



3 Al-Seif Staircase connects Kuwait's past with present



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FM meets French envoy, says sacrilegious acts should stop

Kuwait had condemned teacher's killing • Macron comments provoke ire, boycotts



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets French Ambassador to Kuwait Anne-Claire Legendre yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met French Ambassador to Kuwait Anne-Claire Legendre yesterday, discussing with her a number of important topics. During the meeting, the two officials touched on the gruesome murder of a history teacher in France, an act condemned by Kuwait in a previous statement, which reflected disdain of all acts of terrorism.

On the other hand, Sheikh Ahmad stressed it is vital to stop actions desecrating religion and important religious figures, especially within official and political discourse, to avoid the spread of hatred and racism. He also indicated that Kuwait strongly objects to policies aimed at linking Islam and its teachings to terrorism.

Calls to boycott French goods are growing in the Arab world and beyond, after President Emmanuel Macron criticized Islamists and vowed not to "give up cartoons" depicting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Macron's comments, on Wednesday, came in response to the beheading of the teacher, Samuel Paty, out-

side his school in a suburb outside Paris earlier this month, after he had shown cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during a class he was leading on free speech.

On Saturday, Jordan's foreign ministry said it condemned the "continued publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) under the pretext of freedom of expression" and any "discriminatory and misleading attempts that seek to link Islam with terrorism." It did not directly criticize Macron, although the French president had on Wednesday also contended that Paty was "killed because Islamists want our future".

But Jordan's opposition Islamic Action Front party called on the French president to apologize for his comments and urged citizens in the kingdom to boycott French goods. Such boycotts are already underway in Kuwait and Qatar. Dozens of Kuwaiti stores are boycotting French products, with images on social media showing workers removing French Kiri and Babybel processed cheese from shelves.

In Doha, an AFP correspondent saw

workers stripping shelves of French-made St Dalfour jams and Saf-Instant yeast in a branch of the Al Meera supermarket chain on Saturday. Al Meera competes with French supermarket chains Monoprix and Carrefour for market share in the lucrative Qatari grocery sector. Al Meera and another grocery operator, Souq Al Baladi, released statements late Friday saying they would pull French products from stores until further notice. They stopped short of explicitly naming Macron or citing his comments, but the Al Meera statement said customer "comments guided our actions".

Turkey said yesterday "offensive caricatures" of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were being used to intimidate Muslims in Europe under the guise of freedom of expression. European attitudes demonizing Muslims were reminiscent of how the Jews in Europe were treated in the 1920s, said Fahrettin Altun, communications director at the Turkish presidency.

"The dog whistle politics of offensive caricatures, accusations of separatism
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Israeli troops beat Palestinian teen to death

RAMALLAH: An 18-year-old Palestinian died yesterday after a confrontation with Israeli troops, with the army saying it happened while trying to flee and Palestinian officials saying he had been beaten. The Palestinian health ministry said that Amer Abdel-Rahim Sanouber from the village of Yatma in the occupied West Bank arrived at hospital after being "severely beaten on the neck".

The head of the Palestine Medical Complex, Ahmed Al-Betawi, was quoted in the ministry statement as identifying Sanouber as a "martyr" who was brought to the hospital at 3:00 am (0100 GMT) with "signs of violence and beatings on his neck from the back". In a statement, the Palestine Liberation Organization accused Israeli troops of "a monstrous act of brutality against a defenseless young man whose only crime was being Palestinian".

Senior PLO official Hanan Ashrawi said in the statement that Sanouber had been "bludgeoned" by Israeli troops. Asked about the incident, Israel's army said soldiers responded to an incident north of Ramallah after rocks were hurled at an army vehicle. Troops "in the area were dispatched to the scene and searched the area for assailants," the army statement said.

"Initial details suggest that upon the arrival of the troops... the two suspects tried to escape by foot," it said. "While fleeing, one of the suspects apparently lost consciousness, collapsed and hit his head. The suspect was not beaten by IDF troops," the army added. It said troops at the scene and army medical teams provided medical attention to the suspect, who was "declared dead" following several "resuscitation attempts".

Details of altercations involving Palestinians and Israel's army in the West Bank have been harder to access since the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority ended security coordination with Israel in May. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said the decision was made in response to Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank. Israel put its annexation plans on hold in return for the establishment of full diplomatic ties with the United Arab Emirates. — AFP

Ministry, society ink accord for worker safety

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Rana Al-Fares has signed a cooperation agreement with Kuwait Society for Human Rights regarding safety of personnel at workplaces. Fares said in a statement yesterday that "ensuring labor rights in any enterprise boosts work environment safety", noting the ministry's approach to enhancing such rights as "a value and practice".

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs Rana Al-Fares signs an agreement with Kuwait Society for Human Rights on worker safety yesterday. — KUNA

Dubai metro sees facial recognition

DUBAI: Dubai is introducing a facial recognition system on public transport to beef up security, officials said yesterday, as the emirate prepares to host the global Expo exhibition. "This technology has proven its effectiveness to identify suspicious and wanted people," said Obaid Al-Hathboor, director of Dubai's Transport Security Department. The emirate already operates a biometric system using facial recognition at its international

airport.

Dubai, which sees itself as a leading "smart city" in the Middle East, has ambitions to become a hub for technology and artificial intelligence. Both sectors will be on show when it opens the multibillion-dollar Expo fair. "We aspire to raise our performance by building on our current capabilities, to ensure a high level of security in metro stations and other transport sectors," said Hathboor.

Earlier this week, under the watch of Dubai's Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, the city's police used facial recognition in a simulated scenario to identify gunmen launching an attack on a metro station. A special police unit, trained in

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DUBAI: A handout image shows members of Emirati security conducting a simulation during the opening of the smart simulation training station yesterday. — AFP

'Murder hornet' nest vacuumed out of US tree

LOS ANGELES: Agricultural department workers wearing protective suits have eradicated the first nest of giant "murder hornets" discovered in the United States, vacuuming them out of a tree in Washington state. The nest of Asian giant hornets was found on Thursday by Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) entomologists on a property in Blaine, near the border with Canada, the agency said.

They spent weeks searching for the nest, trapping hornets and tracking them, using dental floss to tie tiny radio trackers on the insects, which are nearly five centimeters in length and have a painful sting. Before dawn on Saturday, a team of workers dressed from head to toe in protective suits vacuumed the insects out of their nest in the cavity of a dead tree.

"Got 'em. Vacuumed out several #AsianGiantHornets from a tree cavity near Blaine this morning," the state agriculture department said on Twitter later Saturday, along with a video showing a mass of hornets in a transparent container. It said removal of the nest appeared to have been successful and more details would be provided at a press conference today.

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BLAINE, Washington: Sven Spichiger, Washington State Department of Agriculture's managing entomologist, displays a canister of Asian giant hornets vacuumed from a nest in a tree behind him on Saturday. — AFP

Local

Amir receives Crown Prince, senior officials

Defense Minister introduces Army's new Chief of Staff to Amir



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Army's new Chief of Staff General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff General Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Nasser.



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Army's new Chief of Staff General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff General Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Nasser.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, at Seif Palace yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who introduced Kuwait Army's new Chief of Staff General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff General Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Nasser. The Defense Minister also introduced the new Chief of Staff and his deputy to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Premier, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, and Saleh at Seif Palace. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Army's new Chief of Staff General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff General Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Nasser.

FM meets French envoy, says...

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against Muslims, and mosque raids isn't about freedom of expression," Altun tweeted in English. "It's about intimidating and reminding Muslims that they are welcome to keep the European economy going, but they will never belong - against the backdrop of lectures about integration. Everything we see about Muslims in European public culture today is eerily familiar to the demonization of the European Jewry in the 1920s," he added.

"Some European leaders today do not just target Muslims in their midst. They attack our sacred values, our scripture, our prophet and our political leaders - our way of life," said Altun. He said Europeans needed to understand: "Muslims won't go away because you don't want us. We won't turn the other cheek when you insult us. We will defend ourselves and our own at all costs."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday slammed Macron over his policies toward Muslims, saying that the French president 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. Before Macron's comments on Wednesday, he had already sparked a backlash in early October when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world".

Erdogan yesterday renewed his call for Macron to undergo mental checks, a day after his comments prompted Paris to recall its envoy to Ankara. The Turkish leader accused Macron of being "obsessed with Erdogan day and night", in a televised speech in the eastern Anatolian city of Malatya. "(Macron) is a case and therefore he really needs to have (mental) checks," he said. Erdogan also took aim at Dutch far-right leader Geert Wilders who shared a defamatory cartoon of the Turkish leader on Twitter. "Know your limits," said Erdogan. "Fascism is not in

our book, fascism is in your book."

Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council called Macron's words "irresponsible" on Friday, and said they would "increase the spread of a culture of hatred". The same day, Qatar University wrote on Twitter that following "the deliberate abuse of Islam and its symbols", French Cultural Week would be postponed indefinitely, in a context where 2020 is the France-Qatar year of culture.

Many Jordanians have changed their profiles on Facebook to add the message "Respect Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (God)". In Jaffa, a largely Arab town next to Tel Aviv, some 200 people protested after evening prayers on Saturday in front of the residence of France's ambassador to Israel.

One of the demonstrators, Amin Bukhari, accused Macron of playing the game of "the extreme right". "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the most sacred thing in Islam and whoever attacks his honor, attacks an entire people," he told the crowd. Speaking outside the official residence of French ambassador Eric Danon, Bukhari said "we must respect Moses (PBUH) among the Jews, we must respect Jesus Christ (PBUH) who is our prophet too, and we must respect Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him." The gathering dispersed without incident.

"Insulting religions and prophets is not a matter of freedom of expression, but rather promotes a culture of hatred," Hamas said in a statement, warning of unspecified "consequences". The smaller Islamic Jihad group, which likewise operates in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, said that offending Islam and its prophet crossed a "red line" and "could not be tolerated". Meanwhile, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan accused Macron yesterday of "attacking Islam". In a series of tweets, Khan said his remarks would sow division. "This is a time when Pres Macron could have put healing touch & denied space to extremists rather than creating further polarisation & marginalisation that inevitably leads to radicalisation," Khan wrote. "It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists." —Agencies

'Murder hornet' nest vacuumed...

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Scientists in Washington state have been actively searching for the Asian giant hornet since the first such insect was detected in Dec 2019 and after one of the wasps was trapped in July in Whatcom County, where Blaine is located. Canada also found Asian giant hornets in two locations in neighboring British Columbia. Several more of the invasive pest not native to the US were subsequently caught, all in the same region.

The WSDA believes there was a good chance that there are more nests and "stopping this cold is very

crucial", said Sven Spichiger, an entomologist with WSDA, during a press conference on Friday. "If it becomes established, this hornet will have negative impacts on the environment, economy, and public health of Washington State," the WSDA said.

It is unclear how the hornets arrived in the US. Scientists warn that unless the insect is eliminated in the next couple years, it could spread in North America and become permanently established. The hornets, which are native to East Asia and Japan, usually don't attack people but they are known for decimating honeybee colonies. The hornets slaughter honeybees by biting their heads off and then occupy the bee nests for up to a week or more, feeding on the pupae and larvae. In Japan, where the insects are hunted and eaten, some 30 to 50 people die each year from their venomous and excruciating sting. — AFP

Dubai metro sees facial...

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the United States, helped "evacuate" commuters from the station in the mock attack, before working in tandem with a control center to apprehend the suspects.

Members of the special unit will be sent to major metro stations during Expo 2020. The six-month event was delayed by one year due to coronavirus, and is now set to open in Oct 2021. It was

expected to attract 15 million visitors before the global economy and transport systems were disrupted by the pandemic.

Jamal Rashed, of Dubai Police's Transport Security Department, said the facial recognition technology will be rolled out in the coming months in all metro stations. Other technology already in use to combat the spread of the coronavirus, such as helmets with thermal cameras and smart glasses, will also be used to identify and manage large crowds. "It took at least five hours to identify a suspect before," said Rashed. "With this technology, it takes less than a minute." But while the technology to identify individuals has simplified lives, such as being used for unlocking phones, it has also raised concerns over privacy. — AFP

Ministry, society...

Continued from Page 1

The minister also indicated that signing the agreement will be ultimately followed with adoption of a broad national strategy for workers' safety. It is the first time the department has inked

such an agreement with a public welfare association for safety of the workers, Fares added.

Chairman of Kuwait Society for Human Rights Khaled Al-Humaidi stated the necessity of the agreement for the society, branding it "a practical embodiment of a serious partnership" with a government department. Workplace hazards vary from one sector to another. Risks for workers at oil installations, for example, are much higher than those in other sectors. — KUNA

Local

Al-Seif Staircase #s25k project opens in Kuwait City

Area witnessed significant contributions to Kuwait's history



KUWAIT: The Al-Seif Staircase #s25k in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The public and private sectors cooperated to renovate an important location in Kuwait City - the Al-Seif Staircase #s25k project that opened yesterday opposite Seif Palace. This project was executed under the umbrella of the Amiri Diwan, sponsored by Tamdeen Group and supported by the Municipality, Public Utilities Management Company (PUMC) and Alghanim International.

It emerged as an initiative by Parallel Studio to refurbish the area that has witnessed significant contributions to Kuwait's history given its heritage and ingenuity. It is contributing once again to the consolidation and renewal of dialogue between generations through the staircase design.

Al-Seif Staircase #s25k design intent evolves beyond a programmatic statement. It seeks to highlight the main concept of urban design, which is to draw attention to this particular area as a symbol of the rehabilitation and renovation efforts of the private sector in collaboration with the governmental sector, and to strengthen the advanced social and urban position.

As for the design concept, it weaves a series of faceted geometrical characters that cascade between levels as evidence of order and balance. Materials from the original staircase were preserved in glass casings to magnify their contents, paying tribute to the old structure. The seating on the sides of the staircase serves as a resting ground to contemplate the mar-

riage between the past and the present. The graffiti (spirit of the past) will remain as it is to support youth artists.

MP Ahmad Al-Fadhel said this staircase connects the past with the present by preserving the authenticity of the place and adding a touch of beauty. "The executing team used the materials of the original staircase in their project. I came today to encourage these creative works, as we are suffering from ugly views in Kuwait of various buildings, streets and even greenery. So such projects add beauty to our country, having the effect

depressed," said Fadhel.

"I hope that other institutions will do the same with other projects, and will consider quality rather than the cost. Usually, cheaper is uglier, but the government has the financial resources to buy the best and the most beautiful. We participated in applying this in Mubarakiya by preserving the heritage along with developing new cafes and stores. It's important to support such initiatives," stated Fadhel.

Elevation Burger is the sponsor of the artwork at this project. "Five years ago, we launched our new branch at Seif. It was a historical building from 1962 and we tried to develop it and preserve its heritage. It is located at a strategic location opposite Seif Palace, so we aimed to develop the surrounding area of our restaurant, which includes this staircase. We tried to beautify it with greenery and outdoor seating to suit its geographical and historical importance," said Abdulaziz Al-Treiji, CEO of Tabco Food, operator of Elevation Burger.

