states

LAGOS: Lagos was under a round-the-clock curfew yesterday enforced by police roadblocks, the day after witnesses reported soldiers had opened fire on protesters in Nigeria's biggest city, in an incident a rights group said may have caused deaths. The Lagos state governor said 30 people were hurt in the shooting at a toll gate in the Lekki district, a focal point of nearly two weeks of nationwide protests against allegations of systematic police brutality.

The governor said one man had died in hospital from blunt force trauma to the head, though it was unclear if the victim had been a protester. As President Muhammadu Buhari appealed for "understanding and calm", Amnesty International said it was investigating "credible but disturbing evidence of excessive use of force occasioning deaths of protesters" at the toll gate.

Four witnesses said soldiers had fired bullets and at least two people had been shot. Two of the witnesses said the lights were turned off at the gate shortly before the shooting began. One said he saw soldiers remove bodies. In a Twitter post, the Nigerian Army said no soldiers were at the scene.

Yesterday, fires were burning across Lagos and residents of the districts of Ebute Mette, Lagos island and Okota reported hearing gunfire. Police - some armed, some wearing body armor and many in plain clothes - earlier set up roadblocks in Lagos, two witnesses said.

Witnesses saw youths trying to get through some checkpoints, and reported protesters in some neigh-

borhoods. In the upmarket suburb of Ikoyi, where the streets were deserted, groups of youths created their own roadblocks out of traffic signs. Authorities imposed the curfew on Lagos on Tuesday after the governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, said the protests had turned violent.

'The buck stops at my table'

Thousands of Nigerians have demonstrated in protests that initially focused on a police unit, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), that rights groups had for years accused of extortion, harassment, torture and murders. The unit was disbanded on Oct. 11 but the protests have persisted with calls for law enforcement reforms.

President Buhari said yesterday he was committed to providing justice for victims of brutality, and that police reforms also demanded by the demonstrators were gathering pace. His statement, disseminated by his spokesman, did not refer to the shooting at the toll gate, from where a witness saw smoke rising yesterday.

Sanwo-Olu tweeted pictures of his hospital visit to victims of what he referred to as the "unfortunate shooting incident" in Lekki.

He said 25 people were being treated for mild to moderate injuries, two were receiving intensive care and three had been discharged. "I recognize the buck stops at my table and I will work with the FG (federal government) to get to the root of this unfortunate incident and stabilize all security operations

claimed more than 800 lives, dozens of them among civilians. The toll could be higher as Azerbaijan does not provide the number of its military casualties.

'Fighting spirit'

Once the unit is given the all-clear, soldiers can resume their duties outside. A Kalashnikov rifle in hand, one of the servicemen takes his turn on watch. He climbs a set of steps to reach a narrow fortified observation post - a space just big enough for one person to stand. The soldier's eyes are fixed on the enemy's territory. At another look-out post, AFP journalists saw Kalashnikov casings from recently-fired bullets scattered on the ground. "The night (Saturday to Sunday) was relatively tense. But the fighting spirit and morale of our personnel is high," major Vladimir Nazlukhanyan, the commander of the unit, said.

He asked AFP not to reveal their precise location for security reasons. This wide V-shaped trench was built just after conflict broke out between the two ex-Soviet states in the early 1990s.

'Repel everybody'

For decades since the two countries have been locked in bitter conflict over this mountainous region populated by ethnic Armenians. Karabakh's self-declared independence has not been recognized internationally, even by Armenia, and it remains a part of Azerbaijan under international law.

Tension, defiance in trenches of Karabakh

ON KARABAKH FRONTLINE, Azerbaijan: Scorched grass, some trees on the horizon and coils of barbed wire are visible from a small slit in the wall protecting a trench on the frontline of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Here Armenian soldiers seeking to keep control of the disputed region of Azerbaijan take turns to watch the activities of their foe in the Azerbaijan-held territory, located just 100 meters (328 feet) away. The afternoon has been comparatively calm on this part of the Karabakh frontline. But in other places fighting had resumed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, each blaming the other for violating a new ceasefire hours after it came into force. As the servicemen are standing outside in the sun, the humming of a military drone forces them to swiftly take cover.

"It finds a moving object, approaches it and explodes, hitting its target and dispersing shrapnel," said soldier Armen Asatryan, 18. Most victims in the conflict had been from drone strikes, he added. So far the clashes that broke out late last month have

UN chief calls for individual action to combat misinformation

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will launch a groundbreaking global online action today (21 October), calling on people around the world to #PledgeToPause before they share content online. The activation is part of a wider behavior change campaign that aims to create a new social media norm to help combat the rising impact of viral misinformation.

In a video recording for the campaign, to be released on his Twitter and Instagram accounts and designed to be replicated by other leaders, influencers and concerned citizens, Guterres, who will begin his message with a five-second pause, says "During the COVID-19 pandemic, the wrong information can be deadly. Take the pledge to pause and help stop the spread of misinformation."

The Pause campaign is part of Verified, an United Nations initiative launched in May 2020 to communicate accessible science-backed health information in compelling formats and share stories of global solidarity around COVID-19. Pause is the first global behavior change campaign on misinformation to mobilize experts and researchers, governments, influencers, civil soci-

ty, businesses, regulators and the media under a single message - #PledgeToPause.

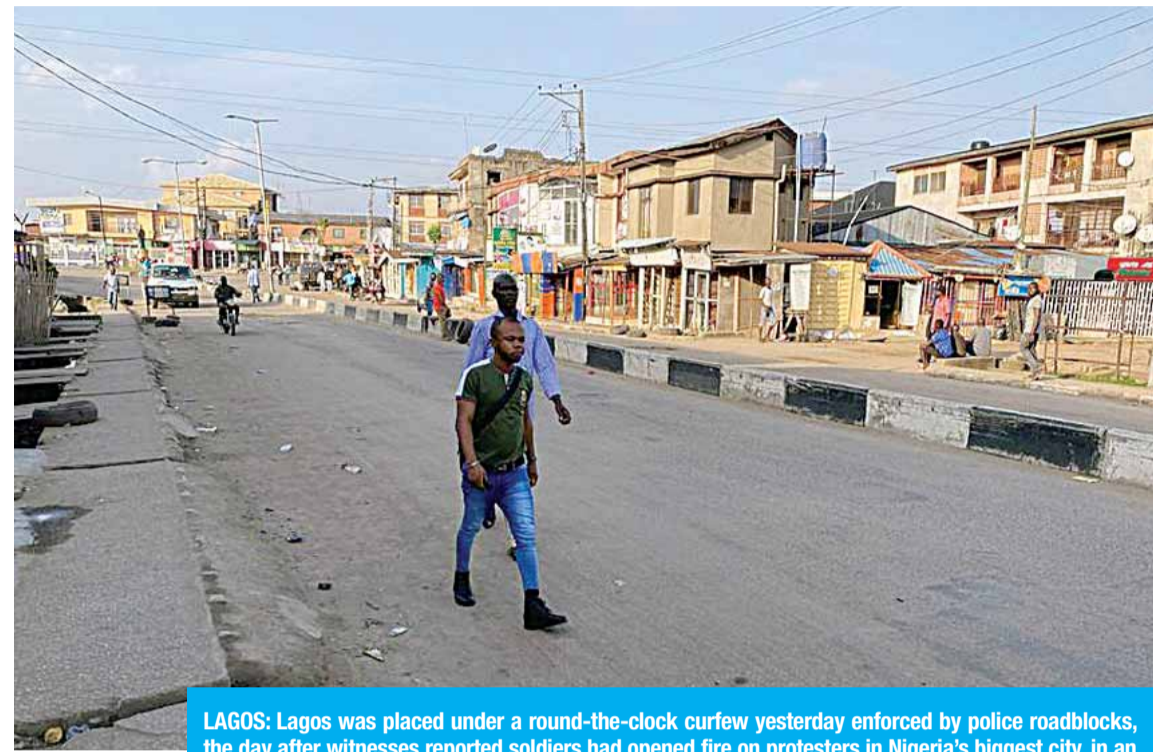
The campaign, which is based on research that indicates that a brief pause significantly lessens the inclination to share shocking or emotive material thereby slowing the spread of misinformation, aims to increase media literacy to enable social media users to spot misinformation and stopping themselves from passing it on.

The Pause campaign aims to reach a global audience of 1 billion globally, online and through partnerships, by the end of December. On October 21, throughout the day, online influencers and global voices will make their own #PledgeToPause and call on their supporters to do the same. "COVID-19 is not just a health crisis, but a communications emergency as well. When misinformation spreads, the public loses trust and too often makes decisions that hamper the public response and even their own lives," said Melissa Fleming, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications. "It is increasingly clear that we cannot successfully tackle the pandemic without also addressing online misinformation. Each and every one of us can help break the chain of misinformation by pausing before we share."

Fleming noted that individual steps alone will not suppress misinformation. The organization is working with social media platforms to recommend changes, and has recognized some notable steps to flag or block misinformation

abducted and arrested. Lissu was worried for his own safety. But the 52-year-old has been amazed by the reaction as he crisscrosses the country to heaving crowds clamoring to see him. "After five years of repression, I was not expecting this kind of enthusiasm and mass support from the people," he said. He said the opposition has "gone through hell", but believes his Chadema party will be the rightful winner of the October 28 presidential and parliamentary elections.

However, like many observers, he believes it will not be a fair fight. "There has not been one large event that has really thrown the free and fair moniker off of this election, it has been more a series of small things, death by a thousand cuts if



LAGOS: Lagos was placed under a round-the-clock curfew yesterday enforced by police roadblocks, the day after witnesses reported soldiers had opened fire on protesters in Nigeria's biggest city, in an incident a rights group said may have caused deaths. —Reuters

to protect the lives of our residents," said Sanwo-Olu. In a broadcast, he urged Buhari to intervene in investigating what happened at Lekki. Witnesses described being shot at by soldiers.

Inyene Akpan, 26, a photographer, said more than 20 soldiers arrive and open fire, and two people being shot. Witness Akinbosola Ogunsanya said he

saw around 10 people being shot, and soldiers removing bodies. Another witness, Chika Dibia, said soldiers hemmed in people as they shot at them.

A Nigerian army spokesman did not respond to requests for comment. Nigeria sovereign Eurobonds fell more than 2 cents on the dollar yesterday. —Reuters



STEPANAKERT: An elderly man carrying bags with food walks in the almost empty city of Stepanakert yesterday during the ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh. —AFP

The walls of the three-meter-deep trench are made up of earth and mud, in some places reinforced with large stacked tires. Concrete rails line the winding path which leads to a stone bunker where soldiers can rest in between their shifts on iron beds with mattresses and sleeping bags.

Just outside towels and T-shirts are drying on thin lines of string. —AFP



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

and elevate science-based content.

It has also warned that the amplification of inaccurate or harmful information and ideas on social media exacerbates some of the most pressing issues of our time. It foments hate and enables oppressive regimes, twists elections, skews understanding of challenges like climate change, undermines trust in institutions and exposes children and the vulnerable to dangerous ideas or people.

Civil society collaborators supporting Pause include organizations committed to tackling misinformation from around the world including Chequedo, Newschecker.in and First Draft, while African media organizations such as MultiChoice, and Yuva are helping to distribute Pause messaging.

you will," a Western diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity. "Whether it is a campaign event being disrupted by police, campaign officials being arrested for unknown reasons... the burning of Chadema offices... little things that add up."

No room for dissent

Tanzania has long been seen as a haven of stability in an otherwise volatile neighbourhood, but since Magufuli's election in 2015 as a corruption-busting man of the people, alarm has grown over a perceived slide into autocracy. Magufuli at first made wildly popular moves such as curbing foreign travel for government officials or showing up in person to make sure civil servants were doing their work. —AFP

Tanzania readies for polls after years of 'hell'

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania: Tundu Lissu, shot 16 times in an assassination attempt, returned to Tanzania to run for president-but he did not know what to expect after the "hell" experienced by the opposition under President John Magufuli. Political rallies had been banned for years, freedom of speech suffocated, opposition leaders killed,

News in brief

Turkey nabs 220kg of cocaine

ISTANBUL: Turkish authorities seized 220 kilograms of cocaine on a ship that arrived at a port in the country's southern coast from Brazil, the local prosecutor's office said late on Tuesday. Police in the coastal province of Mersin found the cocaine hidden in a container carrying packages of paper, it said, adding two suspects had been detained. Footage showed narcotics police with a search dog going through the container and taking the packaged blocks of cocaine out of boxes labeled as containing blank A4 paper. Turkey is on the so-called Balkan Route of drugs trafficking which is used to supply the West with drugs from Asia and the Middle East, including heroin moving from Afghanistan to Europe. Ankara says drug trafficking is one of the main financing sources for terrorist groups. —Reuters

Brazil embraces Chinese vaccine

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil: Brazil's health minister said Tuesday the country would add the Chinese-made CoronaVac vaccine against COVID-19 to its national immunization program, despite a political and diplomatic row over whether to use it. Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello said the federal government had reached a deal with Sao Paulo state, which is helping test and produce the vaccine, to buy 46 million doses to be administered starting in January. "This vaccine will be Brazil's vaccine," in addition to another developed by Oxford University and pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca. Pazuello told a video meeting of the South American country's 27 governors. "That's our big news. This is going to recalibrate the process" of eventually vaccinating Brazil's population against Covid-19, which has claimed more lives here than any country except the United States. —AFP

Kremlin intimidates Navalny

MOSCOW: The Kremlin is trying to intimidate opposition politician Alexei Navalny to discourage him from returning to Russia to campaign once he recovers from his poisoning, one of his close allies said. As the 44-year-old has convalesced in Germany where he was flown for medical care after falling ill in Siberia in August, Navalny's team says Russian bailiffs have frozen his bank accounts and the title to his flat. The Kremlin has since accused Navalny of working with the US Central Intelligence Agency, prompting the pro-government Federal News Agency to report that Navalny could be guilty of treason. "We see all kinds of intimidation by them: 'let's arrest his apartment... let's open cases into state treason'," Leonid Volkov, a senior member of Navalny's team, told Reuters. "It's clear these are all just fakes designed to intimidate." —Reuters

Floods kill 111 in Vietnam

HANOI: Vietnam following weeks of severe flooding and landslides, authorities said yesterday, as the country braced for yet another storm this weekend. About 178,000 homes have been submerged by floodwaters, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with rescuers mounting a desperate bid to get food and drinking water to those cut off. Roads, infrastructure and crops in the central region have also been devastated by the floods, the charity added, warning that hundreds of thousands would need housing and income support in the coming weeks. —AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020

Iraqi Kurds seek to diversify economy

Oil price plunge, pandemic forcing locals to return to long abandoned farms

MEER ROSTAM, Iraq: Iraq's Kurdish region has for decades lived off its oil wealth, but plummeting energy prices amid the pandemic and financial mismanagement are forcing locals to return to long abandoned farms. Civil servants from the northern region's bloated public sector have gone without pay and many are now turning back to agriculture and other businesses to make ends meet.

