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# Kuwait dismayed by cartoons, rejects Islamophobic offenses

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KUWAIT: The foreign ministry said on Friday Kuwait has followed with deep dismay the continued circulation of caricatures lampooning Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). In a press statement, the ministry announced its backing of a statement by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which expressed the Muslim world's rejection of such offenses and practices. The ministry warned about the danger of official political discourses supporting such assaults on religions or prophets.

Such acts instigate hatred, enmity, violence and undermine international efforts to promote the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, the ministry argued. It cautioned against the continued backing of such insults and any discriminatory policies which associate Islam with terrorism. These acts do not reflect the reality, ignore tolerant Islamic teachings which condemn terrorism and gravely offend Muslims worldwide, the ministry concluded.

Kuwait's permanent mission to UNESCO also expressed its "utter rejection" of offensive remarks made about Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "Freedoms do not mean insulting the symbol of Islam, our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and insulting the Islamic religion," Kuwait's representative at the United Nations agency said in a statement. The

mission's position is "consistent and unwavering", he added, as is the position of the government.

"We do not accept such offenses under any circumstances. The Kuwaiti mission continuously seeks to present and adopt decisions and initiatives at UNESCO that support peace, respect divine religions and reject hostility and hatred. Last year, Kuwait's delegation led an Arab and Islamic movement to approve a resolution at a UNESCO meeting condemning racist practices against Islam (Islamophobia), and it was approved unanimously," he said.

The OIC earlier expressed strong indignation at the publication of the caricatures depicting the holy Prophet (PBUH), lashing out at French officials for "sowing acrimony" to further political gains after the incident. "Any attempt to ridicule prophets, irrespective of faith, is strongly condemned," read an OIC statement, equally deploring any "acts of terrorism in the name of religion".

This comes after a middle school history teacher was beheaded earlier this month after he had shown his students cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which Muslims consider highly blasphemous. The OIC said the incident was a "lone wolf" attack and does not in any form represent the Islamic faith.

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## News in brief

### Trump: Egypt may 'blow up' dam

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday voiced anger at Ethiopia over its construction of a huge dam on the Nile River and appeared to suggest that Egypt may destroy it. "They'll end up blowing up the dam. And I said it and I say it loud and clear - they'll blow up that dam. And they have to do something," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. — AFP

### Israel will not oppose F-35 sale

JERUSALEM: Israel said on Friday it will not oppose US sales of "specific weapons systems" to the UAE, in an apparent reference to the F-35 warplanes sought by Abu Dhabi. Under a principle of preserving Israel's "qualitative military edge", the US consults with it on proposed sales of advanced arms to other countries in the region. Asked about potential F-35 sales to the UAE, US President Donald Trump said the "process is moving along". — Reuters

### US condemns Turkey S-400 test

WASHINGTON: The US strongly condemned NATO ally Turkey on Friday after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan confirmed the first test of a Russian-made S-400 air defense system and dismissed US criticism. "We object to Turkey's testing of this system, which risks serious consequences for our security relationship," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said. "It is true about the tests, they have been done and will continue," Erdogan told reporters in Istanbul. "We're not going to ask America for permission." — AFP

### Pakistan stays on 'grey list'

PARIS: A global dirty money watchdog decided on Friday to keep Pakistan on its "grey list", despite progress by Islamabad on meeting international anti-terrorism financing norms. The Financial Action Task Force urged Pakistan to complete an internationally agreed action plan by Feb 2021. — Reuters

## Registration for Assembly polls opens on Oct 26

KUWAIT: The interior ministry yesterday announced it will receive applications from parliamentary election candidates from Oct 26, 2020 to Nov 4, 2020. Those planning to contest the National Assembly elections on Dec 5 have to meet several conditions, including: To be an original Kuwaiti according to the law; their name must be on electoral lists; they must not be younger than 30 years on election day; they must be able to read and write Arabic; and they must not have been sentenced for a

## Sudan agrees to normalize ties with Israel

WASHINGTON: Sudan on Friday became the latest Arab nation to agree to recognize Israel in a diplomatic triumph for President Donald Trump announced days before US elections. The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed an accord at the White House last month to normalize relations with Israel but Sudan carries added symbolism as an Arab nation that has been at war with Israel. Trump announced the agreement by Sudan's

## Libyans voice hope, doubts over ceasefire

TRIPOLI: Libyans have reacted with a mix of hope and skepticism after the signing of a nationwide ceasefire deal intended to pave the way towards a political solution to the country's grinding conflict. While observers have welcomed the UN-backed deal, few are under any illusions about the

crime that compromises honor and honesty unless their status has been restored to them. Those who were convicted of insulting God, the prophets and the Amir will be permanently disbarred from running for parliamentary elections.

To obtain and submit the candidacy application, hopefuls should go to Khawla Joint Girls School in Shuwaikh residential area's block 2 between 7:30 am and 1:30 pm to receive the application. They should bring along their original citizenship certificate, civil ID and two photographs. The applicant must personally fill in the application and pay a deposit of KD 50 (through K-Net) as mentioned in article 21 of law 35/1962. The applicant should then take the application to their area's police station at least seven days before election day.

A candidate can also withdraw their candidacy through a letter submitted to the police station

year-old civilian-backed government moments after he formally moved to end the nation's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism, achieving a major objective for Khartoum. Reporters were escorted into the Oval Office where Trump was on speakerphone with Sudan's leadership and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a close ally of the embattled Republican president.

"This truly changes the region. It changes the lives of our peoples for the better and allows us to focus on the task of building our nations, building our future," Netanyahu was heard telling Trump. Trump said that more Arab states are also looking to recognize Israel including regional power Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest cities. "We have at least five more that want to come in and we'll

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where the application was submitted at least seven days before election day. A candidate is not allowed to run in more than one precinct and must relinquish their candidacy from other constituencies, otherwise their candidacy in all precincts will be cancelled.

Those in public employment are not allowed from the day after closing of candidacy applications until the end of the election process to practice their jobs. Ministers and members of the judiciary, public prosecution and the investigation department are not allowed to run for parliament unless they resign in advance. Election committee chiefs, members and their first-degree relatives are not allowed to run in constituencies where these committees are operating unless they resign from them. If the applicant is a member of the military or police, they must present evidence proving their end of service at the time the application is submitted.



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks to the leaders of Sudan and Israel as he announces that Sudan will normalize relations with Israel at the White House on Friday. — AFP



GENEVA: This handout photo shows Head of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces delegation Emrajaa Al-Amami (left) and Head of the Government of National Accord's military delegation Ahmed Abu Shahma shaking hands on Friday. —AFP



## Local

# Kuwait reports 14 COVID related deaths in two days

## Health Ministry says applies up-to-date health protocols

### Health minister meets Indian ambassador



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah meets Indian Ambassador Sibi George.

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Basel Hamoud Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Indian Ambassador Sibi George in his office on Thursday and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations, especially in the health sector on matters pertaining to medical professionals and fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

The minister discussed with the ambassador the visions and views on addressing and containing the pandemic and enhancing areas of cooperation between the two countries, said Dr Rihab Al-Watyan,

Director of the International Health Relations Department at the Ministry of Health.

She added that the ambassador touched on the latest developments regarding the production and use of the protective vaccine against the virus in India, in addition to discussing areas of strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the health sector, exchanging experiences, seeking medical and health personnel and benefiting from the experiences to confront the new pandemic challenge.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's confirmed novel coronavirus cases increased by 695 to 120,927, while four people succumbed to the disease in the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 744, the health ministry said yesterday. The ministry had announced earlier that 670 people had recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 112,110. Kuwait had reported 10 COVID-related deaths on Friday, as well as 812 new cases and 726 recoveries.

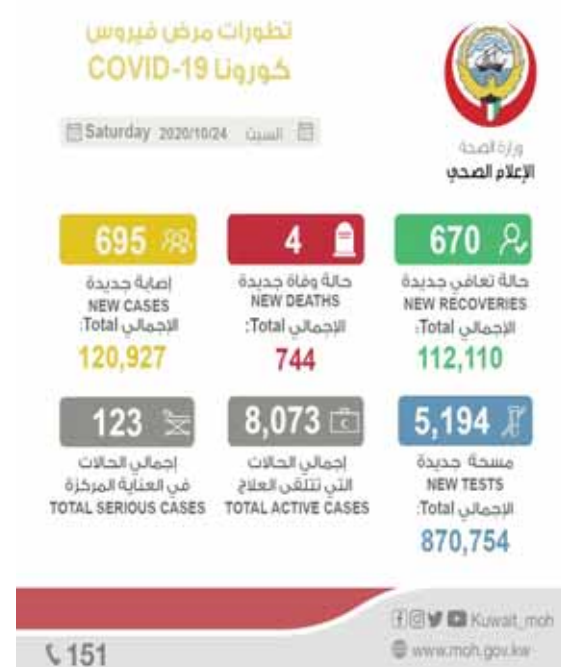
There are 123 people receiving intensive care for the virus as of yesterday, out of a total 8,073 patients being hospitalized, official spokesman of the health ministry Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. Some 5,194 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 870,754 so far. Dr Sanad reiterated the strict need to abide by health precautions, urging the public to follow social distancing rules as the only way

to keep the virus at bay.

#### Health protocols

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health said that it is using sophisticated safe curative and technical protocols just as recommended by specialized international organizations. The ministry, in a press statement Friday, cited the "low mortality rate in the country due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)" as evidence of "Kuwait's strong health system and effective treatment protocols."

However, it underlined that health guidelines designed to rein in the spread of the virus must be observed, and misinformation pertinent to relevant protocols be shrugged off. The ministry also vehemently lashed out at insistence on underrating the efforts and sacrifices of its medical teams, rebuffing as "divorced from reality" recent allegations that some virus patients were denied access to hospitals. — KUNA



## Kuwait stresses importance of int'l law to achieve stability

NEW YORK: Kuwait affirmed the importance of following in international law and the UN articles to allow the international community to face any security threats. Kuwait's second secretary Bashar Al-Mowaziri made the remarks during the

meeting of the sixth committee of the UN General Assembly late Thursday. Enhancing the application of the international law is key to protect human rights and equality in conflict zones, he noted. Mowaziri underlined Kuwait's democratic consti-

tutional system, which states that the three main authorities are required to cooperate on every level. Moreover, he said that Kuwait exerts great efforts to abide by the international law to protect peace and stability and resolve conflicts peacefully. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti diplomat spoke of the continuous Israeli violations of the international law, as it continues to expand its illegal settlements on Palestinian lands. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Kuwait's second secretary Bashar Al-Mowaziri addresses the meeting. — KUNA

## Sudan agrees to normalize...

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have many more than that soon," Trump said in a room packed with visibly happy aides, few of them wearing masks despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Netanyahu hailed the deal as a "new era" for the region, but the Palestinian leadership, watching as more of their Arab brethren appear to give their quest for statehood a lower priority, called it a "new stab in the back". Until last month, the only Arab nations to recognize Israel were Jordan and Egypt - neighbors of the Jewish state that had made peace after US mediation. The Palestinian leadership has been outraged at Arab states' willingness to recognize Israel without any progress on establishing a Palestinian state.

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas' office voiced "condemnation and rejection" of the deal between Sudan and the "Israeli occupation country which usurps Palestinian land". The Islamist movement Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, said the deal was a "political sin" that benefited only the Israeli premier. The accord "harms our Palestinian people and their just cause, and even harms the Sudanese national interests," it said in a statement. "It benefits only Netanyahu."

While Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have found common cause with Netanyahu and Trump against Iran, Sudan appears mostly driven by a desperate economic situation that has fueled new protests in recent days. Both the United States and Israel committed to building trade with Sudan, an impoverished, conflict-torn nation that had faced years of criticism over its violent internal campaigns until the fall of dictator Omar Al-Bashir last year.

In a three-way statement, Sudan and Israel said delegations would meet "in the coming weeks to negotiate agreements of cooperation" including on agriculture, aviation and migration. "The leaders agreed to the normalization of relations between Sudan and Israel and to end the state of belligerence between their nations," it said, without setting a date.

As part of the deal to get off the terror blacklist, the White House said that Sudan's transitional government had deposited \$335 million to compensate survivors and family members of victims of the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as well as other attacks by Al-Qaeda, which Bashir had welcomed.

Sudan's civilian prime minister, Abdulla Hamdok, thanked Trump over the terror designation and, in the Oval Office, said Sudan was a "tolerant, peace-loving country". "This decision will open wide the door to Sudan's deserved return to the international community," Hamdok's office said in a statement that did not mention ties with Israel. Also on the telephone call was Sudan's top general, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, who met Netanyahu earlier this year in Uganda.

Trump had announced his plan to delist Sudan tomorrow through Twitter. But in the days before he formally took action, Israel sent a delegation to Khartoum to discuss normalization. Israel is a major cause for evangelical Christians, a crucial voting bloc for Trump as he trails in polls ahead of Nov 3 elections. Trump questioned whether the Sudan deal could have been achieved by his Democratic rival Joe Biden, who has supported Israel's reconciliation with Arab states but also promised to pay more attention to the plight of the Palestinians.

"Do you think 'Sleepy Joe' could have made this deal?" Trump asked Netanyahu, using the president's pejorative nickname for Biden a day after their final, rancorous debate of the 2020 presidential campaign. "Somehow I don't think so," Netanyahu, reliant on bipartisan support for Israel in Washington, responded haltingly: "Well, Mr President, one thing I can tell you, is, um, uh, we appreciate the help for peace from anyone in America."

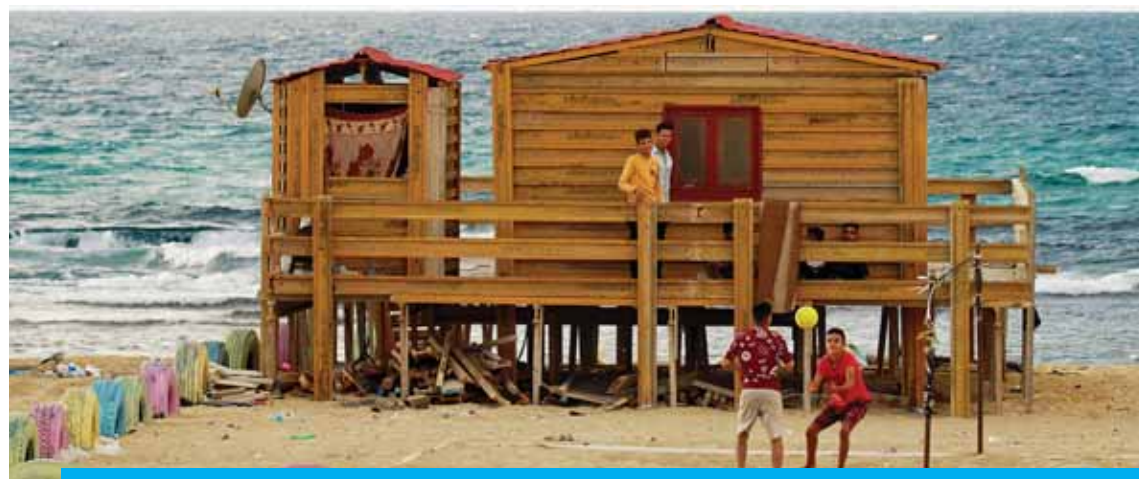
Trump said he "took a lot of abuse from people that were unable to make a deal for 40 years, and this has gone very quickly, very nicely, very inexpensively and with no blood". Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates had long enjoyed quiet relations with Israel but a move by Sudan is especially significant in light of the nation's history. Sudan played a small part in Arab-Israeli wars and, after Israel's decisive victory in 1967, Khartoum was where the Arab League issued its famous "three noes" - no peace, no recognition and no negotiations with Israel. — Agencies

opposite the National Assembly yesterday against the cartoons and statements by Macron. Protesters held up placards mocking the French president and called for a boycott of France. A number of cooperative stores in Kuwait have also cleared their shelves of French products in protest.

"We will not give up cartoons," Macron had vowed at a ceremony on Wednesday at the Sorbonne university in Paris to pay homage to the beheaded teacher. He said the history and geography teacher had been slain by "cowards" for representing the secular, democratic values of the French Republic. "Islamists want to take our future," Macron said. "They will never have it."

Macron this month described Islam as a religion "in crisis" worldwide and said the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and state in France. He announced stricter oversight of schooling and better control over foreign funding of mosques.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday slammed Macron over his policies toward Muslims, saying that he needed "mental checks". "What can one say about a head of state who treats millions of members from different faith groups this way: First of all, have mental checks," Erdogan said in a televised address.



BENGHAZI: Youths play at a beach in this eastern coastal city on Friday after a ceasefire agreement was signed between Libya's warring factions. — AFP

## Libyans voice hope, doubts....

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rival forces led by eastern military commander Khalifa Haftar agreed to withdraw from frontlines, start demobilizing armed groups and set about integrating them into the state. Crucially, the deal also calls for the departure of all foreign forces from Libyan soil within three months.

"It's good that the two sides have been prepared to compromise, but the devil is in the detail," said Peter Millett, a former British ambassador to Libya. "There are an awful lot of questions. A key one is: will countries that have been sponsors of military forces in Libya support this compromise?" Mohamed Eljarh, co-founder of Libya Outlook for Research and Consulting, cautiously welcomed the deal. "There are internal/external players who will see a ceasefire agreement and subsequent political deal as a threat to their influence," he tweeted.

Both major camps in Libya's complex war have received extensive backing from foreign powers. Friday's deal comes four months after Haftar's Russian- and Emirati-backed forces gave up their year-long attempt to seize the capital Tripoli, a battle that killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

In June, Haftar withdrew from western Libya in the face of a blistering counterattack by forces supporting the Government of National Accord - backed by Turkey. The battle had further deepened the bitter mistrust between the rival political camps and their military allies, as well as ordinary Libyans. "The war caused terrible social divisions," said Obeydi. "Work is needed immediately, right now, to rebuild and to heal the deep wounds in Libyan society."

In the capital Tripoli a 1,000-km drive west, pro-GNA fighter Salim Atouch voiced doubts the ceasefire would hold. "We have experience with a previous agreement, which was five days before Haftar's attack on Tripoli, during which he destroyed the capital's infrastructure and killed many people," Atouch said. "I hope this won't be like previous agreements, meaning we go back to war again. We will abide by it, but we are ready to react at any moment if it's violated."

Ahmed Abu Shahma, who headed the GNA dele-

gation in Geneva, urged Libyans to come together and rebuild a united, stable country. "We have had enough suffering, enough divisions, enough bloodshed," he said at the signing ceremony. His opposite number Emrajaa Amhimmid Mohamad Al-Amami of the Libyan National Army (LNA) said: "We have succeeded in achieving that which all Libyans are looking forward to: the feeling of belonging to a nation and to spread peace and security."

The Geneva talks were the military part of a process led by the UN's Libya mission UNSMIL. Separate political talks that start tomorrow aim to create a new governing body and prepare for elections. Mohamed Dorda, co-founder and consulting director of geopolitical risk consultancy Libya Desk, said the ceasefire was a positive step that "creates a basis for the political talks". But, he warned, "Libya needs a security arrangement to allow a government to be set up. If we don't deal with the security crisis, we will find ourselves in same situation in a few years."

That is a complex challenge in a country prey to a patchwork of rival militias as well as foreign mercenaries and jihadist groups. Observers have warned that those negotiating in Geneva do not necessarily control their armed allies on the ground. Nor are foreign players in Libya likely to easily give up their hard-won influence.

Emadeddin Badi, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank, warned that Russia and Turkey would want economic dividends from their military interventions. "It's naive to get them to just leave," he said. "The best case scenario is that they win economic concessions and limit their presence on the ground. The worst is that fighting resumes."

Yet despite all the obstacles, recent days have seen tangible progress. This week, the two camps agreed to open domestic transport links and boost Libya's vital oil output, hard hit by fighting and blockades. Key oil installations have already restarted production after months-long shutdowns.