"We always try to add value to the place where we work. When the architect of this place approached us to join this project, we didn't hesitate and offered our support. We believe that this project is an added value to our community," he added.

Dr Abdulaziz Al-Suqoubi, a teacher at the College of Architecture at Kuwait University, noted that the symbolic importance of this project is more important than its size. "I'm proud that my colleague from the college - Kuwaiti archi-



tect Mai A-Bseiri - executed this important project, where they brought together the public and the private sector," he said.

"This is not a regular project, but a rehabilitation of old stairs, and as a mark of appreciation, the working team preserved some old elements of the staircase

and made them a part of the new project. This reflects the importance of urban heritage for young Kuwaitis. So they built without destroying old heritage. And this is what we teach our students, that the past and the heritage should be respected and protected," stressed Suqoubi.



Under Amiri Diwan's umbrella

of makeup to improve our capital," he explained.

"I think that beauty of the country is important in the present time. Most of the attractions that people seek in other countries are available in Kuwait; even the weather is very pleasant in winter. We feel relaxed when we walk on the streets of Europe due to the symmetry of their buildings, streets, colors, heights and so on. The beauty of this symmetry affects our psyche, and ugly public places will definitely make us

Kuwait reports 708 new COVID-19 cases, two deaths

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health announced yesterday 708 new COVID-19 infections, raising the total to 121,635. Deaths reached 746 with the addition of two fatalities. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that there were 121 patients receiving treatment at intensive care units. Those still receiving treatment amounted to 8,118. Health authorities conducted 5,496 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising the whole count to 876,250. Dr Sanad added. Earlier, the ministry announced 661 people had recovered from the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 112,771. — KUNA

News in brief

Stranded teachers lose residencies

KUWAIT: The education ministry has refused to renew residency permits of nearly 200 Egyptian teachers whose residencies expired while they were abroad, reported Al-Anbaa Arabic daily. Sources said the Kuwait Embassy in Cairo received 200 letters from teachers and administrators whose residencies have expired and they want to renew them, but the education ministry said it does not have the authority to renew residencies of those who are out of the country, and the decision is in the hands of the interior ministry. Meanwhile, a joint committee formed between the teachers association and education ministry is no longer working after reaching a dead-end with regards to several lingering issues. The teachers society suspended negotiations until further notice.

Kuwait welcomes ceasefire in Libya

KUWAIT: Kuwait welcomes the recent announcement of the signing of a ceasefire agreement between Libyan sides at the conclusion of the fourth session of the Joint Military Commission, under the auspices of the United Nations, a Foreign Ministry official said on Saturday. The official commended the efforts made to reach the deal, particularly the UN, represented by its envoy to Libya. The official expressed hope that the sides commit to the deal, thus paving the way for negotiations that lead to a political resolution, which ensures the safety, security and territorial integrity of the country and aspirations of its people.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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ISESCO concerned about growing insults of Prophet Muhammad

RABAT: The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) on Saturday expressed worry about the increasing systematic abuse against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in media and political discourse of some officials in France. "This offense would provoke feelings of more than a billion and half of Muslims around the world, and shock and anger them as well as fuel hate amongst cultures and peoples under flimsy claims that are not based on any logic, sharia or law," the organization said in a statement. It condemns the killing incident carried out by an extremist against a French man who was a teacher in an educational institution in France, it added. "It is astonishing that some French officials persist in fueling the conflict, and limiting and violating religious freedom of French Muslims with discriminatory policies against their rituals and worship," it noted. Persisting in portraying caricatures on official buildings lampooning Prophet Muhammad in the anniversary of his birth undermines the bases of dialogue, coexistence and peace amongst peoples, countries and nations, it pointed out.

The organization emphasized its firm stance "deploring all terrorist acts and standing with the victims and their families," calling for abiding by responsibility and to refraining from functioning Islam or any other religion for political purposes, electoral benefits and media goals, according to the statement. The statement recalled that the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on October 2018 that insulting Prophet Muhammad can't be part of freedom of expression. The ISESCO rejects thoroughly attaching terrorism to Islam or any religion, declaring that contempt of the sanctities of Muslims is not freedom of expression, but rather a deliberate abuse that undermines the efforts of states and international organizations to strengthen the dialogue and world peace, it pointed out. The organization calls for an end to this condemned behavior. The coronavirus is the only crisis that affected millions of people all over the world and health infrastructures, it said, calling for corporation and solidarity to eliminate the pandemic and help the needy. — KUNA

Health precautions must be respected at electoral locations: Prime Minister

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled tours election registration headquarters



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah tours the electoral commission headquarters in Shuwaikh yesterday. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday called on citizens registering nomination for upcoming elections to abide by precautions against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). His Highness the Prime Minister, during inspection of the electoral commission headquarters in Shuwaikh, emphasized the necessity of enforcing all necessary health measures during registration, affirming that the government doubled efforts to ensure safety of the employees and citizens registering their names as candidates for the forthcoming parliamentary polls. Eligible citizens seeking nomination have been called to register their names

at set buildings for elections of the 16th legislative term of the National Assembly, due on December 5. Kuwait had held a series of such elections in the past. The coming polls would be held in the shadow of the coronavirus which have prompted authorities to enforce a chain of constraints: social distancing, wearing protective masks and abstention from gathering. His Highness the Prime Minister, during the visit, instructed the personnel at the electoral location to execute the set precautions as off today, when the 10-day registration for the nominees begins. He was accompanied during the building tour by the ministers of health, interior and justice. — KUNA



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Worker rescued at construction site

KUWAIT: Qurain firemen rescued a worker who fell in a swimming pool's engine room in a house under construction in Abu Fatira yesterday. The Asian man sustained several injuries and was taken to hospital by paramedics.

House on fire

Ardiya and Jleeb fire centers responded to a call about a fire in an Ardiya house. The fire was in the door of a second-floor apartment. The



The scene inside the Ardiya house after the fire was extinguished.

house was evacuated and the fire was put out. Two persons suffered smoke inhalation and were treated onsite.

Falcons confiscated

The Environment Public Authority received a call about several individuals entering Sabah Al-Ahmad nature reserve with falcons. EPA officials coordinated with the interior ministry and environmental violation citations were issued. The falcons were confiscated and sent to concerned authorities.



KUWAIT: Firemen rescue a worker at a construction site in Abu Fatira.



As Pompeo campaigns against China, growing welcome in India

Biden, Obama slam Trump Covid response, president optimistic

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BAGHDAD: Iraqi demonstrators wave flags as they gather in Tahrir Square in the center of the capital yesterday to mark the first anniversary of a massive anti-government movement demanding the ouster of the entire ruling class accused of corruption. — AFP

Iraqis rally to revive year-old revolt

Security forces use water cannon, tear gas against protesters

BAGHDAD: Iraqi security forces fired water cannon and tear gas at anti-government protesters yesterday to prevent them crossing barricades on a bridge leading towards government buildings. The skirmishes came as hundreds of Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad and some southern cities to hold anti-government protests, marking a year since mass anti-government unrest that killed more than 500 people.

"We will not stop protesting to demand our stolen rights. We are the victims of corrupted governments," said Najim Abdullah, a protester standing near the Jumhuriya bridge in the capital. Security forces had deployed in force to control protests that began in the morning, and to stop demonstrators crossing Jumhuriya bridge, which leads to the fortified Green Zone that houses government buildings and foreign missions. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

On the bridge, hundreds of protesters atop concrete barriers yesterday shouted slogans in memory of fallen "martyrs", waving Iraqi flags and portraits of those killed. Security forces also sealed off other bridges over the Tigris River. "We want to dissolve parliament, a transparent electoral law, a new law organizing political parties and for the state to take

control of the flow of arms," said lawyer Sajjad Salam, leading a group of demonstrators from the southern city of Kut.

Hussein Mortada from Amara, also in the south, said he was determined to take part in the revival of the so-called "October revolution" despite "threats from political parties and powerful local figures". "We want to achieve our objective of building a new Iraq," Ali Ghazi, a demonstrator from the southern city of Nasiriyah that has been also at the center of protests, told AFP.

Yesterday's protests were more subdued than demonstrations last year where thousands rallied in Baghdad and the south, facing off against security forces and militiamen in clashes that maimed and killed mostly young, jobless demonstrators. Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, who took office in May after his predecessor was driven out by last year's unrest, has painted himself as a leader who supports demonstrators.

In a televised address on Saturday he pledged to hold early and fair elections, a demand of many pro-democracy activists, and said security forces would this time around not harm any peaceful protesters. "We want our freedom. We want our rights," one

protester said after throwing stones at riot police above Jumhuriya bridge. He retreated when police responded with tear gas.

Security forces and unidentified gunmen carried out a fierce crackdown on anti-government disturbances that erupted in Oct 2019, killing hundreds of mostly unarmed protesters using live gunfire and tear gas. The protesters had taken to the streets in mostly uncoordinated opposition to the political elite that has ruled since the 2003 US invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

They accuse those in power, especially Iranian-backed parties and militia groups, of fuelling endemic corruption that kept large swathes of the oil-rich Arab country in ruins even during times of relative peace. Since the 2017 defeat of Islamic State militants, a moment many Iraqis hoped would signal a turning point for their country, millions have struggled to make a living and been deprived of reliable electricity, clean water and education.

Threats, killings and abductions of activists have continued since the protests lost steam earlier this year, out of a combination of protester fatigue and movement restrictions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. — Agencies

Deal to normalize ties with Israel stirs opposition in Sudan

KHARTOUM: Prominent political factions in Sudan have rejected a deal brokered with the help of the United States to take steps to normalize ties with Israel. The agreement was sealed on Friday in a call between US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Sudanese transitional leaders. It would make Sudan the third Arab country to set aside hostilities with Israel this year, though some Sudanese officials have said it should be approved by a yet-to-be formed transitional parliament.

The issue is sensitive in Sudan, formerly a hardline critic of Israel, dividing opinion among military and civilian leaders heading a transition after former President Omar Al-Bashir was toppled following months of protests in April 2019. The government has said establishing ties with Israel should be treated separately from Sudan's removal from the US state sponsors of terrorism list, a move US President Donald Trump said would proceed days before announcing the deal on normalization.

Sudan, mired in economic crisis, was offered help with debt relief, food security and economic development in the statement announcing normalization. Among those criticizing the deal was the National Consensus Forces Alliance, a leftist coalition and key component of the Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance that emerged from the uprising against Bashir.

"The transitional power intentionally violates the constitutional document and makes steps towards normalization with the Zionist entity, breaking with the principles and commitments of Sudan's Three Nos," it said in a statement. The "Three Nos" refers to a commitment made in Khartoum by Arab states in 1967 to "no recognition of Israel, no peace with Israel and no negotiations with Israel". The Popular Congress Party, an Islamist faction that backed Bashir, also condemned the move. On Thursday, veteran opposition leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi threatened to pull the support of his Umma Party from the government if it went ahead with the move. Some Sudanese say they could accept normalization if it is in Sudan's economic interests, and there have been no street protests against the deal. Others object. — Reuters

Thais gather for protest after PM snub

BANGKOK: Hundreds gathered yesterday at a major Bangkok intersection to renew calls for Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha to resign, after he ignored a deadline to step down set by protesters who have issued unprecedented challenges to the regime. The former military chief who staged the 2014 coup is facing pressure from a student-led pro-democracy movement that has organized massive demonstrations for months calling for his resignation.

They regard his hold on power - renewed after last year's widely disputed elections - as illegitimate and on Wednesday gave him three days to step down. But the deadline came and went on Saturday night, spurring hundreds to gather Sunday at downtown Bangkok's Ratchaprasong intersection, surrounded by gleaming shopping malls and watched on by traffic police.

"Today is open for everyone who wants to talk about their dissatisfaction about Prayut's government," said organizer Jatupat "Pai" Boonpattaraksa, who had called for the protest the night before. He reaffirmed the movement's core three demands - for Prayut to step down, a rewrite to the 2017 military-scripted constitution, and for authorities to "stop harassing" political opponents. "If Prayut insists not to quit, we will keep insisting on coming out to oust him," Pai said.

The gathering saw a diverse crowd-drag queens in full regalia, young people in hard hats ready for a police crackdown and older protesters worried about Thailand's freefalling economy. "I want Prayut to think as a citizen rather than as a prime minister," said 43-year-old Nuch. "The economy is really bad - since he cannot solve the problem, he should resign and let someone else do it." Prayut remained resolute Saturday while attending a prayer ceremony for the country at a historic Bangkok temple, saying "all problems can be solved" through compromise. He also told reporters he "won't quit". The movement is largely leaderless though the different groups are united when it comes to their demands for an overhaul to Prayut's government.

Some are also issuing controversial calls for reform



BANGKOK: A pro-democracy protester holds a sign with the image of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha urging him to leave office at an anti-government rally yesterday. — AFP

to the kingdom's unassailable monarchy, questioning the role of King Maha Vajiralongkorn in Thailand - once a taboo act due to draconian royal defamation laws. Another group called the People's Movement announced a march to the German Embassy today afternoon - in apparent defiance of the king, who spends long periods of time in Germany.

Charm offensive

The monarch has been back in Thailand for the past week and a half to commemorate a Buddhist holiday and the death of his late father Bhumibol Adulyadej. He has not commented on the demonstrations, despite tension in Bangkok as protesters grow bolder in their challenge to the royal institution. But the king has made rare public visits with his supporters waiting outside the palace - a charm offensive for an army of local and international media. On Friday, he broke with royal protocol to praise a man who had held up a portrait of the king's parents at a pro-democracy rally. "Very brave. So good. Thank you," the king told the man, according to footage posted on Facebook. Following the interaction, that quote trended as a hashtag on Twitter in Thailand. Also top-trending yesterday morning was the hashtag "25 October mob". Prayut had initially imposed emergency measures banning gatherings of more than four, but lifted them a week later when they failed to stop tens of thousands showing up to guerrilla demonstrations across the capital. Scores of activists and protesters have been arrested, with several facing serious charges such as sedition. — AFP

News in brief

Key Al-Qaeda leader killed

KABUL: Afghan forces have killed a top Al-Qaeda militant wanted by the United States, as the government on Sunday accused the Taliban of still keeping close ties with the Islamist militant group. Abu Muhsin Al-Masri, an Egyptian national believed to be the group's number two in the Indian subcontinent, was targeted in eastern Ghazni province, Afghanistan's intelligence agency said in a statement. Masri, who also goes by the name Husam Abd-al-Ra'uf, is on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list. — AFP

Ethiopia summons US envoy

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia on Saturday summoned the US ambassador over what it called an "incitement of war" between Ethiopia and Egypt from US President Donald Trump over their dispute about the filling and operation of a massive hydropower dam. Trump called on Friday for an agreement between the countries, but added it was a dangerous situation and that Cairo could end up "blowing up that dam". Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister Gedu Andargachew summoned US Ambassador to Addis Ababa Mike Raynor to seek clarifications on the comments. — Reuters

Turkey extends research mission

ISTANBUL: Turkey has extended once again a research ship's search for gas in contested waters of the eastern Mediterranean in defiance of calls from the West to pull back the vessel. The navy said in a message on the international maritime alert system NAVTEX late Saturday that the Oruc Reis would stay in the region until Nov 4. It had previously said it would remain until Tuesday. In a counter-message on NAVTEX, Greece deemed the Turkish activity as "unauthorized and illegal, in an area that overlaps the Greek continental shelf". — AFP

Cameroon school attack kills 8

KUMBA, Cameroon: Attackers armed with guns and machetes killed at least eight children Saturday in a raid on a school in southwestern Cameroon, the United Nations said. No group claimed responsibility for the attack on the bilingual school in Kumba, but the area has been caught up in violence between Anglophone separatists and government forces for three years. A source close to police added that the children were killed when a "group of nine terrorist assailants" stormed the school and opened fire on pupils aged between nine and 12 years. — AFP

International

Biden, Obama slam Trump's COVID response, president stays optimistic

US sees record COVID-19 numbers for second day straight

WAUKESHA, US: An energized Joe Biden and Barack Obama on Saturday accused Donald Trump of a massive screw-up in his handling of the coronavirus, but the US president remained ebullient despite trailing in polls with 10 days to go until the election. Trump plowed through three campaign rallies in one day, targeting separate battleground states as he sought to close the gap with Biden.