On a rugged hillside some 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of Arbil, the booming regional capital, vineyards are ripe for harvesting as a new source of income. Abdallah Hassan, 51, a civil servant from the nearby village of Meer Rostam, has returned to harvest the grapes, used to produce raisins and vine leaves, for the first time in almost 20 years. "There is hardly any work left for us and there are no salaries," he said, complaining that the regional government now "only pays wages every couple of months".

"It's better for farmers to tend to their fields than wait for the payday or for charity."

Hassan recounted how before the 2003 US invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein's regime, the Kurdish region had survived on farming during years of painful sanctions. Since then, in its drive to secure lucrative oil revenues, the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) had mostly abandoned agriculture. Big investments from multinational energy companies have transformed the region, and Arbil has



Mohammed Shukri, chairman of the Kurdistan Board of Investment, speaks during an interview at his office in Arbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region. - AFP

become an urban hub with skyscrapers and luxury hotels.

Patronage networks

This year, however, the Covid-19 pandemic and tumbling oil prices have taken a heavy toll, worsened by budget disputes with the central government in Baghdad. The Iraqi economy, one of the world's most oil-dependent according to the World Bank, saw its gross domestic product contract by about 10 percent this year.

Mohammed Shukri, chairman of the Kurdistan Board of Investment, said putting all of the regional economy's eggs into the energy basket had proven costly. "We're rich when the oil price is high, and we're poor when the oil price is low," he told AFP. "I wouldn't call this a healthy economy."

Kurdish economist Bilal Saeed also argued the region's leaders had made a strategic blunder by letting other sectors fall by the wayside. "Instead of using that revenue to develop the agriculture, health and tourism sectors, the government of Kurdistan has focused mostly on developing its oil sector and ignored the rest," he said. Over-reliance on energy has also had a corrosive effect on Iraq's state apparatus and fuelled corruption. A World Bank report this year pointed to Iraq's "failure to equitably share the benefits of oil wealth" and described a murky patronage system. "First, the dominant parties use government payrolls to reward political loyalty," it said. "Second, they use government contracts to enrich business people close to their leaderships. Third, money is simply stolen from the ministerial budgets for both personal gain and party use." It is a similar story in the Kurdish region, where lucrative state posts have long been handed out by the two main ruling parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

This has created a bloated public sector with over 1.2 million staff, around 40 percent of them in the mili-

tary and security sectors, out of a regional population of five million. With its budget now bled dry and the KRG facing some \$28 billion in debt, it decided in June to slash civil servants' salaries by 21 percent. But despite this, it has been unable to pay all of their wages on time, with the outstanding pay, accumulated over years, estimated at \$9 billion.

'Hit by cheap imports'

Shukri said that despite current woes, his investment board had granted 60 investment licenses worth \$1.5 billion, mostly in agriculture and manufacturing. But how many projects will go ahead is uncertain at a time of growing impatience among local entrepreneurs.

Iraqi businesses face tough competition from imports from Iran and Turkey, whose currencies have been devalued while the Iraqi dinar remains indexed to the dollar. Baaz Rassul, whose company Hend Steel produces 50,000 tons of cast steel per month, pleaded for "higher customs duties and better border controls".

He said when he tried to diversify into agriculture, he found it difficult to compete with cheap imports and has since dismantled his greenhouses. Saeed, the economist, said Arbil and Baghdad must work out a sustainable economic plan that serves both sides. But that may be a tall order in the short term as Baghdad grapples with a massive deficit and has given no clear timeline of when it will approve a new budget. — AFP

Cathay Pacific to cut workforce by nearly a quarter

HONG KONG: Cathay Pacific announced plans yesterday to cut its workforce by nearly a quarter and close one of its short-haul airlines in an effort to survive the "devastating" impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Across the globe, airlines have been hammered as the pandemic has slashed international travel, and they face a long, hard winter after a much-hoped-for rebound failed to materialize. Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong's flag carrier, published a corporate restructuring plan on Wednesday that will lead to 8,500 job losses in total—nearly a quarter of its workforce—and one of its airlines to disappear completely.

"The global pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on aviation and the hard truth is we must fundamentally restructure the Group to survive," CEO Augustus Tang said in a statement.

Cathay said 5,300 redundancies would be made among the airline's Hong Kong-based employees with a further 600 overseas. The remaining losses would come from a recruitment freeze and natural attrition. Cathay Dragon, a subsidiary that primarily flies short-haul flights within Asia, will cease operations.

The company is seeking regulatory approval to absorb some of Dragon's routes into Cathay Pacific and its budget airline HK Express.

Dismal year

The news of cuts was embraced by investors with Cathay's battered shares trading four percent up in afternoon trade. But employees reacted with dismay, noting the proportion of jobs going was higher than many competitors.

Zuki Wong chairwoman of the Cathay Pacific Flight Attendants Union, said members were "severely disappointed". "We all feel very sad because the colleagues being laid off are all very dear to us," she told reporters. Hong Kong's government came to the rescue of Cathay with a taxpayer-



Cathay Pacific employees walk together at Hong Kong International Airport on October 21, 2020 as the flag carrier announces that 6,000 staff will lose their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic. — AFP

funded bailout of \$5 billion earlier this summer. But Cathay CEO Tang said the airline was burning through up to HK\$2 billion (\$260 million) in cash each month during the pandemic.

"This is simply unsustainable. The changes announced today will reduce our cash burn by about HK\$500 million per month," he said. 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.

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 pressure. Dozens of major airlines have slashed jobs in response.

Half capacity next year

Cathay, much like regional rival Singapore Airlines, has no domestic market to fall back on. But even before the pandemic, Hong Kong's marquee carrier was in a tight spot. Months of huge and disruptive democracy protests in the city last year led to a plunge

in customers, especially from the lucrative mainland Chinese market. The airline also found itself punished by authorities in Beijing because some of its employees joined or voiced support for the protests.

By the time the pandemic hit at the start of the year, Hong Kong was already in recession and Cathay Pacific in the red. There is scant hope on the horizon.

In a note to investors on Monday that detailed its most optimistic scenario, Cathay Pacific said it expected to run at half its pre-pandemic capacity next year. One of the biggest disappointments for airlines 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.

Airlines are hopeful that better testing procedures at airports and "travel bubbles" between countries might encourage more people to fly. Work on the latter has been slow, especially as the virus surges for a second time in Europe and North America. Last week, Hong Kong and Singapore announced plans for a "travel bubble". Under the scheme, passengers who test negative for the virus will be able to travel on dedicated flights and not need to quarantine on arrival. — AFP

Stocks fall as investors focus on US stimulus

LONDON: Global stocks fell and bonds staunchly a sell-off yesterday as investors looked for an agreement on a US coronavirus stimulus package, while the dollar fell to its lowest in six weeks. The MSCI world equity index, which follows shares in nearly 50 countries, was flat, its earlier Asia-powered gains eroded when European shares turned negative in early trading and fell further through the morning. The Euro STOXX 600 was last down 0.9 percent, led lower by healthcare and real estate shares. Indexes in Paris and Frankfurt were down 1 percent and 0.9 percent respectively. Gains for sterling put pressure on London shares.

Wall Street stock futures fell in volatile trading, and were down 0.2 percent. The skittish mood reflected uncertainty over the prospects of a US fiscal stimulus package intended to bolster a recovery from the economic damage caused by the coronavirus. Earlier, Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan gained 0.4 percent. Investors were betting on riskier assets as the White House and Democrats in the US Congress moved closer to agreement on the stimulus package. President Donald Trump said he was willing to accept a \$2.2 trillion aid bill despite opposition from his own Republican Party. But investors were nervous over whether any such

package would pass the Republican-controlled Senate.

A senior Republican aide told Reuters that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has privately told his fellow Republicans he did not favor a deal before the Nov. 3 elections.

"Everyone knows that more stimulus needs to

come through," said Hugh Gimber, global market strategist at J P Morgan Asset Management. "I'm not overly optimistic on prospects for more stimulus before the election." Bets on the stimulus also played out in government bonds markets. US Treasury yields rose to a four-month high in Asian trading, with the yield curve steepening, then dropped. Investors also sold benchmark euro zone debt, with German Bund yields rising to their highest for a week before falling again. Deutsche Bank analysts wrote that a stimulus package is increasingly priced in, either by the time of the election or by early next year.

Dollar down, yuan up

The dollar fell to a six-week low against a basket of currencies as hopes for a pre-election stimulus package led traders to buy riskier currencies. It was last down 0.3 percent at 92.809, amid the doubts any package could pass the Senate. The Chinese yuan reached a more than-two year high on firmer central bank guidance and recent data showing a sustained recovery in the world's second-largest economy. The yuan was up 0.3 percent at 6.6552, taking gains against the dollar this year to around 4.5 percent. Its rise helped lift the Australian dollar, weighed down by expectations of a rate cut in November, from Tuesday's three-week low.

Elsewhere, sterling rose to a one-week high against the US dollar yesterday after the European Union's Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said a new trade deal with Britain was "within reach". The pound rose 0.8 percent to \$1.3050, its highest since Oct. 14. The British currency also rose against the euro by 0.6 percent to 90.80 pence on the comments. — Reuters



TOKYO: A woman walks past an electronic quotation board displaying share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo. Stock markets slid and the dollar faltered yesterday following a mixed performance in Asia, as investors continue to wait for a US stimulus package. — AFP

Google's war on all fronts over media, competition and tax

PARIS: Californian internet giant Google faces a growing list of battles around the world, from tussles in Europe and Australia over fair compensation for media outlets to competition probes on both sides of the Atlantic.

Department of Justice strikes

Washington's powerful justice department is the latest to announce a probe into Google on suspicion of an "illegal monopoly". US authorities have had the digital giant in their sights for years, and now accuse it of breaching competition law to maintain its iron grip on search and online advertising.

The government has called for "structural" change at Google, which could mean breaking it up.

Three antitrust fines in Europe

Across the Atlantic, Google has come under Brussels' scrutiny three times in recent years for anticompetitive practices. In 2018, the company was ordered to pay a 4.3 billion euro (\$5.1 billion) fine over abuse of the dominant position of its Android mobile operating system to entrench the Google search service. The previous year, Google was slapped with a 2.4 billion euro fine for abuse relating to its Google Shopping service.

And in 2019 there was a 1.5 billion euro bill over its AdSense targeted advertising service.

All three cases are now before European courts. The EU opened up a new front against Google in August, with an "in-depth" probe into its acquisition of fitness wearables maker Fitbit that regulators fear would further buttress its dominance of the online advertising market.

Payouts for publishers

News publishers in many countries have accused Google and other digital platforms of profiting off their content without giving them a fair share. In March last year, the European Parliament adopted a directive on so-called "neighboring rights" that calls for the giants to pay publishers.

France implemented the law immediately and was challenged in court by Google. But judges recently upheld a decision that required the company to enter into talks with publishers over neighboring rights. Since then, Google has said it is close to a deal with one of its opposite numbers in the French press, and has also announced a program to pay publishers around the world through a licensing system. In Australia, the government in July unveiled a binding "code of conduct" that would require digital giants to pay media for their content and to increase transparency around the algorithms used to rank content in news feeds and search results—on pain of significant fines.—AFP



The logo of the multinational American Internet technology and services company, Google (center), the American online social media and social networking service, Facebook (top right), Snapchat (bottom right), Twitter (top left) and Instagram (bottom left) on a computer screen in Lille. - AFP

Business

Brexit waves threaten to wreck Belgian fishing in British waters

UK departure from EU single market to disrupt economic ties

OSTEND, Belgium: Britain's departure from the European single market will disrupt many long-standing economic relationships and could yet devastate one of the oldest—the Belgian fishing fleet's work in UK waters. In 1666 — three centuries before Britain joined the European Union—King Charles II granted the Flemish city of Bruges the right to send 50 boats to fish off England in perpetuity.

Since then the port of Bruges has silted up, the world's seas have been divided into exclusive economic zones under a United Nations convention and the European Union has launched a common fisheries policy. But Britain left the EU in January, and negotiators have failed so far to agree on a new way to assign fishing quotas as it regains its status as an independent coastal state.

This could end the fishing relationship, sealed by a grateful English king returning from exile in the Low Countries, that remains a way of life and an economic lifeline for the Flanders coast. The life of 50-year-old Robert Campbell, a deckhand on the trawler Den Hoop, is itself as much a symbol of the bond as the 17th Century "Fisheries Privilege" charter in Bruges' civic archive.

Robert is now Flemish, but he was born in an English fishing port, where his father died when he was young. "My stepdad was also a fisherman," he told AFP as the six-strong crew unloaded crates of sole and plaice on the dockside. "He always fished in English waters, went in English harbors.