Massoud Al-Fotmani, a 57-year-old from Benghazi who runs a group of food stores, said he hoped the ceasefire would hold. "The war has caused a terrible economic downturn," he said. "We've lost a lot of money because of the cutting of commercial ties between east and west due to the roads being closed." English teacher Mayssoun Khalifa, who works at a private school in Tripoli, echoed his call for a lasting peace. "Many are hopeful, but not optimistic," she said. "I sincerely wish that this deal will hold. Libya deserves better." — Agencies

## Kuwait dismayed by cartoons...

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The Gulf Cooperation Council described recent comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron as "irresponsible", saying they increase the spread of a "culture of hatred" between nations and harm solid ties between France and Islamic nations. "At a time when efforts should aim to support a culture of acceptance and dialogue amongst cultures and faiths, these rejected remarks are made and calls continue to spread offensive cartoons of the Prophet (PBUH)," GCC Secretary-General Nayef Al-Hajraf said in a statement.

Hajraf called on world leaders and intellectuals to "bear the huge responsibility of one who seeks peace and coexistence, rejects hate speech and the manifestation of animosity between faiths and respects the feelings of Muslims around the world, instead of succumbing to Islamophobia adopted by fundamental groups".

A small gathering was held in Irada Square



## Local

### The World We Want

By Tarek Elsheikh, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and its founding Charter, and the 57th anniversary for the State of Kuwait as a member of the United Nations. This anniversary comes in a time of great disruption for the world, compounded by an unprecedented global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with severe economic and social impacts. But it is also a reminder that times of struggle can become an opportunity for positive change and transformation. As part of marking this historical year, leading to the UN75 celebrations, joint activities by the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait have mainly focused on playing a pivotal role in open dialogues such as the 'UN75Talk,' a monthly platform bringing UN Agencies and national partners across sectors, through open discussions and igniting people's debate for positive solutions, as part of the UN Secretary-General largest and furthest-reaching call for a global conversation, the role of global cooperation in building the future we want and activating the Decade of Action.

Quoting the UN Secretary General: "The 75th anniversary of the United Nations falls in the middle of a global pandemic. Our founding mission is more critical than ever. To promote human dignity. Protect human rights. Respect international law. And save humanity from war. When the pandemic hit, I called for a global ceasefire. In our world today, we have one common enemy: COVID-19. Now is the time for a stepped-up push for peace to achieve a global ceasefire. The clock is ticking. We must also make peace with our planet. The climate emergency threatens life itself. We must mobilize the whole world to reach carbon neutrality - net zero emissions of greenhouse gasses by 2050. A growing number of countries and companies have already pledged to meet this goal."

"We must build on progress. A remarkable global collaboration is underway for a safe, affordable and accessible COVID-19 vaccine for all. The Sustainable Development Goals give us an inspiring blueprint for recovering better. We face colossal challenges. With global solidarity and cooperation, we can overcome them," the UN Secretary-General added.

#### Kuwait and the UN

This day is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the long-standing diplomatic relations and partnership Kuwait enjoys with the United Nations, the joint neutrality and collaboration to resolve Arab, regional and global issues, which laid the foundations of the preventive diplomacy concept and moderation that has borne fruit in the darkest circumstances. Supporting reform, fighting corruption and establishing the pillars of sustainable development, peace and human rights.

To continue building on the abundant generosity of Kuwait leadership as messengers of peace and a bridge-builders, distinctive humanitarian support, always at the front lines to motivate the international community to show solidarity and promoting multilateralism. We rest assured that our strong partnership with the State of Kuwait will remain intact, moving towards our common strategic objectives to support the state's priorities and aspirations in a steady pace and a firm approach under the leadership of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as we are confident that His Highness will continue to support the integral role of the United Nations as an vital global advocate for peace, sustainable development and rights for all.

To mark the day, the United Nations has also launched #TheWorldWeWant virtual exhibit, a special collection of 75 photos curated from more than 50,000 images from over 130 countries and is a creative response to the UN Secretary-General's call to hear directly from the peoples of the world about their vision for the future. The exhibit features the winning images. At the local level, to highlight the UN Day, amid the constraints imposed by the public health measures in place, a photography contest aspiring to showcase the different milestones, landmarks and human development aspects of a #SustainableSmartKuwait was launched recently involving the wider public. The activity will spotlight the fruitful collaboration between the State of Kuwait and the United Nations in implementing the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and reflection of the ongoing and future plans.

"On this anniversary, I ask people everywhere to join together. The United Nations not only stands with you... The United Nations belongs to you and is you: 'we the peoples.' Together, let us uphold the enduring values of the United Nations Charter. Let us build on our advances across the decades. Let us realize our shared vision of a better world for all," the UNSG said.

Last but not least, to commemorate the 75 years of the United Nations, member states including the State of Kuwait held a high-level event on September 21, 2020, where they reaffirmed and recognized that our challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed through reinvigorated multilateralism.

# Egyptian official suspended for offensive remarks about Kuwait

## Kuwait expressed 'strong condemnation, discontent and rejection'

**CAIRO/KUWAIT:** Egypt's Ministry of Manpower yesterday condemned recent social media comments, made by its assistant minister, deemed offensive to Kuwait and its symbols, adding that he has been suspended pending an investigation. The ministry rejects "entirely" what was said by one of its officials, highlighting that it has taken "immediate" legal action against the person responsible for this offence, read a



### Egyptian ambassador summoned

ministry statement carried by Egypt's state news agency (MENA). The remarks, made on Facebook, are "considered a transgression and a breach and bear no relation the Egyptian government, whatsoever, as this official made the comments on his personal page on the social networking site." The ministry went on to reveal that it has dismissed the assistant minister of manpower from his position, referring him to investigation "immediately" before a high-level legal committee. The matter will be investigated with the decision taken to suspend him from office during the investigation period. The



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tarek Al-Qouni. — KUNA

ministry concluded by expressing its "commitment to the close bilateral relations between Egypt and Kuwait, on the national and people-to-people scale, particularly in light of the nationals of both countries taking part in joint struggles. Both sides are committed to these relations and are mutually keen to develop and broaden these ties in the mutual interest of the two peoples."

Kuwait had expressed its "strong condemnation, discontent and rejection" at "offensive remarks" made by the Egyptian official, that target Kuwait and its icons, a Kuwaiti diplomat had said on Friday, urging Cairo to take legal action against the official. Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tarek Al-Qouni was summoned in the wake of the remarks, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said in a statement. Jarallah said the ambassador has been made aware of Kuwait's position on the matter, explaining that the ministry for-

mally requested Egyptian authorities to take immediate legal action against these "shameful practices," to investigate the circumstances behind the incident and to "reevaluate the fraternal relations between both countries." Kuwait's Foreign Ministry will be monitoring the procedures carried out by Egyptian authorities, in light of which it "reserves the right to take any necessary action" of its own, to deter these offenses to Kuwait and its icons and to "reevaluate the brotherly relations between the two countries, ensuring that these ties are not compromised," added the statement. Meanwhile, the Egyptian ambassador was quoted as rejecting and condemning these offensive remarks, saying he had received a call from Foreign Ministry officials in Cairo, who assured him they would be carrying out the appropriate action against the official in light of these offenses. — KUNA

## US President offers condolences over late Amir's demise

**KUWAIT:** US President Donald Trump sent a letter to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to extend condolences over the death of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In his letter, the US president expressed deep sadness about the passing of the late Amir whom he described as a friend. He added that Kuwait had lost a devoted leader and the world lost a tireless diplomat. The US leader said it was pleasure for him to grant Sheikh Sabah the prestigious Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, in recognition of his efforts to promote regional security. He expressed confidence that the two friendly countries would continue their efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation. He also wished His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad everlasting wellbeing. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf sent a reply message to President Trump thanking him about his sincere condolences and for awarding the late Amir the Legion of Merit. He lauded the deeply-rooted relations between the two friendly countries. He added that the two countries are keen on developing bilateral cooperation in all domains to serve the interests of both nations. He also wished President Trump everlasting wellness and the US more progress and welfare. — KUNA

## Kuwait provides \$5m to Rohingyas

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has completed the handover of \$5 million for Rohingya refugee relief efforts, Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said amid global donor talks held on Thursday. The minister was speaking to nations at a remotely-held conference, aimed at providing urgently-needed assistance for the displaced Rohingya community in and outside of their native Myanmar. At the event, co-hosted by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Britain, the United States and the European Union, the minister underlined Kuwait's commitment to global efforts to address the plight of this stricken community. In addressing their needs, Kuwait hosted a donor conference in July 2017, co-chaired by the EU and the UN, and, during its non-permanent membership in the 2018-19 Security Council in cooperation with the UK and Peru, arranged an official visit for Security Council member nations to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

In April and May 2018, it also supported the Presidential Statement issued by the Security Council for the year 2017 in this regard, he said. He highlighted the importance of an immediate end to violence and the use of threatening and intimidation methods with this minority. He also called on the need to push towards ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected areas and

to work on the voluntary return of refugees through peaceful methods. The minister went on to urge the need to address the root causes that allowed their displacement, namely ensuring the rights of the Rohingya community in line with the UN recommendations and the Advisory Committee of Rakhine State. He also commended the efforts carried out by Bangladesh to host these refugees, pointing out to the financial, political and social implications of these endeavors. "The international community faces a great challenge in confronting this cruel human tragedy, which requires a serious and immediate halt to continuing human rights violations, and to work to resolve the root causes of this growing crisis," he concluded.

Britain had announced during the conference new funding valued at 47.5 million pounds (\$62.2 million) for Rohingya refugees in camps in Bangladesh. Addressing the virtual aid conference, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the fresh aid is meant to alleviate the sufferings of 860,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. He added that the funding will be used to provide food, water, education and sanitation to refugee camps in Bangladesh, noting that it will also help Bangladesh deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its frequent natural disasters. The British foreign secretary also urged other donors not to forget the plight of Rohingya refugees. "I urge the world not to turn away from the Rohingya's suffering and to take the action necessary to allow them to safely return to the homes they fled in terror," he said. — KUNA

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## News in brief

## Kuwait's chief judge joins Gulf meeting

**KUWAIT:** President of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and Chairman of the Court of Cassation Justice Ahmad Al-Ajeel on Thursday partook in the sixth meeting of GCC chief judges. The UAE presided over the virtual meeting, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice said in a statement. The Kuwaiti delegation, who participated in the gathering, included Deputy Chairman of the Court of Cassation Adel Bourisly and President of the Plenary Court Justice Abdulatif Al-Tanian. — KUNA

## Kuwait congratulates UN food agency

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah on Thursday congratulated the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) on winning the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to lift millions of people worldwide out of penury. The prestigious award comes in recognition of the UN body's commitment to fight an upsurge in global hunger, the Kuwaiti minister told the organization's executive director David Beasley in a phone call. In return, the WFP official appreciated the warm sentiments, saying that Kuwait deserves equal praise for its contributions towards humanitarian endeavors as well, pointing out that relations between both sides continue to flourish. — KUNA

## Kuwait FM meets assistants

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, in the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, held a meeting on Thursday with his assistant foreign ministers to discuss COVID-19 efforts abroad and regional and global developments. The minister began the meeting by recalling the contributions to Kuwait's foreign policy by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing his heartfelt condolences over the loss. He also congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on his assumption of power. — KUNA

## stc launches 'Because We Care' breast cancer awareness campaign

## Awareness lectures, fitness activities and screening tests

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it had launched its breast cancer awareness campaign under the title 'Because We Care'. The campaign coincides with the internationally recognized initiative to spread awareness on the disease during the month of October, where stc organized fitness activities, engaging events and awareness lectures for its employees.

In a statement released by stc, the Company revealed the internal and external activities that were organized to further build on the previously launched campaign, #Because\_We\_Care. The objective of the campaign, led by Hadeel Al-Abdullah from the Corporate Communications department at stc, is to raise awareness on breast cancer through engaging activities and informative messages placed on the Company's social media platforms.

Since the beginning of October, stc provided valuable tips and medical advice on ways to reduce the risk of getting the disease, methods of early detection and other relevant information. The information was provided in cooperation with Dr Yousef Al-Saleh, General Surgery Consultant specializing in Obesity Surgery at Dar Al-Shifa Hospital. Additionally, as part of its internal campaign, stc arranged both mammogram and ultrasound screening tests for its employees.

Within the campaign's framework and considering the precautionary measures, stc organized a fitness session for its female employees in cooperation with the women's gym, 'Flare', under the title 'Up for the challenge?'. The session included awareness lectures on health and fitness, physical training activities, as well as gifts that were distributed to participants.

Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "In line with its vital role in the community and social responsibility agenda, the Company is keen on consistently launching its awareness campaigns to support the health sector. Having said that, stc will ensure the continuity of its rich and active CSR program even during unprecedented times."

Jasem expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the active participation and level of engagement witnessed by the Company's employees, who greatly benefited from the added knowledge gained during the awareness

sessions and fitness activities.

Jasem added, "We also focused this year on spreading awareness amongst the members of our society, especially women, in partnership with Dar Al Shifa Hospital, through communicating valuable information about health issues on our social media platforms".

Jasem concluded, "Since the beginning of the



## During the month of October

pandemic, stc launched a series of humanitarian activities aimed at supporting Kuwaiti residents. The Company also focused on granting its customers with greater accessibility to its distinguished offerings and promotions by upgrading its digital platforms to permit a safe and conven-



Dr Yousef Al-Saleh



Danah Al-Jasem

ient user experience, in line with the stc's strategy to enable digital transformation."

On this occasion, Jasem expressed her appreciation towards the Corporate Communications team and all those involved in organizing the event. She especially thanked the female gym, "Flare", and Dar Al Shifa Hospital, for their outstanding contribution to the success of this initiative. Jasem also thanked stc employees for attending and actively participating in the various initiatives organized for such special causes.



## One dead, two injured in highway crash

**KUWAIT:** A motorist died and two others were injured in an accident reported on Fourth Ring Road Friday afternoon. Firefighters arrived to the scene in response to an emergency call and found out that the accident had already left one

person dead. The body of the victim, Kuwaiti woman, was taken to the coroner while paramedics transported the two other persons who were injured in the crash to the hospital. An investigation was opened.

## Hawally fire

Firemen put out a blaze that erupted in a Hawally building Friday. Hawally and Salmiya fire stations' men reported to the scene and evacuated the building quickly before battling the flames. No injuries were reported, and an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire, Kuwait Fire Force said in a statement.



KUWAIT: One of the vehicles involved in the fatal accident.



Another vehicle involved in the crash.



A firefighter battles a blaze in a Hawally building Friday.



Firefighters climb the stairways inside the building.

## Kuwaiti oil barrel up 33 cents at \$41.44 pb

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti oil price rose 33 cents to reach \$41.44 per barrel on Friday, compared to \$41.11 pb on Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. In international markets, West Texas crude oil went down 79 cents to reach \$39.85 per barrel while Brent crude went down 69 cents to stand at \$41.77 pb. — KUNA



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Farmers step up illegal fires as air crisis worsens

Countries battle rising virus cases, WHO sees ‘exponential’ rise

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EL-AYYAT, Egypt: A man casts his ballot at a polling station south of Cairo yesterday during the first stage of lower house elections. — AFP

Egypt starts voting in parliamentary polls

Pro-government coalition Unified National List among top contenders

CAIRO: Egyptians voted yesterday in a parliamentary election in which there was little doubt of a sweeping victory for supporters of hardline President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. Some 63 million voters out of Egypt's more than 100 million people are eligible to elect 568 of the 596 lawmakers in the lower house, widely seen as a rubberstamp body for executive policies.

The remaining deputies will be appointed by former army general-turned-president Sisi, whose government has over the past six years silenced any serious political opposition to its rule. The elections will be held in two phases, with the first covering 14 provinces yesterday and today. The second, on Nov 7-8, will cover 13 provinces including the capital Cairo.

Yesterday morning, mini-buses were seen driving around parts of Giza province, south of Cairo, bearing photos and banners of some candidates to draw support as voters trickled into polling stations, an AFP reporter said. Giant billboards and banners have sprung up across the bustling capital Cairo and elsewhere urging Egyptians to vote, while some candidates have released online music video clips to draw support.

Many of the candidates also stood for election five years ago in a political landscape

marked by the presence of dozens of parties with little weight and influence on the ground. The outgoing parliament, elected in 2015, was packed with Sisi supporters and featured only a small opposition bloc known as 25/30. The new parliament will be the second to convene under Sisi, who took office in 2014 after leading the military ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi. Run-offs will be held in November, and final results are to be announced in December.

Possible fines?

A woman in Giza said she was casting her ballot under pressure from the authorities. "I am only taking part in the elections because I am afraid if I don't vote I will be fined by the government," she said, declining to be named for security reasons. During Senate elections in August, the election commission said citizens who fail to vote could face fines of up to 500 Egyptian pounds (\$31). Nevertheless those elections were marked by a low voter turnout of around 14 percent.

The parliament vote is the second to be held since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which has so far infected more than 105,000 people and killed nearly 6,200 in Egypt. Over 4,000 candidates, believed to be

mostly pro-government, are competing for 284 of the 568 seats reserved for individuals. Eight party lists are running for the remaining 284 seats.

Among the top contenders is a political coalition known as the Unified National List, led by the pro-government Mostakbal Watan, or Nation's Future, Party. The party, including top businessmen and public figures, has grown since 2014 to become one of Egypt's dominant political forces. It swept the August Senate elections, and its leader Abdelwahab Abdelrazek was named the upper house's head last Sunday.

The reinstatement of the upper house - which had been abolished after Morsi's ouster - was among constitutional amendments which included potentially extending Sisi's rule until 2030. Other changes were to boost the president's control over the judiciary and granting the army even greater influence in political life.

Sisi's government has for years launched a severe crackdown on dissent, ensnaring journalists, bloggers, lawyers and intellectuals. Protests have been effectively banned under a restrictive 2013 law, and a renewable state of emergency has been in place since 2017. — AFP



LAGOS: People are obliged to walk with their hands upon their heads as they pass security checkpoints in Obalende Market on Friday. — AFP

Armed gangs in Lagos despite Buhari's plea

LAGOS: Gangs armed with knives and sticks blocked major roads in Lagos on Friday, with many on the streets angered by a speech in which the president called for calm but failed to condemn the killing of protesters demanding an end to police brutality. The unrest is the worst street violence since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999 and the most serious political crisis confronting President Muhammadu Buhari, a former head of a military regime who came to power at the ballot box in 2015.

A highway leading to the international airport was obstructed by blockades manned by groups of young men demanding cash from motorists. Petrol stations were closed and cash machines

were not working in parts of the city. Violence in Nigeria's sprawling commercial hub, a city of 20 million, has escalated since Tuesday night, when a round-the-clock curfew was announced. Amnesty International said soldiers and police killed at least 12 protesters on Tuesday in Lekki and Alausa, two Lagos districts. On Thursday, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and 40 other groups demanded an immediate and thorough investigation of the incident. A Nigerian DJ and musician known as DJ Switch, who broadcast the shooting in Lekki live on Instagram, on Friday recounted the incident on the social media platform. She said the military carried out the shooting and she counted 15 dead bodies.—Reuters

Indigenous Canadians decry racism

MONTREAL: After years fighting for fair treatment, indigenous Canadian Uliipika Kiguktak is finally ready to open up about her experiences in a health care system facing a growing outcry over accusations of racism. Raised in the country's vast Nunavut territory, the University of Montreal student says she has spent much of her adult life battling hostility and resistance from medical professionals when she has sought help and advice.