But the president's efforts have been inescapably overshadowed by a grim reality: The United States saw a record high number of new daily COVID-19 cases for the second day in a row on Saturday, figures from Johns Hopkins University showed, as warnings grew over its spread.

The country reported 88,973 new infections between 8:30 pm Friday and 8:30 pm Saturday, the figures showed, substantially above the previous day's 79,963. A total of 8,568,625 cases have been reported in the United States with 224,751 deaths, the highest in the world in absolute terms.

The worst current outbreaks in the country are in the north and Midwest, and some 35 of the 50 states are seeing an increase in case numbers.



Candidates hit swing states as Trump trails

We're learning how to live with it."

Biden added: "We're not learning how to live with it. You're asking us to learn how to die with it and it's wrong." The Biden campaign also deployed a key surrogate, former president Barack Obama, who slammed the Trump administration's COVID-19 response.

"The idea that somehow this White House has done anything but completely screw this thing up is nonsense," Obama told supporters at a drive-in rally in Miami, Florida. "Donald Trump isn't suddenly going to protect all of us. He can't even take the basic steps to protect himself," Obama added, referring to Trump's hospitalization for COVID-19 three weeks ago.

Also slamming the president's failure to denounce white supremacy, and the many times he has lied in public, among other issues, Obama called on supporters to vote for his former vice president.

"We can make things better... That's what voting is about, not making things perfect, but making things better," he said. "If we vote up and down the ticket like never before, we will elect Joe Biden."

'I get it'

Trump shrugged off Obama's criticism, saying on Twitter that the former president had only "47 people" at his event. "No energy, but still better than Joe!" he quipped. And he shrugged off polls which continue to show his Democratic rival Biden leading the race. "They want to depress you," he said of the political and media outlets reporting the numbers. "These polls are much better than four years ago."

'Leaning how to die with it'

"That's Donald Trump's presidency," Biden said Saturday during a drive-in rally, one of two events in his native Pennsylvania, a critical swing state. He spoke from a stage decorated with bales of hay and Halloween pumpkins. "Donald Trump said, and is still saying, we're rounding the corner. It's going away."

Kamala Harris brings energy to Biden's campaign

ATLANTA: As she speaks to cheering crowds, drops in to neighborhood coffee shops or pays "surprise" visits to college students, 56-year-old Kamala Harris has brought a jolt of youthful energy to the low-key presidential campaign of her 77-year-old running mate, Democrat Joe Biden.

"I'm very happy to be back in Atlanta, Georgia," she says as she steps jauntily down the stairs of a private plane onto the tarmac of the city's international airport in the autumnal warmth of the US South. "I'm Kamala Harris and I'm running to become the next vice president of the United States."

Left unsaid is that she is the first Black woman and the first of South Asian descent to be on a major party's presidential ticket. Normally reticent about speaking to the press, the California Democrat is visibly eager to make her boss's case in the final days of the campaign to unseat Donald Trump.

In her tailored pants suits, high stilettos and black masks—or in her jeans and Converse Chuck

Taylor sneakers on more casual occasions—she embodies the party's youth and diversity, reinforced by the credentials of a US senator and former California attorney general. As such, she stands as a sort of counterpoint to the white-haired candidate atop the ticket.

In Georgia she keeps up a furious pace—trying to make up for the months during which the coronavirus pandemic nearly paralyzed the Democratic teams' efforts to bring their message before a wide public. But the two Democrats are still far from the pre-pandemic days when candidates would skip across the country in a single day—as Republican Donald Trump is continuing to do, often paying little heed to Covid-19 safety precautions.

Targeted visit

In the name of caution, Biden and Harris have limited their travels, often accompanied by only small groups of journalists who have few opportunities to ask questions. If this strategy is welcomed by public health experts, its effect can tend to mute their voices on the national media stage-dominated, as it has been since 2016, by the omnipresent Republican billionaire.

But the race to the White House revolves crucially around a few key swing states. And a well-targeted visit, even a short one, can provide a boost when picked up by local news media. Georgia, a Southern state with a history marred by

reshape American life, closing schools, businesses and restaurants, trapping millions at home and becoming the dominant issue of the 2020 election. It would also keep Trump — and Biden even more so — off the campaign trail for months.

4. Sanders drops out, April 8, 2020

Trailing Biden badly in delegates and with the coronavirus outbreak paralyzing the nation, Bernie Sanders became the final rival for the Democratic nomination to drop out of the race. He would endorse Biden a few days later, ensuring that the party would not be riven by discord as it was four years earlier when Sanders refused to concede to Hillary Clinton until the party's national convention. Sanders' move allowed Biden to turn his focus squarely to the general election with nearly seven months to go. Biden worked to make Sanders' supporters feel welcome, establishing a series of policy working groups that included progressive voices.

5. Trump's 'bleach' moment, April 23, 2020

With the death toll from the pandemic nearing 50,000, Trump at one of his daily virus briefings spontaneously suggested that injecting disinfectants such as bleach into the human body could eliminate the virus. Public health experts quickly warned the public that doing so would be toxic, and Trump later claimed he was being sarcastic. The resulting furor was a factor in his deciding, days later, to suspend the briefings entirely, even though opinion polls in April had shown an uptick in public approval of his handling of the crisis.

6. Protesters gassed outside White House, June 1, 2020

Washington was one of several cities convulsed by largely peaceful protests in the wake of the death on May 25 of George Floyd, a Black man, at the hands of Minneapolis police. On June 1, Trump gave an address at the White House invoking the "law and order" theme he would employ during the rest of his campaign. US Park Police and National Guard troops, clad in riot gear, then used pepper spray to clear the park outside the White House of protesters so that Trump could walk to historic St John's Church and pose for a photo holding up a Bible. The melee became an image that would haunt Trump, as polls showed Americans largely supportive of the protests for racial justice. His approval rating soon dropped to a seven-month low.

Ten moments that defined US campaign

WASHINGTON: With Donald Trump running for reelection, the 2020 US presidential election was always expected to be a dramatic and eventful ride. But nobody predicted a global pandemic that would upend every facet of the campaign.

Here are 10 pivotal moments from a dizzying election year:

1. Trump acquitted, Feb 5, 2020

At the beginning of the year, things were looking up for the Republican president. Trump's Senate impeachment trial ended with him cleared on two charges brought by Democrats. The fallout from the Mueller Report was no longer hanging over his head. The economy was roaring — and prospects for his re-election looked relatively strong. After years of strife, the moment offered him a chance for a reset. But even as things looked rosier for the president, cases of COVID-19 were beginning to circulate in California and the Pacific Northwest.

2. Biden wins South Carolina primary, Feb 29, 2020

After disappointing finishes in the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary, Joe Biden's presidential bid looked cooked. But his campaign aides asserted that things would turn around as soon as African Americans began voting in large numbers — and they were right. Biden blew the field away in South Carolina, causing several rivals to immediately drop out and setting the stage for a stunning run that sewed up the Democratic nomination in a matter of weeks. Biden would perhaps prove to be the one Democrat best suited to pull moderate voters in the Midwest and elsewhere away from Trump.

3. Trump delivers coronavirus address, March 11, 2020

After weeks of downplaying the coronavirus threat and with cases skyrocketing in the country, Trump delivered a rare national address from the Oval Office in an attempt to reassure a jittery public. Two days later, he would declare a national emergency. The virus would



WEST BEACH, Florida: President Trump waves after casting his own vote at a public library in Florida. —Reuters

"This election is a choice between a Trump super-recovery and a Biden depression," he told supporters under a hot sun in North Carolina, highlighting promises of a cure to Covid-19 and a rapid economic recovery. Biden has a firm lead in national polls, and narrower leads in many battleground states like Florida that typically decide the winner of US presidential elections.

But Democrats are not about to forget the stunning upset Trump pulled off in 2016 when he defeated Hillary Clinton, and Biden worked to chip away at Trump supporters Saturday. "I understand why some people voted for Donald Trump, they believe they weren't seen, or being respected or heard... I get it. But then he got elected, he immediately forgot the Forgotten Man," he said at a second rally in Dallas, Pennsylvania.

"You know, you'll be seen and you're heard and respected by me... if elected president, there'll be no



Joe Biden and his wife Jill share a hug after his speech. —AFP

red states or blue states, only the United States," he said. Trump's current grueling travels aim to repeat his 2016 feat. Earlier Saturday, Trump cast his own vote at a public library in Florida, telling reporters with a smile: "I voted for a guy named Trump." He thus became one of nearly 55 million Americans to cast early ballots in a year when the coronavirus has made in-person voting problematic.

Campaigning at a frenetic pace, Trump then hopped from North Carolina to Ohio, and later to Wisconsin, where he doubled down on his optimism, repeating claims that the country is "rounding the turn" of the pandemic. Referring to earlier comments by Biden warning of a "dark winter" with Covid-19, Trump said he thought his rival was "very dark."

"They say you sound too optimistic," he added of himself. "That's right, because I love this country. We're optimists... Our country next year will be greater than ever before." —AFP

News in brief

US embassy warnings in Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON: The United States on Saturday warned that Americans and foreigners could be targeted by kidnappers or attackers in Azerbaijan, where a conflict is roiling the separatist province of Nagorno-Karabakh. "The US Embassy in Baku has received credible reports of potential terrorist attacks and kidnappings against US citizens and foreign nationals in Baku," the diplomatic mission said on its website in a message shared by the State Department on Twitter. —AFP

Venezuela's Lopez headed to Spain

MADRID: Leopoldo Lopez, a Venezuelan opposition figure who has sheltered at the Spanish ambassador's residence in Caracas for 18 months, has now fled the country, his father told AFP Saturday. "I can confirm he left the embassy of his own free will and left Venezuela in secret," his father, who is also called Leopoldo Lopez and who lives in Spain, said. Later, the younger Lopez himself seemed to confirm the news. —AFP

Colombia hits 1m COVID cases

BOGOTA: Colombia on Saturday surpassed the benchmark of one million cases of COVID-19 registered in the country since the beginning of the pandemic, the health ministry announced. The last 24 hours saw 8,769 new infections, bringing the total to 1,007,711 since the first case was detected on March 6, the ministry said. Deaths rose to 30,000 after authorities added 198 fatalities from the last 10 days. With 50 million people, Colombia is the eighth country to top a million infections, after the United States, India, Brazil, Russia, Argentina, Spain and France. —AFP

FB may block ad targeting research

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook has demanded that New York University pull the plug on a research project into the platform's targeting practices for political ads, saying it is a violation of terms to collect user data. "A week ago, Facebook sent me a (cease and desist order) asking us to take down AdObserver and delete our data. The public has a right to know how political ads are targeted, so we will not be complying with this request," Laura Edelson, a PhD student and researcher with NYU Ad Observatory, said in a post Friday. —AFP

3,732 new cases in Indonesia

JAKARTA: Indonesia reported 3,732 new coronavirus infections yesterday, official data from the health ministry showed, taking the country's total number of cases to 389,712. The data showed that the country had 94 additional deaths from the virus, taking the total number of fatalities to 13,299. The government of Indonesia's capital city Jakarta said in a statement earlier on Sunday that it will extend mass social restriction measures introduced to curb the spread of the virus until Nov 8. —Reuters



CLEVELAND: US Democratic vice presidential nominee Senator Kamala Harris speaks during an election campaign event in Cleveland, Ohio, Saturday. —Reuters

slavery and segregation, has not voted for a Democratic presidential candidate since Bill Clinton, himself a Southerner, in 1992.

This time, polls show a tight race between Trump and Biden as record numbers of motivated Georgians have voted early in the state, where one-third of the population is African American.

That has given Democrats hope. "There's just so much at stake," Harris tells a group of students from historically black colleges and universities. Herself the graduate of such a school, Howard University in Washington, Harris has surprised the wide-eyed students in the middle of a meeting. —AFP

7. Harris joins Biden's ticket, Aug 11, 2020

Biden tapping Senator Kamala Harris of California, a former rival for the nomination, as his running mate didn't come as a surprise. She had been the favorite all along. But she swiftly proved herself to be everything Biden needed, giving him a practiced and polished campaign partner and energizing the Democratic base. She also brought her own fundraising prowess to bear, with contributions to Biden's campaign reaching stratospheric levels once she was in the fold.

8. Justice Ginsburg dies, Sept 18, 2020

The worst fears of liberals came true as the storied justice finally succumbed to cancer less than two months before the Nov 3 election. Trump did not hesitate to fill the slot, nominating Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the court and likely ensuring a conservative majority for years to come. The move gave conservatives a reason to cheer in what had been a challenging year for the president. But it also galvanized Democrats, particularly women, while allowing the Biden campaign's warnings of threats to the Affordable Care Act and abortion rights to be thrown into stark relief.

9. The first Trump-Biden debate, Sept 29, 2020

Needing something to turn his fortunes around, Trump came into his first debate with Biden looking for a fight. But his belligerence worked against him. He repeatedly interrupted Biden and the moderator, Chris Wallace, to the point where the entire event veered out of control. He attacked Biden's family. Polls and focus groups conducted afterward showed swing voters were repulsed by his behavior. Trump would later drop out of the second debate after it was switched to a virtual format in the wake of his COVID-19 diagnosis. He then adopted a more restrained tone for the final face-off with Biden on Oct 22.