"He met my mother and we all came to Belgium when I was five years old," he said. Robert joined a boat when he was 15 and has worked in British waters from a Belgian port ever since. The fishing strategy that brought his family together continues to this day.

The Den Hoop's catches from Dutch or Danish waters are landed in Ostend, but once their 12 tons of fish and crabs are unloaded here they set sail for Britain. When the hold is once more crammed with fish they will land in Liverpool, northwest England, or Milford Haven or Swansea in Wales, to unload while their haul is fresh.

The catch is then transported in lorries through England and the Channel Tunnel and then on to

Belgium to be sold at auction in Ostend, the boat's home port.

Belgium's fishermen, therefore, face two threats from Brexit. If the small fleet loses its access to British waters—the source of between 50 and 60 percent of its revenue—it could simply become unviable, the boat owners' association warns. And even if the tortuous negotiations throw up a deal that preserves Belgium's quotas, the return of a customs and regulatory border at the Straits of Dover will cause traffic jams.

'Think about us'

Hundreds or even thousands of trucks will have to wait for the tunnel and cross-Channel ferries, and if the fish doesn't make it back to Ostend shortly after it is landed, it won't be fresh. Marc Vieren, an official with the Rederscentrale, a professional association that represents boat owners, says the industry could perhaps survive losing access to inshore fishing within Britain's 12-mile limit. But if Brexit closes the deeper waters of Britain's maritime economic zone, "it's a catastrophe for us."

The best of the rays and turbot landed by the Den Hoop go to restaurants like the seafront eateries on the other side of the Noordde river in Ostend's beach resort. But these have been closed by the coronavirus lockdown, and prices have fallen 20 percent since last Friday. The fleet has left some boats idle to avoid flooding the market.

Before the epidemic, the Belgian boats were having a good year, and the Ostend owners have ordered at least three new vessels from a Dutch boatyard. One is already at the quay being fitted out.

"If they say that we can't fish in the English waters any more, all the ships, all the owners of the ships, they'll have to sell," says Campbell. "All the people that sail in them, the houses that they bought, it's going to all go down. I don't know if the ministers and the politicians can give us the money. I don't think so. "No deal? Nobody knows what it means 'no deal'. Only the politicians know," he exclaims. "I hope they think about us."

'No survival possible'

Emiel Brouckaert, director of the boat owners'

demonstrated financial need and used most of the cash to make payroll. Fraud by borrowers popped up almost as quickly as the program, overseen by the Small Business Administration (SBA), began in April. The Department of Justice has so far brought charges against 82 individuals in 56 cases for around \$250 million in loans, according to a review by the Project On Government Oversight.

So far, the burden on lenders has mostly been administrative. One veteran attorney who advises major banks on compliance matters said clients were responding to as many as 20 law enforcement subpoenas a week, producing documents and making employees available for interviews.

There is increasing concern, though, that the lenders themselves will face legal challenges over PPP, already leading to internal compliance reviews, investor warnings and even the outright sale of loan portfolios, according to public statements and people familiar with the situation.

At least four banks have warned investors in shareholder filings about PPP regulatory and legal risk. Bank of America, for example, said in a July filing that its participation in government stimulus programs "could result in reputational harm and government actions and proceedings, and has resulted in, and may continue to result in, litigation, including class actions."

"We fully cooperate with government inquiries," said Bill Halldin, a Bank Of America spokesperson.

to carefully monitor Chinese investments in Brazil and moves by Beijing to expand its influence in Latin America's largest economy through sale of 5G technology by Huawei. China's Embassy in Brazil on Twitter accused the United States of seeking a networking "monopoly," but said it believed most countries would remain independent and make their own decisions regarding 5G. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said trade agreements reached with Brazil on Monday would pave the way for further negotiations on steel, ethanol and sugar, and promote greater US investment as Washington moves to provide a counter-weight to China's expansion in the region.

"I would say clearly there is a China element ... in everything that all of us do," Lighthizer told an event hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce. "China has made a very significant move in Brazil. They're Brazil's biggest trading partner, so it's something that we're concerned about." Lighthizer's remarks were part of a full-court press. White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said Washington had urged Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and other Brazilian officials to keep a close watch on China's invest-

its own proposals.

"After a long struggle, we have reached a crucial agreement," German Agriculture Minister Julia Klöckner said after two days of talks in Luxembourg. Klöckner said there was a "good balance" in achieving a Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) that is "greener, fairer and simpler."

Leading climate change activist Greta Thunberg however dismissed the deal as a sellout which "basically means surrender on climate & environment." "No awareness means no pressure and accountability so the outcome is no surprise. They just don't care," Thunberg said in a tweeted message. The member states and members of the European Parliament must decide over the next few months on



Belgian fishermen are worried that if the UK leaves the EU single market without a fishing quotas agreement, their industry will be devastated. —AFP

Rederscentrale, says his association has teamed up with colleagues from other EU nations as the European Fisheries Alliance to lobby for a solution. The industry has had direct contact with EU negotiator Michel Barnier and has the backing of the Flemish and Belgian governments—despite its relatively small size in the Brexit puzzle.

"It's true that with our colleagues we've been able to push the sector to the front," he told AFP in Zeebrugge. "When you look at the balance sheet, in terms of gross national product, it's not that great. But it's clear that no survival is possible if we don't have access to British waters."

For the moment, in public at least, the EU lead-

ership—especially President Emmanuel Macron's government in Paris—has stood up for EU fishing against British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's brinkmanship. There can be no question, French and Dutch officials say, of leaving the fishing question until last in the Brexit talks in the hope of using it as a bargaining chip to secure a last ditch trade deal.

But time is running out, and—in the spirit of the 1666 charter—Brouckaert's team wants to treat fishing as separate from the broader picture of EU-UK ties. "As soon as there's the certainty of a 'no deal'," he said. "We need to talk specifically about fishing ... to re-establish our rights." —AFP

US banks sweat regulatory exposure from pandemic loans

BOSTON/NEW YORK/WASHINGTON: Banks that facilitated the US government's Paycheck Protection Program at first saw the effort as a small revenue booster with a patriotic bonus, shepherding \$525 billion in loans to businesses slammed by the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But as taxpayers begin to take on the cost of forgiving those loans, lenders like JPMorgan Chase & Co, Wells Fargo & Co and Bank of America Corp, are girding for what is likely to be years of regulatory scrutiny for their role in doling out the money, according to industry insiders, securities filings and government watchdogs. "The sense of anxiety is high," said Vivian Merker, a management consultant to financial services firms at Oliver Wyman in New York. "They are gearing up for years of requests from regulators and there's still reputational risk from PPP fraud even if they did all the right things to follow program rules."

Banks participating in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) issued more than 5.2 million loans, to be repaid by the government as long as borrowers

US offers telecoms financing to Brazil to buy 5G equipment

BRASILIA/WASHINGTON: The US government stepped up an offensive on Tuesday to keep China's Huawei Technologies out of Brazil's 5G market, with Washington offering to finance purchases by Brazilian telecom companies of equipment from its competitors.

During a visit to Brasilia, officials of the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the US EXIM bank and the National Security Council told reporters that funding was available to buy equipment from other companies.

The US delegation was headed by National Security adviser Robert O'Brien, who met with Bolsonaro before they attended the signing of an EXIM bank financing agreement that identifies areas of business cooperation that includes 5G telecoms. In Washington, top US officials urged Brazil

EU ministers back farm reform with environment rules

BRUSSELS: European Union ministers agreed yesterday to overhaul its big budget farm policy with tighter rules to protect the environment and fight climate change but environmentalists were not impressed. The new policy adopted by the 27 EU countries will now be negotiated with the European Parliament, which this week will vote on



WASHINGTON: Banks that facilitated the US government's Paycheck Protection Program at first saw the effort as a small revenue booster with a patriotic bonus, shepherding \$525 billion in loans to businesses slammed by the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Possible hazards

Among the possible hazards, experts have pointed to potential violations of the program's first-come, first-served application rules, disadvantaging minority-owned and women-owned businesses; maintaining adequate documentation, especially for loan forgiveness applications; and abiding by broader "know your customer" rules, which could have spotted more fraud. Congress passed the \$2.2-trillion Cares Act bailout in March which included nearly \$350 billion for PPP loans, with the pot later increasing. —Reuters



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and US National Security adviser Robert O'Brien.

ments and advanced technologies.

"We have encouraged Brazil ... to try to work together to make sure that we watch China carefully with respect to all manner of technology and telephoning and 5G," he told the event. "We have taken actions here in the States; we continue to move, and it is my great hope that Brazil will move with us," he added. —Reuters

rules that will apply from January 2023.

The European commissioner for agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski said the deal was "a good starting point" for these negotiations, suggesting a "good compromise" could be reached.

With a budget set for around 387 billion euros over seven years, the CAP accounts for the biggest share of EU spending. Under the agreement, all farmers will be forced to respect stricter environmental regulations if they want to benefit from financial aid.

Small farms will be subjected to simple checks "which would reduce the administrative burden, while guaranteeing at the same time their contribution to environmental and climate objectives," it says. —AFP

Ooredoo Kuwait launches its 'Shamel Pro'

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, launched its all-new "Shamel Pro" on 19 October 2020. The launching event took place at Ooredoo's headquarters, at Ooredoo Tower, Kuwait City. The hard work of Ooredoo's team has paid off as they have proudly stated that they gained more than 1,000 new "Shamel Pro" customers in the first two days of its launching. Ooredoo Kuwait never ceases to amaze its customers with its constant captivating products and services, and "Shamel Pro" takes Ooredoo's digital customer experience to the next level through its three different plans that were designed and built around the needs and passions of the local consumer market be it travelling, gaming or entertainment.

The launching event showcased Shamel Pro's innovative features, as well as kept the guests entertained with engaging activities and complimentary gifts such as: latest devices, digital services vouchers, Huawei routers, Arlo cameras, and more.

At the "Shamel Pro" launch event, officials from Ooredoo Kuwait including Abdulaziz Al-Babtain - Chief Executive Officer; Tapan Tripathi - Chief Marketing Officer; Mijbil Alayoub - Senior Director, Corporate Communications; - Yousef Al-Shallal - Director of Marketing; and Fatemah Dashti - Senior Manager, Corporate Communications, gave the attendees insights and information on the all-new "Shamel Pro", including its three different plans: Shamel Pro 25, Shamel Pro 35, and Shamel Pro 45, and their unlimited benefits.

Starting at KD 25, "Shamel Pro" features various benefits 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 (PAYGO) 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. "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 up to KD 720 gift from "Shamel Pro" partners including; Anghami, STARZ-PLAY, OSN, and other trending digital services vouchers.

"Our aim as Ooredoo is to become the leading integrated communications provider in Kuwait catering to all customers' needs and with the launching of "Shamel Pro", we take yet another step towards leading innovation" said Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Chief Executive Officer - Ooredoo Kuwait.

"Adopting new innovative strategies that deliver the ideal digital experience is the road ahead in delivering an effective and efficient customer experience. Indeed, creating value for our customers is a key success factor for us at Ooredoo" Al-Babtain added. Beyond entertaining guests, the launching day showcased Ooredoo's commitment and ability to deliver the brand promise of "enriching people's digital lives". Ooredoo keeps creating and improving its products and services based on customers' changing demands, delivering personalized online services and optimal product portfolios.

Business

UK borrowing exceeds forecasts, debt highest since 1960: Report

Debt-to-GDP ratio rises to 103.5%, highest since 1960

LONDON: Britain's government borrowing in the first half of the financial year was more than six times higher than before the COVID pandemic, official figures showed yesterday, taking public debt to its highest since 1960.

Public borrowing in September alone totaled 36.101 billion pounds (\$46.90 billion), above all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists, although August's figure was revised down by more than 5 billion pounds to 30.113 billion pounds. The increased borrowing took total public debt further above the 2 trillion pound mark to 2.060 trillion pounds or 103.5 percent of GDP, its highest on this measure since 1960, the Office for National Statistics said. Driven by a surge in coronavirus-related spending and a fall in tax revenue after the biggest economic hit since at least the 1920s, borrowing from April to September totalled 208.5 billion pounds, over six times more than for the same time in 2019.

Britain's Office for Budget Responsibility predicted in August that borrowing would reach a record 372 billion pounds by the end of this financial year, equivalent to 18.9 percent of gross domestic product, the most since World War Two. Borrowing to date is below what the OBR pencilled in for this point in the tax year, though the ONS data does not yet include the cost of defaults on government-backed COVID loans which the OBR has factored in.

Spending risks rising again in the second half of the financial year as lockdown restrictions return to

much of the United Kingdom, pressuring the government to offer extra support to closed businesses and their workers. "The OBR's forecast for public borrowing of 372 billion still looks about right," said Samuel Tombs, chief UK economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics.

Ratings agency Moody's downgraded Britain's sovereign credit rating on Friday to the same level



Sunak says jobs still priority

as Belgium's and the Czech Republic's, warning that Britain "effectively has no fiscal anchor".

But financial markets have shrugged off rising borrowing, and 10-year government borrowing costs of around 0.2 percent are only slightly above an all-time low struck at the start of the pandemic. Economists polled by Reuters expect the Bank of England to launch a further 100 billion pounds of bond purchases next month, adding to the 300 billion pounds announced since March.

Britain's government had aimed to set out a



LONDON: Public borrowing in September alone totaled 36.101 billion pounds (\$46.90 billion), above all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists.

three-year plan for public spending next month, but said yesterday this would only cover one year due to COVID uncertainty, with exceptions for schools, healthcare and some infrastructure. Finance minister Rishi Sunak said after the data his "enduring priority" would be to protect jobs during the crisis.