"We should feel safe when we go to a hospital, feel that we are all equal. Our blood is the same color," Kiguktak told AFP. The 26-year-old - whose bitter recollections include having to threaten to harm herself before a doctor would treat her - is part of a growing backlash from the country's First Nation communities over a harrowing case of mistreatment in a Quebec hospital. Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old indigenous patient, was subjected to vicious racist abuse by a nurse shortly before her death, sparking an outcry that has emboldened indigenous people across the nation to speak out.

On Twitter, reactions multiplied under the hashtag #JusticePourJoyce ("Justice for Joyce"), and antiracism protests brought thousands of people to the streets of Montreal. Echaquan, an Atikamekw who was admitted to the Joliette hospital near Montreal with stomach pain, posted a video on Facebook shortly before her death showing the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her caregivers. She was subjected to "the worst form of racism," said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has made "reconciliation" with indigenous peoples a priority of his government.

Loss of confidence

Echaquan's case was far from a one-off, according to indigenous rights activists. Kiguktak recalls having to fight, at age 19, with a doctor at a Montreal hospital who wouldn't remove her birth control device, an

IUD. She says she had to go as far as threatening to remove it herself before he finally agreed to the procedure. "With a history of aboriginal women forcibly sterilized in Canada, I really saw it as abuse: they don't want me to have children and refuse to remove my IUD," she explained.

In another bitter experience, Kiguktak says she waited hours last April before being treated for vaginal bleeding — but not before she was interrogated by a doctor about whether she was abusing drugs. "For me... what I lived, if I had been white, if I had not been native, it would not have happened like that," she said, adding that the experience caused her to "lose confidence in the health care system." Racism exists "everywhere," she says, including in searches for an apartment or a job.

A turning point

Echaquan's death came a year after the publication of a public inquiry report that concluded that "members of First Nations and Inuit of Quebec are indeed subjected to systemic discrimination when accessing public services." "When aboriginals describe



MONTREAL: A woman holds a candle and a picture of Joyce Echaquan at a candlelight vigil held in her memory on Sept 29, 2020 near Joliette Hospital. — AFP

their experiences, the majority of people do not believe them," said Carole Levesque, an anthropologist specializing in aboriginal issues at the National Institute of Scientific Research (INRS).

Echaquan's suffering, witnessed by millions online and through media coverage, could mark a turning point in Canadian race relations, she added, noting that "there will be a before, there will be an after." Indigenous people encountering discrimination have been using the government-funded universal health care system less and less, and as a result find themselves more often in emergency situations, according to experts.

"We think that this person will be automatically violent, aggressive, we will put forward a diagnosis which presumes an intoxication with psychoactive substances," says Doctors of the World Canada president David-Martin Milot, who points to the "double burden" of aboriginal people in precarious and homeless situations. The NGO, also known by its French name "Medecins du Monde," set up three "indigenous navigators" in 2019 to help get more equitable health care in Montreal.

The group is pleased to have created "better bonds of trust and to meet their needs," Milot said. "There is systemic racism or systematic discrimination against indigenous populations which comes into play each time an indigenous person accesses health services," the public health specialist told AFP. For Odile Joannette, director of Wapikoni Mobile, a Montreal non-profit that raises awareness of indigenous rights through workshops and film screenings, it's not always about out-in-the-open racist abuse.

"I don't need there to be an explicitly racist statement to know that there are unconscious biases that exist everywhere," she says, adding that "you have to experience racism to really understand." The 45-year-old Innu says she shunned Canada's health care system in favor of natural care after receiving a misdiagnosis in her youth linked to suspected alcoholism. "It has been going on in silence for generations and generations," says Joannette, while welcoming increased "pressure" put on authorities since the death of Echaquan to set things right. "We must denounce the racism we see," she said. "We must not stop speaking up." — AFP



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## International

# Countries battle rising virus cases as WHO sees 'exponential' rise

## US sees daily record of nearly 80,000 new COVID-19 infections

**PARIS:** Grim data highlighted the struggle for authorities around the world to bring the coronavirus pandemic under control yesterday, as the US reported 80,000 infections in a single day, France extended a curfew to two-thirds of citizens and Germany's death toll passed 10,000. The World Health Organization had earlier warned of an "exponential" rise in infections threatening health systems' ability to cope.

But populations weary of social isolation and economic hardship have pushed back against fresh restrictions to slow the resurgent virus' spread, including overnight clashes in hard-hit Naples between Italian police and hundreds of protesters. In the US, COVID-19 has become a central election issue ahead of a November 3 vote, with President Donald Trump on Friday promising attendees at a Florida rally that "we're going to quickly end this pandemic, this horrible plague."

Meanwhile challenger Joe Biden matched Trump's vow to make a vaccine available for free to all who want it "whether or not you're insured" and said the Republican incumbent has "given up" on controlling the outbreak. Johns Hopkins University had earlier reported 79,963 new American cases in 24 hours, a new record, although the number of daily deaths has remained broadly stable since the beginning of autumn at between 700 and 800. Overall, more than 223,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the US.

France on Friday followed Spain past the milestone of one million cases, while the government extended an overnight curfew designed to slow the spread to affect some 46 million people. "Whatever we do in the coming days and weeks, the toll will grow heavier," Health Minister Olivier

Veran told lawmakers. And after Germany recorded its 10,000th death from the coronavirus, Chancellor Angela Merkel told citizens that "the order of the day is to reduce contacts, to meet as few people as possible" in a weekly video podcast. In Poland, President Andrzej Duda tested positive for COVID-19, although an aide wrote on Twitter that he was "fine".

### 'Close to capacity'

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had on Friday warned that "too many countries are seeing an exponential increase in COVID-19 cases and that is now leading to hospitals and intensive care units running close to or above capacity - and we're still only in October". "We urge leaders to take immediate action to prevent further unnecessary deaths." That message was echoed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), whose director Andrea Ammon warned of a "highly concerning epidemiological situation".

But moves to reintroduce restrictions were met with protest in parts of the continent. In Naples, hundreds of demonstrators turned out after a call on social media to resist a new curfew in parts of Italy, throwing objects at police and setting rubbish bins on fire. The country is reeling from its worst post-war recession after a gruelling two-month national lockdown prompted by one of Europe's worst outbreaks, and authorities have so far been reluctant to repeat the drastic quarantine restrictions seen then.

Wales entered a full lockdown on Friday evening, a day after Ireland shut down, while Poland adopted a nationwide "red zone" lockdown mandating the partial closure of primary

all Biden talks about is "COVID, COVID, COVID" to try and "scare people."

"We're going to quickly end this pandemic, this horrible plague," he said, underlining his consistent message that the virus is on a rapid decline, when in fact case numbers are spiraling upward again, with more than 220,000 Americans already dead. Referring to Biden's warning of a "dark winter" ahead, Trump countered: "We're not entering a dark winter. We're entering the final turn and approaching the light at the end of the tunnel."

He then pivoted to his own scare tactics, claiming that Biden would let in hordes of illegal immigrants that he said were comprised of "criminals and rapists and even murderers." "Joe Biden cares more about illegal aliens than he does about senior citizens," he said. Trump finished his day with a rally in Pensacola, Florida, where he told the cheering crowd that "11 days from now, we're going to win my home state of Florida."

While he is a lifelong New Yorker, Trump changed his residency to Florida during his White House tenure and on Saturday he was to cast his own ballot in West Palm Beach. The rest of the weekend will see Trump, 74, maintaining the frenetic pace with rallies in North Carolina and Ohio, then New Hampshire today, before a spate of more

date Evan McMullin, who is Mormon, as she was put off by both Trump and his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. In the four years since, Trump has done little to change her initial opinion of him. "I thought, well, maybe he'll get into office and he'll kind of tone it down and follow conservative policies and he'll be a good leader," she told AFP. "But nope, that's who he was," Wheat added. "He likes to make fun of people and divide and he doesn't respect women. He doesn't respect refugees or immigrants or minorities."

Like Wheat, many other Mormons are fed up with Trump's rhetoric and behavior, which is at odds with the church's teachings on sex, foul language, empathy and humility. Last month, McMullin - who in 2016 finished third in the election in Utah behind Trump, but not far behind Clinton - urged his followers to back Biden.

"A word to my fellow principled conservatives and Republicans: Voting for Biden doesn't mean you agree with every position he holds or that you can't oppose decisions he makes as president," he said in a Twitter post. "It just means that you're prioritizing the Constitution, truth & decency in this election."

Republican Senator Mitt Romney, one of the Mormon church's most famous members who has

an environmental politics researcher at Argentina's San Martin National University (UNSM). She says it's part of a wider problem affecting multiple regions around the world this year, including in Brazil's Amazonas state, Australia, California, and the Gran Chaco, South America's second largest forest after the Amazon. The Pantanal-the world's largest wetlands that span Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay-is experiencing its worst drought in 47 years.

The Parana river-one of the most powerful on the planet that originates in Brazil and empties into the River Plate estuary-is at its lowest level since 1970. In August it was down to 80-centimeters in Rosario, eastern Argentina, rather than the usual 3-4 meters for that time of year. It's the same thing with the Paraguay river that is at its lowest level "in half a century," according to Paraguay's national weather center in Asuncion.

The fires are being fanned by ideal conditions, includ-



WILMINGTON, Delaware: Democratic presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden picks up his mask after dropping it at the end of his speech on COVID-19 at The Queen theater on Friday. —AFP

schools and restaurants. Only Sweden, which famously refused to lock down earlier this year, continued to stick to its guns despite a rise in cases. After Spain became the first European country to officially record a million Covid-19 cases earlier in the week, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Friday the real number of infections was likely more than triple that number.

### 'We're overwhelmed'

Across the planet, COVID-19 has now claimed the lives of 1.1 million people and infected close to 42 million, with the WHO warning the northern hemisphere was at a critical juncture. Belgium has

seen one of Europe's deadliest per capita outbreaks and has found itself suffering some of the highest second-wave infection rates in Europe.

"We're losing. We're overwhelmed. We're bitter," said Benoit Misset, head of the intensive care unit at the University Hospital in the city of Liege, where several of his staff are having to work despite being positive - if asymptomatic - themselves. Work has continued on the international quest to find a vaccine for the disease, with clinical trials for one candidate developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University resuming in the United States on Friday, six weeks after a test subject became ill. —AFP

## Trump launches intense campaign push as Biden hammers on COVID-19

**PENSACOLA:** Donald Trump launched an intense last-ditch reelection push Friday in Florida, insisting that COVID-19 is disappearing, while frontrunner Joe Biden hammered his message that the president had abdicated responsibility for a pandemic that is actually surging. With 50 million people having already cast early ballots, Biden has a firm lead in national polls, as well as in most of the battleground states like Florida that typically decide the winner of US presidential elections.

The drama of the final Trump-Biden televised debate on Thursday was thought unlikely to move the needle significantly. But Trump pulled off a stunning upset when he defeated the favorite Hillary Clinton in 2016 and he will now make a grueling series of campaign stops through the battlegrounds to try and repeat that feat. Targeting the politically powerful seniors' vote in Florida, Trump began with a rally in the famous retirement community The Villages, where he told a large crowd that

## For Mormons, Trump is too off-putting

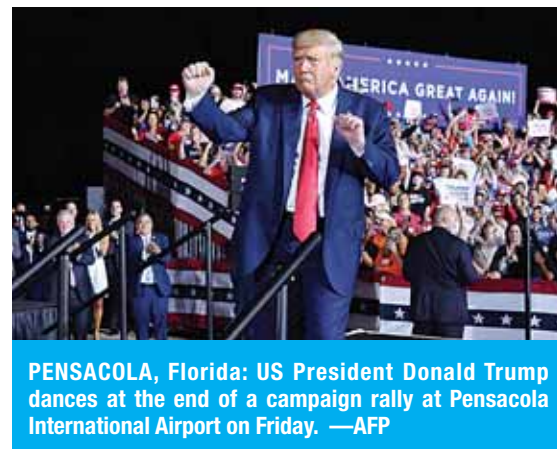
**LOS ANGELES:** Mormons in the United States have traditionally been reliable Republican voters, but some members of the conservative church put off by President Donald Trump are switching sides and backing veteran Democrat Joe Biden. Support for Trump among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which emphasizes family values and morals, is especially lagging among women.

Experts say that could have a significant impact in some key battleground states - notably Arizona and Nevada, where Mormons represent six percent of the population. "There are things about Biden that I don't agree with, but I think it's more important not to vote for Trump," said Melarie Wheat, a 36-year-old mother of five who lives in the western state of Utah, where the LDS Church is headquartered.

In 2016, Wheat voted for independent candi-

## S America ravaged by unprecedented drought and fires

**MONTEVIDEO:** Under stress from a historic drought, large swathes of forest and wetlands in central South America known for their exceptional biodiversity have been ravaged by devastating fires. Experts say the wildfires in a region that spans Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay-especially the region between the Paraguay, Parana and Uruguay rivers-have become critical in 2020. "There has been a dramatic increase in fires. In Argentina there has been an increase of around 170 percent, it's very serious," said Elisabeth Mohle,



PENSACOLA, Florida: US President Donald Trump dances at the end of a campaign rally at Pensacola International Airport on Friday. —AFP

rallies next week. Trump said that by November 3 he'll be doing "five or six a day."

Biden, as throughout the coronavirus-disrupted 2020 campaign, remained lower key. But even the 77-year-old Democrat is ramping up activity in the final stretch. In his home state of Delaware, he gave a speech about economic recovery from the pandemic, slamming Trump's record and vowing - as Trump has - that he would provide a safe coronavirus vaccine to all who want it. —AFP



PHOENIX: Dan Barker, a retired judge, poses with a sign to encourage voters to choose Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden during evening rush hour on Oct 16, 2020. —AFP

repeatedly clashed with Trump, also said this week that his party's incumbent leader did not have his backing. "I did not vote for President Trump," Romney, who cast his early ballot in Utah ahead of the Nov 3 contest, told CNN - while refusing to say if he had backed Biden. —AFP

ing strong winds, temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius and the dry season in which farmers use slash-and-burn techniques to try to regenerate the soil. In Paraguay, "the fires ... at the end of September and first week of October, broke all records," Eduardo Mingo, a top official at the national weather center, told AFP. The number of fires were up 46 percent in 2020, according to authorities. Paraguay's capital Asuncion and several towns in north-eastern Argentina and southern Brazil spent days and even weeks submerged under a thick fog due to the intense fires. And without the usual rainfall that moistens the soil, the wetlands have been particularly badly affected. Images from the Brazilian Pantanal of the charred carcasses of birds, snakes, caimans and trees have shocked the world. A quarter of the area was devastated between January and September, while the Paraguayan Pantanal had already been badly affected by fires in 2019. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Bodies found in fertilizer shipment

**ASUNCION:** Paraguayan police have found the remains of seven people in an advanced stage of decomposition in a container of fertilizer that arrived in the country from Serbia, officials said Friday. The remains, discovered by employees of an agricultural company in the capital Asuncion, were likely those of illegal migrants, prosecutor Marcelo Saldivar told reporters. Local shipping authorities said the container had left Serbia in July, first for neighboring EU member Croatia - the migrants' likely destination - before travelling through Egypt, Spain and Argentina en route to Paraguay. Traces of food discovered near the remains suggested the group was "prepared for a short trip." Saldivar told reporters. Asphyxiation was the likely cause of death, forensic doctor Pablo Lemir said, adding that three of the seven were from Morocco and one was from Egypt. —AFP

#### Germany death toll hits 10,000

**BERLIN:** Germany has suffered more than 10,000 COVID-19 deaths since the start of the pandemic, according to official data published yesterday. A total of 10,003 deaths have been recorded by the Robert Koch Institute, a federal government agency, with 418,005 infections recorded nationwide. Of those, 14,714 were diagnosed in the last 24 hours-a daily record. Robert Koch Institute president Lothar Wieler said Germany was facing a "very serious" situation and asked the population to adhere to social distancing measures. Germany was spared during the first wave of coronavirus infections that hit Europe in spring but is now suffering a sharp increase in cases along with the rest of the continent. Authorities have tightened measures against the pandemic including the adoption of a public assembly ban. Chancellor Angela Merkel last weekend asked the country to reduce their social contact and stay home as much as possible. —AFP

#### Iran daily virus cases top 6,000

**TEHRAN:** Iran's official daily coronavirus caseload exceeded 6,000 infections on Friday, setting another record this week, as death rates also remained close to the country's all-time high. Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said Iran had registered 6,134 new infections in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 556,891. The previous record of 5,616 was announced on Wednesday, a day after Iran breached 5,000 new daily cases for the first time. Lari also announced 335 new virus deaths on Friday, barely below the record of 337 registered on Monday. The new fatalities bring officially reported Covid-19 deaths in the Middle East's worst-hit country to 31,985. Deaths and infections from the novel coronavirus have been on a rising trajectory in the Islamic republic, which has recorded several new highs since September. —AFP

#### 19 killed in eastern DR Congo

**BUKAVU:** At least 19 people have been killed over several days of clashes between militias in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, according to experts and a local official. The fighting between rival militias "left 19 dead including two civilians and 17 combatants", one of the experts in the Hauts Plateaux region said. The region has seen conflict between Congolese Tutsis of Rwandan origin, the Banyamulenge, and other communities. "There was violent fighting since Monday" between Banyamulenge and rival militias, the local official said on condition of anonymity. "We have counted at least 30 bodies," he added. If the death toll is confirmed, it would be one of the biggest flare-ups of violence since the conflict resumed at the start of 2019. —AFP



## International

# How S Africa farm murder sparked violence - and then soul-searching

## White farmers stage protests over violent attacks, murders

**SENEKAL:** A white farmer's murder in a rural town in early October touched off a series of racially charged events that has drawn comparisons with South Africa's apartheid past, but the truth is far more complex. Brendin Horner was strangled and tied to a fence near the small farming town of Senekal 300 kilometers south of Johannesburg, the 22-year-old's body discovered on October 2. Weeks later, angry supporters of white farmers rioted, tried to snatch the black suspects from the court - they failed but torched a police car. And last week, black and white crowds taunted each other outside the court.

But analysts said the new tensions were not simply a replay of those from the apartheid era that ended almost three decades ago. They are rather a result of factors including a new government policy to reduce past inequality in farm ownership, and rising criminality that is also affecting black farmers following the easing of coronavirus restrictions. Nevertheless, white farmers have in recent months staged back-to-back protests across the country over violent attacks and murders of farmers.

Researchers say there are roughly 50 such killings each year - less than a third of numbers seen in the 1990s and not abnormal in a country with 21,000 murders a year - and most do not seem to be motivated by race. But the latest murder has forced South Africa to revisit the ghosts of its past and exposed difficulties in removing the vestiges of decades of inequality for blacks. "We would be naive to assume that race relations in farming com-

munities have been harmonious since the advent of democracy," said President Cyril Ramaphosa.

South Africa is also reeling from historical injustice around the highly emotive land issue. Whites, who make up nine percent of the population, own 72 percent of farms with only four percent in the hands of blacks, according to a 2017 land audit. The latest tensions in Senekal represent "the microcosm of the proverbial elephant in the room with regards to South African politics which is race, racism", said South African analyst Oscar van Heerden. "And what makes the Senekal events more emotive is it combines the issue of race which we have not resolved which we are constantly avoiding," said van Heerden.



farm attacks in recent months.

And the farm violence is coinciding with government's push to fix land ownership imbalances. The governing African National Congress has endorsed a policy of expropriation of land without compensation. Parliament has begun the process to enact the law. That, analysts say, has created anxiety among whites they will lose their long-held farms.

### Horner was strangled and tied to a fence

Two senior ministers - those representing the police and state security - sat through an entire day of bail application by the two alleged killers. Outside the courthouse groups of whites, some of them armed and wearing the uniform of the Afrikaner survivalist Kommandokorps faced off with black opposition supporters. Radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) supporters, in an ostentatious display of force, carried traditional batons and sticks known as knobkerries. They sang a banned apartheid-era song with the lyrics "kill the Boer - kill the farmer" incensing pro-white protesters. The Boer are the descendants of Dutch settlers.