10. Trump gets COVID-19, Oct 2, 2020

After weeks of holding in-person rallies in which safety measures against the spread of the coronavirus were largely ignored, Trump and several aides tested positive for the disease. A short illness and quarantine period kept him off the campaign trail for 10 days. The bigger damage, however, may have been to the president's image. With Trump already faulted by a majority of Americans for his handling of the pandemic, his diagnosis made the White House look bumbling and hypocritical. And it ensured the virus would remain the central issue of the campaign just weeks before Election Day. —Reuters

International

As Mike Pompeo campaigns against China, a growing welcome in India

US official to visit the Maldives, Sri Lanka after top-level talks in India

WASHINGTON: When the United States tried to seal a defense deal seven years ago with the Maldives, a sprawling and strategic archipelago, its plans were quietly torpedoed by a friend-India, which considers the Indian Ocean its sphere of influence.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will visit the Maldives this week after top-level talks in India—which offered open support when the Pentagon finally went ahead with a defense pact with the island nation in September. What brought about the change, analysts say, is a deepening concern in New Delhi about China, which engaged in a deadly border clash with India this year and has been ramping up influence around South Asia, including in the Maldives. Pompeo will also visit Sri Lanka—where China has lent billions of dollars, leaving a mountain of debt—as well as Indonesia, as President Donald Trump's administration steps up its challenges to Beijing's maritime claims in the dispute-rife South China Sea.

Pompeo, who has championed a hard line on Beijing, said his trip will “include discussions on how free nations can work together to thwart threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party.”

Moving ‘needle’ from China

Pompeo will be the first US secretary of state since 2004 to visit the Maldives, which under the defense accord agreed to strengthen cooperation with the United States and support a “free and open Indo-Pacific.” “At another time, India might have complained about the US presence in the Indian Ocean. Today, it doesn't want the US to

leave,” said Tanvi Madan, director of The India Project at the Brookings Institution. New Delhi has come around to seeing greater US involvement in India's backyard as offering a better alternative to China, she said.

“India recognizes that it can't do it alone, either because of capacity issues or because it has baggage with the countries that affects what they would be willing to do with India versus, say, Japan or the US.”

Sri Lanka's populist president, Gotabaya



Even during election, Asia visit a priority

Rajapaksa, has embraced support from China but will likely want to “play the game” of being courted by different powers, said Aparna Pande, director of the Hudson Institute's Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia.

She doubted Sri Lanka would go the route of India's historic rival Pakistan, which has forged tight relations with China. New Delhi believes that if the United States gets more involved in Sri Lanka, “the needle will come a little closer to the US-India side

than the China side,” Pande said.

Priority even during election

Pompeo will be joined by Defense Secretary Mark Esper in New Delhi today and tomorrow for annual talks. Officials said the two countries are expected to sign an agreement on sharing geospatial intelligence, paving the way for the United States to ship increasingly sophisticated missile technology.

The United States has sold India more than \$20 billion in weapons since the world's two largest democracies began to scale up relations in the 2000s but New Delhi has also turned to historic partner Russia as well as France and Israel as it modernizes its military. The “two-plus-two” dialogue, delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged both India and the United States, comes one week before US elections in which Trump is trailing Democrat Joe Biden in polls.

Pande said the timing showed India that the United States placed a high priority on the relationship—and she doubted there would be significant changes under Biden. “I think Delhi is one of the few capitals which is not very worried” about swings in policy depending on the election, Pande said.

As US relations deteriorate with China, “which country would you want on your side—one which borders China, is antagonistic to China, has lost territory to China and has the potential to become a rival to China. That's India.” India has banned Chinese apps including TikTok but has voiced hope for stable relations with Beijing, even after 20 Indian troops and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers



WASHINGTON, DC: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, pictured in September 2020 in this file photo. Pompeo will travel to India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka this week. Pompeo will visit the Maldives this week after top-level talks in India.

died in the June clash in the Himalayas.

When Indian officials hear the Trump administration, “I do think they would prefer it not to be so in-your-face at times, because they do take a subtler approach,” Madan said.

But she added: “They are very aware that there is a more competitive American view that converges with much of their view of China.” — AFP

Malaysia's king rejects emergency rule in blow to PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's King Al-Sultan Abdullah rejected yesterday a request by Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin for him to declare a state of emergency in response to the coronavirus crisis, saying that he did not see the need. The move is a blow to Muhyiddin, who is facing a leadership challenge from opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and infighting within his ruling coalition.

Anwar and other critics have denounced Muhyiddin's proposal for emergency rule, which included the suspension of parliament, as an attempt by the premier to stay in power by avoiding a showdown in parliament over the support he commands. The palace said Muhyiddin made the request for emergency rule to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, but that the government has been handling the crisis well. Malaysia is seeing a resurgence in virus infections and on Saturday reported its biggest daily jump in cases with 1,228 new cases.

“Al-Sultan Abdullah is of the opinion that there is no need at the moment for His Majesty to declare an emergency in the country or in any part of the country of



KUALA LUMPUR: A couple looks at the skyline of Malaysia's capital Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Malaysia's king yesterday rejected a proposal by the premier to declare a state of emergency and suspend parliament to fight the coronavirus after the plan sparked a massive backlash. — AFP

Malaysia,” the palace said in a statement. “His Majesty is confident in the ability of the government under the leadership of the prime minister to continue to implement policies and enforcement efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The king also called for politicians to end politicking that could affect stability of the administration. The constitution gives the king the right to decide if an emergency should be declared, based on threats to security, economy or public order. His

decision came after a meeting with other senior royals, the palace said.

Muhyiddin has been in a precarious position since he took office in March with a two-seat majority. Last month Anwar said that, with the help of administration defectors, he has the parliamentary majority to form a new government. Muhyiddin's government is due to present the 2021 budget in parliament on Nov. 6 but there are doubts he will be able to command a majority for its approval. — Reuters

Fighting talk as besieged Thai loyalists try to rally

BANGKOK: #KingKeepFighting was the hashtag used by the embattled Thai prime minister's operations center at the weekend on a Twitter post with pictures of a walkabout by King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

Faced by protesters' calls on Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to quit and the monarchy's biggest challenge in decades, the royalist establishment is showing signs of attempting to mobilise a counterattack. The Palace has been silent through months of anti-government protests that have increasingly aimed at the monarchy. But the king on Thursday made a sign of support for former junta leader Prayuth and then on Saturday lauded a royalist demonstrator who had defied protesters.

His supporters took heart. “Politicians, leaders of enemies of the King - are you ready to flee the Kingdom of Thailand? Your time is almost up,” Rienthong Nanna, leader of an ultra-royalist vigilante group, threatened on Facebook at the week-

end. The protests at first targeted Prayuth before demanding curbs to the monarchy's powers too. Demonstrations only grew bigger after a week of tough emergency measures to end them.

With Prayuth still the main target for protesters, the king lit the fire at the cremation of the premier's father on Thursday, nine months after he died. Then yesterday, in a widely publicized moment, the monarch expressed encouragement for a man who had defied protesters, telling him: “Very brave, very good, thank you.” Thais read the signals.

“The king just left no doubt. He's in this fight and he's backing his royalist-nationalist supporters against the pro-democracy youth movement,” said James Buchanan, a lecturer at Bangkok's Mahidol University International College. Nattabhorn Juengsanguansit, partner at Asia Group Advisors, a government affairs consultancy, said the king's “actions signal a closer-knit and more aligned establishment.”

“There is heightened tension and a risk of clashes. If the situation worsens, the government could use it as a pretext for a heavier hand,” she said. The government says it seeks dialogue with protesters, but some of the most prominent are detained. — Reuters

China's Kashgar launches testing, closes schools

BEIJING: Kashgar in northwestern China's Xinjiang region are closing schools for a week and carrying out a city-wide coronavirus test, officials said yesterday after one person was found to have the virus that causes COVID-19. A 17-year-old girl was found on Saturday to have the virus but no symptoms of the pandemic disease in a village in Kashgar after being tested during a regular inspection, the Xinjiang health commission said.

The discovery marks mainland China's first local infection since Oct. 14, when one was detected in Qingdao. Xinjiang was the site of a local cluster in August, but no new cases had been found in the region since Aug. 15. All close contacts of the infected person have been isolated for medical observation and local authorities are carrying out epidemiological investigations, Xinjiang officials said.

Kashgar has launched a nucleic acid test covering the city's 700,000 people. As of Sunday morning, more than 300,000 people had been tested and the rest would be covered within two days, the city government said in a statement. The Kashgar government said all schools except universities will be closed through Friday but supermarkets and shopping malls will remain open to ensure sufficient supply of living materials.

China's national health commission dispatched experts yesterday to guide coronavirus control work in Kashgar. In the daily tally report for Saturday, the national health commission reported 15 imported coronavirus cases in the mainland, all imported, down from 28 cases the previous day. It reported a total of 19 new asymptomatic patients in the country, down from 27 a day earlier. As of Saturday, mainland China had 85,790 confirmed coronavirus cases, the health authority said. The COVID-19 death toll stands at 4,634. — Reuters

Nearly 9,000 flee in Philippines as Molave intensifies

MANILA: Nearly 9,000 people fled their homes in the Philippines as Typhoon Molave made landfall while traversing provinces on the southern part of the main Luzon island yesterday, bringing heavy rain and strong winds, officials said.

The disaster monitoring agency said it had received reports of damaged roads and bridges, flooding and landslide incidents in some areas, but there were no casualties so far. Packing top sustained winds of 130 kilometers per hour (80 mph) Molave intensified into a typhoon as it moved westward and made landfall over San Miguel Island in Albay province early in the evening.

It made a second landfall on Malinao municipali-

ty also in Albay, the weather bureau said. Some 5,518 people were evacuated to safer grounds, while 3,421 people took shelter with their relatives in areas outside danger zones, the disaster monitoring agency said. Molave follows Tropical Storm Saudel, which last week caused widespread flooding in Quezon province in the Calabarzon region, southeast of the capital Manila. The weather bureau warned of storm surges as high as two meters (6.5 feet) in coastal areas in northern Samar province, the Bicol region and the central and southern portions of Quezon province. Tropical cyclone wind alerts were issued for several provinces in the Bicol and Calabarzon regions, and several provinces in central Philippines, as well as for Metro Manila and central Luzon provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales. Sea travel operations were cancelled in danger zones, with 569 people stranded at ports due to strong winds, according to the disaster monitoring agency. After crossing the Philippine archipelago, Molave was expected to continue intensifying over the South China Sea, the weather bureau said. — Reuters



MANILA: A resident holds onto his umbrella in strong wind as others stand by their wooden boats along the coastal area of Legaspi City, Albay province south of Manila yesterday ahead of tropical storm Molave's expected landfall. — AFP

News in brief

Hungary virus tally tops 3,000

BUDAPEST: Hungary reported 3,149 new cases of coronavirus yesterday, its highest single-day tally and jumping above 3,000 for the first time, the government said. The total number of cases rose to 59,247 in the country of 10 million, with 35 new deaths taking the total to 1,425. Although coronavirus cases have been rising sharply since late August, Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban is seeking to avoid a repeat of the spring lockdown that sent the economy crashing by 13.6 percent in the second quarter. — Reuters

Warsaw police detain 278

WARSAW: Warsaw police detained 278 people on Saturday after thousands protested against new curbs aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus, a police spokesman said. Police said demonstrators had attacked policemen, throwing stones, glass bottles and fire crackers during the demonstrations. Police used tear gas on several occasions during the protests in Warsaw in which people demanded that new restrictions be repealed. — Reuters

French COVID tracing app

PARIS: France's new COVID-19 contact-tracing app needs to be downloaded by at least 20 percent of the population to be effective but is far from reaching that level for now, the minister for digital affairs said yesterday. On Oct 22, France relaunched its “StopCovid” tracing app and renamed it “Tous Anti-Covid” (all against COVID), which has since seen an additional 1.2 million downloads for a total number of about 4 million. — Reuters

Business

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020

Airlines suffering from business class blues

Four largest US carriers together lost nearly \$11 billion in Q3

NEW YORK: The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in the era of video meetings. But can Zoom really replace in-person meetings that require business executives to travel? US airlines have suffered a steep decline in this lucrative category of travel. They do expect a rebound-just not right away. "I suddenly stopped travelling in March because of the concerns around Covid," JJ Kinahan, market strategist at TD AmeriTrade, said.



Zoom replacing in-person meetings?

The halt was a bit of a shock for someone who typically spent about 75 nights a year away from home for work. Now his company only authorizes travel on a case-by-case basis. While Kinahan says he does not miss the flights, he does miss the personal connection with hotel doormen and receptionists he would encounter regularly in his travels.

As for Zoom meetings, he said, "you don't have the same back and forth." Airlines are really feeling the pain: the four largest US carriers-American, United, Delta and Southwest-together lost nearly \$11 billion in the third quarter.

Americans have tentatively resumed leisure travel. For the first time since mid-March, the number of travelers passing through airport security on October 18 exceeded the one million mark. But that is still far below the 2.6 million recorded on the same day in

2019. Many companies have begun to authorize travel, but only in very limited amounts.

Risk of lawsuits

Companies have to consider the legal ramifications of asking employees to get on a plane. Alexandra Cunningham of the law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth notes that travel is unavoidable in some cases, such as repairs that require a specialized technician. While some workers in enclosed places, like slaughterhouses and cruise ships, have been able to claim compensation after falling ill, it is not clear if an employee would be able to successfully prove they contracted Covid-19 while on a business trip, she said.

Even so, "an employer's best protection right now... is to follow the guidance of the CDC, to limit travel to essential business," she said, referring to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Different quarantine rules in some US states also can make short trips impractical. The disappearance of business travelers is a big problem for airlines. While they comprise only about a third of passengers, they account for half of annual revenue, according to the industry group Airlines for America (A4A).

'Bread and butter'

"Business travel is incredibly important to United," the airline's chief Scott Kirby said on a recent conference call. "It was our bread and butter," he said of the segment that has collapsed by 85-90 percent.

Kirby tried to remain upbeat though he said he does not see a rebound until late next year, while volume will not return to normal until 2024. Southwest CEO Gary Kelly said the recovery could take much longer. "Just like 9/11, everybody said the world is going to change, people aren't going to fly. They were wrong," he said this week on CNBC.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Kun-hee Lee, Chairman of Samsung Electronics," the company said in a statement. "Chairman Lee passed away on October 25 with his family, including Vice Chairman Jay Y. Lee, by his side. "Chairman Lee was a true visionary who transformed Samsung into the world-leading innovator and industrial powerhouse from a local business," the firm said, adding: "His legacy will be everlasting."

Samsung is by far the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates, or chaebols, that dominate business in South Korea. They drove the nation's transformation from a war-ravaged ruin to the world's 12th-largest economy, but nowadays are accused of murky political ties and stifling competition-with Lee himself twice convicted of criminal offences, in one case bribing a president.

Global power

When Lee inherited the chairmanship of the Samsung group in 1987 — founded by his father as a fish and fruit exporter-it was already the country's largest conglomerate, with operations ranging from consumer electronics to construction. But it was seen as a shoddy producer of cheap, low-quality products. "Let's change everything except our wives and kids," Lee said in 1993.