"Over time and as the economy recovers, the

government will take the necessary steps to ensure the long-term health of the public finances," he said. Separately, the Office for National Statistics said annual consumer price inflation in September rose to 0.5 percent in September from 0.2 percent in August, when it had been reduced by a temporary scheme to promote dining in restaurants. — Reuters

ASAR bags 12th consecutive IFLR award for Kuwait

KUWAIT: ASAR - Al-Ruwayh & Partners (ASAR), Kuwait's leading and most prominent corporate law firm, and one of the region's top tier firms, is pleased to announce that it has for a record 12th consecutive year received a national award presented by the International Financial Law Review (IFLR), the world's leading market guide for corporate and financial law firms worldwide. The 2020 IFLR national award presented to ASAR was for the "National Law Firm of the Year" in Kuwait.

Sam Habbas - Senior Partner at ASAR noted that: "Given the current global situation in which the world finds itself in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has not been without its challenges for all of us. Having received an IFLR national award for Kuwait for the 12th consecutive year is indeed a significant achievement for us. In addition, the Bahrain office of ASAR was also fortunate enough to be nominated for and awarded the IFLR M&A Deal of the Year where ASAR Bahrain acted as Bahrain local counsel UBER in respect to its acquisition of Careem. The receiving of these IFLR awards is a testament to the caliber and quality of our clients, the absolute level of trust that they have in our firm in handling their commercial transactions, and of course, because of the high level of skill, commitment and quality of service which our lawyers in both Kuwait and Bahrain consistently deliver to our clients. Of great significance, a key reason why we



have also been able to achieve such great success with our work is because of the high quality and sophisticated corporate and commercial transactions work which Kuwait and Bahrain keeps on producing on a consistent basis. As always, putting our clients first is a cornerstone principle of ASAR; their success is our success."

Ahmed Barakat - Managing Partner at ASAR noted that: "We are most delighted to receive from the IFLR the national law firm of the year award for Kuwait. This emphasizes our firm's continuous role as a leading player in advising on the most outstanding transactions in Kuwait. This award also reflects our firm's commitment to provide our clients with service of the highest order so that we may cross the finishing line with them in closing ground-breaking and innovative transactions. As always, we remain committed to provide cutting-edge legal counsel to our clients across all sectors in Kuwait and Bahrain. Our success is also underpinned by the ever-increasing level of sophistication in Kuwait and Bahrain and the

high level of quality legal services being rendered in those jurisdictions."

With dedicated offices in Kuwait and Bahrain coupled with its associated offices and relationships, ASAR provides clients across an extensive range of industry sectors with comprehensive legal advice and support for their business activities in Kuwait, Bahrain, across the GCC and beyond.

The firm has been consistently rated as the leading corporate and commercial law firm in Kuwait by reputable legal guides such as the International Financial Law Review (IFLR), the Chambers Global Guide, and the Legal 500. In 2017, ASAR won the "IFLR M&A Deal of the Year Award" in relation to ASAR's role as Kuwait law counsel to Adepto AD Investments SPC Limited who acquired a 93.4% stake in Kuwait Food Company (Americana), and the "IFLR Restructuring Deal of the Year Award" in relation to ASAR's role in acting as Kuwait law counsel to the various creditors in respect to the restructuring of the debt of Adeem Investment and Wealth Management.

Sophos appoints Kevin Isaac senior VP of sales for EMEA

KUWAIT: Sophos, a global leader in network and endpoint security, yesterday announced a new appointment to its senior EMEA sales leadership team. Kevin Isaac has joined Sophos as senior vice president of sales for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). "Kevin is a strategic addition to the Sophos senior leadership team, and his decades of expertise will be pivotal in helping partners evolve their security strategies to defend against today's persistent attackers," said Michael Valentine, chief revenue officer at Sophos. "There is tremendous opportunity for partners worldwide to leverage our strong portfolio of next-generation cybersecurity solutions and managed threat hunting and response services to protect their customers as they adapt to the constantly changing threat landscape and needs of remote and onsite workers. Kevin recognizes this and is dedicated to supporting partners in their respective regions."



Kevin Isaac

Isaac brings more than 25 years of cybersecurity sales leadership to Sophos, and most recently served as chief revenue officer at Forcepoint. He is known for inspiring and managing high-performing teams, and has considerable experience in driving business growth, operational excellence and year-over-year results, particularly in EMEA. Isaac is based in the UK.

"We are thrilled Kevin has joined Sophos to expand our already strong growth path in the EMEA market. He is a well-respected international sales executive within cybersecurity, and his wealth of experience will benefit partners and customers as Sophos continues to innovate and lead the industry," said Valentine.

IAA holds elections; Joel Nettey becomes chairman, president

NEW YORK: At the World Board Meeting of the International Advertising Association, held virtually on October 5, Srinivasan Swamy handed over the baton of the Chairman and World President to Joel E Nettey, CEO, Innova DDB, Ghana.

During the elections the following roles were also confirmed:

- Senior Vice President: Sasan Saeidi, Global Client Leader for Nestle at Wunderman Thompson (London)
- General Secretary: Carol Schuster, Business Information Advisor at Lafayette 148 New York (New York)
- Treasurer: Venanzio Camarra, Venanzio Camarra & Partners (Milan)

A thoroughbred marketing communications professional, Joel Nettey has been Chief Executive of various multinational marketing communications agency affiliates in Ghana including DDB, Saatchi & Saatchi and Publicis. His passion for building relationships and his

penchant for achieving extraordinary marketing and communications goals have resulted in the agencies he has led being partners for a myriad of blue-chip companies, both multinational and indigenous.

Speaking after the election Nettey outlined his plans for the two years ahead, "We will focus on four key pillars -

Diversity & Inclusion, Creativity & Innovation, Regulatory Issues, and Education. Together, as a team, we will take the steps required to ensure that the IAA remains the most recognizable, relevant and impactful marketing and marketing communications association across the globe, while ensuring we attract and provide opportunities that engage and nourish the next generation of marketing game changers".

Srinivasan Swamy, the Immediate Past President and the Chairman of Presidents' Council said, "I have worked with Joel over the last two years when he was Senior Vice President at IAA. His understanding of the issues at IAA is amazing, as is his commitment level to deliver on what is required. I am sure IAA will flourish over the next two years under his stewardship, and I am happy to actively support his initiatives that will build IAA further".

Global trade recovered somewhat in the third quarter, when it was estimated at about 4.5 percent less than in the same period a year ago, the agency said in its latest update. "Trade in home office equipment and medical supplies has increased in Q3, while it further weakened in the automotive and energy sectors," UNCTAD said. Growth in the textiles sector was also strong.

Its preliminary forecast put year-on-year growth for Q4 2020 at 3 percent less, but the report said that uncertainties persisted due to how the pandemic would evolve. If the pandemic resurges in coming months, that could lead to a deteriorating environment for policymakers and sudden increase in trade restrictive policies, it said. China's exports rebounded strongly in the third quarter after falling in the early months of the pandemic, and have posted year-on-year growth rates of nearly 10 percent, UNCTAD said. —Reuters

News in brief

China warns Swedish firms

BEIJING: China yesterday told Sweden to reverse a ban on Chinese tech firms from its 5G network, warning of "negative impacts" if it did not. The Swedish telecoms regulator issued a ban on Tuesday that would require carriers to remove existing Huawei and ZTE equipment by 2025, citing national security concerns. Chinese telecoms companies have faced bans and heightened scrutiny in recent months over fears Beijing could use their overseas deals to spy on foreign citizens. That has provoked a furious response from Beijing, which denies the allegations and says trumped-up security concerns are being used against its successful tech firms to harm them in for commercial reasons. —AFP

Assad cuts tax for the poor

BEIRUT: Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad moved yesterday to exempt more low-wage earners from income tax, his office said, as the economy buckles under the weight of US sanctions and nearly a decade of war. The legislative decree, the first such amendment in years, widens the tranche of low-income workers exempt from tax to cover those earning 50,000 Syrian pounds (\$40) or less per month, up from 15,000 Syrian pounds. It also amends other tax tranches to "reduce the tax burden on those with limited income," the presidency said. Syrians have suffered from steep price hikes in recent months as the collapse of the currency drives up inflation and piles on hardship. The economy has been hit also by a financial crisis in neighboring Lebanon that has choked off a key source of dollars. — Reuters

Port of Rotterdam sees recovery

AMSTERDAM: Freight volumes in the Port of Rotterdam improved in the third quarter after the deep slump caused by the coronavirus pandemic in the first half of the year, Europe's largest sea port said yesterday. Throughput of agribulk, iron ore, biomass and goods transported by trucks on ferries showed a marked improvement at the end of the third quarter, the port said, while the number of containers that arrived in Rotterdam also increased. "Many segments showed a marked improvement in their throughput volumes in comparison with the second quarter", the port authority said. Overall, however, throughput in the first nine months of the year was 8.8 percent lower than a year earlier, at 322.3 million tons. —AFP

Malaysia's Sept CPI drops

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's consumer price index (CPI) fell for the seventh straight month in September, declining 1.4 percent from a year earlier, government data showed yesterday. The drop was more than the 1.3 percent decline forecast by 10 economists in a Reuters poll. In August, the index had fallen 1.4 percent. September's decline was driven largely by the transport sector index falling 9.9 percent on-year and lower housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel prices, the Statistics Department said in a statement. — Reuters

Classifieds

Thursday, October 22 2020

Kuwait Times
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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

الطيران المدني
Civil Aviation
 State of Kuwait - دولة الكويت

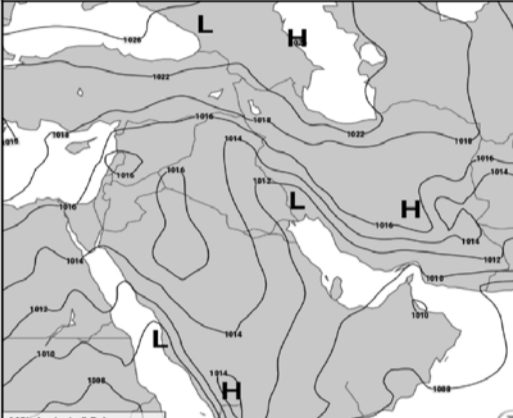


Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 66819 - 66817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/10/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	35 °C	25 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	36 °C	21 °C			
ABDALY	37 °C	16 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	19 °C			
JAHRA	37 °C	22 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	34 °C	24 °C			
SALMIYAH	34 °C	26 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWAISIB	35 °C	20 °C			
WAFRA	37 °C	20 °C			
SALMY	36 °C	17 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	10/22	Rather hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	36 °C	21 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	10/23	Rather hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	36 °C	20 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	10/24	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	34 °C	18 °C	NW-SE	10 - 30 km/h
Sunday	10/25	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	35 °C	16 °C	NW-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:34
Sunrise	05:54
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:46
Sunset	17:12
Isha	18:29

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	37 °C
MIN. Temp.	19 °C
MAX. RH	34 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	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

NOTICE
 October 20, 2020

Mr. Daniel George Aranha, son of Mr. Denis Victor Aranha, resident of Asara HSG society, Block C 47, IInd Dombivili E, Thane Maharashtra and Ms. Maehul Lal Manoj Kumar, daughter of Mr. Lal Manoj Kumar Narendra Kumar, resident of S 9 sector XI, Neida, GautamBudh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Pin: 201301, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters/ telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ranveer Bhatti)
 Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer,
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.
 Email: welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in

Ph.00965-22550171 - 00965-22533125
 Fax: 00965-22573910
 Email: attachecons@indembkwt.org
welfaresection@indembkwt.org

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

Word Search

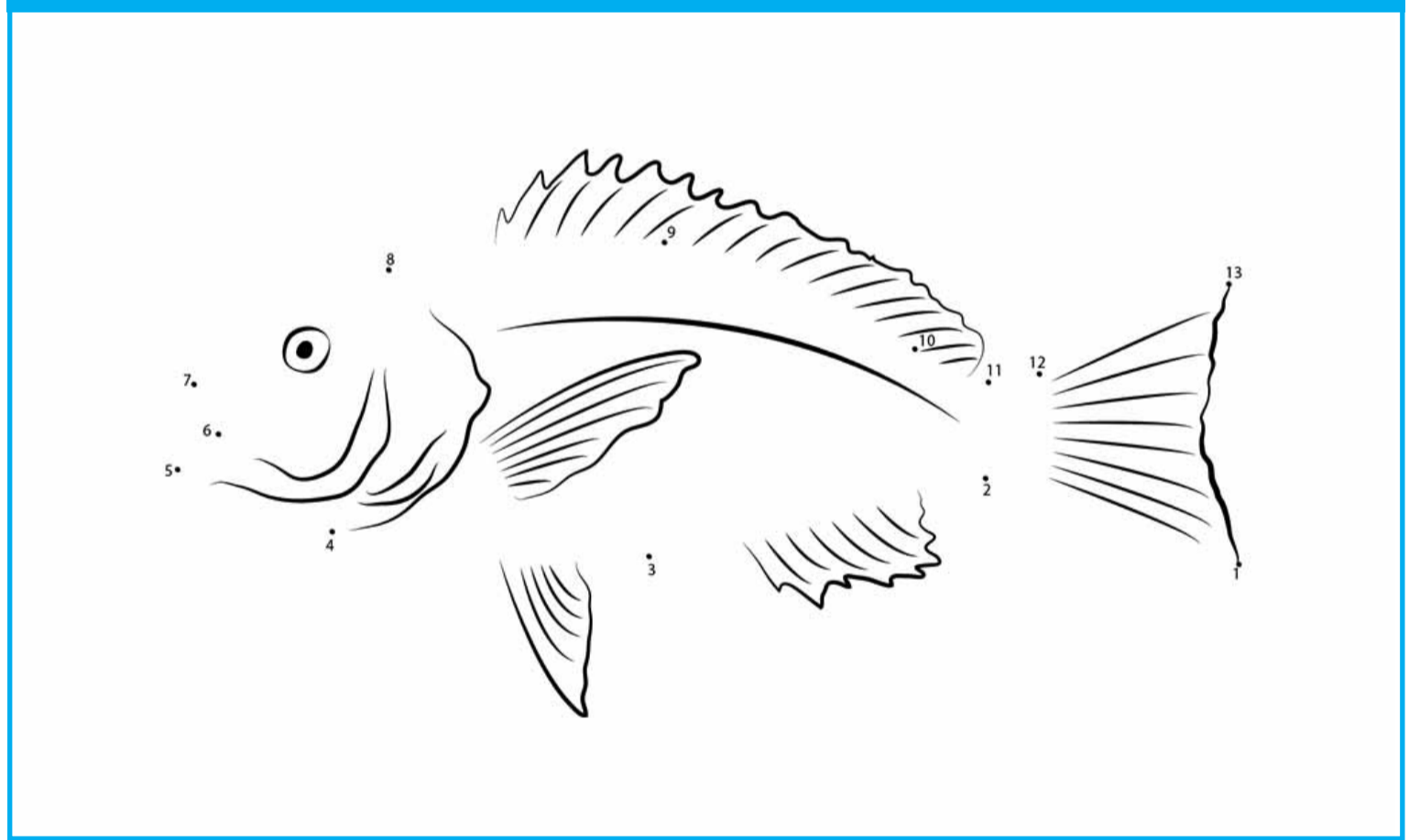
Donuts by the Dozen

Don't forget to celebrate National Doughnut Day, June 7th, with a little sweet something.