Blacks feel they are yet to reap the benefits expected after Nelson Mandela took over as the first black leader of the continent's most developed country in 1994. "We don't want to kill white men.

We want equality," EFF leader Julius Malema told his supporters in Senekal. On the other hand whites have "this feeling in being second class citizens", said Afrikaans rights group AfriForum's Ernst Roets.

### 'We want equality'

But blacks have not been spared. Senekal black farmer Robert Mphuthi, 54, has been a victim. "They don't just take your sheep," said Mphuthi, but "they kill you", adding the attackers do not care whether "you are white or black". Pretoria-based Institute of Security Studies crime researcher Johan Burger, sees no evidence to suggest that race is behind the ongoing farm violence. "Everyone is facing the risk of being attacked irrespective of race," he said. But because "attackers are almost exclusively black... white victims would perceive the attacks as racial", said Burger. With some 2.2 million people having lost jobs because of the coronavirus pandemic, crime levels have generally increased, and isolated farms are soft targets.

Black farm workers are also victims of attacks. But it seems "black lives don't matter, white lives (are) superior," said prominent farm workers' unionist Nosey Pieterse speaking from the grapes-growing Western Cape province. According to Burger, out of 2,048 farm murders recorded since 1990, 1,242 are white farmers, 72 black farm owners and 150 black workers. The rest were farmers' relatives. In response to the violence government announced Thursday it was "fast-tracking" the implementation of a revised rural safety strategy. —AFP

## Farmers step up illegal fires as air crisis worsens

**SANETA, India:** Delhi's smog crisis headed for a new toxic peak yesterday, but farmers are refusing to stop the stubble burning that is widely blamed for the poisonous clouds engulfing the Indian capital. Air pollution in parts of the city reached "severe" levels yesterday - a day after US President Donald Trump described Indian air as "filthy" - with monitoring agencies warning it would worsen in the next two days because of the lack of wind.

Teams in states around Delhi, home to some 20 million people, are hunting the illegal stubble burners, even driving around country roads at night

when most fires are started. In the past month some 1,265 farmers have been fined in Punjab alone, according to senior pollution officer Krunesh Garg, but satellite detectors have recorded more than 12,000 fires in the state.

In a bid to step up the campaign, the government is offering subsidized machines to clear rice paddies and farmers who are caught starting fires are blocked for bank loans. But thick grey clouds of smoke that carry deadly particles to the world's most polluted capital can still be seen everywhere. Because of Delhi's position and weather pattern, every winter the city is choked by deadly smog. Farmers like Paramjeet Singh say they understand inhabitants' health concerns but consider stubble burning a "necessary evil" in the race to clear fields for fresh crops.

"The smoke is also bad for our eyes and lungs but we don't have the money to buy machines that can clear the crop residue," Singh told AFP in Saneta vil-

lages, about 230 km northwest of Delhi, in Punjab state. "And why go after only farmers? There are so many polluting industries in Delhi and Punjab but only we get blamed," said the 42-year-old.

According to state air quality monitors, farm fire smoke accounted for 56 percent of Delhi's pollution in 2018 and 44 percent last year. Authorities say the share has fallen further this year, but not enough to ease the crisis in Delhi. Some experts say the worsening smog is because of the number of cars on the roads, construction and industry around the city.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has declared a "war on pollution" putting up billboards across the city while placard-wielding activists urge drivers to turn off their engines when halted at traffic lights. But experts say political will to tackle pollution is still lacking with central government and Delhi, Punjab and Haryana states unable to agree tough action to clean the air. —AFP

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**UZYNAGASH, Kazakhstan:** Bikamal Kaken poses with a portrait of her disappeared husband Adilgazy Muqai in a rental apartment in this provincial town on Aug 27, 2020. —AFP

Xiao told a state-owned news outlet that Muqai was sentenced to nine years on extremism charges, and in the same interview dismissed Kaken's account of her family's ordeal, which was reprinted by the US embassy in Kazakhstan. —AFP

## Kazakhs despair for missing relatives

**UZYNAGASH:** When Bikamal Kaken's husband vanished during a 2017 visit to Xinjiang in northwestern China, she had good reason to believe he would not be returning home to Kazakhstan anytime soon. But she did not anticipate just how dire his fate was, or that it would be revealed during a spat online between US and Chinese diplomats. Rights groups at the time of Adilgazy Muqai's disappearance were sounding the alarm over a mushrooming network of facilities for the massive incarceration of mostly Muslim minority citizens in Xinjiang.

Kaken heard that her husband had fallen victim to the system. But three agonizing years later, she learned he had met an even worse judgment: a nine year prison sentence for extremist crimes. "I am so worried. The Chinese (authorities) will destroy him in jail," Kaken, a China-born ethnic Kazakh who is now a Kazakh citizen, told AFP through tears, pressing her two young daughters tightly to her body. Beijing has robustly defended its

policies in the Xinjiang region where more than one million people - mostly Muslims from Turkic speaking groups like Uighurs and Kazakhs - have been rounded up on vague extremism and separatism pretexts, rights groups say. China claims the sprawling network of detention centers are vocational "training" facilities used to counter extremism where attendance is voluntary. Yet in neighboring Kazakhstan, 44-year-old Kaken is just one of a growing number of relatives to discover their missing family members are not in the centers as previously thought, but serving hard jail time instead.

Kaken and her husband, a retired oil worker, moved to Kazakhstan when she was pregnant with her youngest child, now three, after hearing reports that Xinjiang authorities were forcing women from minority groups to have abortions. But 47-year-old Muqai, who had right of residency in Kazakhstan but was not a passport-holder, was lured back to his native region in May 2017 by his former employers. They said the company pension that his family subsisted on could be cancelled if he failed to attend a meeting.

When news of Muqai's sentence finally emerged three years after his disappearance, it came from an unlikely source - a senior diplomat of the country that had jailed him. China's ambassador in Kazakhstan Zhang

## Immigrant doctor eyes seat in red Arizona suburb

**PHOENIX:** Hiral Tipimani represents the so-called American Dream - an Indian immigrant who came to the United States as a child and became a doctor. Now the 53-year-old aspires to become a congresswoman. But to do so, the Democrat will need to win in an Arizona suburb that has always voted Republican red. Is it an impossible task? The polls show a race too close to predict - a surprise in a district where Republican David Schweikert, the incumbent since 2013, won by 10 percentage points in the last election two years ago.

President Donald Trump won by the same margin in Arizona's sixth district in his 2016 election duel with Hillary Clinton. The district covers part of crucial Maricopa County, which is home to six out of 10 Arizona voters and includes Phoenix, the state's largest city. "Maricopa County is the largest swing county in the entire nation," Tipimani told AFP at her campaign headquarters. "So yes, we have the ability to not just impact this district, and what happens in the state of Arizona," she said. "We have the chance to impact what happens for this nation when we wake up on November 4."

### No door-knocking during COVID

With its booming urban population and its burgeoning demographics of young, educated college voters and Latinos - as well as moderate conservatives - Arizona could be crucial to

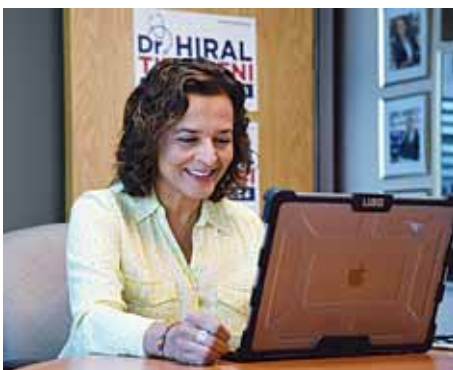
next month's election. The state is "really prized", Tipimani said. And to win in the sixth district, she said candidates must win over "independent thinkers" who "are not looking for somebody who's going to toe a party line". Schweikert represents a "far-right extreme arm of the Republican Party," she says.

But the eerie silence at campaign headquarters shows just how much the coronavirus pandemic has impacted this election cycle, with remote events now the rule - at least for Democrats. "I so miss knocking on doors, having direct personal engagement, talking to families all across our community," said Tipimani. "But obviously, we have to do what is safest for everybody. We don't want to put anyone at risk."

### 'Don't back off'

Tipimani came to the United States at the age of three with her parents, who opened a convenience store in Buena Park, California. They did not have enough money to pay for employees or a babysitter, meaning they took turns running the business and caring for their daughter. Her father eventually got a job as an engineer in Ohio, where Tipimani and her brother grew up. Her mother became a social worker.

"I am the product of the American Dream," she told a Zoom meeting with volunteers, who are calling voters on her behalf in a state where early voting began more than two weeks ago. "Don't back off," she urged them. The meeting was attended by "West Wing" actor and political activist Bradley Whitford, whose presence invigorated avowed fan Tipimani as well as the volunteers. "My God, it's Josh Lyman!" gushed Tipimani in a star-struck tone,



**PHOENIX:** Dr Hiral Tipimani, a candidate for US Congress in Arizona's 6th Congressional District who hopes to unseat the Republican incumbent, speaks to supporters via Zoom from her campaign office on Oct 17, 2020. —AFP

referring to his character in the acclaimed White House television drama. But the doctor quickly turned serious again when explaining her political agenda, centered on the health care system - a key Democratic focus in this election. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it has triggered, she said it is "a perfect time for an ER doctor to step in and say, 'Let's hold on, let's stabilize the situation, let's stop the bleeding,' right?" "Let's make sure that we provide immediate relief. And then let's have a long-term plan."

Like many Democrats in the traditionally conservative southwestern state, though, Tipimani is careful not to appear partisan, and strikes a centrist tone. "It has nothing to do with party and has nothing to do with ideology," she said. —AFP

## US Coast Guard to tackle China 'illegal' fishing in the Pacific

**WASHINGTON:** The United States said Friday it will deploy Coast Guard patrol ships in the western Pacific to counter "destabilizing and malign" activities by China in disputed fishing grounds of the South China Sea. Accusing China of "illegal" and "unregulated" fishing, as well as "harassment" of fishing boats from regional countries, White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said in a statement that the US Coast Guard "is strategically homeporting significantly enhanced Fast Response Cutters...in the western Pacific."

These Sentinel class vessels will carry out maritime security operations, including helping fishing boats "in collaboration with regional partners who have limited off-shore surveillance and enforcement capacity, and ensure freedom of navigation," he said. Washington regularly accuses China of breaking international law by sending its warships as escorts for Chinese fishing vessels into the fishing grounds of other countries.

In July, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper slammed a "catalog of bad behavior" in the South China Sea over the previous months and accused the Chinese military of having sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat, harassing Malaysian oil and gas development and escorting Chinese fishing fleets into Indonesia's exclusive economic zone. O'Brien added that the Coast Guard, which is under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), was also studying whether to permanently station several of its patrol ships in the area of American Samoa in the South Pacific.

Last month, Indonesia protested about an incursion by Chinese coastguard ships in its exclusive economic zone, which is situated between its own territorial waters and international waters and where the state claims exclusive rights to exploit natural resources. China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea as its own, a claim contested by several countries including Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. —AFP



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# Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2020

## UK and EU try to land deal on fish

### Britain, EU make good progress in last-minute talks

**LONDON:** Britain and the European Union have made good progress in talks on a last-minute trade deal that would stave off a tumultuous finale to the five-year-old Brexit crisis, but fish is the biggest sticking point. The United Kingdom left the EU in January but the two sides are trying to clinch a deal that would govern nearly a trillion dollars in annual trade before informal membership - known as the transition period - ends on Dec 31.



Every day  
counts:  
Barnier

"We're in intense negotiations with the EU - we've made real progress," Trade Secretary Liz Truss said. "We're making good progress on the negotiations." "But if the EU aren't prepared to do a deal that allows the UK to retain its sovereignty, then we will go to Australia style terms, and I think that's perfectly reasonable." After threats from Britain that it would undercut the 2020 divorce treaty, and Johnson briefly broke off trade talks on Friday, the EU said it was ready to talk about draft legal texts of a deal.

The chief negotiators of Britain and the European Union, Michel Barnier and David Frost,

meet on Friday for intensive negotiations. After some progress on competition guarantees including state aid rules, the hardest issue remains fish: Johnson has insisted on taking back control over its waters while the EU wants access to the fishing waters.

Ireland's foreign minister said he believed Britain and the EU could reach a trade deal now the talks were back on track, but added the issues of fair competition and fisheries hampering an accord were "still very much there". "I think a deal can be done... What we have now, after all sorts of politics being played, is a process that is back on track," Simon Coveney said, adding, however, that both sides remained "miles apart" on fishing.

#### Symbol of sovereignty

Asked if there would be a deal, Britain's junior finance minister Stephen Barclay said he hoped there would be but fishing was a key sticking point. "(The) deal needs to reflect that fact that we're leaving the EU, we will regain control of our fisheries," he told Sky.

At a briefing with diplomats in Brussels on Wednesday, Barnier said he was only worried about fish, one person who participated in the closed-door meeting said. "Fish is now the thing to tackle. The other elements seem doable, more or less," the diplomat said.

While fishing alone contributed just 0.03 percent of British economic output in 2019, it is an emotive subject as many Brexit supporters see it as a symbol of the regained sovereignty that leaving the EU



**LONDON:** EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier (right), wearing an EU flag-themed facemask due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, leaves a hotel in London yesterday to attend the latest round of Brexit trade talks with the UK. — AFP

should bring. Combined with fish and shellfish processing, then the sector makes up 0.1 percent of UK GDP. For French fishermen, British waters are crucial and being locked out would cause trouble for French President Emmanuel Macron.

The United Kingdom first sought membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1961, but Charles de Gaulle vetoed Britain's accession in

1961 and 1967, accusing the British of "deep-seated hostility" to the European project.

It eventually joined in 1973, but voted to leave by 52 to 48 percent on June 23, 2016. Britain and Japan formally signed a trade agreement on Friday, marking the UK's first big post-Brexit deal on trade, as it continues to struggle to agree on a deal with its closest trading partners in the EU. — Reuters



The housing market has been one of many few brilliant spots in the US economy during the pandemic.

## US housing market heats up ahead of election

**WASHINGTON:** The housing market has been one of the few bright spots since the coronavirus pandemic slammed the US economy, a boom that at a glance would appear to be aiding the financial wellbeing of American homeowners and ought to offer a tailwind to President Donald Trump heading into the homestretch of the election. But as with so much else going on in the recovery, the benefits are far from evenly distributed - and sentiment heading into the election will vary based on how individual voters are faring, offering no clear lift to the incumbent Republican over his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden. "I don't think there's any question that we've seen significant improvement," said Jim Baird, chief investment officer for Plante Moran Financial Advisors. "The question is 'is it enough?'"

The National Association of Realtors this week reported US existing home sales surged in September to levels not seen in more than 14 years. With so much of Americans' wealth tied up in the home they live in, that offers a welcome financial buffer in a decidedly uncertain economic moment. It has also been a boon for builders, who are as confident as they've ever been, the National Association of Home Builders reported this week, as they rush to meet the demands of a severely under-supplied housing market. Indeed, single-family housing starts are proceeding at the fastest clip in 13 years.

## Indonesian unions vow mass protests if govt inks jobs law

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's workers will stage further mass protests across the country if President Joko Widodo signs new jobs measures into law next week, the head of the main labor group said yesterday.

But the gains in home sales were concentrated in the higher end of the market, which is fine for people with stable jobs who have been able to snag houses, but first-time buyers or those looking for affordable homes may be priced out of the market. "While this has helped push home prices higher and improved equity positions for existing homeowners, it has created a challenging market for buyers, especially those shopping in the more affordable end of the market," said Andy Walden, an economist and director of market research at Black Knight.

The median price of an existing home is nearly 15 percent higher than last year. Sales in resort areas have been particularly strong, the NAR said this week.

That outsized gains for pricier homes is another sign the crisis is falling harder on lower-income households, Baird said. Many current homeowners who lost jobs or had their pay cut significantly during the crisis are also struggling. Uncertainty over what will happen when existing forbearance protections expire in March may weigh on voters' minds on Nov 3.

It is too soon to know if the 3 million homeowners in forbearance will be able to resume mortgage payments or if foreclosure moratoriums will be extended, Walden said.

More homeowners are keeping up with payments, for now. The number of seriously delinquent mortgages, or those at least 90 days late, declined in September for the first time since the pandemic started, according to Black Knight data released Thursday. However, mortgage delinquencies could stay elevated throughout 2021 and into 2022 at the current pace of improvement, said Walden. "And that's without any re-emergence of broader economic impacts from the pandemic," he said. — Reuters

"It is the exploitation of labour that we're against," said the head of the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions, Said Iqbal. "We are ready for dialogue, even ready for a debate if necessary in an open, public hearing." The government says the legislation will boost employment by cutting red tape, easing restrictions of foreign investment and improving labor market competitiveness. Unions and rights groups say the measures favor business over workers and the environment.

Hundreds of thousands of Indonesians have hit the streets across the archipelago in recent weeks, culminating in sporadic violence and thousands of arrests,

## Syria crisis eases as Iran delivers new oil supplies

**AMMAN:** Iran has delivered several gasoline and crude oil shipments to Syria, easing a near two-month gasoline shortage aggravated by tougher US sanctions, shippers, port officials and traders said.

A vessel began unloading 38,000 tons of gasoline at the Baniyas oil terminal on Monday, three weeks after another ship carrying Iranian crude unloaded its one million barrel cargo, three shippers and a Damascus-based businessman familiar with the shipment told Reuters. In addition an Iranian vessel carrying another 1 million barrels off-loaded its cargo in the Mediterranean to two smaller vessels for delivery to Syria, a Beirut-based shipper and an Amman-based regional shipper also said.

Those cargoes were delivered two weeks ago, they said. Oil Minister Bassam Touma had said in September that The Caesar Act - the toughest US sanctions which came into force last June prohibiting foreign companies trading with Damascus - had disrupted several imported shipments from undisclosed suppliers. A halving of Iranian deliveries in the last four months purchased by Damascus under credit lines and barter deals with Tehran worsened the chronic shortages, another three shippers said.

They said Iran's preference to step up cash sales to Asian customers rather than supply its ally Damascus on credit was a factor behind the reduced supplies. Iran's own economy has also been struggling from the impact of US sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic. Data from TankerTrackers, which tracks shipments and oil storage, showed a spike in Iranian exports last month in defiance of US sanctions. Syrian oil production collapsed after Damascus lost most of its oil producing fields in the eastern part of the country, east the Euphrates River in Deir Al-Zor.

During the nearly decade old conflict it has relied on its ally Iran for an average of 70,000 barrels per day - almost half of its needs - but supplies have been falling in the past year with tightening sanctions and Tehran seeking cash exports, according to industry experts. — Reuters



as they protested the measures passed by parliament on Oct. 5. If the president, widely known as Jokowi, signs the measures into law, as expected, on Wednesday, labor unions will stage "massive national" protests on Nov 1, centered on the State Palace and Constitutional Court in the capital Jakarta, Iqbal told a virtual news conference.

Tens of thousands would be expected to gather in Jakarta and hundreds of thousands more across the country, he said. Spokesmen at Jokowi's office, Jakarta police and Indonesia's economic ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. — Reuters



## Japan against huge bailout for ANA

**TOKYO:** Japan's government is in no mood for a huge bailout plan for ailing airline ANA, sources say, preferring a piecemeal approach to direct capital injections - a stark contrast to the bold moves other countries have made to protect flagship carriers.

Forecast to suffer a net loss of about \$4.8 billion in the fiscal year to March, Japan's largest airline is expected to announce a revival plan next week that will most likely include pay cuts and reduction in its fleet of aircraft. The government hopes a waiver on airport landing fees, a tax-funded domestic tourism campaign and a gradual re-opening of borders will be enough to keep ANA alive, said government and ruling party officials with direct knowledge of the matter.