The company gathered up and burnt all 150,000 mobile phones it had in stock, paving the way for the rebirth of the highly successful "AnyCall" handset. With Lee at the helm, Samsung became a global behemoth: by the time he suffered a heart attack in 2014, it was the world's biggest maker of smartphones and memory chips, and a major player in semiconductors and LCDs.

Lee rarely spoke to the media, but was closely watched whenever he broke his long silences, often with doom-laden New Year corporate addresses. His son, Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong, has been at the helm of the company since the 2014 heart attack.

Republicans have voted to subpoena Jack Dorsey and Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executives of Twitter and Facebook respectively, as part of a stepped-up assault on social media's handling of online political content, notably the downranking of a New York Post article purported to show embarrassing information about Democrat Joe Biden.

CEOs of Twitter, Facebook and Google are already slated to testify at a separate Senate panel Wednesday examining the so-called Section 230 law which offers liability protection for content posted by others on their platforms.



NEW YORK: Ben Ratner takes a photo of the new iPhone after being the first customer to walk out of the Apple Fifth Avenue store on Oct 23, 2020 in New York City. — AFP

Samsung chairman Lee Kun-hee dies at 78

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics chairman Lee Kun-hee, who transformed the South Korean firm into a global tech titan, died at the age of 78 yesterday, the company said. Under Lee's leadership, Samsung rose to become the world's largest producer of smartphones and memory chips, and the firm's overall turnover today is equivalent to a fifth of South Korea's GDP.

Samsung's meteoric rise helped make Lee South Korea's richest and most powerful industrialist.



SEOUL: In this file photo taken on April 22, 2008 Lee Kun-Hee (left), chairman of South Korea's largest group Samsung, arrives to hold a press conference as the vice chairman Lee Hak-Soo (right) is seen at the group's headquarters in Seoul. — AFP

Big week for Big Tech as earnings, hearings loom

SAN FRANCISCO: Big Tech is bracing for a tumultuous week marked by quarterly results likely to show resilience despite the pandemic, and fresh attacks from lawmakers ahead of the November 3 election. With backlash against Silicon Valley intensifying, the companies will seek to reassure investors while at the same time fend off regulators and activists who claim these firms have become too dominant and powerful.

Earnings reports are due this week from Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and Google-parent Alphabet, whose combined value has grown to more than \$7 trillion. They have also woven themselves into the very fabric of modern life, from how people share views and get news to shopping, working, and playing. Robust quarterly earnings results expected from Big Tech will "highlight the outsized strength these tech behemoths are seeing" but "ultimately add fuel to the fire in the Beltway around breakup momentum," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said in a note to investors.

The results come amid heightened scrutiny in Washington of tech platforms and follow a landmark antitrust suit filed against Google which could potentially lead to the breakup of the internet giant, illustrative of the "techlash" in political circles. Meanwhile, Senate



CHICAGO: In this file photo taken on October 05, 2020 people travelling wear facemasks as they walk through Chicago O'Hare International airport (ORD) in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

But he added, "I'll bet you it's a long time from now-it may be 10 years before business travel recovers." Delta chief Ed Bastian said the new normal might mean business travel is 10-20 percent lower than the pre-pandemic level as video meetings replace some trips. But "it's not going to be a substitute," he said. Meanwhile, the rise in teleworking could even help air travel, as remote workers have to make the trek back to their offices a few days a month. United executive vice president Andrew Nocella said on a conference call. "Business traffic may be different, but we think it will return," he said. — AFP

'Hermit king'

Despite his immense wealth and power, Lee seldom ventured out from the high walls of his private compound in central Seoul to visit the company headquarters, earning him the nickname "hermit king". Lee, the third son of Samsung group founder Lee Byung-chull, had a soft spot for dogs-developed as a child in Japan where he went to school from age 11. He was also known for his love of movies, horseriding and exotic supercars.

He studied at Japan's prestigious Waseda University and earned an MBA at George Washington University in the United States. He became vice chairman of the group's construction and trading arm at the age of 36, and became group chairman nine years later, shortly after his father's death.

Lee married Hong Ra-hee-whose father was a justice minister-with whom he had a son and three daughters.

Bribes, embezzlement, tax evasion

The worlds of politics and business have been intertwined in South Korea, and the connection was reflected in Lee's career. In 1996, he was convicted of bribing former president Roh Tae-woo to get favors for Samsung in business policy decisions. Lee was also found guilty of embezzlement and tax evasion in a slush fund scandal in 2008, which saw him briefly step down from the company leadership.

But suspended sentences meant he never served time in jail and he received two presidential pardons, going on to spearhead his country's successful efforts to secure the 2018 Winter Olympics.

A few years later, he fought off a lawsuit from his older brother and sister claiming they were entitled to Samsung shares worth billions of dollars. He had been in medical care after his heart attack, but few details were ever revealed about his condition, leaving him shrouded in mystery even in his final days. — AFP (See Page 10)

Business models questioned

The four giants drawing the most scrutiny-Apple, Amazon, Facebook and Google-have been wildly successful in recent years and have weathered the economic impact of the pandemic by offering needed goods and services. Google and Facebook dominate the lucrative online ad market, while Amazon is an e-commerce king. Apple has come under fire for its tight grip on the App Store, just as it has made a priority of making money from selling digital content and services to the multitude of iPhone users.

The firms have stepped up lobbying, spending tens of millions this year, and made efforts to show their social contributions as part of their campaign to fend off regulation. "For the most part, tech companies know how to do this dance," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group. "They don't spend a lot of time bragging about how well they have done any more."

Ed Yardeni of Yardeni Research said the outlook for Big Tech may not be as rosy as it appears. "For one, regulators at home and abroad are gunning to rein in some of the largest US technology names," Yardeni said in a research note. "Also, the Covid-induced tech spending enjoyed over the past six months won't likely be replicated."

Ebbing ads?

Of interest to the market short-term will likely be whether backlash about what kind of content is left up and what is taken down by online titans causes advertisers to cut spending on the platforms. Organizers of a Facebook ad boycott vowed early in the third quarter to continue their campaign, saying the social network's top

Dubai announces \$136 million extra stimulus package

DUBAI: Dubai has announced a new 500 million dirhams (\$136.14 million) stimulus package to support the local economy, taking Dubai's total stimulus measures this year to 6.8 billion dirhams, the crown prince of the emirate said on Twitter on Saturday. "The private sector is a major partner in Dubai's development process, and we have adopted a set of new exemptions for some fees and a reduction in rents for some sectors, as well as an extension of the validity of a previous set of exemptions from fees," said Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al-Maktoum.



Aldar headquarters in Abu Dhabi

Aldar move

Aldar Properties will take over the management and development of government capital projects worth 30 billion dirhams (\$8.2 billion) under a memorandum of understanding with state-backed ADQ, the Abu Dhabi Government Media office said. The projects include Riyadh City, the Baniyas north region, and projects in Al-Ain and Al-Dhafra regions, the office said on Twitter yesterday. ADQ is a holding company owned by the Abu Dhabi government. The public private partnership framework also includes Aldar having management oversight of state agency Abu Dhabi General Services Company, known as Musanada, it said. — Reuters

executives failed to offer meaningful action on curbing hateful content. At the same time, political conservatives have accused Facebook and others of political bias as social platforms step up their content moderation. President Donald Trump has threatened new regulatory measures which could impact the business models of platforms.

Pandemic punch

Economic and social disruption from Covid-19 also looms over tech firms, which benefitted early in the pandemic as people turned to the internet to work, learn, shop and socialize from home. "Performance will be best for those providing solutions for people working at home," analyst Enderle said. Amazon, Google and Microsoft each have cloud computing divisions that have been increasingly powering revenue as demand climbs for software, services and storage provided as services from massive datacenters.

Amazon has seen booming sales on its platform during the pandemic, and viewing surge at its Prime streaming television service. Enderle expressed concern that with Covid-19 cases and a lack of new stimulus money in the US, tech companies could reveal in forecasts that they are bracing for poorer performance in the current quarter. "The second wave of the pandemic has got a lot of folks spooked," Enderle said. "Those stimulus checks aren't going out and people are afraid of what is happening with their jobs; so that cuts spending and buying confidence." And even though Microsoft is well positioned in a booming video game market with a new Xbox console coming in November, its arrival could be soured if people worried about money cut back on such luxuries. — AFP

Business

Bumper melon harvest sweetens Uzbekistan's pandemic problems

700,000 tons of melons are grown annually in Uzbekistan

VAZIR, Uzbekistan: In the giant shed of Uzbek farmer Sanat Kalandarov, a bountiful melon harvest hangs suspended from wooden beams, promising profits through a difficult winter ahead. Kalandarov is practicing a type of storage that is centuries-old—the shed has been in his own family for three generations—and he is dismissive of younger farmers who are turning to refrigerators.

“Melons need fresh air to breathe,” 35-year-old Kalandarov said, indicating narrow slits for ventilation in the shed walls, which are thick enough to shield the fruits from the cold of winter and the early spring heat. “When the days are frosty, we insulate the room. Plus, this method requires no electricity. It is very economical.”

These thick-skinned varieties of Uzbekistan's favorite fruit—some shaped like torpedoes, others more spherical—are planted in May, two months after the melons that ripen in summer.

They are then stored and sold during the winter, when their value can grow 15-fold on the domestic market and even more abroad. This year, the melon growing season has been especially good, and it is just as well.

The coronavirus pandemic hit Uzbekistan hard, just when it was on an economic upswing.

Remittances sent by migrants working abroad fell by half, according to a report by the United Nations Development Programme published in July, straining hundreds of thousands of family budgets that depended on them. Strict lockdowns triggered massive layoffs around the landlocked country of 33 million, with small businesses especially affected. Kalandarov, by contrast, has been able to hire 12 people who would have otherwise been unemployed from his village of Vazir in the arid northwest of the country.

He is also planning to send his first batch of melons for export to neighboring Kazakhstan by the



Melons hang from wooden beams in the village of Vazir in the northwest of Uzbekistan.

end of October. “With COVID-19 and all the unemployment (it has caused), these winter melons are a lifeline,” he told AFP, noting that he had 50 tons of the crop to sell in the off season.

Melon country

According to the ministry of agriculture, an average of 700,000 tons of melons are grown annually in Uzbekistan on 35,000 hectares of land. Shohruh Tolibov, an expert from the ministry, said that exports represent less than 10 percent of that total—some of the sweetest varieties do not travel well. But they will more than double this year and have grown five-fold over the last three years.

Such growth has been triggered by the agricultural reforms of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who broke up monopoly interests that dominated the export of fruit and vegetables and allowed small-holders the chance to determine their own clients.

Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia and



VAZIR: A woman prepares melons to be hung for storage in an adobe shed in the village of Vazir in the northwest of Uzbekistan. —AFP photos

Ukraine are the top destinations for Uzbek melons, Tolibov told AFP. This month, the locally-based Jahon Exim Group claimed it had overseen the first exports of Uzbek melons to Britain.

“We hope that Uzbek melons, known for their taste and health benefits, will be appreciated by local consumers,” said the company's director Jahongir Giyasov in comments to local media.

Uzbekistan grows more than 50 types of melons. Khorezm, a region in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya river that benefits from temperate winters, grows at least 12 and they all share a common characteristic—deliciousness. While other crops fail in this area, “melons grow sweeter on saline land,” said

Kalandarov, whose employees feasted hungrily on some of his produce, slicing up the green-skinned bounty like sticky birthday cakes at the end of a long, warm, autumn day.

Kalandarov grew up on the melon fields, and has been growing his own fruit since he was a teenager. But he is no longer satisfied with this work alone. Instead, his dream is the same as the avowed policy of the national government—to move from selling raw produce to products with value added. “I have a business plan. I want to create new products—melon jam, melon conserve, dried melon. There is a big demand for these products on foreign markets,” he said. —AFP

Frankfurt cancels Christmas market over virus spike

FRANKFURT: The German city of Frankfurt has become the latest to cancel its traditional Christmas market as the nation struggles to halt an alarming rise in coronavirus infections.

“Frankfurt is pulling the corona emergency brake,” the bestselling Bild daily wrote after city officials made the decision in emergency talks late Saturday. The Frankfurt “Weihnachtsmarkt” is one of Germany's most popular Christmas markets and usually attracts more than two million visitors who come to sip mulled wine, nibble on roasted chestnuts and shop for seasonal trinkets among a cluster of wooden chalets. “Our goal remains to avoid another lockdown,” Frankfurt mayor Peter Feldmann said in a statement.

The worsening pandemic has already forced a slew of other German cities, including Berlin,

Duesseldorf and Cologne, to announce they are scrapping or severely curtailing their Christmas markets, although major ones are still going ahead in Munich and Nuremberg. Germany is home to some 2,500 Christmas markets each year that kick off the festive season in late November and are much loved by locals and tourists alike. They draw about 160 million domestic and international visitors annually who bring in revenues of three to five billion euros, according to the BSM stallkeepers' industry association.

Although Germany coped relatively well with the first wave of coronavirus, case numbers have risen rapidly in recent weeks, as they have across Europe. The country yesterday reported more than 11,000 new cases over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number since the start of the pandemic to 429,181. Sunday marked that fourth day in a row that new cases crossed the 10,000 mark.

Germany has recorded 10,032 coronavirus deaths to date, according to the Robert Koch Institute for disease control. Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged Germans to drastically cut



The famous Christmas market at Gendarmenmarkt normally attracts thousands each year.

back on socializing to curb the spread of the virus and authorities have introduced stricter rules on private and public gatherings. Berlin police tweeted that they had to break up a “fetish party” of some 600 people on Saturday evening because the venue was too small for the crowd to social distance. —AFP

HK brokers ready war chest for Ant's IPO bidding frenzy

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's brokerages are readying billions of margin-lending dollars to tap an expected surge in retail demand for China's fintec giant Ant Group's likely \$35 billion dual-listing in Hong Kong and Shanghai in the next few weeks, industry officials said.

Margin lending, or the amount brokers can lend to individual investors to purchase shares, has been a big business in Hong Kong in recent years with a large number of equity floats luring retail buyers.

Hong Kong had 851,157 margin lending accounts with total loan volume of HK\$161.8 billion (\$21 billion) in the first half of 2020, according to the city's Securities and Futures Commission (SFC), up sharply from 601,842 at the same time last year. The expected surge in demand for margin financing for the Hong Kong tranche of Ant's initial public offering (IPO), poised to be the world's largest ever, underscores robust retail interest in the deal due to be launched next week.

Ant, which operates China's biggest mobile payments platform Alipay, is backed by Chinese e-commerce group Alibaba Group Holding. Bright

Smart Securities, one of the city's largest brokerages, said it would lend up to HK\$50 billion — one of the firm's largest offerings — for the Ant IPO despite looming markets uncertainty due to the approaching U.S. election.

“We will make sure our interest rate will be the lowest among our peers,” chief executive Edward Hui told Reuters, adding retail investors would only have to put up 5 percent as a deposit to take on a margin loan to buy Ant shares. Another Hong Kong brokerage UOB Kay Hian has earmarked HK\$20 billion for Ant IPO margin financing, a spokeswoman said.