APPLE		
BERLINER		
BLUEBERRY		
BOX		
CHOCOLATE		
CIDER		
CINNAMON		
COCONUT		
COFFEE		
CREAM		
CRULLER		
DONUT		
DOUGHNUT	FROSTING	OLD FASHIONED
DOZEN	GLAZED	SPRINKLES
ÉCLAIR	HOLE	STICKY
FRIED	HOLE	SUGAR
FITTER	JELLY	SWEET
	MAPLE	TWIST

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

 <p>Aries (March 21-April 19) Demands made by friends, children, or the special person in your life might have you feeling like you're moving in a dozen different directions at once. You may feel unfocused and scattered. You usually enjoy serving others, Aries, but today you need to concentrate a little more on yourself. Show others how to help themselves and then go and do something you want to do. You deserve it!</p>	 <p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) You don't normally tend toward frugality, Cancer, but today you could go overboard with your spending. Frustration from all sides makes you want to release it all at once by acquiring new possessions. This is fine up to a point. Treat yourself but take care that you curb the impulse buying. You don't want to waste any time tomorrow taking unwanted items back to the store.</p>	 <p>Libra (September 23-October 22) Group activities are probably very much on your agenda today, Libra. You could attend an online meeting or lecture and later participate in a group chat with a bunch of friends. Don't be tempted to eat or drink too much. You'll likely regret it tomorrow. An unexpected sum of extra money could come your way. Don't spend it all in one place. This is a great day to concentrate on having fun - within limits.</p>	 <p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Although your financial situation appears to be on the upswing, you still might be feeling pessimistic and indifferent about money and life in general. You might want to soothe your discontent by overspending, indulging in food or drink, or both. Don't let this feeling get the better of you, Capricorn. Get together with some friends, if possible, and have a good time.</p>
 <p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) A number of deliveries, service people, emails, or phone calls might keep you jumping today, Taurus, right when you're in the mood for a quiet day. It may take all your effort to keep your cool. Try to get a family member to intercede for you with some of these people or you might lose your temper. In the evening, watch a movie and relax.</p>	 <p>Leo (July 23-August 22) Some failures that you may have experienced over the past few days could have you beating yourself up today, Leo. Perhaps you feel that you were too hasty or too sloppy and could have done things better. Don't obsess over it. Figure out what went wrong, learn from it, and let it go. Too much negativity directed at yourself is likely to sabotage future efforts rather than help them.</p>	 <p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Too much pressure on the job could have you feeling like chucking it all and going somewhere by yourself. You might be tempted to go on a spending spree or indulge in food or drink. This may spill over into your personal relationships, causing disagreements with friends or family. It might be a good idea to be alone for a few hours, Scorpio. You will feel much better once you clear your head.</p>	 <p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) A minor and rather silly quarrel with a friend or romantic partner could have you down in the dumps. This is an overreaction, Aquarius. You might need to get away for a while before you can make sense of it all. Too many demands from others could have you feeling used, and you might be tempted to tell them off. Try to avoid others long enough to gain control of yourself.</p>
 <p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) A close friend might pass along some seemingly harmless but nonetheless untrue gossip, Gemini. Don't accept anything you hear today until you check the facts for yourself. Any information you receive is likely to be exaggerated if not totally false. You might find a lot of material on subjects that interest you - too much for you to read all at once, although you might wish you could!</p>	 <p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) Today you might be able to tune in to the thoughts and feelings of others, Virgo, but you aren't likely to know exactly how to handle the situation. Should you say something or just tailor your own behavior to suit the moods of others? Reflect on the situation before doing either. This is a great day to meditate or read books or attend online lectures on spiritual matters.</p>	 <p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Inner conflict regarding spiritual matters might have you questioning your and others' beliefs. You might doubt just about everything, Sagittarius, and you could be tempted into angry debates over different concepts. Books or TV documentaries on whatever is bothering you might spark your curiosity and calm you down a little. A legal matter might come to the forefront today. It's a hassle, but it needs to be handled.</p>	 <p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) Pressures on the job may be mounting. You might feel so disgruntled that you want to chuck it all and run away. Foreign countries and distant states may suddenly seem far more appealing than usual. Maybe it's a good idea to plan a future vacation, Pisces. The stresses you've been experiencing could adversely affect your health. You need to release them somehow. Give it some thought.</p>

Lifestyle | Features

Thailand welcomes first tourists since March

Thailand has welcomed its first group of tourists in seven months, as part of an experiment aimed at testing if a wider opening is possible as the coronavirus cripples the kingdom's economy. A planeload of 39 Chinese tourists flew into Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport Tuesday evening from Shanghai to a welcome from staff in full protective equipment. The visitors underwent health checks and had their luggage disinfected, before donning protective clothing themselves and being whisked away for two weeks' quarantine. "It's a welcome sign that foreigners are confident in our safety measures," Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said in a statement. "I instructed officials to take good care of the tourists, because if they're safe, Thais are safe too."

The pandemic has brought the Southeast Asian nation's economy to its knees, with eight million expected to lose their jobs by the end of the year. Many of those losses will be in the tourism sector, in a country that saw 40 million international arrivals in 2019. The holidaymakers have come under a special tourist visa scheme, which offers 1,200 spots and allows people to stay for up to nine months. The arrival numbers were much smaller than the 150 passengers authorities touted last month. Tourism officials declined to give a reason, but insisted it was not linked to recent confrontations between pro-democracy protesters and police in the Thai capital and elsewhere. Tourism consultant Bill Barnett admitted the ongoing unrest was damaging

Thailand's image, but said the country could channel visitors away from protest-hit Bangkok.

"Thailand will become an economic basket case if it doesn't bring back tourism," he said. Mario Hardy from the Bangkok-based Pacific Asia Travel Association agreed, saying civil unrest had never dissuaded tourists from visiting Thailand in the past. "They know it's isolated, a local issue and not targeting tourists," he said. A second group of 147 Chinese tourists from Guangzhou is due to arrive in Thailand next week, followed by a flight from Scandinavia in November. — AFP



This handout photo released yesterday by the Airports of Thailand company shows members of a group of 39 Chinese visitors (right) with special tourist visas getting their luggage cleaned as part of the arrival measures to halt the spread of the COVID-19 at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, before heading to a 14-day stay in Alternative State Quarantine (ASQ) facilities. — AFP

ASIA'S BIGGEST FILM FEST OPENS AS A SHADOW OF ITS USUAL SELF

An anthology paying cinematic tribute to Hong Kong was the highlight yesterday on the opening day of Asia's biggest film festival, which has been forced largely online by the coronavirus pandemic. The Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) usually sees a host of stars and industry players from Asia and elsewhere descend on the port city for 10 days of critical consideration and financial deal-making. But strict conditions imposed this year due to the pandemic mean that while socially-distanced screenings are taking place, there are no opening or closing ceremonies, no red-carpet parades, no after-parties or outdoor fan events.

Even so the fact it is taking place at all contrasts with the many international festivals have gone online-only, while some such as Cannes have been cancelled altogether. This year marks BIFF's 25th anniversary and comes after home-grown director Bong Joon-ho's historic Oscar win for the dark comedy "Parasite" in February—the first time a foreign-language film has won top accolades in Hollywood. Around

190 movies will be shown at this year's festival and only once each, compared to the typical 300-odd films played multiple times—an 80 percent cut in total screenings. Viewers have to wear masks and only a quarter of theatre seats are being made available. A trickle of moviegoers—outnumbered by staff—made their way into the Busan Cinema Center for the first shows on Wednesday, where hand sanitisers, QR codes and temperature screening were mandatory on the way in.

"It's a shame that it's been scaled down so much," said Busan resident and festival regular Ahn Tae-jeong, 30. "I'm very down that I'm going to miss a lot of movies that I wanted to watch." The official opening film was the world premiere-one of 70 this year-of "Septet: The Story of Hong Kong", a multi-director anthology that pays tribute to the territory from the 1950s to the present. Directed by Tsui Hark, Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, Johnnie To, Yuen Wo Ping, Ringo Lam and Sammo Hung, the movie was shot on film to honour the golden age of Hong Kong cinema, from the 1960s to

the 1990s. The former British colony was once the regional cinematic powerhouse, producing as many as 200 Cantonese-language films a year that were devoured by cinema-goers across Asia and beyond. "It was an era of 'one hundred flowers blooming'—the free expression of art—that nurtured numerous movie talents," production company Media Asia Film Hong Kong said in a statement. But since the 1997 handover to China, the city's movie studios have gone into decline, eclipsed by flashier and wealthier rivals on the mainland and in South Korea.

'Very special feeling'

Most BIFF components—including judging, press conferences, film and project markets and discussion forums—will still be held during the festival, but only online. "It will certainly be a different festival this year," Jason Bechervaise, a professor at Korea Soongsil Cyber University, told AFP. Organizers have also scheduled some 45 screening talks—far fewer than normal—but featuring only South Korean filmmakers and

actors. South Korea imposes a strict two-week quarantine on most arrivals, making short visits impractical, so organizers have not invited foreigners—although some will participate online.

"We are doing our very best to offer what's most essential while following Covid-19 safety measures," BIFF program director Nam Dong-chul told AFP. "We think what's most important about film festivals is to screen movies at movie theatres, as cinema is an art form that requires big screens." But the compromises have left some people dismayed. "I've attended a number of online movie talks since Covid, and I have to say they are just dreadful," said filmmaker Kim So-young, a professor who has not missed an edition of BIFF in 10 years. "You just can't connect with your viewers the way you do in theatres, especially after the lights are back on after a screening," she said. "There is a very special feeling that comes from knowing that you are with people who just finished watching your film." — AFP



This handout photo shows visitors sitting among movie posters to observe social distancing as they attend at a public talk about South Korean zombie thriller "Peninsula" during the BIFF 2020 at the Busan Cinema Center in Busan. — AFP photos



This handout photo taken and released yesterday by the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) shows South Korean film director Yeon Sang-ho on a screen at a public talk about South Korean zombie thriller "Peninsula" during the BIFF 2020 at the Busan Cinema Center in Busan.

Translation tools, air purifiers: Face masks go high-tech

From monitoring vital signs to filtering filthy air and even translating speech into other languages, the coronavirus-fueled boom in mask-wearing has spawned an unusual range of high-tech face coverings. As masks become the norm worldwide, tech companies and researchers are rolling out weird and wonderful models to both guard against infection and cash in on a growing trend. One of the wackiest comes from Japan, where start-up Donut Robotics has created a face covering that helps users adhere to social distancing and also acts as a translator. The "C-Face" mask works by transmitting a wearer's speech to a smartphone via an app, and allows people to have a conversation while keeping up to 10 metres (32 feet) apart.

"Despite the coronavirus, we some-

times need to meet directly with each other," Donut Robotics chief executive Taisuke Ono told AFP. The lightweight silicone device could have immediate benefits for people such as doctors who want to communicate with patients from a distance, the company says. It can translate speech from Japanese into English, Korean and other languages—a function that will become more useful once travel restrictions are eventually eased. But it does not offer protection from Covid-19 on its own, and is designed to be worn over a regular face covering when it goes on sale in February for about 4,000 yen (\$40).

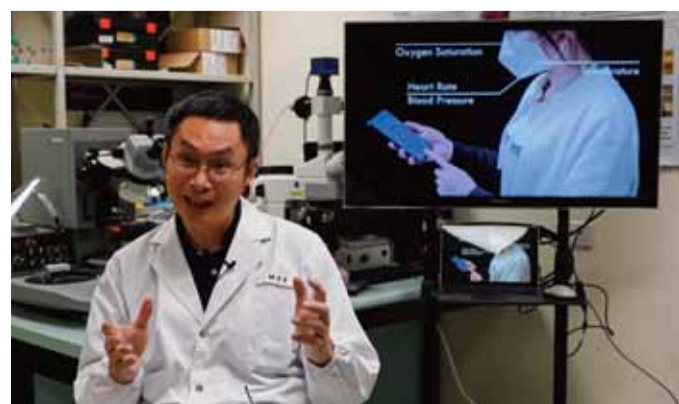
Donut Robotics raised nearly 100 million yen (\$950,000) via crowdfunding to develop it, a success Ono believes was driven by a desire for innovations to make

life easier during the pandemic. "We may be able to fight the virus with technology, with human wisdom," he said. Another face mask developed in Singapore is aimed at protecting medics treating Covid-19 patients. It has sensors that monitor body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure and blood oxygen levels, and relay data to a smartphone via a Bluetooth transmitter. "Many of these frontline workers will be exposed to patients when they are taking their vital signs," Loh Xian Jun, one of the scientists behind the invention, told AFP.