These measures will come on top of \$3.8 billion in subordinated loans to ANA Holdings Inc from state-backed and private lenders. The loans, cost cuts and capital accumulated during Japan's inbound tourism boom in the past few years will allow ANA to weather the hit from COVID-19 at least for now, they said. Though nothing has been officially decided, the government is ready to offer more relief if a deepening economic slump worsens the plight of big companies with national impact such as ANA.

But ideas being floated among government and political circles center on tax breaks for aircraft and fuel, as well as extensions of existing programs such as the tourism campaign and subsidies to companies that retain jobs, the officials said.

More radical steps such as those taken by Germany, which did direct capital injection, are off the table for now, they said. "As long as private banks are healthy enough (to support ANA), it's probably unnecessary," a senior ruling party official said of a direct bailout.

"Capital injection is a last resort," said another ruling party official with close ties with the airline industry. "I don't think the airlines themselves want this, because it would just show how dire their business health is." The Bank of Japan, too, is wary of stepping in, concerned that rescuing non-financial entities like ANA would fall into the realm of fiscal policy, said three people familiar with its thinking.

"The BOJ and government each has different roles to play," one of the people said, ruling out measures such as directly offering subordinated loans to ANA. There is uncertainty, however, on how long this drip-feed approach can last. Like other carriers, ANA has been burning through cash to maintain jets that are either grounded or flying with too few passengers during the coronavirus pandemic. Most of ANA's international routes are suspended and a resurgence of infections in Western countries means a revival of inbound tourism may be some time off. If there is a huge wave of infections in Japan, that could also dash hopes of a rebound in domestic tourism. Once pent-up demand from the government's campaign peters out, households may hold off on travelling as job losses and wage cuts hit income, analysts say. — Reuters



## Business

# S&P affirms UK's sovereign debt rating at 'AA'; Italy outlook stable

## Ratings agency downgrades Azerbaijan debt outlook to negative

**LONDON/WASHINGTON:** Ratings agency Standard & Poor's affirmed the United Kingdom's sovereign debt rating at 'AA' on Friday, saying the government's pandemic response efforts helped limit the hit to its economy.

The rating action comes a day after Britain's finance minister offered more cash to prop up businesses reeling from the coronavirus crisis, as new curbs to tackle a resurgence in cases threaten a nascent economic recovery. The UK government and the Bank of England have demonstrated significant fiscal and monetary flexibility in their response to the pandemic, said S&P in a statement. The agency maintained its outlook at "stable" on Britain's sovereign debt. S&P upgrades

Meanwhile, S&P Global Ratings on Friday held the grade on Italy's government debt steady at BBB but upgraded the outlook to stable from negative, noting improved prospects to restart

growth amid the pandemic. "The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Italy's economy hard; under our projections, GDP will not return to 2019 levels until 2023," the agency said in a statement.

S&P estimates the Italian economy will contract by about 9 percent this year, before recovering by 6.4 percent next year. However, low interest rates and expanded measures by the European Central Bank (ECB) could provide a huge injection to the Italian economy.

"In our view, despite macroeconomic uncertainties, these steps provide Italian authorities an opportunity to restart economic growth and to reverse the deterioration of

its budgetary performance," the statement said.

S&P Global Ratings downgraded the outlook on Azerbaijan's debt to negative, even while holding the credit rating stable at BB+ amid the

rising risks from the conflicted ignited in September with neighboring Armenia. "The military confrontation could exacerbate Azerbaijan's economic, external, and fiscal vulnerabilities at a time when the economy has been weakened by COVID-19 and the collapse in oil prices," S&P

said in a statement.

The conflict will weigh on the nation's economy and finances as it "may take quite some time to



### Virus fight helped UK cushion hit to economy

## Huawei announces Q3 2020 business results

**SHENZHEN:** Huawei yesterday announced its business results for the first three quarters of 2020. During this period, Huawei generated \$8.57 billion in revenue, an increase of 9.9 percent over the same period last year. The company's net profit margin in this period was 8.0 percent. Throughout the first three quarters of 2020, Huawei's business results basically met expectations.

As the world grapples with COVID-19, Huawei's global supply chain is being put under intense pressure and its production and operations face significant challenges. The company continues to do its best to find solutions, survive and forge forward, and fulfill its obligations to customers and suppliers.

Moving forward, Huawei will leverage its strengths in ICT technologies such as AI, cloud, 5G, and computing to provide scenario-based solutions, develop industry applications, and unleash the value of 5G networks along with its partners. Its stated goal is to help enterprises grow their business and help governments boost domestic industry, benefit constituents, and improve overall governance.

ICT has become a cornerstone of modern society and the main driver behind sustainable social, economic, and environmental development. Huawei believes that rapid and healthy development within the ICT industry will rely on open collaboration and mutual trust across the global industry, so it will continue working closely with its global partners and using its innovative ICT technologies to create greater value for customers despite the complex situation it is currently facing. The compa-



ny will continue contributing to pandemic responses, economic growth, and social progress.

The financial data disclosed here are unaudited figures compiled in compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards.

## Gulf Bank announces customer contact, WhatsApp number

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has announced yesterday that the WhatsApp number clients can use to message the Bank has changed to 1805805, the same number that the bank uses for its Customer Contact Center.

The latest update makes it even easier for customers to be able to communicate with the Bank through its WhatsApp service, which grants its users immediate communication with Gulf Bank representatives around the clock and from anywhere around the world.

Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Ahmad Al-Amir, said: "As part of the Gulf Bank commitment, we are con-



Ahmad Al-Amir

stantly striving to provide our clients with the highest levels of customer satisfaction, which is why we have assigned one number to both receive Customer Contact Center calls and answer immediate inquiries via WhatsApp. Our aim is to facilitate the customer service experience, and make it even easier for our clients to communicate with us anywhere and anytime."

To learn more about Gulf Bank's various activities, customers can visit one of the Bank's 52 branches, or visit the Gulf Bank website at [www.gulfbank.com](http://www.gulfbank.com). Customers can also use the WhatsApp service on 1805805 for round-the-clock assistance from Gulf Bank representatives, or call the Customer Contact Center on the same number.

## Britain signs post-Brexit trade deal with Japan

**TOKYO:** Britain hailed its first major post-Brexit trade deal Friday after signing an agreement with Japan that it said shows it can stand alone on the global stage, as talks on a pact with the European Union remain bogged down. London said the pact, which was agreed after just a few months of talks over the summer, would boost business between the two by £15.2 billion (\$19.5 billion) and proved others could be signed elsewhere.

The deal comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson pursues his "Global Britain" strategy that seeks potentially more advantageous trade deals than those that were negotiated while it was an EU member. The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement covers sectors including food, textiles and technology and largely replicates the existing EU-Japan arrangement, which will no longer apply to Britain at the end of this year.

It is due to take effect on January 1 — the end of a transition period in which London and Brussels are trying to thrash out the terms of their own new relationship.

British-Japanese trade was worth around £30 billion last year, while Britain's imports and exports



**TOKYO:** British Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss (left) and Japan's Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama gather prior to their talks in Tokyo on Friday. —AFP

to the European Union, its biggest trading partner, totaled \$670 billion. After the signing ceremony in Tokyo, Britain's International Trade Minister Liz Truss said: "It used to be said that an independent UK would not be able to strike independent trade deals, or they would take years to conclude. But today we prove the naysayers wrong."

Truss also said the deal "paves the way" for Britain to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership between 11 countries including Canada, Mexico, Japan, Vietnam and Australia. But joining is likely to be a complex manoeuvre that will take years. —AFP

## China to set 5-year plan for steering economy through choppy waters

**BEIJING:** China's top leaders will chart the country's economic course for 2021-2025 at a key meeting starting tomorrow, seeking to balance growth and reforms to avoid stagnation amid an uncertain global outlook and deepening tensions with the United States. President Xi Jinping and members of the Central Committee, the largest of the ruling Communist Party's elite decision-making bodies, will meet on Oct. 26-29 behind closed doors to lay out the 14th five-year plan, a blueprint for economic and social development.

The plan and its execution will be crucial for China



resolve." Hundreds have already been killed in the latest flare-up of fighting over Karabakh, a region of Azerbaijan long controlled by ethnic Armenian separatists. Efforts by world governments to broker a peace have so far failed. —Agencies

## Why companies in Mideast need to be on high alert

By Werno Gevers



Werno Gevers

Middle East organizations are growing wary of criminals exploiting their brands to target their customers, partners or the general public. According to the latest Mimecast State of Email Security Report, 74 percent of organizations in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are concerned about a web domain, brand exploitation or site spoofing attack.

Cybercriminals are acutely aware of the ease with which they can register lookalike domains and launch sophisticated attacks impersonating trusted brands that are nearly indistinguishable from the real thing. It's become common for malicious actors to use our favorite retailers or other loved brands and services to trick people into handing over money or sensitive information. And it's becoming harder for these brands to continue to avoid responsibility. Local concerns outweigh global averages, with 50 percent of UAE organizations admitting they are very concerned about an attack that directly spoofs their email domain, compared to a global average of 40 percent.

It's critical that organizations look beyond the perimeter to determine how threat actors are damaging their brands online. As a start, they need to adopt Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (DMARC), an email validation system designed to uncover anyone using a brand's domain without authorization. This means brands can monitor who is sending mails on their behalf and instruct receiving servers to reject unauthorized emails. This helps protect receivers from falling victim to fraudulent mails. In KSA all respondents were aware of DMARC, but only 40 percent were using it. Ninety-eight percent of UAE respondents were aware of it while only 34 percent were using it. Perhaps an indication that the importance of using such a solution to protect brand reputation has not yet been realized for many organizations.

And while brand protection is certainly on the radar for IT and security decision makers, has its importance reached the rest of the C-suite? The report found that in the UAE chief information officers (CIOs) and chief information security officers (CISOs) are most likely to control the budget for securing the organization's corporate brand from web or email spoofing or other forms of exploitation and impersonation. Encouragingly, in KSA 48 percent of organizations had the chief financial officer (CFO) overseeing the budget, which means organizations here are looking beyond traditional IT and security roles to own brand protection. There is an argument to be made for the chief marketing officer to take ownership of this budget since they are typically responsible for their brand's reputation, but our research revealed this is the case at only 14 percent of UAE and KSA organizations. No matter who manages the budget — whether it's the CFO, CMO or CIO — what's critical is having budget set aside for this important element of cybersecurity. And the budget owner also needs to work closely with the organization's security leader to make the right purchasing decisions.

All of the countries surveyed in this year's report expect web and email spoofing attacks to increase in the coming year, but Saudi Arabia and UAE organizations were among the ones on highest alert with 52 percent and 54 percent respectively, predicting an increase. It therefore makes sense to have a dedicated senior resource looking after the organization's online brand integrity. On average UAE organizations were made aware of six web or email spoofing attacks in the last year, while KSA organizations were made aware of seven. Of course, that's just the ones they were aware of and if left unchecked, brand spoofing could have devastating effects on the brand's reputation. If organizations don't have the tools to actively look for exploits, or unless someone takes the time to report them, they're difficult to find which leaves brands none the wiser.

Standard web and email security strategies are no longer enough. Organizations need to protect their brands online and ultimately protect their customers and supply chains by preventing fraudulent senders using their domains or lookalike domains. Note: Werno Gevers is cybersecurity expert at Mimecast

### News in brief

#### KFC to create 5,400 jobs in UK

**LONDON:** US fast-food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken said Friday it will create 5,400 jobs in Britain and Ireland on strong takeaway demand, despite a tough year for the virus-hit hospitality sector. KFC said in a statement that it would create the new positions over the next three months, taking this year's new intake since the COVID-19 lockdown to 10,000 extra staff. "There's no denying it's been a tough year for the hospitality sector, and we're already seeing the substantial impact of that across our high streets and city centers," said Paula MacKenzie, general manager at KFC UK and Ireland. —AFP

#### Sweden, Denmark bid to save SAS

**STOCKHOLM:** The Swedish and Danish governments have agreed to stump up more cash to bail out ailing airline SAS in a recapitalization plan that was finalized on Friday, the Scandinavian carrier announced. SAS, which like other airlines around the world has been hit hard by the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, said that Stockholm and Copenhagen have agreed to increase their respective stakes in the carrier to 21.8 percent apiece as part of the rescue plan first unveiled in August. The package includes some 12 billion kronor (\$1.37 billion, 1.16 billion euros) of fresh funding and the conversion of a further 2.25 billion kronor of debt into equity. —AFP

#### Daimler lifts outlook on Q3 profits

**FRANKFURT:** German auto giant Daimler, maker of Mercedes-Benz, said Friday that it was upgrading its earnings forecast for the whole of 2020 after group profits rose in the third quarter. "The key figures reflect a good performance based on improving markets and strong products, combined with diligent cost discipline and extensive cash-preservation measures," the carmaker said in a statement. In the three months to September, Daimler's net profit amounted rose to 2.2 billion euros (\$2.6 billion) from 1.8 billion euros in the same period a year earlier. Underlying or operating profit rose amounted to 3.1 billion euros compared with 2.7 billion euros a year earlier. —AFP

#### Renault says sales down in Q3

**PARIS:** French auto giant Renault said Friday that its sales were down in the third quarter, but the figure was cushioned by a boost for its electric models and as the global car market shows the first signs of recovery. Renault, which does not publish profits on a quarterly basis, said in a statement that revenues fell by 8.2 percent to 10.4 billion euros (\$12.3 billion) in the three months to September and unit sales were down by 6.1 percent at 806,320 vehicles. Average analyst forecasts compiled by Bloomberg had anticipated third-quarter revenue of just under 10 billion euros. "The third quarter of 2020 is marked by a recovery in the trend of the global automobile market," Renault said. —AFP



# Classifieds

Sunday, October 25 2020

Kuwait Times

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الطيران المدني  
Civil Aviation

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Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw

### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas later on with light to moderate north westerly wind changing to south easterly wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to south westerly wind with speed of 08 - 26 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 24/10/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	34 °C	24 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	35 °C	16 °C		
ABDALY	37 °C	16 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	38 °C	21 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	32 °C	25 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWAISIB	36 °C	17 °C		
WAFRA	39 °C	17 °C		
SALMY	36 °C	16 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	10/25	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	34 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 26 km/h
Monday	10/26	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	34 °C	16 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	10/27	Rather hot	36 °C	17 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h
Wednesday	10/28	Rather hot	36 °C	17 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:36
Sunrise	05:56
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:44
Sunset	17:09
Isha	18:27

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	39 °C
MIN. Temp.	17 °C
MAX. RH	60 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	W 21 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
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

**NOTICE**  
October 22, 2020

Mr. Jijo George, son of Mr. George Muruppel Kochukutty, resident of Muruppel House, Elakolloor PO, Konni, Pathanamthitta, Kerala 689703 and Ms. Jency Elizaba Johnson, daughter of Mr. Johnson Mathews, resident of Panthapavil Puthen Veedu, Karuvatta, Adoor PO, Pathanamthitta, Kerala 691523, 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 - 22533315, 00965 - 22533125).

Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

(Ramveer Bharti)  
Second Secretary (Cons)  
and Marriage Officer.

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

## Listen to the Beat

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the music genres in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally. Do you have a favorite that we missed?

V	Z	J	I	Y	R	S	L	D	H	X	P	T	P	C	R	E		
N	F	A	R	E	P	O	A	E	I	E	G	A	W	E	N	V	L	
K	U	A	H	B	U	C	W	L	T	P	P	Q	R	S	B	X	E	
C	E	N	H	P	M	I	K	E	L	R	J	E	O	L	X	J	W	C
T	D	K	O	Q	S	M	P	A	P	B	W	J	R	Q	I	O	W	T
B	R	P	P	S	W	S	O	U	A	L	L	Z	G	O	K	J	F	R
Q	G	A	A	W	O	E	A	G	O	L	R	N	S	L	Y	H	N	O
E	N	L	N	G	U	U	S	O	U	L	I	U	O	K	Z	R	Q	N
A	C	D	L	C	Y	L	A	U	Z	N	G	F	S	J	H	Z	H	I
L	R	Z	L	Q	E	B	M	L	E	G	I	X	L	W	X	D	A	C
T	J	L	L	U	Q	B	P	T	A	L	G	B	X	A	L	E	D	J
E	M	D	D	Z	V	M	S	E	A	G	G	E	R	R	T	T	X	N
R	O	C	S	I	D	I	H	X	H	K	Y	H	O	T	W	I	B	A
N	Y	C	F	T	L	Z	F	X	H	O	S	W	N	H	F	M	N	X
A	Q	E	G	Y	C	C	F	A	Q	V	G	E	L	G	I	P	U	I
T	J	S	S	C	O	U	N	T	R	Y	I	R	K	H	U	M	Y	Q
I	E	A	C	L	Y	S	F	F	U	B	I	B	P	R	G	G	J	O
V	E	X	Q	G	T	L	D	U	M	O	C	U	A	T	T	R	C	V
E	H	I	P	H	O	P	O	A	W	D	H	P	E	C	N	A	D	Q

ALTERNATIVE  
AMBIENT  
BLUES  
CLASSICAL  
COUNTRY  
DANCE  
DISCO  
EASY LISTENING  
ELECTRONIC

FOLK  
FUNK  
GOSPEL  
HIP HOP  
JAZZ  
LATIN  
NEW AGE  
OPERA  
POP

R AND B  
RAP  
REGGAE  
ROCK  
SKA  
SOUL  
TRANCE  
WORLD

### Join the Dots

### STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**  
Today you might feel a bit bloated and slow, Aries, which could interfere with your daily routine. You could also feel unmotivated about work. You might not feel like exercising, but it's important that you do it anyway. Moving the body can clear your head and put you in the proper frame of mind to get on with your day. It can also help purge your tissues of all the excess toxins.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**  
This could be a confusing day for you, Cancer. Financial issues might be complicated by computer glitches or failures in communication. Keep pushing, however, and whatever you're trying to straighten out will be resolved. An opportunity to participate in a project you've never tried before could have you doubting your abilities. Believe in yourself and then move ahead. There's a first time for everything!

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**  
Your imagination is working overtime today, Libra, and you might spend hours at a computer writing or in front of an easel or piano creating your own brand of painting or music. This drive to create comes from the heart and shouldn't be ignored no matter what other issues come up. Take care of whatever needs to be handled and then follow your inspiration.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**  
If you've been planning a long trip by air, Capricorn, today you might doubt whether you should continue with your plans. Money or safety might be the issues. Be aware that your fears may run away with you. The situation may be more secure than it appears. You might want to attend an online class or lecture, perhaps on computer science or some other technology.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
Today your job or another activity could require your artistic skills for a particular project, Taurus. You may not be used to this, so it could throw you into a bit of a panic. There should be others around who can collaborate with you, so you will be all right. A tendency to be overly emotional could interfere with just about anything you try. Stay centered.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**  
Financial issues might have you and your partner a bit more on edge than you need to be, Leo. Perhaps money is tighter than usual right now, and you have to put off purchases you want to make. Try to work it out. This is a great day to reach a compromise in just about any touchy situation, because you should be in just the right space to see both sides of any issue.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**  
A conflict between your responsibilities to family and obligations to friends could rear its ugly head today, Scorpio. You might want to attend an event but need to deal with emotional issues in the home immediately. It could be difficult to keep a cool head under these circumstances. If you can, you should find a way to satisfy your family and go out. Step back and be objective!