Retail investors in Hong Kong — from taxi drivers to junior professionals — borrow heavily as larger bids boost the chances of IPO share allocation, and they look to benefit from a first-day pop.

The lending could be for 6-7 days and is lucrative for the brokerages as they earn commission on executing trades as well as interest income from margin financing. “We see in Hong Kong that retail investors are always keen to buy into IPOs, it's almost a form of gambling and there is a strong trend for them to only hold on to them for a day or two,” the Hong Kong Institute of Investors' chairman Ricky Tam said.

Pressure on rates

Retail brokers said the margin interest rates would be set closer to the IPO's launch date. The strong demand could raise the short-term Hong Kong Interbank Offered Rate (HIBOR). The two-

crisis confronting President Muhammadu Buhari.

Violence in the sprawling commercial hub of Africa's largest economy, a city of 20 million, escalated after protesters in the Lekki district on Tuesday night were shot by what witnesses said were soldiers, hours after the curfew was announced. Amnesty International said soldiers and police killed at least 12 protesters on Tuesday in Lekki and Alausa, two Lagos districts. The army has denied soldiers were at the site of the shooting. Lagos state said on Friday the restrictions on movement would be eased from Saturday, with the curfew in place from 6 pm to 8 am. Workers took to streets to sweep away broken glass. Meanwhile, cars filled the roads. “We need to sweep it so that the road can be free for the cars and motors to be going so that they cannot have accidents,” said cleaner Ajala Eyiwunmi.

Disruption has not been limited to Lagos. Several



SHANGHAI: Ant Group logo is pictured at the Shanghai office of Alipay, owned by Ant Group which is an affiliate of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

week Hong Kong Interbank Offered Rate rose for a fourth straight session on Thursday to its highest in more than seven weeks.

The retail bidding frenzy poses some risks for the brokerages and their clients, especially on any heightened market volatility in an economy already badly hit by the pandemic as well as last year's anti-governments protests. “The risk for subscribers is that they are paying a lot in commissions to try and get allocations, they are paying interest and it's likely the shares will be priced at the top of the range,” GEO Securities chief executive Francis Lun said. “That could leave very little room for profit.” —Reuters

states in southern Nigeria have imposed curfews after two weeks of confrontations between security services and protesters.

On a call between Buhari and former Nigerian presidents, including his immediate predecessor Goodluck Jonathan, the head of state said 51 civilian fatalities and 37 injuries had been recorded as a result of “hooliganism” in recent weeks. Many businesses, already hit hard by restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, had been affected by the protests.

The Lagos Chamber of Commerce said Nigeria's economy had suffered an estimated loss of 700 billion naira (\$1.84 billion) due to lockdowns, before the violence.

“I thank God that today Lagos is good. We are happy at least I can go for my business now,” said shopkeeper James Odudo. —Reuters

Copper, quakes, inequality: Four things about Chile

SANTIAGO: Long considered a Latin American hub of political stability and economic growth, Chile holds a referendum yesterday to change the dictatorship-era constitution after a year of social unrest.

Some background on the country of nearly 19 million people:

From dictatorship to democracy

In 1973 General Augusto Pinochet toppled Socialist President Salvador Allende in a military coup. Allende committed suicide in the presidential palace as troops closed in. Pinochet imposed a right-wing dictatorship that lasted for 17 years, during which at least 3,200 people were killed or disappeared as a result of political repression. Around 38,000 were tortured. In 1988 he lost a plebiscite on remaining in power and handed over to democratically elected Patricio Aylwin in 1990, remaining head of the armed forces until 1998. Pinochet died in 2006 without standing trial for atrocities under his regime. In 2006 Socialist Michelle Bachelet, who herself had been tortured, became Chile's first female president. Re-elected in 2013, she was barred constitutionally from standing again immediately and was appointed UN human rights commissioner in 2018.

The 2017 elections were won by conservative billionaire Sebastian Pinera, who had already been president in 2010-2014.

Model economy

Pinochet applied neo-liberal free-market methods, privatizing healthcare, education and pensions. In the 1980s the country became the preferred Latin American host for foreign investors. Today it is the world's biggest copper producer. However, despite the economic model from the Pinochet era, which is still largely in place, inequalities within the population sparked a social crisis in 2019, resulting in yesterday's referendum.

Pensioners are cash-strapped and education and healthcare in the country are expensive. In the second quarter of 2020 Chile's GDP fell by 14.1 percent, due to the pandemic, which affected all sectors of the economy apart from mining, which accounts for 10 to 15 percent of GDP and half of Chile's exports. The central bank has forecast that GDP will shrink by up to 7.5 percent in 2020, a 35-year record.

Pedophile priests scandal

The staunchly Roman Catholic country has been rocked by allegations of sexual abuse within the church going back decades. The scandals were highlighted by a controversial visit to the country in 2018 by Pope Francis, who has been accused of not doing enough in response. Some 158 cases of sexual abuse implicating 219 members of the church are being investigated. Ultra-conservative Chile allowed divorce only from 2004 and legalized abortion in certain cases in 2017.

Super seismic

Bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Andes mountain range to the east, long and narrow Chile is one of the world's most seismic countries. In 1960 it was hit by the most powerful earthquake ever registered, measuring 9.5. More than 5,700 people were killed. In 2010 a 8.8-magnitude quake unleashed a tsunami that swept away entire villages in the south and center of the country, leaving around 520 people dead. Chile also has numerous active volcanoes. —AFP

Nigeria's megacity Lagos reopens as curfew relaxed

LAGOS: Workers began a cleanup of the streets of Lagos on Saturday after the relaxation of a round-the-clock curfew after days of unrest sparked by the shooting of protesters demonstrating against police brutality in Nigeria. Groups of men armed with knives and sticks blocked major roads and burned buildings and street signs in recent days as the city became the main flash-point of the worst street violence since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999 and the most serious political

Business

Bahrah, Ashok Leyland celebrate 2,000 Oysters on-road in GCC

Ashok Leyland rolls out 2,000th Oyster bus from its RAK factory

KUWAIT: Ashok Leyland recently rolled out its 2000th Oyster into GCC market from its Ras Al-Khaimah factory in the UAE. The 3rd largest global bus manufacturer launched three variants of 32-seater Oyster in Staff, School and Luxury category in 2017. Since then, the Oyster bus has attracted customers with its positioning of 32 seats with uncompromising Reliability and unmatched Durability.

The product has successfully penetrated construction segment, leasing companies and in school to win the hearts of customers with its higher earning per seat and lowest cost of operation. The passengers are also equally delighted with its ergonomic seats with heavy Duty air conditioning much needed in this high ambient environment.

Bahrah Trading Company (BTC), a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding, sole authorized distributor in Kuwait celebrated the milestone with customers who were part of the Journey and felicitated the 2000th Oyster Buyer in Kuwait.

BTC is proud to have Oyster buses operating with powerful business houses in Kuwait. Now, Oyster bus has become ubiquitous in Kuwait's city, add beauty to the landscape and strength to the operators' balance sheet.

Nitin Seth, Chief Operating Office, Ashok Leyland, on 2000th Oyster roll out remarked "This milestone is a true reflection of delivering Customer value and driving customer focus in every aspect of our business. At Ashok Leyland, we constantly innovate and deliver products that will positively impact total cost of ownership to customer. The 2000th Oyster in GCC, has boost-



ed our confidence to launch new products in the 24-26seater space. You will hear from us shortly about this. I am sure, the customers will find our new products delivering superior value and benefits to their operations. We are excited about this journey in Kuwait." "This milestone is a true reflection of delivering Customer value and customer focus in every aspect of Bahrah's business. The 32-seater bus powered by time tested 'H' Series engine with Rugged 6 speed gear box and a

power AC is the perfect value proposition to the customer supported with strong after-sales network from Bahrah. We are upbeat about Ashok Leyland's next range of products in Light commercial vehicle space and Al Sayer brand stands for customer profitability" said Elie Andraos, General Manager BTC.

Bahrah Trading Company is a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding, which was acquired by the group in 1976 - at a time when it was a supplier of heavy



equipment to the oil industry. Today, it has evolved into a market leader, serving a wide spectrum of clients in the construction, oil and industrial sectors within Kuwait.

Ashok Leyland is a leader in India's commercial vehicle industry. Ashok Leyland, flagship of the Hinduja group is (the 2nd largest manufacturer of commercial vehicles in India, the 3rd largest manufacturer of buses in the world, and the 10th largest manufacturer of trucks) guiding the country's commercial vehicle profile by introducing technologies and product ideas that have gone on to become industry norms.

Gulf Bank launches 'Red' account with more features for youth

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has launched their Red account for young customers with new features that suit their needs and complement their lifestyles. The account offers its users a free prepaid card upon opening the account or upon request, and automatically enters account holders into an annual draw for the chance to take home a cash prize equivalent to 12 times the student allowance. Gulf Bank is also the only bank in Kuwait that offers Red account holders a 10 percent cash refund on their monthly debit card spends, a cashback program feature unique to Gulf Bank.

Mohammed Al-Qattan, General Manager of

Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, said: "At Gulf Bank, we make it a point to design products that meet the specific needs of our customers and provide them with the banking services they require. Red is one of Gulf Bank's most important accounts catering to our younger customers at the high school and university levels, with additional features that were introduced with the specific goal of enhancing their lifestyles. The account currently offers its users a free prepaid card, and is the only account in Kuwait that provides a cashback service on debit cards for youth, in addition to the opportunity to win a cash prize worth 12 times the student allowance. We encourage high school and college level students to learn more about the Red account and its numerous benefits,



Mohammad Al-Qattan

and we wish them all the best."

Gulf Bank's annual draw for its Red account, which will award one lucky winner a cash prize worth 12 times their student allowance, will take place in April 2021. It is worth noting that the Red Account is a savings account for high school, college and university students who are between the ages of 15-25 years old. The account offers seasonal discounts at selected stores every month, and year-round discounts on various local shops and restaurants. The account also provides a distinctive Red branded MasterCard ATM debit card, along with free and immediate digital banking registration, activating the customer's online, mobile and SMS banking services. Account holders can access their money immediately from any local bank account via SelfPay, iTunes and Google Play, and settle their phone bills using Gulf Bank's mobile banking application. For any of their banking needs, Red Account users can also access Gulf Bank's ATM and ITM network spanning many branches.

Lee Kun-hee: 'Hermit king' of Samsung empire

SEOUL: South Korea's richest and most powerful industrialist, Lee Kun-hee, turned Samsung Electronics into one of the world's biggest tech companies but lived a reclusive existence.

Still, occasional pronouncements on business by the tycoon, who died at 78 yesterday, reverberated through the country. When he inherited the chairmanship of the Samsung group in 1987 — founded by his father as a fish and fruit exporter—it was already the country's largest conglomerate, with operations ranging from consumer electronics to construction. But Lee transformed it into a global power-by the time he was left bedridden by a heart attack in 2014, it was the world's biggest maker of smartphones and memory chips.

He seldom ventured out from the high walls of his private compound in central Seoul to visit the company headquarters, earning him the nickname "hermit king".

Samsung is by far the biggest of the

chaebols, the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate South Korea's economy. They drove the nation's transformation from a war-ravaged ruin to the world's 12th-largest economy, but nowadays are accused of murky political ties and stifling competition—with Lee himself twice convicted of criminal offences, in one case bribing a president.

Lee's far-sighted leadership style was widely credited with turning Samsung Electronics, now the group's flagship subsidiary, into one of the world's leading developers and producers of semiconductors, mobile phones and LCDs. "Chairman Lee was a true visionary who transformed Samsung into the world-leading innovator and industrial powerhouse," Samsung said in a statement announcing his death. "His legacy will be everlasting."

'Let's change everything'

Early in Lee's chairmanship,



In this file photo taken on July 16, 2008 former Samsung group chairman Lee Kun-Hee (center) is surrounded by reporters as he leaves a court in Seoul. Lee died on October 25 at the age of 78, the company said. — AFP

Samsung was seen as a shoddy producer of cheap, low-quality products.

"Let's change everything except our wives and kids," he said in 1993. The company gathered up and burnt all 150,000 mobile phones it had in stock, paving the way for the rebirth of the highly successful "AnyCall" handset. Soon afterwards, he ordered Chinese-made products to be displayed at Samsung headquarters, saying it was important to show how China was quickly catching up.

Lee rarely spoke to the media, but

was closely watched whenever he broke his long silences, often with doom-laden New Year corporate addresses. In meetings with subordinates and occasional interviews, Lee always stressed the importance of bright minds in business.

"No matter what happens, there will be nothing to be afraid of if we have the best talent," he once said. "In the era of unlimited competition, winning or losing will depend upon a small number of geniuses... One genius will feed 100,000 people." —AFP

More US firms offer earnings guidance

NEW YORK: With earnings season in full swing, more companies are again offering earnings guidance, signaling to investors that some corporations are adapting to uncertainty about a global pandemic that may extend deep into next year. Overall, 73 companies in the S&P 500 index have offered guidance this quarter so far, up from last quarter's 65 pre-announcements but well below the 170 companies that typically offer guidance, according to Refinitiv data. The companies offering guidance are giving the most bullish expectations in Refinitiv data going back to 1997.

"If a company is able to offer guidance it shows that they're able to have a better idea of what's coming down the road," said Charlie Ripley, senior investment strategist at Allianz Investment Management. The market has been buffeted by cross-currents related to the looming Nov 3 US presidential election, drawn out fiscal stimulus talks in Washington and a resurgent pandemic. Still, investors appear more hopeful in recent months.

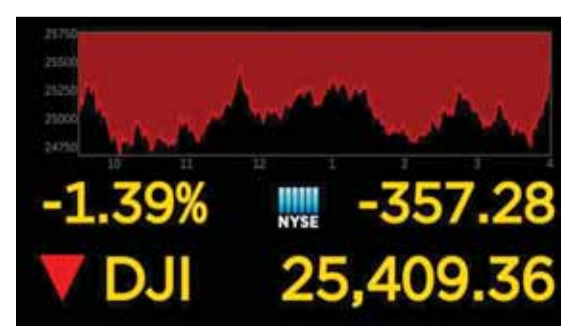
Fifty percent of high net worth U.S. investors surveyed by UBS Global Wealth Management voiced optimism on the economy, up from 41 percent three months prior, with 55 percent optimistic on stocks, up from 44 percent. The S&P 500 index is up nearly 7 percent year to date, including a 2.2 percent gain since the start of October.

So far this quarter, shares of AT&T Inc, Verizon Communications Inc and Quest Diagnostics Inc have rallied after each company gave investors updated guidance on how they expect to fare over the next fiscal year. "It's not surprising we've had so many beats this quarter because we entered the season with very little guidance," causing analysts to slash their estimates, said Katie Nixon, chief investment officer at Northern Trust Wealth Management.