"This poses a health risk to the nurses, and we wanted to think about a way to reduce such risk." Its inventors say the device could also monitor vital signs of migrant workers in crowded dormitories, which incubated massive virus outbreaks

in the city-state this year. They hope to trial it in the near future and market it commercially. For those seeking to combat the effects of pollution in smog-choked cities, South Korea's LG Electronics has developed an air purifier mask. The futuristic white device, which fits snugly around the wearer's mouth, nose and chin, is equipped with two filters on either side and fans to aid airflow.

The filters are similar to those in the company's home air purifiers, and can block 99.95 percent of harmful particles. Thousands have already been made available to medical staff and it will also be rolled out in shops in the future, the company says. — AFP



This photograph shows Professor Chen Xiaodan from the School of Materials Science and Engineering at the Nanyang Technological University talking to an AFP reporter regarding the development of a face mask that can monitor vital health information. — AFP photos



A research fellow from the School of Materials Science and Engineering at the Nanyang Technology University wearing a face mask installed with sensors which transmit via Bluetooth readings.



Donut Robotics chief executive Taisuke Ono posing for a photo with the smart mask "C-face" in his studio following an interview with AFP in Tokyo.



CHERNOBYL-LEVEL RADIATION HARMFUL TO BEES

Bumblebees exposed to levels of radiation found within the Chernobyl exclusion zone suffered a "significant" drop in reproduction, in new research published yesterday that scientists say should prompt a rethink of international calculations of nuclear environmental risk. The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, set out to discover how ionizing radiation affects insects, which are often thought to be more resilient than other species. Researchers in Scotland and Germany exposed bee colonies in a laboratory setting to a range of radiation levels found in areas of the exclusion zone around the ruined Chernobyl site, where a reactor exploded in 1986 in the world's worst nuclear disaster.

They found that colony reproduction reduced by 30 to 45 percent at doses previously considered too low to impact insects. "We found that at radiation levels detectable in Chernobyl, the number of new queen bees produced from the colony was significantly reduced and colony growth was delayed—meaning colonies reached their peak weight at a week later," said the paper's lead author Katherine Raines. The lecturer in environmental pollution at the University of Stirling told AFP by email that researchers "anticipate that this may have an effect on pollination/ecosystem services in contaminated areas". The authors said they chose bumblebees both because of a lack of lab-based research into bees and because of their crucial role in pollination. Ionizing radiation can occur either from nuclear sites or medical procedures, although the levels tested were higher than those that would likely be found in the environment from normal releases, Raines said.

But she added that the researchers were "very surprised that we could detect effects as low as we did". "Our research suggests insects living in the most contaminated areas at Chernobyl may suffer adverse effects, with subsequent consequences for ecosystem services such as pollination," she added. The authors said if their findings could be generalized "they suggest insects suffer significant negative consequences at dose rates previously thought safe" and called revisions to the international framework for radiological protection of the environment. People are not allowed to live near the Chernobyl power station and the abandoned settlements within the exclusion zone are surrounded by forests hosting birds, wolves, elks and lynxes. A giant protective dome was put in place over the destroyed fourth reactor in 2016. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Actress Nayeli Cortez performs in the La Llorona folk play at the Cuernavaca pier in the "chinampas" of Lake Xochimilco.



Dancers representing Mexica indigenous people perform in the La Llorona folk play. — AFP photos



A dancer representing a Mexica indigenous man performs in the La Llorona folk play, at the Cuernavaca pier in the "chinampas" of Lake Xochimilco, small artificial islands and causeways created by the Aztecs in wetlands, in southern Mexico City amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEXICO'S 'WEEPING WOMAN' RETURNS WITH PANDEMIC-ERA TWIST



Actress Nayeli Cortez performs in the La Llorona folk play.

A disconsolate mother dressed in white wanders through Mexico City's floating gardens looking for her children killed by the coronavirus, in a pandemic-era adaptation of a legend rooted in Aztec mythology. The traditional play "La Llorona" (The Weeping Woman) returns to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Xochimilco ahead of the Day of the Dead with a poignant tribute to the victims of Covid-19. The ghost with flowing black hair, who according to legend reappears every year searching for her downed children, has spread throughout Latin America. "It's dedicated to the memory of all the people who left without saying goodbye to their loved ones and for all the families who have suffered this loss," Nayeli Cortez, who has played the role of the weeping mother for 11 years, told AFP.

Measures such as face masks made of transparent plastic or cloth and a smaller audience enabled the 27-year-old performance and its flamboyant costumes to survive the pandemic. The coronavirus has killed 86,000 people in Mexico, one of the world's highest tolls, and as in other countries kept people apart from their families. "Not being able to hug, hold hands or kiss (relatives) is very frustrating and that's why right now it's dedicated to them," said stage director Maria Luisa Castillo. "We

know that they are here with us and it is the homage that we can give them, and also to tell them, 'Here we are. We remember you. You will never be forgotten.'" According to experts, the legend of the wandering ghost was first documented around 1550.

It is associated with supposed dire omens prior to the Spanish conquest that predicted the end of the Tenochtitlan empire 500 years ago. The audience watched the show from the gondolas that ply the canals of Xochimilco, which usually attracts about a million tourists a year but was shut for almost six months due to the pandemic. Hugo Cruz, a 46-year-old driver, said that it was important to keep the legend alive for future generations. "If we don't instill (the traditions) in our children then it's going to be lost," he said. "I think that we're the only country that worships death in this way." The Day of the Dead, celebrated in Mexico on the first two days of November, is believed to be when the gateway separating the living and the deceased opens. This year the festival known for its bright colors and elaborate costumes will be a more subdued, scaled down affair due to the pandemic. — AFP



Actress Nayeli Cortez (right) performs in the La Llorona folk play.



Dancers representing Mexica indigenous people perform in the La Llorona folk play.

Robert Redford's son, James Redford, dies at 58

James Redford, a filmmaker, activist and son of actor Robert Redford, has died at age 58. The legendary actor's publicist, Cindi Berger, told AFP that the 84-year-old was "mourning with his family during this difficult time and asks for privacy." "The grief is immeasurable with the loss of a child. Jamie was a loving son, husband and father," she added. "His legacy lives on through his children, art, filmmaking and devoted passion to conservation and the environment."

James Redford died on Friday last week at his home in California, his wife, Kyle Redford, said in a post on Twitter accompanied by several photos of the family. "We're heartbroken," she said. "He lived a beautiful, impactful life & was loved by many. He will be deeply missed. As his wife of 32 yrs, I'm most grateful for the two spectacular children we raised together. "I don't know what we would've done w/o them over the past 2yrs." She told the Salt Lake Tribune that her husband had died

from bile-duct cancer in his liver. The cancer was discovered last November as he waited on a liver transplant. The filmmaker was a fierce environmental advocate and many of his projects focused on raising awareness about the environment and health. He and his father co-founded the Redford Center in 2005, a non-profit aimed at films focusing on the environment.

"With Jamie came love and contagious joy," Jill Tidman, the center's executive director, said in an Instagram post. "He approached everything he did with kindness and warmth, and an openness that spread itself easily among others. "Jamie worked tirelessly to build a healthier world for us all, and particularly for those most in need of support. He always led with his enormous heart and was guided by his curiosity and creative spirit." — AFP



In this file photo Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks during his daily coronavirus, COVID-19 briefing at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa, Ontario. — AFP

No Halloween trick-or-treating for Trudeau's kids due to virus

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Tuesday his children will not go trick-or-treating on Halloween this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, but may instead hunt "Easter-style" for candy around their house. Public health officials have reintroduced a partial lockdown in the capital Ottawa and several other Canadian cities and towns to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus after a recent spike in the number of cases. Among the recommendations in Ontario, the nation's most populous province, was to not send kids trick-or-treating, provoking a public outcry. "Unfortunately all of us are having to make sacrifices of different types, particularly kids," Trudeau told a news conference.

"Listening to public health officials means that my family will not be going trick-or-treating this year because... in red zones like Ottawa, they are not encouraging or not recommending trick-or-treating," he said. But, he added, his sons Xavier, 13, and Hadrien, six, as well as his daughter Ella-Grace, 11, "could do an Easter-style treasure hunt for candy throughout the house and yard." "I think families will be (similarly) creative in how they respond to giving their kids as fun a holiday as we can," Trudeau said. Trudeau famously likes to dress up in costumes for Halloween and parties-since coming to power in 2015, he has masqueraded as Clark Kent, Sherlock Holmes and "Star Wars" fan favorite Han Solo. — AFP

US GOES NUTS OVER FLYING SQUIRREL THIEVES

It was a high-flying scheme that landed with a thud: seven alleged flying squirrel traffickers were arrested in the US state of Florida after capturing thousands of animals worth more than \$1 million. Following a 19-month investigation, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) announced Monday it had so far apprehended seven individuals but that additional arrests were forthcoming. Following a January 2019 complaint, the commission found that up to 3,600 flying squirrels had been caught in 10,000 traps throughout central Florida, the FWC said.

Under the scheme the flying squirrels, which are a protected wild animal in Florida but are sold internationally as pets, were poached, trafficked and laundered before being purchased by South Korean buyers. The investigation revealed that the Florida-based dealer who purchased the squirrels from poachers and claimed they were born in

captivity, earned as much as \$213,800 for the animals. According to the FWC, the flying squirrels, which were collected over the course of less than three years, have an international value of more than \$1 million. Charges for the seven individuals include racketeering, money laundering and scheming to defraud, among other crimes. "These poachers could have severely damaged Florida's wildlife populations," said Major Grant Burton, FWC Investigation's section leader. "The concerned citizen who initially reported this activity started an investigation that uncovered a major smuggling operation." Flying squirrels weren't the only victims: The suspects also profited from dealings with other poached animals-protected freshwater turtles and alligators with falsified documents to conceal their origin. — AFP



In this file photo James Redford, Robert Redford and Shauna Redford attend the Netflix Hosts The New York Premiere Of 'Our Souls At Night' at The Oak Room in New York City. — AFP



People, some wearing a face mask or covering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sit near an art installation entitled "Out of Order" by artist David Mach, in Kingston, south of London. — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Red Bull Sailing Team at the GC32 Oman Cup in Muscat, Oman. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Kershaw and Dodgers dominate Rays to win World Series opener

Dodgers beat Rays 8-3 to draw first blood in World Series

ARLINGTON: Clayton Kershaw pitched a post-season gem and Mookie Betts backed him up with a scintillating offensive effort as the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Tampa Bay Rays 8-3 in game one of the 116th World Series. Kershaw, a three-time Cy Young Award-winner and future Hall of Famer whose lackluster post-season record puts him under the microscope this time of year, was rock-solid as the Dodgers seized the initiative in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship showcase, being played this pandemic-disrupted year at the neutral site of Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas. The 32-year-old left-hander surrendered two hits-including one home run-with eight strikeouts and one walk in six innings.

Betts boosted the Dodgers' bid for their first World Series title since 1988 with a solo home run and a World Series record-equaling two stolen bases in one inning. Cody Bellinger, whose solo homer was crucial to the Dodgers' 4-3 series-clinching win over Atlanta in the National League Championship Series, came through again with a two-run homer off Rays starter Tyler Glasnow. "It's awesome, it's great to get this series going with a win," said Kershaw, who endured World Series disappointment with the Dodgers in 2017 and 2018.

"It's always important to get that first game in a series, and just for me personally, it's awesome, to pitch well and

get a win in a World Series." Kershaw gave up a leadoff single to Yandi Diaz to open the game and needed 20 pitches to get out of the first inning. That included a walk to Randy Arozarena that moved Diaz to second, but Kershaw struck out Hunter Renfroe and induced a ground out from Manuel Margo to end the danger, launching a run of 13 straight batters retired.

"I was fortunate to get out of the first inning without any runs," Kershaw said. "Then after that I locked it in a little better." Glasnow surrendered just one hit through three innings, but Bellinger broke through with one out in the fourth, seizing upon a 98 mph first-pitch fastball from Glasnow and sending it 378 feet over the right-centerfield wall for a home run that also scored Max Muncy—who walked to open the inning and reached second on a wild pitch.

'Special' Betts

Kershaw gave up a homer to Kevin Kiermaier in the top of the fifth. The Dodgers responded in the bottom of the fifth, when Betts made Glasnow pay for a leadoff walk, stealing two bases and scoring as Max Muncy reached first base on a fielder's choice and Betts beat the throw to home. "Stolen bases are a thing for me," said Betts, who helped the Boston Red Sox beat the

Dodgers in the 2018 World Series and was traded to Los Angeles prior to this season. "That's how I create runs and create havoc on the basepaths.

"Once I get on the basepaths I'm just trying to get home." After Will Smith singled to drive in a run, Rays manager Kevin Cash pulled Glasnow for Ryan Yarbrough, who surrendered run-scoring singles to Chris Taylor and Enrique Hernandez that pushed the Dodgers' lead to 6-1 through five. Glasnow departed having given up three hits and six runs and a particularly damaging six walks. "Not discouraging," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "Disappointing, yeah (but) we bounce right back like we've done multiple times this year and look to find a way to win a game tomorrow."

Kershaw retired three straight in the top of the sixth, and Betts greeted Rays relief pitcher Josh Fleming with a leadoff homer in the bottom of the frame. "Mookie's pretty special," Kershaw said. "He does things on the baseball field that not many people can do, and he does it consistently, which I think separates him from other guys." The Dodgers piled it on with run-scoring doubles from Justin Turner and Muncy. The Rays pulled back two runs in the seventh on singles from Mike Brosseau and Kiermaier, but the Rays rally stalled when Mike Zunino hit into a double play. —AFP



Jorge Prado



Karl Meltzer



Nitro Team



Pierre Gasly

On-demand showcase: 6 engrossing Red Bull TV documentaries

KUWAIT: Demand for documentary filmmaking has taken off in the last few years, with Red Bull leading the way. Red Bull TV is a treasure trove for subscription-free, on-demand films. From the celebrated library of high-caliber documentaries are 6 films that exemplify the range and quality available to viewers.