**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**  
Today you might feel too overwrought to concentrate on whatever goals you're trying to reach, particularly if they're financial. Past issues might crop up at inopportune times but will still need to be released. If you aren't careful, this could get in the way of just about anything you need to do. Keeping cool is the most important thing to remember.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**  
A subject of interest that you've been pursuing could bring up some deeply buried emotions today, Gemini. You might want to retreat into your mind and try to make sense of it, although analyzing it intellectually may not be the answer. Avoid emotional confrontations. Things might be said that shouldn't be said, and they won't be easily forgotten. In the evening, watch a movie full of special effects.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**  
Today your intellect is flying high, Virgo. A number of new ideas, perhaps about political or social issues, might excite your curiosity and cause you to want to spend hours in the library or on the Internet. Mundane tasks still need handling, however. This might be frustrating because it takes you away from your quest. If you get the basics done quickly, you can return without causing any undue guilt.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**  
Dissatisfaction with certain job conditions might come to a head today, Sagittarius. A discussion with colleagues might be necessary to defuse a potentially explosive situation. Clear, honest communication is necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings. Try to remain objective. Don't let your emotions take control. Things will work out to everyone's satisfaction. The situation is temporary and unlikely to have lasting negative effects.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**  
You tend to be pretty self-assured, Pisces, but self-esteem issues dating from long ago could surface today. You might feel like a schoolchild called on to recite. This could cause a few snags in your relationships or interfere with your effectiveness at social occasions. Try to remain objective. Don't lose sight of who you are. Don't let old insecurity interfere with your effectiveness.





A Singapore Airlines Airbus A380 plane is parked on the tarmac at Changi International Airport in Singapore. — AFP photos



A Singapore Airlines stewardess wearing a face mask welcomes at the doorway during a media tour onboard a Singapore Airlines Airbus A380.



A couple and their children dine in business class during the inaugural lunch.



A Singapore Airlines stewardess poses next to a billboard during the inaugural lunch at Restaurant A380 @Changi.



Diners watch movies while dining in business class.



A meal set for economy class is served during the inaugural lunch.

## Travel-starved 'passengers' dine on parked Singapore Airlines jet

Hundreds of travel-starved diners ate lunch and watched seat-back films aboard two parked Singapore Airlines jets turned into pop-up restaurants yesterday. With the aviation industry in deep crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic, airlines have turned to alternative ways to raise cash, from offering "flights to nowhere" to tours of aircraft. Singapore's flag carrier, which has cut thousands of jobs and grounded nearly all its planes this year, offered passengers the chance to dine on board two A380 superjumbos-the world's biggest passenger jet. On Saturday more than 400 diners checked in at Changi Airport

and went through the usual security checks before arriving at the aircraft for lunch.

"The food is pretty amazing, it's better than the one they serve during the flight," Zhou Tai Di, a 17-year-old student in economy class, told AFP as he tucked into his soy sauce-glazed chicken with spicy fried eggplant and rice. Some settled in for a nap while waiting for their meals to be served, while others watched movies on the seat-back entertainment systems. About half the seats were left empty, in keeping with social-distancing guidelines. Calvin Teo, a 29-year-old civil servant and aviation buff, paid Sg\$321

(\$236) to be served a six-course meal in business class, saying he missed flying and hoped to recreate the experience. "Of course the feeling of actually flying will be better, because there's the excitement of going to a new destination, to explore a new destination, and even though we can't do it now due to Covid, this is a good substitute for now, to recreate the feels of taking a long-haul flight," he told AFP.

The most expensive option is a Sg\$642 eight-course meal in a first-class suite, while the cheapest costs Sg\$53 and consists of a three-course meal in economy class. A limited number of diners were also able to tour the

double-decker aircraft and take selfies with pilots in the cockpit. The tarmac meals proved surprisingly popular-the airline announced six additional sessions after more than 900 lunch tickets sold out within 30 minutes of bookings opening earlier this month. The airline is also offering home deliveries of plane meals, but it has ditched plans for "flights to nowhere"-short journeys starting and ending at the same airport-following an outcry over the potential environmental impact. — AFP



Singapore Airlines crew members arrive for the inaugural lunch at Restaurant A380 @Changi.



Diners go through security check to board.

## Dubai breaks world record for largest fountain

The glitzy emirate of Dubai broke the record for the world's largest fountain on Thursday, as the Gulf city seeks to boost its hard-hit tourism sector amid the coronavirus pandemic. The Palm Fountain, which covers an area of 14,366 square feet (1,335 square metres), is located at The Pointe shopping and dining district on Palm Jumeirah, a man-made palm-shaped island. Mask-clad people, in keeping with coronavirus safety measures, gathered on Thursday evening to watch a show of dancing jets of water, music and lights. "GWR is delighted to officially see The Palm Fountain breaking the title of the Largest fountain," Shaddy Gaad, Senior Marketing Manager at Guinness World Records said in a statement.

"This fountain is an example of another milestone in Dubai's architect-

ural achievements," it said, adding that Guinness was declaring it "Officially Amazing". Dubai, one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, already holds a string of world record titles-including the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa, and the fastest police car in service, a Bugatti Veyron. The city that attracts millions of tourists had already one of the largest fountains in the world near Burj Khalifa. The new fountain has over 3,000 LED lights, 7,500 nozzles and can shoot water up to 105 meters, according to Guinness. Last month, British artist Sacha Jafri broke the record for the largest art canvas measuring 1,595 square meters, also in Dubai, Guinness said.—AFP



Dubai launches the Palm Fountain in a bid to break a Guinness World Record as the world's largest fountain, at Palm Jumeira. — AFP

## Algerian actresses cry foul on femicide

Algerian actresses angered by murders and violence targeting women have launched a campaign to fight the phenomenon-but not everyone has welcomed their initiative. After the gruesome rape, torture and murder of a 19-year-old woman sparked angry demonstrations earlier this month and calls for a return to capital punishment, 22 actresses published a photo of themselves dressed in black. "We, Algerian actresses, unite today to say enough to violence and killings of women. We are calling for more awareness and a general mobilization to stop this violence," said a statement by the women, many of them household names in Algeria.

The North African country, like its neighbors Tunisia and Morocco, does not publish official nationwide figures on murders of women. But campaign group Femicides Algeria recorded 75 such killings in 2019, with a further 41 so far this year. The group says the actual figure is much higher. And while the government last year registered some 7,000 complaints of violence against women, activists say it has done little in response-promoting the actresses to launch their own initiative. "This campaign is aimed at everyone, men and women. It's not to accuse Algerian men but to make everyone responsible," said Salima Abada, a popular actress in the North African country who is among those involved. She said it was already having an impact. "There's debate, anger, people are fed up-but it's already a beginning," she said.

But a video of one of the actresses has already triggered a bitter backlash on social media. Mounia Benfeghou published a video on Instagram early this month following the news of the grim killing of the 19-year-old, identified as Chaima. In an angry monologue, Benfeghou slammed people who had made excuses for the killer: "There are no excuses for rapists! It was a rape! She didn't consent!" Well-known as a TV presenter, Benfeghou said she was against the death penalty-but favored castrating sex offenders.—AFP

## DAVID HOCKNEY WORK SOLD BY ROYAL OPERA HOUSE FETCHES £12.9 MILLION

A painting by British artist David Hockney sold by the Royal Opera House in London to raise funds to help survive the pandemic fetched nearly £13 million at auction on Thursday. The painting, which depicts the iconic UK institution's former chief David Webster, had been estimated to sell for between £11 million (\$14 million, 12 million euros) and £18 million. At an evening auction of post-war and contemporary art at Christie's in London, the work-"Portrait of Sir David Webster"-went under the hammer for £12,865,000. The Royal Opera House announced earlier this month that it had been forced to sell the painting as it faces "the biggest crisis in our history" due to the coronavirus.

"The proceeds will be used to ensure that the world's greatest artists can once more return to our stages,"

its Chief Executive Alex Beard said at the time. The world renowned opera house closed its Covent Garden doors in late March as Britain went into a months-long nationwide lockdown as Covid-19 spread across the country. It reopened in June without live audiences, instead streaming performances online as part of a four-pronged recovery plan which includes redundancies and other cost-cutting. It has also launched a fundraising campaign among audiences and supporters "to sustain our community of artists". But income has fallen by more than half since the pandemic began. Under pressure from the cultural sector, the government recently released an aid package of £1.57 billion (\$2.03 billion, 1.72 billion euros) but many have branded it insufficient. —AFP



In this file photo a painting by English artist David Hockney titled Portrait of Sir David Webster, 1971 is on show at Christie's auction house in London. — AFP



# SYRIANS SPRUCE UP FAMED CRUSADER CASTLE AFTER YEARS OF WAR

This picture shows a general view of the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers, approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of Syria's central city of Homs and close to the border with Lebanon. — AFP photos



A view of a passageway inside the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



A view of the Gothic cloisters inside the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.

Clutching a small saw, Syrian volunteer Rana Jreij cut away at bushes growing up the centuries-old walls of one of the world's most famous Crusader castles, Krak des Chevaliers. She was among dozens to clear grass, shrubs and dead trees from the UNESCO-listed fortress this week, to protect it from forest fires that have ravaged the region. "This castle is our home. It's our memories, and I'm scared for it," said the 32-year-old, dressed in a white t-shirt with her hair tied back. Heritage official Naeema Muhartam said she was delighted to see the castle come back to life after years of grinding civil war that has kept almost all tourists away. "The castle is recovering," she said. The fortress was built by a medieval Catholic military order, the Knights of St John, who held it from 1142 to 1271, when it was captured by a Mamluk sultan.

Sitting atop a high ridge in what is now the Homs province of modern-day Syria, it could once accommodate a garrison of 2,000 men. Many centuries later, after civil war broke out in Syria in 2011, the fortress again became a battleground, this time between government forces and rebels. "The castle closed its doors in 2012, then opened up again in 2014 but it wasn't ready to receive visitors," Muhartam said. Most notable was the damage to the castle's Gothic reception hall, and its chapel.

## Forced into lockdown

Muhartam was ecstatic when the fortress finally welcomed sightseers back across the moat bridge into its walled interior in late 2018. "Up to 23,000 visitors came in 2019, but the corona pandemic forced it back into isolation and only 5,000 people have come this year," she said. "I'm happy to see life come back to the castle with hundreds of volunteers turning up, but my dream is to see cultural and touristic events return. I hope one day to again

see concerts within its walls like there used to be before the war." In early 2018, the Syrian government attended a tourism trade fair in Madrid, seeking to bring back foreign visitors to the war-ravaged nation.

But most countries advise citizens against all travel to Syria, and tourists from abroad have been few and far between. At the entrance to the castle's large reception hall, engineer Hazem Hanna gestured to some of the decora-

silent, another kind of danger stalks its fortified walls. Earlier this month, President Bashar al-Assad declared a national catastrophe after inspecting farmland devastated by wildfires that have ravaged Syria's Mediterranean coastal belt.

The fires destroyed more than 9,000 hectares of farmland and forest in the coastal provinces of Latakia and Tartus, as well as Homs inland, the United Nations said. Naji Derwish, a director of



A view of the Gothic Knights' Hall at the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.

tive stonework damaged in the 2012-2014 battles. "As long as the primary materials are available, we can fix them," he said. Hungarian archaeologists have visited to help with restoration. "The Hungarian excavation team came at the end of 2016 and helped us to restore the church's steeple and part of the castle's interior," he said.

## 'Scared for our castle'

The United Nations Education, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) added Krak des Chevaliers to its World Heritage List in 2006, alongside Old Damascus and the ancient city of Palmyra. Two years into the civil war, it was put on the World Heritage in Danger list. Now the guns have fallen

social responsibility at a nearby university, says more than 400 volunteers have travelled to the fortress to clear vegetation and anything else that could catch fire. "We were scared for our castle, with all the dry grass and shrubs that had accumulated during the years of conflict," he said. Nine years into the war, the Damascus government is back in control of more than 70 percent of Syria. Derwish said he hoped to again see tourists explore the fortress's dark underbelly and snap pictures from the top of its massive walls. "The castle misses its visitors," he said. — AFP



A view of the aqueduct of the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



A view of the interior of a tower at the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



A view of the walls of the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



Volunteers take part in a clean-up at the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



A view of the interior of the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.



A view of the Gothic cloisters inside the medieval Crusader fortress Krak des Chevaliers.

## Selfies, acting and Instagram meet in French theatre first

Alone on stage in a French theatre, Helena de Laurens plays her character Jeanne in front of an audience for close to two hours. But her solo performance comes with a twist: the actress holds a smartphone with which she films herself constantly for a live feed on Instagram, in what has been dubbed the first such double act. The play, "Jeanne Dark", is currently touring France after a successful run at the Theatre de la Commune in Aubervilliers just north of Paris. There, the live feed was broadcast back onto two screens on either side of the stage, on which theatre-goers could read online viewers' comments.

De Laurens, 31, plays Jeanne, a 16-year-old who lives near the central city of Orleans and finds herself ugly, uncool, feels her parents don't respect her privacy and is mortified by constant taunts at school over her virginity. It's a cheeky nod to a patron saint of France, Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc), a 15th century virgin maiden who became a national heroine. But the similarity ends there. While Joan of Arc led a French army to victory against the English at Orleans, our character Jeanne takes her stand on adolescent angst in a live feed on Instagram, which has just celebrated its 10th birthday.

## Reality and fiction

Marion Siefert, who created, wrote and directed the play that was inspired by her teenage years, searched long and hard for a way to realistically represent "a 16-year-old who would speak up today." "At first, I thought of a private diary, but there was a lack of immediacy," she said in a chat with spectators, many of whom were very young. During the show, the actress moves her phone around, bringing it close to her face or further away with the help of a selfie stick, filming her body under every angle, using Instagram filters. To exorcise her demons, she dances to the famous French 80s pop tune "les demons de minuit". It's a constant shift between reality and fiction as de Laurens occasionally breaks from her lines and interacts with instagrammers. Some online users comment via emojis, others play the game or get hugely involved. "You don't choose your family," "I find you're really hard on yourself Jeanne" or "you must be body positive," are just some of the comments.

## Rehearsed for a year

De Laurens recognizes that the process of filming herself creates "a particular brand of acting" with the phone "a mirror and a lens" all at once. But she stresses she is not constantly assessing herself. "I see myself all the time but I don't look at myself all the time," says de Laurens, who rehearsed the role for a year. "Acting takes over." To reinforce the isolation of the character, the decor is a white room, "a space where there is no way out, where she cannot hide," says Siefert. "The 'live' is where the character feels protected, where no one is going to interrupt her."

The audience, meanwhile, is often distracted by the screens where the live is broadcast, which competes with the physical presence of the actress. And the fact that she films herself all the time, speaking to her phone instead of to the audience, makes her performance more intimate. "I wanted to give the impression that we're inside this teenager's head," says Siefert. "I wanted us to hear her inner voices, and not just look in from the outside." — AFP

## Iconic UK arts institutions get £75m virus funding

The British government yesterday announced a £75 million (82 million euros) rescue package to save 35 cultural institutions hit by the coronavirus pandemic, including London's iconic Globe Theatre. Grants of between £1 million and £3 million will be distributed to each of the organizations, and will be drawn from the £1.57 billion culture rescue fund announced in July to safeguard

the arts. The Old Vic theatre in London, founded in 1818, and the Globe, a life-size replica of the 1599 Shakespeare theatre, built on the south bank of the Thames near its original site, will both receive support. More than a million people annually visit the Globe, which also includes a library, archives and a candlelit replica of a 17th century Jacobean theatre.

But 70 percent of the funds are earmarked for cultural venues outside the British capital, such as the Crucible in Sheffield and the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, the Ministry of Culture said in a statement. "These places and organizations are irreplaceable parts of our heritage and what make us the cultural superpower we are," minister Oliver Dowden said in a statement.

Globe Executive Director Neil Constable and Artistic Director Michelle Terry called the nearly £3 million grant a "lifeline". "We...are hugely grateful and relieved to receive the maximum grant available," they said in a statement. The theatre hopes to reopen in the spring of 2021.

Britain imposed a full lockdown in March at the beginning of the first wave of the pandemic, which has claimed

more than 44,000 lives, the worst death toll in Europe. The Globe warned in May that it might not survive without help, and a parliamentary report in July highlighted the "existential threat" to the cultural sector, which employs 700,000 people. In 2018, the 1,100 British theatres employed 290,000 people, with 34 million people spending £1.28 billion on tickets. — AFP



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



A participant performs during Red Bull Soapbox Race in Amman, Jordan. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Turner, Barnes power Dodgers to victory, grab 2-1 World Series lead

## Arozarena enters record books with World Series homer in Rays' defeat

ARLINGTON: Justin Turner set the tone with a first-inning home run and the Los Angeles Dodgers marched to a 6-2 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays Friday to take a 2-1 lead in the World Series. Austin Barnes added a solo homer and a squeeze bunt as the Dodgers provided plenty of support to outstanding pitcher Walker Buehler—who gave up just one run in six innings while striking out 10.

"I feel good out there," said Buehler. "Our team gave me a cushion and allowed me to be aggressive. You can't ask more than that. "I made a couple of bad pitches, when I gave up the run, but other than that I felt good with it. There is a comfort level with both our catchers. Barnes back there, put me in a spot to execute. We are happy." Los Angeles, seeking their first title in 32 years after coming up empty in World Series appearances in 2017 and 2018, will try to stretch their lead in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship series in game four on Saturday.

The roof was closed in case of inclement weather at Globe Life Field in Arlington Texas, where the first neutral site World Series in modern major league history caps a pandem-

ic-shortened season. Statistics in the Texas Rangers' new park's first season show fewer runs scored on average in games played with the roof closed, but Turner wasted no time in bucking that trend when he lashed a fastball from Rays star pitcher Charlie Morton over the left field wall to put the Dodgers up 1-0 with two out in the top of the first.

"I got down 1-2 in the count," Turner said. "I was just trying to battle, work a good at-bat. He threw a fastball and I was able to get some good wood on it. "We did a really good job against (Morton) tonight," Turner added. "We were battling, making him work, making him throw some good pitches." Max Muncy and Mookie Betts delivered run-scoring singles as the Dodgers pounced on Morton to take a 5-0 lead through four innings.

Morton, who established himself as a post-season star as he gave up just four runs—two earned—in 25 2/3 prior innings in the post-season, surrendered seven hits and five earned runs with six strike outs one walk and one hit batter in 4 1/3 innings. "I gave up hits on my curveball, I gave up hits on my sinker, I gave up hits on my four-



ARLINGTON: Corey Seager #5 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a single against the Tampa Bay Rays during the ninth inning in Game Three of the 2020 MLB World Series at Globe Life Field on October 23, 2020. — AFP

seamer," Morton said. "I just never got into a groove. I never felt comfortable out there." With two outs in the third, Morton hit Corey Seager with a pitch, Turner doubled to left field and Max Muncy's single scored them both. The Dodgers added a pair of runs in the fourth when Cody Bellinger led off with a single and

reached third on Joc Pederson's single to right field. Barnes's bunt scored Bellinger and Betts cracked a two-out single up the middle to score Pederson. Five of the Dodgers' six runs came with two outs in the inning. "Just the fight," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of what he liked seeing from his lineup. — AFP

The NBA would prefer to play in home arenas rather than a bubble and is looking at playing a team multiple times on a trip to reduce travel. Areas that allow spectators in arenas might have testing for fans in court-side seating and updated air purifying systems. In the 2011-12 season, which was shortened by a labor dispute, the NBA began a 66-game per club campaign on December 25 and finished on June 21, a timetable that would allow for a US team of NBA players to compete in Tokyo and set up a 2021-22 season starting in October, returning the league to its usual overall timetable.

Talks continue between the NBA and players union over such issues as financial breakdowns and a salary cap for next season. ESPN reported October 30 would be a deadline for talks and mark eight weeks before Christmas, NBA commissioner Adam Silver having said there would be at least eight weeks between a union deal and the start of next season. The NBA has set the NBA Draft for November 18 with free agency expected to begin soon after for the 2020-21 campaign. — AFP

Pumas captain and lock Pieter Jansen van Vuren cut a sad figure as he reflected on the late collapse after outscoring the Stormers by four tries to two. "We are very disappointed to have let this match slip from our grasp. After a great first half, I believe we got a little carried away and began throwing the ball around. "Losing Eddie (fly-half Fouche) to an injury during the first half was a big blow as he has been outstanding this season, although Niel (Marais) did not let us down as his replacement."