"Now we're seeing how companies expect to be able to navigate through the challenges of the year ahead," she said. Investors next week will wade through the busiest period of earnings season so far, with companies ranging from Beyond Meat Inc and Microsoft Corp to Pinterest Inc scheduled to report results.

Microsoft, in particular, should outperform its conservative guidance thanks to strong PC shipments and growth of its Azure cloud computing platform, said J. Derrick Wood, an analyst at Cowen.

"The set-up feels more compelling as the bar was



reset last quarter and as macro conditions are improving," he said. Nearly 86 percent of companies that have reported earnings so far have beat analyst expectations, a rate 20 percentage points higher than the average beat rate since 1994, according to Refinitiv data. Still, investors like Nixon say they are looking past beat rates and focusing on companies that can improve or maintain measures such as refinancing debt, raising cash, and controlling costs regardless of the pandemic's trajectory or a breakthrough in stimulus talks.

The White House and congressional Democrats remain in negotiations for another coronavirus relief bill, though Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has signaled he may not bring the bill to the floor until after the election. — Reuters

News in brief

Germany agrees to pay deal

FRANKFURT: Germany struck a deal over pay with public-sector unions that will cover about 2.3 million workers employed by municipalities and the federal administration. The Verdi union and public employers said they had agreed an inverse sliding scale of pay gains, from plus 4.5 percent for the lowest income bracket to plus 3.2 percent for the highest bracket. The agreement will run until the end of 2022. — Reuters

Argentina mulls slow devaluation

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's economy minister Martin Guzman vowed to maintain a slow rate of currency devaluation despite rising pressure on the peso and tumbling foreign reserves. Argentina had a "serious problem" with its fiscal deficit because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the real economy is showing "signs of recuperation" and the devaluation did not reflect the true condition of the country's macroeconomy, Guzman said in an interview with Radio con Vos. He acknowledged that currency devaluation expectations hurt the economy, but said exchange stabilization could not be achieved "from one day to the other." —Reuters

Germany wants strong actors for 5G

BERLIN: The EU supports the idea of free competition but must be vigilant when its security interests are affected, Germany's economy minister said when asked whether sidelining China's Huawei on the 5G mobile network expansion could lead to a competitive disadvantage. He is not against Huawei, said Peter Altmaier after a video conference of European Union competition ministers on Friday. However, strong European actors were needed in this segment, he added. — Reuters

Manila to allow foreign investors

MANILA: The Philippines' coronavirus task force has approved the entry of foreign investors to the Southeast Asian nation starting from Nov. 1, the presidential spokesman said on Friday. Foreigners with investment visas from Philippine agencies would now be allowed entry, after the country imposed travel curbs in February to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a televised address. The easing of travel restrictions is among a slew of relaxed rules announced on Friday to help the country's battered economy recover from recession. —Reuters

IranAir relaunches European flights

DUBAI: Flag-carrier IranAir is resuming its European flights which had been suspended in March because of the coronavirus pandemic, an airline spokesman told the state news agency IRNA. Scheduled flights to England, France, Austria, Germany, and Italy are among flights being resumed, Hossein Jahani told IRNA.

"IranAir now has about seven scheduled European routes," he said. Iran's health ministry on Friday reported a record 6,134 new coronavirus cases for the previous 24 hours, bringing the national tally to 556,891 in the Middle East's hardest-hit country. — Reuters

Classifieds

Monday, October 26, 2020

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

الطيران المدني
Civil Aviation



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

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Rather hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southerly wind to south westerly wind with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

| WEATHER WARNING | | | No Current Warnings | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| STATION | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. | SFC. CHART 25/10/2020 0000 UTC | | |
| KUWAIT CITY | 33 °C | 22 °C | | | |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 35 °C | 15 °C | | | |
| ABDALY | 36 °C | 14 °C | | | |
| BUBYAN | - °C | - °C | | | |
| JAHRA | 36 °C | 19 °C | | | |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 33 °C | 22 °C | | | |
| SALMIYAH | 30 °C | 25 °C | | | |
| AHMADI | - °C | - °C | | | |
| NUWASIB | 33 °C | 17 °C | | | |
| WAFRA | 36 °C | 16 °C | | | |
| SALMY | 35 °C | 20 °C | | | |

| 4 DAYS FORECAST | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Monday | 10/26 | Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas | 35 °C | 16 °C | VRB-SE | 06 - 28 km/h |
| Tuesday | 10/27 | Hot to rather hot | 35 °C | 17 °C | VRB-NW | 06 - 28 km/h |
| Wednesday | 10/28 | Rather hot | 34 °C | 16 °C | VRB-NW | 08 - 28 km/h |
| Thursday | 10/29 | Rather hot | 35 °C | 16 °C | VRB | 06 - 24 km/h |

| PRAYER TIMES | |
|--------------|-------|
| Fajr | 04:36 |
| Sunrise | 05:56 |
| Zuhr | 11:32 |
| Asr | 14:44 |
| Sunset | 17:08 |
| Isha | 18:26 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| MAX. Temp. | 37 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 16 °C |
| MAX. RH | 85 % |
| MIN. RH | 10 % |
| MAX. Wind | S 21 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 0 mm |

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

SITUATION WANTED

An experienced accounting and financial professional with big 4 firms background seeks job. Manage upto finalisation of accounts, auditing, transaction advisory and projects, business plans and familiar with Investments, banking, consulting general trading contracting and projects including oil sector etc. Pls call 65052066 (C5807) 26-10-2020

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Aisha D/o Habeeb, have changed my name to Aisha Habib and father's name changed to Habib Haji Abdulqadir, as per the National ID card and birth certificate for all purposes in future. (C5806) 23-10-2020

مطلوب وكيل لتوزيع مواد غذائية

- على دراية بتوزيع المواد الغذائية
 - ملم بكيفية التعامل مع المواد الغذائية
 لمن ينطبق عليه الشروط والأحكام يرجى إرسال البيانات على الإيميل:

Required Distribution Agent For Foodstuff

- Knowledge of distributing foodstuff
- Knowledge of dealing with FMCG products

Interested agent to send agency details to email:
distrusales@gmail.com

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 |

| 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 |

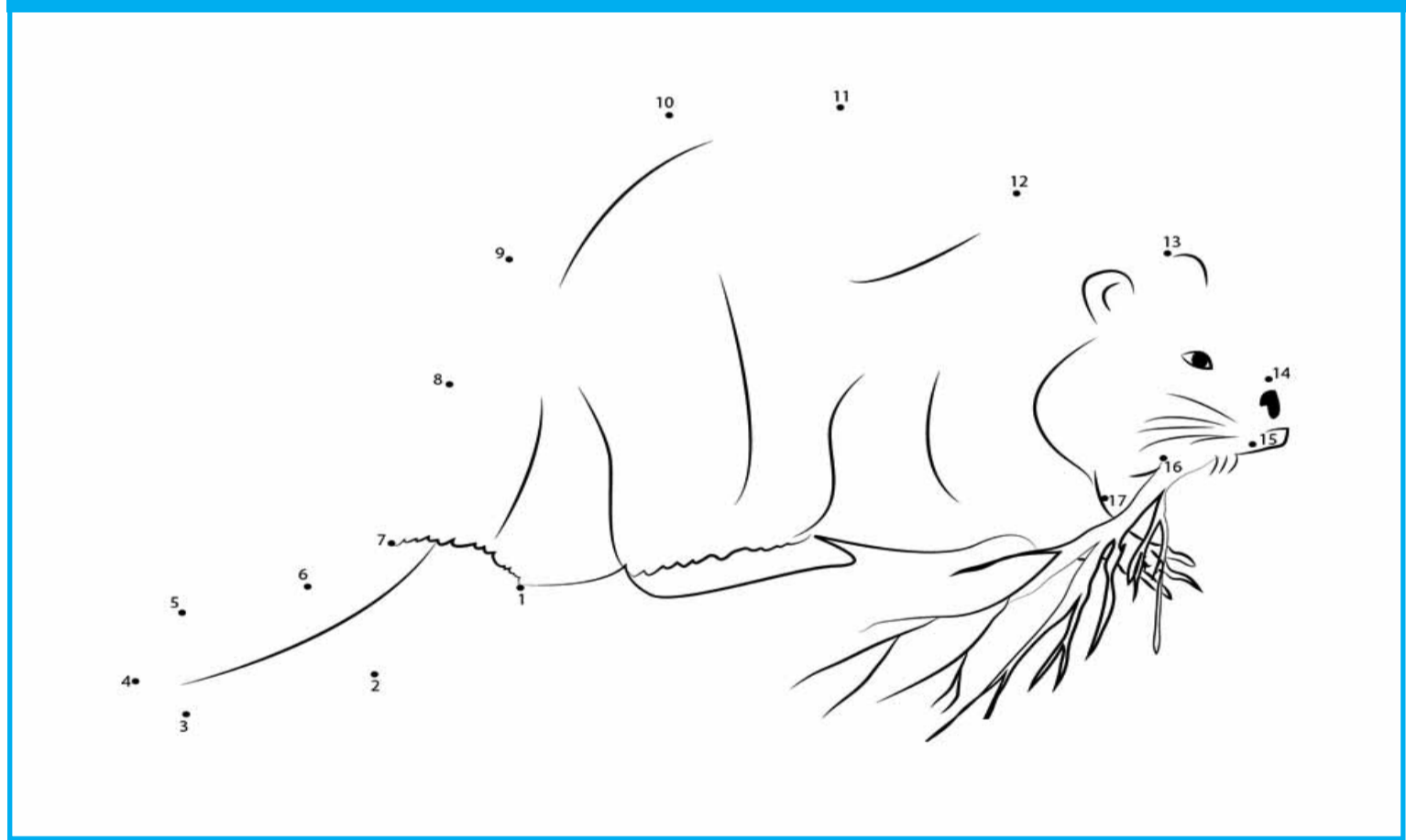
Word Search

ANCIENT EGYPT



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| AFTERLIFE | GOD | NILE | SCROLL |
| BURIAL | GOLD | PAPYRUS | SPHINX |
| CLEOPATRA | HIEROGLYPHICS | PHARAOH | SYMBOL |
| DESERT | HISTORY | PYRAMID | TEMPLE |
| DYNASTY | INK | RAMSESSES | TOMB |
| EDICT | IRRIGATION | REED | TRADE |
| EGYPT | ISIS | RULER | TUTANKHAMUN |
| FERTILE | JEWELRY | SAND | VIZIER |
| FLOOD | KINGDOM | SARCOPHAGUS | |
| GIZA | MUMMY | SCRIBE | |

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Problems with machines could have your nerves on edge. This may be one day when everything seems to break. Some problems you might be able to fix yourself, Aries, but at least one may involve something that has to be replaced. This might be the one you need the most right now. Think of it as a sign from the universe that you should do something else. That's the only way to stay sane.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This isn't the day to plan a trip by air, Cancer. Everything that can go wrong with such a trip will - delays, lost luggage, obnoxious seatmates. If you have one planned for today, change it to a future date if possible. This also isn't a good day to take an online class, since your attention span could be unusually short. What can you do? Relax, read, surf the Internet. A lot of interesting information could spark your curiosity.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your mind is likely to be going a thousand miles an hour today, Libra. Thoughts and ideas are pouring into your head like rain from the sky. Some of them might be confusing and others contradictory. You might be tempted to puzzle over them until you give yourself a headache. Write them down and look at them in a day or two. Your ideas are more likely to make sense to you then.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Upsetting news that you receive from far away, perhaps by phone or email, could send you into an emotional tailspin. There's an aura of uncertainty about what you hear - it may not make sense. Before you pass along the news or panic, Capricorn, make sure you know all the facts. You're likely to find that it's been blown all out of proportion. In view of this, you deserve a fun evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today you might attend a small party or group event with some friends, if possible, and become separated from them. Don't panic, Taurus. You will probably run into them later. You might meet some new friends and hear some news that could interest you. This is a day when cell phones and other handheld devices are likely to come in handy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

One of your ambitions in life is to be financially independent, and lately you might have made great strides toward attaining that goal. Today, through no fault of your own, you may receive information that indicates there may have been a setback. However, all is not as it seems. Don't go into a panic until you know all the facts, Leo. You're probably still right on track.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

An old friend you haven't seen for a long time may suddenly resurface, perhaps contacting you through social media. This could take you by surprise, Scorpio, but you won't be any less happy to talk to him or her again. Surprising news of another kind may come to you through email or phone, and this might set you off in a totally different direction from the one you started in this morning.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Computer glitches or bank errors might send erroneous information to you about your finances. Perhaps the bank says you have less money than you do, or a bill is higher than you thought it should be. If you can, make sure it gets settled today. You won't want to spend your day under this cloud. You will probably want to indulge in total frivolity. Go ahead, Aquarius, you deserve it!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Surprise visitors could result in a small impromptu party of some sort, if possible. This could be fun for you, Gemini, but it could also be a bit irritating. It might interfere with something you had planned. There's nothing you can do without sounding like Scrooge. Go with the flow, enjoy yourself, and then try to salvage your own plans as best as you can.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A surprising revelation from a friend or acquaintance might wake you up to the fact that you don't really know this person as well as you thought you did. Information could set you off on a search for knowledge that keeps you occupied for hours. A child or young person could come to you and ask for help. This promises to be a busy but interesting day, Virgo. Make the most of it!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A sudden, unexpected problem at home could be rather upsetting. This probably relates to plumbing, electricity, or some other kind of home equipment. You will have to handle it, Sagittarius, which means you will be housebound for most of the day waiting for a repairman when you'd rather be out. A friend might hear of your predicament and come over to keep you company.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You and someone close could disagree on an issue that both of you feel strongly about. Stubborn pride on both your parts could keep you from working things out. Let it go, Pisces. It isn't worth ruining your relationship. Someone you know might be headed for divorce or moving away, and the news could be a shock to you. This should be a day of surprises - not all of them pleasant.

Lifestyle | Features



A handout picture taken in 1958 by Dutch photographer Ed Van Der Elsken and released by the Rijksmuseum shows Queen Elizabeth (bottom center), at banquet at the historic Ridderzaal (Hall of Knights) in The Hague in 1958, a youthful British regent with her husband Prince Philip on a state visit, together with Dutch Queen Juliana and her husband Prince Bernard. — AFP photos



A handout picture taken by Dutch photographer Ed Van Der Elsken and released by the Rijksmuseum shows young people at a fair, one shooting with a rifle, a picture of the unpublished book "Feest", which means "to party" in Dutch, compiling photographs which captured "life in his own raw style" and an era from the 1950s to the early 60s.



A handout picture taken by Dutch photographer Ed Van Der Elsken and released by the Rijksmuseum shows youth, one sticking out his tongue as they pose in a street, a picture of the unpublished book "Feest", which means "to party" in Dutch, compiling photographs which captured "life in his own raw style" and an era from the 1950s to the early 60s.