Ride: All in Red Bull Edition Motocross

Going all in for the professional motocross riders means more than full-on surrender. For them, it means putting in the hours, showing up, trusting in the program, and the team. For the few that do prescribe to this ethos, like Marvin Musquin, Jeffrey Herlings, Jorge Prado, and Cody Webb, the journey is long and worthwhile. For them, there is no other way to climb to the top of the podium. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/ride-all-in-film>.

Karl Meltzer: Made to be Broken Ultrarunning

The Appalachian Trail covers 3,500 km and passes through 14 U.S. States. For ultrarunners, it remains one of the greatest challenges. In this film, Karl Meltzer and team give it their all in his final attempt to complete the trail and break the land record. This would mean completing the journey in less than 49 days. A superhuman task if there ever was one. This is a film about the power of the human spirit, family, teamwork, execution, and what it truly means to never give up and follow through on your dreams. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/karl-meltzer-made-to-be-broken>.

Reverence: A Journey into Fear Mountain Biking

Elite mountain bikers understand fear. They grasp it, know it first hand, they live and grow by it. Fear is always around to be conquered. In this gripping feature you will meet Darren Berreclough, Cam McCaul, James Doerfling, Matt McDuff, and many more in their journey against fear. For these extreme athletes with heart, the only way to defeat it is to face it. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/reverence>.

Offline: A Snowboarding Escape Snowboarding

The Global Nitro snowboarding team take control of the camera, giving curious viewers an all-access



Darren Berreclough

pass at the life and times of a snowboarding group. The teammates live and work together all hours, and have fun while they are doing so. This is the kind of movie that only a snowboarder could make. It's quirky, sincere, and promises that the life of extreme athletes is never one for those who favor a dull moment. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/offline>.

Open the Doors: Scuderia AlphaTauri F1 Racing

Professional F1 drivers Daniil Kvyat, Pierre Gasly, unveil their new racecar and prepare for their first race of the 2020 season in this documentary. See how they manage their routine and health and get a look at the sheer amount of work that goes into preparing for a single race. It takes dozens of individuals working together to get a team to the finish line, and this is the perfect film to prove it. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/scuderia-alpha-auri-documentary>.

Underdogs: A Documentary about Hip-hop Culture

Music & Arts

Pulling away from the athlete-themed filmography of the above, art and musicians are featured as well on Red Bull TV. This is one such documentary, by director and producer Téo Frank, whose love of extreme sports brought him into filmmaking. Hip-hop is the focus of this documentary, as Frank takes the audience for a behind-the-scenes look at the urban art, and the people who make it. Watch it at <https://www.redbull.com/int-en/films/underdogs-film>. To find out more, visit @RedBullKuwait on Instagram and Twitter, and @RedBull on Facebook, or visit redbull.com

News in brief

Bayern's Gnabry tests positive

BERLIN: European champions Bayern Munich on Tuesday announced their first case of the coronavirus as Germany winger Serge Gnabry tested positive for COVID-19. The 25-year-old is "doing well" and is in quarantine at home, the German giants said in a brief statement. He will miss Wednesday's Champions League group game against Atletico Madrid when Bayern begin the defense of their European title behind closed doors at the Allianz Arena. However, Bayern did not say whether Gnabry's positive test would have any other impact the home game after he took part in the club's training session on Tuesday morning. The former Arsenal winger has started all four of Bayern's Bundesliga games this season and scored a hat-trick in their 8-0 demolition of Schalke in the opening game last month. He is the second member of the Germany squad to test positive for the virus after Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan. —AFP

Ighalo slams Nigeria govt

LONDON: Manchester United striker Odion Ighalo says he is ashamed of the Nigerian government following reports that soldiers opened fire on protesters in the Lekki district of the commercial capital Lagos on Tuesday. Nigerians have been demonstrating nationwide every day for nearly two weeks against a police unit, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), that rights groups had for years accused of extortion, harassment, torture and murders. The unit was disbanded on Oct 11 but the protests have persisted and at least two people were shot on Tuesday. In a Twitter post, the Nigerian Army said no soldiers were at the scene of the shooting. Ighalo said in a video message on Twitter that while he rarely talks about politics he could not stay silent about events back home in Nigeria. —Reuters

Crowd at Portugal GP cut

LISBON: The number of spectators at this weekend's Formula One Portuguese Grand Prix has been cut following a spike in coronavirus cases in the country, organizers said on Tuesday. "As a result of new measures against Covid-19, health authorities have decided on limitations regarding the presence of spectators," said the Algarve International Circuit which is set to host Sunday's race. The statement did not say how much attendance would be cut. Portugal is facing an increase in the number of daily virus cases, which reached a record on Friday with 2,608 new infections in 24 hours. On Monday, the country broke the 100,000 barrier for the number of cases since the start of the pandemic. On Sunday, circuit manager Paulo Pinheiro said that the capacity of the track would be 27,500 after having initially put nearly 46,000 tickets on sale. —AFP

New Pyramids book a place

RABAT: Egyptian club Pyramids, formed 12 years ago, booked their first appearance in a continental cup final as they beat Horoya of Guinea 2-0 in their African Confederation Cup semi-final on Tuesday. They will play Morocco's Renaissance Berkane in Sunday's showpiece match at the end of the mini-tournament at Rabat's Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium to complete the competition delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ibrahim Hassan and Abdellah Said scored within a minute of each other to break the deadlock after 74 minutes and set the Egyptians on their way to the final. They had earlier been awarded a penalty but it was overruled after a VAR check. A late consolation for Horoya from Alseny Camara was also ruled out by VAR, after initially being awarded by the referee. Pyramids only won promotion to the top flight in Egypt six years ago but have flourished after Saudi investment allowed them to buy top players. —Reuters

Brazil legend Pele turning 80

SAO PAULO: Days away from turning 80, Brazilian football legend Pele said he was happy for his good mental health in a video sent to the media Tuesday. "I thank God for giving me the health to make it this far lucid. Not very intelligent, but lucid," he joked in the short video, released ahead of his milestone birthday Friday. "I hope when I die God will welcome me the same way I've been welcomed all over the world because of our beloved football," he added. Considered by many to be the greatest footballer of all time, Pele has struggled with poor physical health in recent years. The three-time World Cup champion (1958, 1962 and 1970) has been in and out of hospital for various issues. Last year he traveled to Paris for a promotional appearance with French star Kylian Mbappe, but had to be hospitalized shortly after for kidney problems. In 2014, he was placed in intensive care for dialysis after contracting a severe urinary infection. —AFP



In this file photo, Brazilian football legend Edson Arantes do Nascimento, 'Pele', jokes with a ball during a press conference in Mexico City. —AFP

Sports

Dhawan ton in vain as XI Punjab down Delhi in IPL

Chennai's Bravo out of IPL with groin injury

DUBAI: Shikhar Dhawan on Tuesday became the first batsman in the Indian Premier League to hit two successive centuries but his Delhi Capitals lost by five wickets to Kings XI Punjab. The left-hand opener smashed an unbeaten 106 off 61 deliveries to guide Delhi to 164 for five, a total that proved insufficient as Punjab won with one over to spare in Dubai. The KL Rahul-led side moved up to fifth in the eight-team table as Nicholas Pooran scored 53 and Chris Gayle hit 29 off 13 balls.

But Dhawan, who hit his first IPL ton of the season in a match-winning knock on Sunday, was named man of the match for his 57-ball hundred. "The boys have been playing well in other games. Today I had to take the responsibility on myself," said Dhawan. "It is good that I am scoring consistently so you carry it into the next games. We are going to have a discussion and see where we can improve. "Of course, it is going to be a learning. This is not going to put us down. Just take our lessons, and come back stronger."

Dhawan used the sweep and the slog sweep to great effect as he hit 14 fours and three sixes, but the rest of the Delhi batting failed to fire, with skipper Shreyas Iyer (14) and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant (14) as the next best. Punjab lost early wickets, including Rahul for 15 and Gayle, bowled by Ravichandran Ashwin, but Pooran kept the chase on track in his 28-ball knock. Delhi quick bowler Kagiso Rabada sent back Pooran and then Glenn Maxwell, for 32, to put Punjab in a spot, but Deepak Hooda, on 15, and Jimmy Neesham, on 10, took the team home.

Earlier Punjab paceman Mohammed Shami returned figures of 2-28 from his four overs to keep Delhi's scoring rate under check. Shami gave away just 13 runs from his final two overs and got two wickets of Marcus Stoinis and Shimron Hetmyer. "Shami obviously is coming in with confidence from the last game," Rahul said of his paceman who defended five runs in a super over to help his team beat Mumbai Indians in the Sunday match that wit-

nessed IPL's first double super over. "He is our senior bowler, and an international, and he is getting better and better every game."

In another development, West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo has been ruled out of the rest of the Indian Premier League with a groin injury, his Chennai Super Kings team said yesterday. Bravo could not bowl the last over in Chennai's game against Delhi Capitals on Saturday and missed the following match. The three-time champions who are struggling, bottom of the eight-team table.

"Bravo is ruled out with a groin injury and flying back home," CSK chief executive Kasi Viswanathan said. "The team management has yet to decide whether to seek a replacement or not." The 37-year-old played six games and scored seven runs in two innings. He claimed six wickets with his pace bowling. Skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni admitted after his team's seventh loss from 10 games on Monday that their tournament is virtually over. — Agencies



Shikhar Dhawan

China wants football to be 'bridge with the world': FA

SUZHOU: China wants to unite its 1.4 billion people through football while also using the sport as "a bridge to work with the rest of the world", a top FA official says. Chinese Football Association Secretary General Liu Yi explained to AFP what lies behind the country's aggressive push to become a major football power by 2050. Under President Xi Jinping — described by state media as an "avid soccer fan" — the world's most populous country has grand plans to host and even one day win a World Cup.

In rare comments to international media, Liu talked of "using football to motivate the whole nation". "Football is a beautiful game to educate the new generation of young Chinese and also to (help) our nation to team up as one and be more cohesive," he said. Like China's success in recent Summer Olympics, Liu called football "another tool to unite a nation and also demonstrate what we can deliver. "And football, as I said, is a bridge between China and the rest of the world. Everyone plays football."

Expanding on that theme, which comes as China is embroiled in a variety of disputes with countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia, Liu said: "China is still open. "And the development of Chinese football needs help from external stakeholders like the AFC (Asian Football Confederation), FIFA and also other federations as well, and other leagues as well. "We are definitely going to carry on with that kind of partnership,



SUZHOU: Referees and players react during a memorial to pay respect for people's efforts on defeating the COVID-19 before the Chinese Super League (CSL) football match between Wuhan Zall and Qingdao Huanghai in Suzhou in China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

working with all the international governing bodies, brands and stakeholders."

Long-term goals

China's football ambitions are striking for a country which has reached the World Cup only once, in 2002, when they failed to win a point or score a goal. China are 76th in the FIFA rankings and their chances of reaching the Qatar 2022 World Cup are in the balance, underlining how far they have to go to reach the top. But speaking in Suzhou, where the Chinese Super League is in a "bubble" to thwart the coronavirus, Liu said that failing to qualify will not deter the country from its long-term goals.

"To win a spot (in Qatar) means a lot to the Chinese, to the country and also the Chinese football community because that boosts the confidence and gives motivation to every stakeholder and to the football community to contribute more to the development of Chinese football," he said. "If we fail, you might have a short-term setback, but the president of the central government (Xi) understands football and that developing football is a process."

Sustainability over spending

Along with building a football infrastructure and overhauling grassroots, school and youth systems, the CSL is a crucial part of the determination to be a superpower in the sport. The league made headlines in recent years when a series of well-known foreign players — along with coaches — arrived on generous contracts and for inflated transfer fees. Attacking midfielder Oscar moved to Shanghai SIPG from Chelsea in 2017 for what is still an Asian-record 60 million euros.

However, the CFA has since introduced measures such as a salary cap so that the largesse is redirected towards developing young Chinese players. "We want to be one of the top leagues in Asia, for sure, which we probably already are, but the benchmark is not supposed to be big spending," said Liu. "It's about sustainability." Liu conceded that Oscar and other overseas stars, such as fellow Brazilians Hulk and Paulinho, have boosted the CSL's profile. "But has that (expensive foreigners) helped the development of the local players? That's our question mark," he said. — AFP

High kicks: Pakistan's football star training Himalayan girls

KARACHI: Running a football club for girls from poor families in a remote, mountainous area of Pakistan is hard enough at the best of times, let alone during a pandemic. But footballer Karishma Ali has not let the coronavirus stop her pursuing her dream of helping girls in her impoverished native Chitral region, high in the Hindu Kush mountains, to have a better future.

The 23-year-old, who has represented her country at international football tournaments, said the pandemic had only made her more determined to give girls the opportunities often reserved for boys in Pakistan. "Unlike boys, who could go out and play, girls remained cooped up, specially since even schools were closed," Ali told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Islamabad, where she has just completed a degree in business and management.

"Many had to help with household chores, which certainly was not much fun." Ali started her high-altitude sports club two years ago with 60 girls aged between eight and 16, and now has nearly 150 members who ski, and play volleyball and cricket as well as football. She hopes it can help them overcome the twin challenges of poverty and sex discrimination in a country where boys' education is prioritized, by helping them get sports scholarships in professional colleges.

It has not been easy — when the community discovered Ali's own football career, some were deeply hostile, and she received messages

threatening to kill her if she continued. "It was as seen inappropriate culturally because I would wear shorts, thereby baring my skin," she said. The situation eased last year when she was selected for Forbes magazine's 30 Under 30 Asia list of rising stars, alongside tennis champion Naomi Osaka and K-Pop band Blackpink, and the community began to recognize her achievements.