Fouche kicked 13 points as the fired-up Pumas built a 30-14 half-time lead behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic. That lead stretched to 23 points when winger Neil Maritz scored his second try of the match while the Pumas were a man short after back-row forward Jeandre Rudolph was sin-binned. Then, Fouche and Mbonambi scored pushover tries, Zas crossed the line unopposed and Gelant evaded three Pumas as he cut inside to score the match-winning try. Yesterday, the Lions hosted the Cheetahs in Johannesburg, the Bulls faced the Sharks in Pretoria, and the winless Griquas have a bye. — AFP

## NBA eyes December start, Olympics and 72-game season

NEW YORK: The NBA is looking at starting a 72-game 2020-21 season in December and finishing in time for players to compete at the Tokyo Olympics according to multiple reports Friday. The Athletic and ESPN, citing unnamed sources, said the league told team owners in a Friday conference call about the plans, which would require approval by the players union by the end of October. After the play-offs ended on October 11 due to a Covid-19 shutdown last March and a July restart, the league would have only a 72-day break before a December 22 restart, three days before the NBA's usual plethora of Christmas Day game offerings, The

## Kolisi praises Stormers after 4-try rally beats brave Pumas

JOHANNESBURG: Springbok World Cup-winning captain Siya Kolisi hailed his Stormers team after a 28-point last-quarter rally pipped the Pumas 42-37 Friday in a South African Super Rugby Unlocked thriller. The star-less home team looked set to shock a visiting team including five World Cup winners when they led 37-14 in northeastern city Mbombela with 19 minutes remaining.

But the Stormers staged a brilliant comeback with fly-half Tim Swiel converting tries by prop Neethling Fouche, hooker Bongani Mbonambi, winger Leolin Zas and full-back Warrick Gelant to snatch victory. Loose

Athletic reported.

The move would allow greater income and more games compared to a January restart and allow the league to crown a champion and leave a window for NBA talent to play for homelands in the Tokyo Olympics, where the US team would seek a fourth consecutive gold medal. A play-in tournament for the final playoff spot in each conference, an idea developed due to the pandemic-hit season, would continue, according to the reports.

The National Basketball Players Association must agree upon any deal regarding when to start, with ESPN reporting there had been talk about a mid-January start on the Martin Luther King Jr holiday and staging more games later when chances might be better for spectators to attend. The NBA had no players test positive for Covid-19 during its stay in a quarantine environment at Orlando in its restart. USA Basketball has started asking about player availability for the July 23 start of the Tokyo Olympics to allow time to select players and prepare for the tournament.

forward Kolisi watched the dramatic comeback from the touchline having retired injured during the first half with a suspected hamstring tear. Stormers began their campaign last weekend with a six-point win over the Lions and lie second on the standings, one point behind the Cheetahs, who played yesterday.

The bonus-point loss for the fourth-place Pumas, a South African team based in Mbombela, continued a fluctuating season in which they lost heavily to the Cheetahs and upset the Griquas in away matches before tackling the Stormers. "Belief and a never-say-die spirit got us over the line," said Kolisi, who skippered South Africa to victory over England in the 2019 Rugby World Cup final in Japan last November. "Staring at a heavy loss, the boys threw everything they had into the match and it paid off with four tries and four points.

### 'Carried away'

"However, for the second weekend in a row, we took too long to get into our stride. We are away to the Bulls and cannot afford to repeat that mistake."

### News in brief

#### Sabalenka wins 12 straight games

PRAGUE: Aryna Sabalenka staged a spectacular comeback against Spanish qualifier Sara Sorribes Tormo to reach the semi-finals of the Ostrava Open WTA tournament on Friday. The powerful Belarusian lost the first ten games to a fast, focused Sorribes Tormo and came within a point of losing another. But she miraculously recovered as she suddenly started to find the court with her groundstrokes and went on to take the next 12 games for a 0-6, 6-4, 6-0 win.

The day before, the world number 12 had already come back from 5-2 down in the third set against American teenager Coco Gauff. "I just wanted to win at least one game," said a laughing Sabalenka. "Everything went like I wasn't on the court. I was out of the game and I didn't know why." "Then I cooled down a bit, took one step back and tried to put a little bit more balls back and go through her backhand." "After I won three games in a row I knew this was a good sign and if I keep going the same way, I'll find my game. And that's what happened."

In the semi-final, Sabalenka will take on Jennifer Brady, who beat Veronika Kudermetova 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-1. Sabalenka's compatriot Viktoriya Azarenka swept Elise Mertens in straight sets. The former world number one won 6-4, 6-1 just over a month after trashing Mertens 6-1, 6-0 at the US Open where she reached the final. The 21st-ranked Belgian broke Azarenka's first serve and went 4-2 up, but the 31-year-old world number 14 quickly quashed her hopes of a revenge. — AFP

#### Sinner defeats veteran Simon

COLOGNE: Jannik Sinner, the only teenager in the world's top 100, recovered from losing eight straight games to beat French veteran Gilles Simon 6-3, 0-6, 6-4 on Friday and book a place in the Cologne ATP semi-finals. The 19-year-old Italian, ranked at a career-high 46, was 0-2 down in the final set to an opponent 16 years his senior before fighting back. Wild card Sinner, who saved 16 of 21 break points, will be playing in his second tour-level semi-final after making the last four in Antwerp in 2019. He will next play top-seeded German Alexander Zverev or Adrian Mannarino of France. "He didn't give me any angles and played down the middle. He was very solid and I tried to play more on his forehand," said Sinner of Simon, a former world number six. — AFP

#### Sassuolo earn a 3-3 draw

TORINO: Second-placed Sassuolo struck twice in the final six minutes to earn a 3-3 draw at home to winless Torino in a lively Serie A encounter in heavy fog on Friday. Torino took the lead in the 33rd minute when Sassuolo's Romanian defender Vlad Chiriches failed to clear a Mergim Vojvoda cross and Karol Linetty slotted home from close range. The home side drew level in the 71st minute through Filip Djuricic after good work from substitute Mert Muldur but Torino responded superbly with two swift goals. Andrea Belotti restored their lead in the 77th before a fine finish from Sasa Lukic looked to have made sure of the points two minutes later. — Reuters

#### England cricketers agree pay cuts

LONDON: England's centrally contracted men's cricketers have agreed to take a 15 percent pay cut as part of cost-cutting measures due to the coronavirus pandemic. The England and Wales Cricket Board said the English game has already lost more than £100 million (\$130 million) - a figure that could rise to £200 million next year. Last month the governing body announced it was to cut 62 jobs due to the financial crisis. Bowlers Stuart Broad and Chris Woakes have said recently that players are willing to take a pay cut, which the ECB revealed on Friday would come from retainers, match fees and win bonuses. The annual contracts, which started on October 1, were understood to have been worth £650,000 for Test stars and £275,000 for white-ball performers in 2019/20. — AFP

#### Sir Dragonet wins \$3.6 million

MELBOURNE: Sir Dragonet won the A\$5 million (\$3.6 million) Cox Plate at Moonee Valley Racing Club in Melbourne yesterday, storming clear in the final straight in the 100th running of Australia's most prestigious weight-for-age race. Purchased from the stables of Aidan O'Brien especially for a tilt at the 2,040-metre race, the Ciaran Maher and David Eustace-prepared stallion nosed in front 100 meters from the finish before crossing a length-and-a-half in front of O'Brien's Armory. Pre-race favourite Russian Camelot was third on a gloomy afternoon in Melbourne. "This is unbelievable," said jockey Glen Boss, who won his fourth Cox Plate. "I couldn't have scripted the run any better ... He was up for the task." — Reuters

#### Irish rugby suffers huge deficit

DUBLIN: The Irish Rugby Football Union announced a 35.7-million-euro (\$42 million) deficit for the 2019/20 season on Friday as chief executive Philip Browne warned of "drastic cuts" if fans cannot return soon. Browne said the IRFU had had to provide loans to the four Irish provinces - Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connacht - to help cover player and staff wages, with the teams hit by a sharp drop in income due to the coronavirus pandemic. The IRFU recorded its best-ever figures the previous year, with a surplus of more than 28 million euros. Browne said was "no surprise" that Irish Rugby had experienced one of its worst financial years ever. — AFP



## Sports

# Mumbai score biggest win over old rivals Chennai Super Kings

## Clouds darken for Dhoni

**SHARJAH:** Trent Boult starred with the ball and Ishan Kishan with the bat as Indian Premier League champions Mumbai Indians inflicted their biggest ever win over old rivals Chennai Super Kings on Friday. Boult took four wickets as Chennai - at one stage four wickets down with just three runs scored - were restricted to 114 for nine off their 20 overs. Kishan then hit 68 and Quinton de Kock 46 as Mumbai sped to 116 in 12.2 overs without losing a wicket. It was Mumbai's first 10-wicket victory over Chennai and the first time MS Dhoni's Chennai have lost by such a margin. Dhoni admitted the rout "hurt".

Mumbai went to the top of the IPL standings while three-time champions Chennai went to the

bottom of the eight-team race amid growing questions about the future of Dhoni and other veterans in the team. New Zealander Boult removed Chennai opener Ruturaj Gaikwad, who took Shane Watson's place for the day, just five balls into the game. Jasprit Bumrah claimed Ambati Rayudu and Narayan Jagadeesan with straight balls in the second over before Boult took the wicket of Faf du Plessis in the third.

Dhoni made 16, hitting a six before being caught next ball off Rahul Chahar. While more wickets fell, Sam Curran saved Chennai from complete disaster with a defiant 52 that guided his side away from their historic low score of 79. Boult who took four for 18 off his four overs, said

he kept to his "natural" swing bowling style. "I've been lucky to get the first over, if it's going to swing here it's going to be up front." Chennai beat Mumbai in the opening game of the season, moved to empty stadiums in the United Arab Emirates because of the coronavirus pandemic in India, but Dhoni admitted that nothing has gone right since.

"They have now lost eight of their 11 games. What you need to see is what are the things that are going wrong, especially this year. It hasn't been our year, whether you lose by eight or 10 wickets, it hardly matters, but where we are at this stage of the tournament, it does hurt," he said. "Whenever you're not doing well, there can be a

100 reasons, but one of the main things you ask yourself is whether you've played to the potential you've got no matter the conditions," added Dhoni.

"And this year we haven't. Cumulatively there have been batting failures." Dhoni said that Chennai now need a "clear picture" for the 2021 season for which many questions remain because of the pandemic fallout. "The coming three games will be an ideal opportunity to give platforms. See some of the youngsters in preparation for the next year, see who will bat and who bowls at the death and soaks the pressure," added the captain, who retired a few weeks ago from international cricket and who also faces new doubts about his future. —AFP

## Nakagami tops times in Teruel MotoGP practice



**ALCANIZ:** LCR Honda IDEMITSU's Japanese rider Takaaki Nakagami takes part in the fourth free practice session ahead of the MotoGP Grand Prix of Teruel at the Motorland circuit in Alcaniz yesterday. —AFP

**ALCANIZ:** Takaaki Nakagami celebrated signing a new contract with Honda-LCR by riding the fastest lap in Friday's practice for the Teruel MotoGP, pipping championship contender Maverick Vinales to top spot in Alcaniz. Nakagami, who was second to Alex Marquez after the first session earlier on Friday, posted a best time of one minute, 47.782sec in his penultimate lap, which left him 0.175sec ahead of Yamaha's Spanish rider Vinales. The result comes a day after the Japanese rider agreed a contract extension with Honda-LCR "for 2021 and beyond", where he will be joined by Alex Marquez - the younger brother of six-time MotoGP champion Marc Marquez.

Vinales, the sole Yamaha factory rider in action this weekend following the coronavirus-enforced absence of Valentino Rossi, was the only other rider to dip below 1min 48sec. "I think today was quite good, because I noticed an improvement," said Vinales. "Actually, the track seemed to have less grip today compared to last week (when the Aragon GP was staged at the same circuit). That makes setting good lap times more difficult, but we did a good job anyway."

Championship leader Joan Mir was fifth fastest, 0.400sec back as the Suzuki rider prepares to defend his wafer-thin lead at the top of the standings in today's race. In the absence of injured Marc Marquez the title is being hotly contested, with eight different winners in 10 races. Mir is six points ahead of Frenchman Fabio Quartararo, with Vinales and Andrea Dovizioso both within 15 points of the Spaniard. Nakagami is 29 points back in fifth with four races left in the 2020 season and is still in with a chance of the title. Quartararo, 21, improved on his dismal 18th in the first practice session to jump up to fourth, ahead of Mir and 0.382sec behind Nakagami. —AFP

## African 'Man City' aim to put squeeze on Orange Boys

**JOHANNESBURG:** Pyramids FC of Egypt are called the 'Manchester City' of Africa because they share with the English Premier League club the benefits of huge investment from the Middle East. Formed in 2008 as Al Assiouty Sport, the club made no impact until Saudi Turki al Sheikh took over, changed the name to Pyramids and splashed millions of dollars signing stars and coaches.

When Emirati Salim Al Shamsi succeeded Al Sheikh he followed a similar pattern with the goal of challenging domestic giants Al Ahly and Zamalek and becoming a force in Africa. They entered the CAF Confederation Cup for the first time this season and will complete a fairytale Sunday if they defeat Moroccan outfit Renaissance Berkane, known as the Orange Boys, in the final in Rabat. Here, AFP Sport spotlights five things to know ahead of the title decider in the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League. This advantage to Berkane will be considerably diluted because the title decider takes place behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is a big blow as ordinarily Renaissance would have been backed by a predominantly Moroccan crowd in the 50,000-capacity Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in the capital of the kingdom. Berkane qualified for the final by overcoming fellow Moroccans Hassania Agadir at the final venue while Pyramids beat Horoya of Guinea 92 kilometres (57 miles) down the Atlantic coast in Casablanca. —AFP

## Cerny storms to Giro win; rain, protest see 130km cut from race

**ASTI:** Czech cyclist Josef Cerny made a solo break at the end of Friday's 19th stage of the Giro d'Italia which was radically shortened after a rider protest in lashing rain forced organizers to slash more than half its distance to 124km. The 27-year-old Cerny covered the curtailed course like a time trial at a remarkable average speed of more than 49km an hour. He powered through the final 23km alone to win a farewell victory for the CCC team sponsor which leaves the sport after this season.

Wilco Kelderman retained the overall lead by a handful of seconds and should be better prepared for the crucial stage 20 after a relatively easy day in the saddle as the rider protest forced organizers to cut 134km off the original route. Eight kilometers into the event's longest stage, the organizers neutralized the race and the riders got back on their team buses. Australia's Adam Hansen told reporters the riders were refusing to race and wanted to find a solution. "We weren't ready to race in those conditions, so we negotiated with the organizer to shorten the stage so that it could actually happen," said Hansen, who is about to switch from cycling to Ironman triathlons.

Race organizer Mauro Vegni saw it differently. "I'm sorry but I did not receive a single proposition either last night or this morning," said a furious Vegni as the buses made their chaotic departure for the hastily conceived new route. A 124km run to Morbegno embarked from Abbiategrosso with an escape group quickly forming and pulling ten minutes ahead with the peloton, which was enjoying a day of relative rest. Team director Marc Madiot of the FDJ team was also upset by



**MORBEGNO:** Team CCC rider Czech Republic's Josef Cerny celebrates after crossing the finish line during the 19th stage of the Giro d'Italia 2020 cycling race, a 258-kilometer route between Morbegno and Asti on October 23, 2020. —AFP

the protest. "When you sign up for a three weeks tour you know it's going to be very tiring, if you can't accept that then change jobs," said Madiot.

Race leader Kelderman sounded happier. "The weather was poor this morning and it was cold, it had been a hard week for our immune systems. I'm thankful the organiser shortened the stage." Yesterday's mountain stage, and an individual time-trial in Milan today, offer a testing finish to a tight battle for the overall title between Kelderman, in the pink jersey, his Australian

team-mate Jai Hindley, who is 12sec behind, and Ineos breakout man Tao Geoghegan Hart in third, just 15sec off the lead.

The British rider made a bid to reduce the gap late Friday with a last gasp push for the line but failed to drop his watchful rivals. Cerny's powerful break from 23km out proved too much for the other escapees, including time-trial specialist Victor Campenaerts, who made a late, doomed, bid to catch up. The much-awaited run included three ascents of the Sestriere mountain. —AFP

## Kuwaiti shooters shine at 19th International Championship



Iman Al-Shamma

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The Kazakhstan Shooting Federation organized the 19th International Championship to commemorate Chairman of the Soviet Republic Sports Federations Vladimir Bushvalov. The event was organized under the patronage of Asian Shooting Confederation online from October 20-October 30th in observance of health protocols. The tournament featured Olympic skeet, trap, pistol and rifle events.

This tournament was the first of its kind and was welcomed by many federations and nearly 250 shooters from 20 countries participated. Kuwait shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi secured the second place in the Skeet event by scoring 145 out of 150 targets, while Nasser Al-Miqldi ended in second in the Trap event - scoring 144 out of 150. Meanwhile Kuwait women shooters Sarah Al-Hawal took gold in the Trap and Iman Al-Shamma took the Skeet gold.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting



Sarah Al-Hawal

Federations and Secretary General of ASC Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi said the Asian confederation, chaired by Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah welcomed the idea of the Kazakh federation to hold this first of its type formula. He said the scores were under constant supervision by the organizing committee and Kazakh federations to prevent manipulation of results and that the electronic coordination proved effective.

The system allowed shooters to shoot in their countries then send results to the organizers committee after completing each round and the committee listed the results at the end of the tournament. Al-Otaibi lauded the performances of Kuwait shooters especially after resuming sports activities and training following four months of no activity as stipulated by health authorities due to the coronavirus.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said such achievement does not come without hard work and efforts of shooters, technical and administrative officials. He dedicated this latest achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh



Mansour Al-Rashidi with Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwait people.



Sports

# Iraq's 'stadium of horrors' in ruins, but the game goes on

## Bullet-riddled stadium was caught up in deadly battles

**MOSUL:** Mohamed Fathi, coach of Mosul's football club in northern Iraq, hardly recognizes the ruined soccer stadium once used by Islamic State group fighters to fire rockets and lob mortars from. Piles of rubble lie alongside a pitch of bumpy sand. The high concrete stadium tiers surrounding it - with all seats torn out - look dangerously close to collapse. "After this was destroyed, there's no other stadiums in the city to play football," Fathi said, waving his hand at the crumbling building. "The impact of the destruction is enough to tell you everything that happened here."

Jihadi fighters from the Islamic State (IS) group seized Mosul in 2014, later expanding its so-called "caliphate" to over a third of Iraq and into neighboring Syria. In 2017, Iraqi and coalition forces forced the hardened insurgents out in a grinding urban battle that left ancient Mosul in ruins. The bullet-riddled 20,000-seater stadium, home to Mosul Sports Club, was not spared, caught up in the deadly battles for control. Two other smaller stadiums in town were also damaged.

### Football 'brings life'

"Sadly the central government doesn't realize that football is what brings life back to a town, its people and its youth," Fathi said. "So things have stayed the same." Mosul Sports Club was once a solid performing club that produced some of the country's best players. They include Hawar Mulla Mohammed, who led Iraq to its historic 2007 Asian Cup championship, and who played professionally in Europe. Decades earlier, Iraq's national squad made its only World Cup appearance in Mexico in 1986.

Mosul's own son, skilled midfielder Haris Mohammed, ably led his country to the rare international honor. Founded in 1947, Mosul SC played 18 seasons in Iraq's premier league, before its relegation

to the first division a decade ago. With thousands of roaring fans passionately backing their team, locals dubbed it the "stadium of horrors" for visiting teams. But that ominous label would take on a more sinister meaning with the arrival of IS militants. "I used to follow soccer matches here, and suddenly out of nowhere convoys of IS militants decked out with guns would show up," recounted Omar al-Mosuli, a resident in his thirties. "It was a frightening scene, and I used to walk away quietly."

Islamic State's austere and terror-ridden reign was marked by beheadings and shootings. Like so many other facets of daily life, football changed. Soccer disappeared as a professional pursuit - and violence became established a past-time instead. "Under the stands, IS fighters transformed the space into a massive weapons depot," Mosuli said. "They set up launchpads inside the stadium to fire rockets during the battle to liberate the city." He recalled how the extremists forced people to play in long shorts that reached below their knees - and there was a strict ban on anyone donning jerseys of their favorite international teams or players. Football matches would be abruptly halted for prayer time, he added.

### 'Plenty of talent'

Amid Mosul's disfigured landscape, its committed players still train on the stadium's dusty pitch a couple of times a week.

There are no other suitable fields to play on. "We are forced to train here now," Fathi, the coach, explained. "The club's president and some of the staff even pay for the equipment out of their own pocket," he added.

But the lack of a proper place play for the team is also a reflection of the rampant corruption Iraq struggles with. The country is consistently ranked as one of the worst performers on Transparency



**MOSUL:** Mohamed Fathi (right), coach of Al-Mosul FC, speaks with his team players at the ravaged Al-Idara Al-Mahalia stadium, which was once used by Islamic State group fighters as a weapons depot, near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. —AFP

International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

"A foreign aid agency started reconstructing Mosul SC stadium, but the province's sports authority reassigned the site two years ago to a businessman," Mosul-based sports journalist Talal al-Ameri told AFP. The businessman sat on the project — a common occurrence in Iraq. When a respected former captain of the Iraqi national squad became sports minister, Adnan Darjal, he reviewed the file.

"Due to corruption allegations, the new minister has suspended everything," Ameri added. But the lack of stadium has not deterred Maytham

Younis, the 34-year-old coach of the aptly-named amateur team Al-Mustaqbal, or "The Future". He urges his young players to train hard, as they practice in a dusty field in Mosul's al-Bakr neighborhood in front of a small but loyal following of fans. It is a far cry from the cheering thousands who once watched in Mosul's centerpiece stadium, but it is the best they can do for now as they wait for football to flourish again. For now, hopes of a return to the glory days the club has seen remain a dream. "We have plenty of talent," Younis said. "But without a stadium, it's hard for them to get noticed." — AFP

## Rennes lose to Angers as fans try to beat curfew

**RENNES:** Rennes sent 5,000 fans racing home to beat a curfew on Friday ruining another wasted lead after their team lost 2-1 at home to Angers in Ligue 1. A spike in Covid-19 cases in the region brought the introduction of a curfew from midnight on Friday. That gave fans barely an hour to get home after the match or risk a 135-euro (\$160) fine. Rennes could have moved to the top of Ligue 1 with a victory, instead, they suffered their first defeat of the season as, for the fourth time in four games, they blew a lead. This time they did not even gain a draw.

The home team started well. After 18 minutes, Paul Bernadoni, Angers record signing, failed to hold a tame volley from Flavien Tait. Adrien Hunou pounced on the loose ball to slide it in from close range. Angers quickly hit back. In the 27th minute, former Southampton player Sofiane Boufal's shot from the edge of the box took a small deflection off Steven Nzonzi and a bigger one off Damien Da Silva before flying past Alfred Gomis.

In the 57th minute, Angelo Fulgini chasing a long punt forward wriggled past Da Silva and stretched out a toe to lob the ball over Gomis to give Angers the lead. Almost at once, Gomis atoned with a spectacular save from a point-blank Boufal



**RENNES:** Stade Rennais' Moroccan defender Nayef Aguerd (left) vies with Angers' Malian midfielder Lassana Coulibaly during the French L1 football match between Stade Rennais and Angers on October 23, 2020. — AFP

header. The victory lifted Angers into the top six. "For us, it's an exploit," said Angers coach Stephane Moulin adding that the Champions League had taken a toll on Rennes. "They used a lot of energy on Tuesday evening."

Angers had conceded 10 goals over their last two away games. "We had to close the floodgates and I liked the way we did it," said Moulin Rennes manager Julien Stephan made five changes to the starting lineup from the club's Champions League debut against Krasnodar on Tuesday when they squandered a lead and drew 1-1 at home. — AFP

## Bamford hits hat-trick as Leeds end Villa's winning start

**BIRMINGHAM:** Marcelo Bielsa insisted Patrick Bamford deserves all the credit for transforming his career after the striker's hat-trick inspired a 3-0 win over Aston Villa on Friday. Bielsa's side moved into third in the Premier League thanks to Bamford's 19-minute treble in the second half at Villa Park. Bamford had one goal in 27 Premier League appearances prior to this season, but he already has six in six games this term.

The hat-trick provided a sweet moment for the 27-year-old, who endured a long and winding road to the top enduring long-running criticism of his finishing. Bamford had seven loan spells during his time as a Chelsea youth academy graduate before moving to Middlesbrough, then finally finding his feet under Bielsa's tutelage at Leeds.

"It's a dream come true. When the third went in it was elation. I will be telling my kids about this," Bamford said after becoming only the second player to score in each of Leeds's opening three top-flight away games since Gordon Hodgson in 1937-38. "It is testament to how the team has worked. Without them I wouldn't be able to score. "Marcelo has put a lot of trust in me. People say Bielsa is a myth but we have shown Leeds are here to compete." While Bamford recognises Bielsa's role

in his rise, the Leeds boss said his player's renaissance was down to hard work and a humble approach.

"Very happy for Patrick because he scored some wonderful goals. Apart from that a noble player who sacrifices a lot for the team. He's generous also," Bielsa said. "I think his development is more to do with him and less to do with me." Leeds' third league win since their promotion from the Championship was the perfect response after losing against Wolves on Monday. "It was an

important game for us and a deserved triumph. We scored first and were a little bit lucky they didn't score some of the chances they had," Bielsa said.

For Villa, their four-game winning run came to a halt as they missed the chance to start a season with five successive victories for the first time in their history. Villa only escaped relegation on the final day of last season, so the first defeat could serve as a reality check for Dean Smith's team after their unexpectedly strong start. Smith had told his players they would get "a bloody nose very quickly" if they rested on their laurels, but they did not heed the warning as Bamford delivered the knockout punches. —AFP



**BIRMINGHAM:** Leeds United's Polish midfielder Mateusz Klich (right) challenges Aston Villa's English midfielder Jack Grealish during the English Premier League football match between Aston Villa and Leeds United at Villa Park in Birmingham on October 23, 2020. —AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Southampton v Everton

17:00

beIN Sports HD 1

Wolverhampton v Newcastle

19:30

beIN Sports HD 1

Arsenal v Leicester City

22:15

beIN Sports HD 2

SPANISH LEAGUE

Real Valladolid v Deportivo Alaves

16:00

beIN Sports HD 3

Cadiz CF v Villarreal

18:00

beIN Sports

Getafe v Granada

20:30

beIN Sports

Real Sociedad v Huesca

23:00

beIN Sports

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Cagliari Calcio v Crotone

14:30

beIN Sports HD 4

Benevento v Napoli

17:00

beIN Sports HD 4

Parma Calcio 1913 v Spezia

17:00

beIN Sports HD 5

Fiorentina v Udinese Calcio

20:00

beIN Sports HD 4

Juventus FC v Hellas Verona

22:45

beIN Sports HD 4

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

VfL Wolfsburg v Arminia Bielefeld

17:30

beIN Sports

Werder Bremen v Hoffenheim

20:00

beIN Sports

FRENCH LEAGUE

Racing Club de Lens v Nantes

15:00

beIN Sports HD 6

Bordeaux v Nimes Olympique

17:00

beIN Sports HD 6

Stade Brestois 29 v RC Strasbourg

17:00

beIN Sports

FC Metz v Saint Etienne

17:00

beIN Sports HD 7

HSC Montpellier v Stade Reims

17:00

beIN Sports HD 6

OGC Nice v LOSC Lille

19:00

beIN Sports HD 6

Olympique Lyonnais v Monaco FC

23:00

beIN Sports HD 6

## Mohsen helps Ahly secure comfortable passage to CAF final

**JOHANNESBURG:** An early Marwan Mohsen goal set Al Ahly of Egypt on their way to a 3-1 home victory over Wydad Casablanca of Morocco on Friday and a place in the CAF Champions League final. Mohsen struck after five minutes. Hussein el Shahat added a second midway through the first half as Ahly doubled their aggregate advantage having won the first leg of the semi-final 2-0 last weekend.

Yasser Ibrahim scored a third goal for record eight-time African champions Ahly before substitute Zouhair el Moutaraji pulled one back eight minutes from time. Ahly qualified 5-1 overall and must wait until November 1 before knowing whether they will face fellow Egyptians Zamalek or Raja Casablanca of Morocco in the single-match final five days later. Zamalek were due to defend a 1-0 first leg lead over Raja on Saturday in Cairo, but the match was postponed when eight of the Moroccan squad tested positive for coronavirus.

On Friday, Ahly coach Pitso Mosimane from South Africa made one enforced change from the first-leg line-up with veteran full-back Ahmed Fathy replacing injured Tunisian Ali Maaloul. Argentine-born Wydad coach Miguel Gamondi recalled fit-again Ivorian centre-back Cheick Comara, who was missed last weekend with replacement Yahya Jabrane blamed for both Ahly goals. Mosimane had warned his team that they could face a "difficult" return match against Wydad, reasoning that Wydad were capable of achieving in Cairo what Ahly did in Casablanca.

### Furious protests

Ahly needed the intervention of VAR (Video Assistant Referee) to go ahead as Mohsen was flagged offside after a chipped pass released the forward to score with a shot into the bottom corner. The South African referee opted for a review and the goal was allowed amid furious protests from Wydad, who now needed to score at least three times to survive. There was no controversy about the second Ahly goal as El Shahat latched on to a diagonal pass from Malian Aliou Dieng and beat Yahia Attiyat Allah twice before scoring from inside the box. After goals from forward Mohsen and midfielder El Shahat it was the turn of defender Yasser Ibrahim to net for Ahly.

He headed a corner into the net past goalkeeper Ahmed Reda Tagnaouti just before the hour mark to put Ahly five goals in front on aggregate. Wydad were shattered as they experienced a rare hiding in Africa, but they did have the final say as El Moutaraji cut in from the wing and fired past rarely-tested Ahly goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenawy. This was the 10th match between two of the strongest sides in Africa with Ahly winning four, Wydad two and four drawn. Should Zamalek qualify next weekend, it will be the first CAF Champions League final between clubs from the same country. — AFP



**14** Kuwaiti shooters shine at 19th International Championship



**15** Rennes lose to Angers as fans try to beat curfew



**15** Iraq's 'stadium of horrors' in ruins, but the game goes on



## Real sink Barca in 'Clasico'

Real Madrid ease pressure on Zidane with rousing victory



BARCELONA: Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric (right) scores a goal during the Spanish League football match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

**BARCELONA:** Real Madrid averted a crisis in the best possible way yesterday by beating Barcelona 3-1 in the first empty Clasico, landing an early blow in La Liga's title race. Barca had the chance to inflict a third consecutive defeat on their rivals and increase the pressure on Zinedine Zidane. Instead, Madrid's win earns them a six-point lead over the Catalans, having played one game more. "They are only three points but we have to enjoy them, especially after everything that has been said about the squad," said Zidane.

Sergio Ramos' penalty and a late Luka Modric goal finished Barcelona off after Federico Valverde and Ansu Fati had traded early strikes in a frantic game that defied those expecting further evidence of two heavyweights in decline. "You always have bad spells in a season and hopefully this one only lasted a week," said Ramos. "To win in the home of your oldest rivals is always satisfying." Barcelona might feel hard done by, especially as Ramos' penalty was awarded after a check by VAR and a hugely

exaggerated fall by Madrid's captain after Clement Lenglet tugged his shirt.

"Maybe one day you can explain how VAR works here in Spain," said Koeman. "We've had five games in the league and VAR has only intervened against Barca." But aside from an impressive spell in the first half, when Lionel Messi threatened to win the game on his own, Madrid were dominant for longer spells and pulled away when it mattered. This was Ronald Koeman's first Clasico as Barcelona coach and some of the pressure Zidane would have felt from a loss is now transferred to the Dutchman, who has overseen only three wins from his first six games in charge.

Barcelona face Juventus on Wednesday in the Champions League, without the suspended Gerard Pique. Every Barca set-back now reflects on the future of Messi, for whom this could even have been the last Clasico at Camp Nou. The Argentinian, who failed in his attempt to leave last summer, has still to score from open play this

season. Mundo Deportivo had declared the match "The least Clasico of Clasicos" on its front page yesterday morning. The coronavirus pandemic meant the biggest football stadium in Europe was silent for the game that La Liga president Javier Tebas had claimed is "still the biggest football match in the world".

In the previous week, Real Madrid had lost to Shakhtar Donetsk and newly promoted Cadiz, while Barcelona were beaten by Getafe. Yet a dip in quality does not have to mean a drop in drama and any doubts about the thrill of this fixture were answered in eight minutes, as both teams had scored. Madrid made the start they dreamed of when Karim Benzema drifted deep into the right channel and was allowed to turn, with the sprinting Valverde going beyond him. Valverde pierced the gap before lifting a curved shot past Neto and into the far corner.

But within three minutes, Barcelona were level. Messi, from almost left-back, chipped a ball over the top freeing

Jordi Alba, who fired into the front post where Fati had nipped ahead of Ramos and turned in. It was fast and open for the rest of the half, with Messi enjoying a golden spell. He glided past Casemiro and then swerved around Ramos, but onto his right foot, the finish stabbed into Thibaut Courtois at the near post. Benzema should have scored too and Madrid finished the stronger before half-time but Barca were better just after. Fati flashed wide and Philippe Coutinho missed a free header at the back post.

Their momentum was checked by Lenglet's error, a tug in the box clear enough that Ramos' shirt was stretched, even if the fall was comical. Referee Juan Martinez checked the monitor. Ramos found the corner. Barca wanted a penalty themselves when Ramos booted a clearance into the arm of Raphael Varane but this time there was no whistle and Madrid were hardly troubled thereafter. Ramos and Valverde both could have made it three in the final minutes before substitute Modric did, finishing beautifully after Neto rushed out. — AFP

## Lewandowski hits hat-trick as Bayern rout Frankfurt 5-0

**BERLIN:** Robert Lewandowski took his Bundesliga tally to 10 goals in five games this season with a hat-trick as Bayern Munich thumped Eintracht Frankfurt 5-0 yesterday, then issued a warning to the European champions' future opponents. "I hope that we will keep this form for a very long time - it doesn't matter against who we play, we always want to show our best football, we always want to win," Lewandowski told Sky. Lewandowski has scored nine goals in his last three league games and wrapped up his treble within an hour at the Allianz Arena.

Defending champions Bayern have scored 22 goals this term - 10 more than league leaders RB Leipzig who stayed top with a 2-1 win over 10-man Hertha Berlin. Bayern sit one point behind in second place. In Munich, Leroy Sane marked his return from injury with the fourth goal during a brief cameo, before England Under-17 midfielder Jamal Musiala also came off the bench to net the fifth. However, Bayern's victory came at a price with Canadian left-back Alphonso Davies out for up to eight weeks with torn ankle ligaments.

Later, head coach Hansi Flick admitted Davies' injury "hurts" the European champions. Lewandowski underlined his status as one of the world's best strikers last season by scoring a career-best 55 goals in 47 games, including 34 in the

Bundesliga. The Polish international opened the scoring on 10 minutes when he fired home after a Thomas Mueller pass. Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp couldn't do anything to stop Lewandowski's header from a Joshua Kimmich corner in the 26th minute.

Bayern had a penalty appeal turned down when Douglas Costa's cross clipped the hand of Frankfurt's Makoto Hasebe. Lewandowski clinched up the victory on the hour mark with a clinical finish from another Costa cross. After sitting out the last two games, Sane ghosted past a defender and drove a shot into the bottom corner with 18 minutes to play. Manuel Neuer pulled off a great save to deny Frankfurt striker Bas Dost before Musiala grabbed the final goal as the visitors suffered their first league defeat of the season.

### Leipzig fight back

Leipzig came from behind to seal a 2-1 win over Hertha, whose Colombian striker Jhon Cordoba scored in the eighth minute. Leipzig drew level when defender Dayot Upamecano fired home from a free-kick on 11 minutes. Berlin were reduced to 10 men after the break when substitute Deyovaisio Zeefuik was shown two yellow cards within four minutes of coming on.

Leipzig made the man advantage count when Marcel Sabitzer converted a penalty with 13 minutes left. Hertha were lucky not to finish with nine men when another sub, Jessica Ngankam, scythed down Leipzig left-back Angelino and the referee changed his decision to a yellow card having initially shown a red. Borussia Moenchengladbach warmed up for Tuesday's Champions League game at home to Real Madrid with a 3-2 comeback win at Mainz. — AFP

## Man City stumble again as Man Utd draw with Chelsea

**LONDON:** Manchester City squandered more points against West Ham yesterday to leave them languishing in the lower half of the Premier League table as Manchester United and Chelsea played out a soggy stalemate. Substitute Phil Foden rescued a 1-1 draw at the London Stadium but the disappointing result means Pep Guardiola's team have taken just five points from their past four matches. City remain favourites to snatch the Premier League title back from Liverpool but there are growing doubts over their ability to establish momentum in a topsy-turvy season for the 'big six'.

Injury-hit City, without Fernandinho, Aymeric Laporte, Nathan Ake and Gabriel Jesus, dominated possession but rarely found top gear against West Ham in the early kick-off. They are already five points behind leaders Everton, who play Southampton today, and look more vulnerable than at any time since Guardiola's first season in charge. West Ham went ahead against the run of play in the first half through Michail Antonio's superb overhead kick from Vladimir Coufal's cross. Foden, who came on at half-time, restored parity minutes later, coolly controlling Joao Cancelo's cross before slotting home.

But the visitors could not turn their dominance into goals, with West Ham indebted to Lukasz Fabianski, who produced some vital late saves. A frustrated Guardiola said City were struggling with injuries and a hectic schedule. "I would prefer to have results but we have to

analyse where we are," he said. "Many injuries, a lack of preparation, no recovery time, and tough games we've played so far. "But the players gave everything on the pitch. Now we recover and think about the next game."

There could be more grim injury news for Guardiola, who said Argentine forward Sergio Aguero, who has only recently returned after a long lay-off, had picked up a suspected hamstring injury. West Ham manager David Moyes was delighted his side had hung on for a draw after their spectacular comeback against Tottenham last week, where three late goals secured a 3-3 draw. "It was different to Tottenham last week because they had to try and hang on and keep something, and they did," said Moyes. "We're improving as a team, our football is getting better and I'm really pleased with the way things are going."

### Cavani debut

Edinson Cavani made his debut for Manchester United against big-spending Chelsea but the sides cancelled each other out in a 0-0 draw on a night of torrential rain at Old Trafford. Both teams are hoping to take advantage of sluggish starts by City and Liverpool but have themselves struggled to find their rhythm. United's previous two Premier League home games this season resulted in a 9-2 aggregate scoreline against them in defeats by Crystal Palace and Spurs.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer threw on Paul Pogba and Cavani with just over half an hour to go and the Uruguayan nearly scored with his first touch. Teenage forward Mason Greenwood entered the fray in the 83rd minute as United went for the win but neither side could break the deadlock, with Edouard Mendy making a fine late save to deny Marcus Rashford. The result means United have failed to win any of their opening three home league games in a season for the first time since 1972/73. — AFP