Next month, 30 of the girls will have a week of training from professional coaches in Islamabad — something Ali said would be a "giant educational step" as most have never left their communities. She has also raised funds for a van to take them to the field where they train — a two-hour walk from where they live — to escape disapproval from the community. Her own family supported her dream of becoming a footballer, she said, calling her father a "feminist" who "believed in me when even I did not believe in me".

Society as a whole is less supportive, said Ali, who wants to see more state backing for sport in a country whose prime minister, Imran Khan, is a former cricket star. She dreams of one day playing for a national team, but that will have to wait — Pakistan does not currently have a women's football team. "I struggle every day myself," said Ali. "I work very hard at my end, but am not sure if the country's sports management is putting in the same effort." If she has learned one lesson from her sporting career, however, it is this: "Fight no matter what, get up after a fall and be a leader," she said. — Reuters

Reading move top, Rooney-less Derby beaten again

LONDON: Reading moved top of the Championship with a 1-0 win over Wycombe after Bristol City were beaten 1-0 at home by Middlesbrough. City had seen their 100 per cent start ended on Saturday when Barnsley struck a stoppage-time equalizer. Boro made the breakthrough on 73 minutes when George Saville robbed Taylor Moore as the midfielder tried to play out from the back to score the only goal.

Reading capitalized to move three points clear at the top of the table thanks to Lucas Joao's sixth goal in as many games after taking down a long pass before firing home on 64 minutes. Royals keeper Rafael Cabral produced a fine reaction save in stoppage time from Fred Onyedimma as Veljko Paunovic's side claimed top spot. Wayne Rooney publicly expressed his anger at being forced to self-isolate despite a negative test for coronavirus after being visited by a friend, who was subsequently diagnosed as positive for Covid-19.

Derby's miserable season continued without the former England captain as Juninho Bacuna scored the only goal in a 1-0 win for Huddersfield. Millwall saw off Luton 2-0 at the Den to sit fourth after back-to-back league wins. Matt Smith helped give the Lions the lead in first-half stoppage-time following a deflection at a corner which went in off Hatters defender Martin Cranie. With 11 minutes left, winger Connor Mahoney wrapped things up when he cut in from the left and slotted in a low finish off the post.

Norwich beat Birmingham 1-0 with a late goal from substitute Mario Vrancic at Carrow Road, where the visitors finished with 10 men. Todd Cantwell, who was linked with a move away ahead of the transfer deadline, saw a goal ruled out during the second half. Blues midfielder Adam Clayton then saw red after a late tackle on the Canaries' England Under-21 international and Vrancic then finally broke the deadlock with just three minutes left to put the Canaries seventh. Coventry and Swansea drew 1-1 as did Nottingham Forest at home to Rotherham. — AFP

First international 'Darts' conference

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Egyptian Minister of Sport, head of the Executive office of Arab Sports Ministers opened the first international 'Darts' conference through the zoom application under the slogan "towards a better future for the sport of darts in the Arab world - challenges and opportunities". The conference was organized by the Egyptian Darts Federations, under the Honorary Chairmanship of Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. The 19 Arab countries participating include: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Sudan, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon.

Chairman of the Egyptian Darts Federation Dr Yahya Abdelqader said the conference coincided with Egypt's celebrations of the October War Victory that was accomplished by the sacrifice of the Egyptian army and the Arab nation solidarity. He said the conference is aimed at spreading the culture of playing darts in the Arab world and to encourage the establishment of national darts federations to add to the already existing ones in preparation for the decla-



ration of the Arab Darts Association.

The conference rapporteur Juda Abu Alnoor said the conference honorary chairmanship by Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad is a quality move in the sports administration at the world, Asia and Arab level for the game and its success in the future. He said around 200 persons who are interested in the sports of darts is attending the conference and will be given certificates in appreciation for their efforts. The conference manager Hazem Al-Roubi said the large interaction by participating countries reflects the need to pay interest to the game and establish local federations leading to an Arab association that cares for the game at the Arab level.

Stroll tests positive for COVID-19 after Eifel GP



Lance Stroll

LONDON: Canadian Formula One driver Lance Stroll said yesterday he tested positive for COVID-19 after the Oct 11 Eifel Grand Prix but was now clear and ready to race in Portugal this coming weekend. The 21-year-old missed the race at the Nuerburgring after feeling unwell and was replaced at short notice by Germany's Nico Hulkenberg at the Racing Point team. The Silverstone-based outfit, owned by Stroll's father Lawrence and third in the constructors' standings, said at the time that he had felt unwell since the Russian Grand Prix on Sept. 27 but had tested negative.

Stroll is the second Formula One driver to contract the new coronavirus, the other being his Mexican team mate Sergio Perez who missed two races in August. "I just want to let everyone know that I recently tested positive for Covid-19 after the Eifel GP weekend," said Stroll on his social media accounts. "I am feeling 100% and have since tested negative."

Stroll said he had woken up on the Saturday morning at the Nuerburgring with an upset stomach.

"I followed the FIA protocol and self-isolated in my motorhome and did not re-enter the paddock," he explained. "I wasn't fit to race so I flew home early Sunday morning. As I was still feeling under the weather I took a COVID test on Sunday evening. "The next day the results came back positive, so I stayed at home self-isolating for the next 10

days. Luckily, my symptoms were pretty mild." Stroll said he was tested again last Monday and his results were negative. "I feel in great shape and I can't wait to be back with the team and to race in Portugal," he added.

Formula One teams are operating in 'bubbles within bubbles', isolated from each other and separated into groups internally to limit the risk of contagion. Nobody is allowed into the paddock without producing a negative test result, and team members are tested at five day intervals. Champions Mercedes, who have Lewis Hamilton heading for a seventh world championship, reported two positive cases at the Nuerburgring with six replacements flown in from England.

Friday practice at the German track was wiped out by bad weather but Stroll was in the paddock for media duties, conducted at a safe distance, on the Thursday. Sunday's race at the Algarve circuit near Portimao will be the 12th round of the season and first Portuguese Grand Prix in 24 years. It was added to the calendar after some other races were cancelled due to the pandemic. The season-opener in Australia in March was cancelled after a McLaren employee tested positive for COVID-19, with the championship then stalled until July. — Reuters

14 Kershaw and Dodgers dominate Rays to win World Series opener



14 On-demand: Six engrossing Red Bull TV documentaries



15 Stroll tests positive for COVID-19 after Eifel GP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French defender Layvin Kurzawa (left) vies for the ball with Manchester United's Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea (right) during the UEFA Europa League Group H first-leg football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Manchester United at the Parc des Princes stadium on October 20, 2020. — AFP

Rashford sinks PSG again

Koeman's Barcelona send a message

PARIS: Marcus Rashford once again sank Paris Saint-Germain after netting the decisive goal in a 2-1 Champions League win in the French capital on Tuesday, while Barcelona sent a message with a thumping 5-1 victory over Ferencvaros. Rashford, who scored the winning spot-kick when United knocked PSG out in 2019, drilled home a low shot three minutes from the end which won a thrilling Group H contest at a near-empty Parc des Princes.

United had taken the lead in the 23rd minute when Bruno Fernandes slotted home from the spot at the second attempt, but Anthony Martial inexplicably headed Neymar's corner into his own net 10 minutes after the break. The rest of the match was an end-to-end affair with both sides opting to go for the win rather than hold on for the draw, and Rashford took the points after twice being denied by Keylor Navas earlier in the match.

"Of course it's a nice feeling. More importantly we win the game and we're in a strong position now in the group," Rashford told BT Sport. "It's the first game, the concentration and intensity we showed today we have to take forward in the next games in the Premier League." The win sets United up nicely for next week's home clash with RB Leipzig, who are top of the group after beating Istanbul Basaksehir 2-0 in Germany.

Koeman's winning start

Ronald Koeman got his first Champions League campaign as Barcelona coach off to a winning start with a confident win over Ferencvaros that gives them control of Group G, top but level on three points with Juventus. Ferencvaros, the first Hungarian team to make the group stage in 11 years, started brightly and even had the ball in the net via Tokmac Nguen only for the powerful 12th-minute strike to be ruled out for offside.

Messi won and converted the penalty to give the Catalans a 27th-minute lead and the match was as good as done when Ansu Fati clipped home Frenkie de Jong's sumptuous pass just before the break. Philippe Coutinho lashed home the third before Ihor Kharatin pulled one back from the penalty spot after Gerard Pique was sent off for pulling back Nguen as he charged towards goal. Pique's red card means he will miss next week's game away at Juventus, a greater test of Barca's capabilities.

Pedri and Ousmane Dembele finished the scoring for the 10-man hosts as they prepare for the weekend's Clasico with Real Madrid. "We go into it with the maximum motivation possible," said Fati. "It's a Clasico, a game I have always dreamed of playing in." Barca announced contract extensions for Gerard Pique, Frenkie de Jong, Marc-Andre ter Stegen and Clement Lenglet almost straight after the win. Juventus looked comfortable in their 2-0 win at Dynamo Kiev in what was the Andrea Pirlo's first ever Champions League match in the dugout, with Alvaro Morata scoring twice to take the points for the Italians.

Immobile downs Dortmund

It was a good night for Italy as Ciro Immobile got revenge on his old club Borussia Dortmund by scoring in Lazio's 3-1 win over the Bundesliga club in Rome, their first Champions League match in 13 years. Immobile managed just three goals in 24 Bundesliga games for Dortmund in 2014/15, but last season's European Golden Shoe winner outshone Dortmund's star forward Erling Braut Haaland by netting the opening goal for the hosts after just six minutes.

Lazio went two ahead midway through the first half thanks to Marwin Hitz deflected Luis Alberto's whipped corner into his own goal. Haaland pulled one back with a thumping finish but Immobile laid on an easy finish for Jean-Daniel Akpa-Akpro to hand Lazio a big win. "There was an extra flavor and we are satisfied because the match was played to perfection," continued Immobile.

Simone Inzaghi's men are level on three points with Club Brugge in Group F following their dramatic 2-1 win at Zenit Saint Petersburg earned thanks to Charles De Ketelaere 93rd minute winner. Chelsea are still waiting for a £220 million (\$284 million) spending spree to pay off they began their campaign with an uninspiring 0-0 Group E draw with Sevilla at Stamford Bridge. The Blues have now won just two of their opening six games of the season and the only consolation of a cagey encounter for Lampard was a rare clean sheet. All four sides in the group are on a single point after Rennes drew 1-1 with Krasnodar in their first ever Champions League match in front of 5,000 passionate fans in Brittany. — AFP

Tokyo urges Olympics supporters to 'pack less and wait less'

TOKYO: Tokyo Olympics organizers wrapped up three days of tests yesterday, trialing a number of security and COVID-19 countermeasures and asking supporters and officials to pack less to wait less when entering venues during the Games. During the tests at Tokyo Big Sight, a convention centre that will host media during the postponed Games next year, organizers assessed various technologies to monitor body temperatures of spectators.

As seen at other sporting events during the global pandemic, thermology cameras and non-contact infrared thermometers were used but organizers also tested the use of 'thermometer strips'. The strips, which were pasted onto the wrists of volunteers being used in the trial, contain heat-sensitive liquid crystals and can immediate-



BARCELONA: Ferencvaros' Hungarian defender Endre Botka (left) challenges Barcelona's Spanish forward Ansu Fati during the UEFA Champions League football match between FC Barcelona and Ferencvarosi TC on October 20, 2020. — AFP

'European Premier League' proposals face backlash

LONDON: Speculative proposals for a "European Premier League" comprised of the continent's top clubs and reportedly backed by FIFA were criticized on Tuesday by La Liga and supporter groups. A Sky report on Tuesday claimed that negotiations were nearing conclusion on an 18-team league with end of season playoffs including the likes of Real Madrid, Barcelona, Liverpool, Manchester United and Bayern Munich. According to the report, the project would be funded by \$6 billion (5.1 billion euros) of financing from major banks secured on the proceeds from future TV broadcast deals. Each of the participating clubs could receive "hundreds of millions of pounds to participate".

A European Super League has long been touted as the way for major clubs to further increase their revenue streams, but it would come at the cost of the Champions League and national leagues. Although the report claims the proposals would see clubs continue to compete in national leagues with European matches in midweek, that would put extra strain on an already highly congested calendar. "These 'underground' projects only look good when drafted at a bar at five o'clock in the morning," said La Liga president Javier Tebas.

"The authors of that idea-if they really exist, because there is nobody actually defending it-not only show a total ignorance of the organization and customs of European and world football, but also a serious ignorance of the audiovisual rights markets. "A project of this type will mean serious economic damage to the organizers themselves and to those entities that finance it." The latest leak over proposed reform of the game comes just over a week since Liverpool and Manchester United's "Project Big Picture" plans to restructure English football were rejected by Premier League clubs.

Those plans aimed to cut the Premier League to 18 teams and scrap the League Cup to make more room in the calendar for European matches. "If you're a club owner or football financier who thinks a global health crisis is the perfect opportunity to rip up and reshape football to suit billionaires...you have no idea how much fans detest your concept," said the Football Supporters Association in England. "It will not go how you think." —AFP

ly detect if the wearer has a fever. Another key element of the field test was checking how smoothly spectators can pass through the inspection area while other measures, such as social distancing in queues, are being enforced.

Volunteers presented security personnel with more than 40 different scenarios, including forgetting to wear a mask and trying to bring an aerosol can through security, to test their readiness for the Games. Organizers were happy with the testing but said more trials will be needed when full COVID-19 protocols are decided. "Pack less, wait less. We don't want to delay the excitement, so please come with very little luggage," urged Tokyo 2020 Security Director Tsuyoshi Iwashita.

"For the testing of security measures, probably this is the last one," he added. "As for COVID-19, when we finalize the measures, we want to check these processes. To do so, we will set up further types of testing occasions." Tokyo organizers have yet to conclude whether fans will be allowed into venues during the Olympics, which run from July 23 - Aug. 8 next year. International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach has said organizers expect to welcome spectators from around the world at the Games. — Reuters