Dutch museum unveils unseen pics by master lensman

Amsterdam's famous Rijksmuseum unveiled a set of long-lost pictures Friday taken around the 1950s by Dutch master lensman Ed van der Elsken, considered one of the most influential photographers of the last century. Famous for his raw street-style photography of daily life in Amsterdam, the newly found picture book contains some 134 never-before-seen images ranging from ordinary people to famous poets and royals. The unfinished work was discovered after Van der Elsken's widow

Anneke Hilhorst transferred his estate to the Rijksmuseum and the Rotterdam-based Nederlands Photo Museum last year. Van der Elsken died in 1990, aged 65. "For the curators, this marked the beginning of their research into the Van der Elsken working archive, comprising 11,000 objects," the Rijksmuseum said in a statement.

"One of many surprises was the mock-up design of a photo book that Van der Elsken compiled in roughly the same period that he was working on his magnum

opus Sweet Life," it said. Called 'feest' in Dutch, which means "feast", the unpublished book contains pictures of carnivals, birthday parties including of renowned Belgian poet Hugo Claus and Dutch and British royals. A photo of Queen Elizabeth, taken at a banquet at the historic Ridderzaal (Hall of Knights) in The Hague in 1958, shows a youthful British regent with her husband Prince Philip on a state visit, together with Dutch Queen Juliana and her husband Prince Bernard. Hailing a "remarkable discovery," Rijksmuseum

director Taco Dibbits said the book 'feest' captured an era from the 1950s to the early 60s.

Van der Elsken "was one of the first photographers in the 1950s who endlessly walked the streets and captured life in his own raw style," added Hans Rooseboom, the museum's curator. His style inspired generations of top Dutch photographers including Anton Corbijn, famous for his portraits of rock stars and celebrities and award-winning photographer Ilvy Njikiktjen. "I think one of the main things

that I take from his work is that it can be really amazing" capturing the daily lives of people, Njikiktjen told AFP. "It's in the daily lives of people where we connect," said Njikiktjen, who was named official "Dutch National Photographer" in 2013 for her work. The newly-discovered photo-book goes on display in a new exhibition called "Ed van der Elsken: a crazy world" which opens at the Rijksmuseum on October 30. — AFP

OLD IS GOLD: LIKE HUMANS, AGING CHIMPS PRIORITIZE IMPORTANT FRIENDSHIPS

When it comes to friendships, people are known to become more selective with age. It turns out the same is true of male chimps, who have fewer yet more genuine pals to ape around with as they get older, according to a study published in the journal Science. The research, which was led by animal psychologist Alexandra Rosati at the University of Michigan, was said to provide the first evidence that animals exhibit age-related social selectivity, and could help us understand more about why humans behave as they do. The authors drew on a huge dataset of 78,000 hours of observations performed at the Kibale National Park in Uganda between 1995 and 2016. They reported on the social interactions among 21 wild male

each other, one-sided friends where only one party showed a preference but the other did not, and non-friends where neither side preferred each other. According to the findings, older males had significantly more genuine friendships than their younger counterparts, whose attempts at romance were more often lopsided. For example, a 40-year-old male had on average three times as many high-quality friendships and one-third as many asymmetric friendships as a 15-year-old.

Emotional maturity

Males over the age of 35 were also found to selectively groom their genuine friends, while the chimps engaged in less aggressive behavior toward others in their party-such as



chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes) ranging in age from 15 to 58 years.

Males were chosen because they remain in the communities in which they are born, whereas the majority of females disperse to new groups when they become sexually mature. Aside from being our closest animal relatives, chimpanzees are an ideal species to compare to humans because they live long lives-sometimes until their 60s-and have a wide-degree of choice in whom they befriend. Male friends groom one another, hunt and share meat together, collectively patrol the boundaries of their territories, and form alliances to attain and keep high rank in their groups, which in turn leads to more individual reproductive success. To study their affinities for one another, the team developed an "association index" that was based on how often a male within a party was in close proximity (under five meters) to another, relative to how much they associated with all group members.

The team produced three categories: mutual friends, who both showed a preference for sitting with

hitting, biting, chasing or hostile displays-as they got older. Finally, while the older chimps spent more time by themselves than the younger ones, when they did choose to mingle it was with important social partners. Writing in a related editorial, Joan Silk of Arizona State University, Tempe, said the paper had provided "convincing evidence that male chimpanzees behave much like humans do as we age, and this pattern might exist in other primates as well."

It had been theorized that, as people age, they focus on their oldest and most important friends rather than looking for new ones because of their approaching sense of mortality. But since chimps probably aren't capable of such perspective, Rosati and her colleagues suggested other factors may be at play, like a reduction in emotional reactivity. Strong friendships might also help aging chimps continue to thrive despite a decline in their health and social status, they added. — AFP



Handout picture showing scientists working inside a laboratory where tadpoles of the 'Rana del Loa' (Loa's Frog) has been successfully reproduced, in Santiago.



Handout picture showing a tadpole of the 'Rana del Loa' (Loa's Frog) at a laboratory in Santiago. — AFP photos

Chile celebrates successful breeding of endangered frog

A critically endangered species of frog seems to have a bright future after conservationists in Chile launched a rescue campaign that has produced 200 offspring. When the Loa frog was rescued from its natural habitat in northern Chile, there were only 14 individuals left. Considered the most endangered species in Chile, they were taken to the zoo in the capital Santiago in August last year suffering from dehydration and on the brink of death. Scientists had rescued them from a small canal in the north-

ern city of Calama that had almost entirely dried up and where 600 frogs had already died. "Today we have great news for the world's ecosystem," Housing and Urbanism Minister Felipe Ward said. "We had to replicate the exact water conditions there are in the north of our country to keep them alive," added Alejandra Montalba, the director of the national zoo.

Measuring just six centimeters (2.3 inches) and with webbed hind legs, the Loa frog (Telmatobius dankoi) is a microendemic species that originates

from wetlands close to the Loa River, which is the longest in Chile. Located in the Atacama desert-the most arid in the world-the frog's natural habitat has suffered from human over-exploitation and more than a decade of drought in northern Chile. The frog's plight is symptomatic of the environmental crisis facing the world with the loss of a million species, Chilean authorities warned last year. — AFP

Eiffel Tower sees dizzying drop in visitor numbers

The Eiffel Tower is experiencing a collapse in visitor numbers as foreign tourists stay away and tight coronavirus measures, including a curfew, take their toll, the Paris landmark's operator said Friday. Ticket sales have fallen by 80 percent compared to 2019, according to the operator, SETE, and revenue by 70 percent. "We have 2,500 visitors per day for a monument that can accommodate up to 25,000," SETE president Jean-Francois Martins told RTL radio. "Since the end of the summer, we're down to between 10 and 20 percent of our usual attendance," he said. Social distancing rules allow lifts going up the tower to carry only half the usual number of people. The Eiffel Tower has also cancelled its night opening hours as curfew rules in Paris are banning people from being out after 9:00 pm. But the almost complete absence of foreign tourists, who usually account for up to 85 percent of visitors, hurts the most, SETE spokeswoman Isabelle Esnoud told AFP.—AFP



Two persons face the Eiffel Tower in Paris, during a nighttime virus curfew as a measure against the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus. — AFP



An inflatable in the form of Borat, UK comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's fictional Kazakh reporter floats down the River Thames in London to promote the release of the sequel, Borat Subsequent Moviefilm. — AFP

Trump no fan of 'Borat' creator Sacha Baron Cohen

Donald Trump said he has not been a fan of Sacha Baron Cohen-even before a clip from the British comedian's new Borat movie forced the US president's lawyer Rudy Giuliani into an awkward explanation. Asked about the clip-which shows Giuliani in a faked "interview" with an attractive and flirtatious young woman-while speaking to journalists aboard Air Force One, Trump said: "I don't know what happened." "But years ago, you know, he tried to scam me. And I was the only one who said no way. That's a phony guy. And I don't find him funny," Trump said the incident happened about 15 years ago. "To me, he was a creep," Trump said. The president did not provide further details about that encounter, but in a 2003 interview, Baron Cohen-playing the wannabe gangster Ali G-pitched a business venture to Trump: special gloves for eating ice cream.

Before the new Borat film's release, word of Baron Cohen's latest outrageous

ambushes on unsuspecting participants had spread like wildfire. On Wednesday, Giuliani issued an angry denial over the fake interview. In the film, the encounter appears to leave the 76-year-old former New York mayor in a compromising situation, caught with his hands down his pants in the bedroom. Giuliani said the scene was "a complete fabrication." "I was tucking in my shirt after taking off the recording equipment. At no time before, during, or after the interview was I ever inappropriate," he tweeted. "If Sacha Baron Cohen implies otherwise, he is a stone-cold liar." The comedian continued to poke fun at Giuliani. In a video posted on social media, Borat himself leapt to his defense and accused the "fake news media" — a term often used by Trump and his supporters-of turning an "innocent" encounter into "something disgusting." — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Sarah Atallah: Interns' homes turned into small dramatic spaces

After the end of The Social monologue workshop, The 7th workshop of "Theater Retreat". Sarah Atallah, the instructor of the workshop and The Head of The Drama Department in LAPA said: "We came from Kuwait, Syria, Oman, Egypt and Lebanon to meet on one screen. The screen that became much larger than our devices and even larger than our small communities. The social monologue workshop lasted for five days, which was enough for us to look at our surroundings with a theatrical eye".



Sarah Atallah, the instructor of the workshop and head of the drama department in LAPA.

Atallah said: "The correct question is not "Who is our audience? What does it want to hear?" Rather, who is our audience and what we want us to hear. Cases of repression and taboos remain silent in homes and streets, but they gain a resounding voice on stage".

She added: "The difference is big between a performing actor and a committed actor, as he studies the backgrounds of his audience and knows how to take them on a journey of deep thinking. We did not talk to the heart and emotions, we did not simulate feelings and sentiments, but rather we communicated with the mind of the audience and told him what he was avoiding hearing. The participants 'homes were transformed into small theater spaces that included a part of their community that they chose based on a study in which it showed the location and type of oppression, the environment, its history, its anthropology, the degree of freedom of expression and the

measure of social justice in it. We ended up with a bunch of little shows, which opened big windows, to think together. If theater is not serving society, then it should not be".

Abdul Aziz Al-Jumaili, one of the trainees, said about the workshop: "We are continuing this journey of knowledge led by LAPA towards a bright theater future. The social monologue workshop was one of the most beautiful parts of this journey. Ms. Sarah Atallah wrote for us, as well as a tremendous knowledge of every minute of the workshop. The workshop gave me a great opportunity to present an issue that was very important to me. I can say that this workshop enlightened me about many social aspects and many issues that I did not know about before".

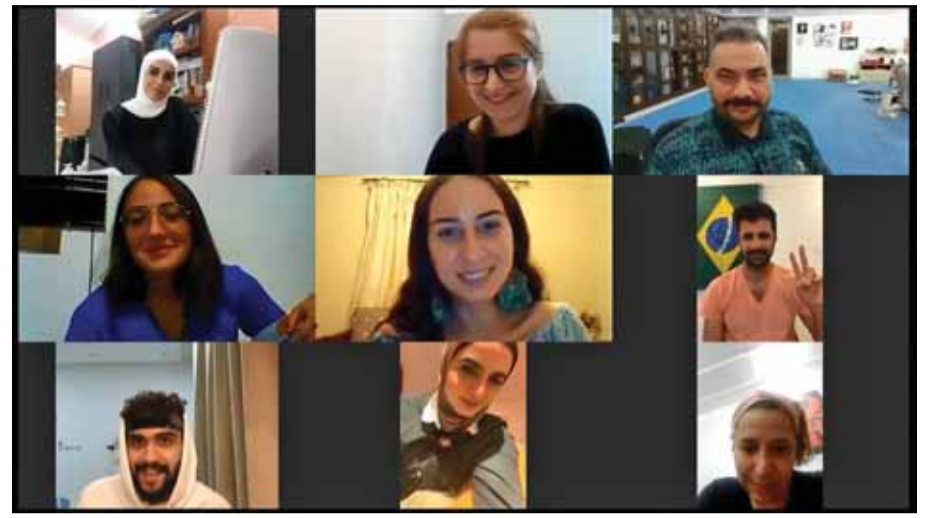
As for Farah Al-Hajli, she said: "Despite the many of our concerns and issues, social theater has not received a

wide reputation like other types of theater, especially in our Arab society. This is because it focuses on the pain that we avoid even recognizing, and that is its strength! in this rich workshop, We discovered the social Theater in practical application with the wonderful Sarah Atallah, who carried the lamp of awareness and knowledge and took us to its world, which is our reality.

Essam Al-Kazemi said: "Despite the short duration of the workshop, the distinguished artist, Sarah Atallah, was able, as usual, to enrich us with practical applications accompanied by theoretical doses of knowledge drawn from the experiences of world-class dramatists such as Augusto Boal, the pioneer of the oppressed theater and Brecht. This wonderful workshop is important for every theater artist who carries a human concern. I hope that LAPA will reintroduce it again and add more levels to produce theatrical works presented to the public".

Actress Abeer Yahya said: "The wonderful trainer Sarah Atallah was able, through the social monologue workshop, to provoke us and motivate us to come out with a social monologue on paper and then on the virtual stage through the zoom experience. The trainer was interested in all the details and delicacies of writing the script, performance and accessories to directing."

On his part, Abdul-Malik Al-Shizawi said: "My benefit from the workshop was great despite its short duration, and this is due to the distinction of Mrs. Sarah



Excerpts from the Social Monologue workshop via the Zoom app.

Atallah, since its completion I have been working on a broader experience in the social theater because it is the window of society to the oppression that he is experiencing."

Hessa Al-Abbad said: "The workshop was a wonderful and interesting task, and this was confirmed by the final projects that were different and varied in raising social issues. What made me look forward to participating in work that belongs to the social theater and to integrate decoration and costumes in it according to my professional specialization and what I learned from the workshop."

Hamid Al-Balushi said: "The workshop was an opportunity to learn about

the social theater in text, acting and directing with the instructor Sarah Atallah, who was able to communicate the information in a series of ways that benefited and pleased us."

In conclusion, the participants thanked the instructor Sarah Atallah, who introduced them to the social theater, and LAPA for the great efforts made during the second theater retreat, wishing that the world would recover from the Corona crisis and that the next retreat would be on the stage and under its lights.



A man in a facemask is seen on stage during The Atlanta Opera's production of "Pagliacci" in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP photos



A woman sings inside a plastic box on stage.



A man and woman sing a song separated by a plastic barrier during The Atlanta Opera's production of "Pagliacci".

'The Undoing': More murder and secrets starring Kidman, this time in NY

After the huge success of "Big Little Lies," actress Nicole Kidman is back with a new mini-series revolving around a murder among privileged white Americans—this time living in New York. There is more than one similarity between this new project, to be streamed by HBO in the United States, and "Big Little Lies," which in its first season alone garnered four Golden Globes and eight Emmy awards. To start with, it takes place in a microcosm built on wealth and carefully established social norms—a predictable world deeply shaken by the arrival of an outsider. One by one, secrets are revealed and masks fall, sweeping aside comfortable certainties.

The series marks the return of writer/producer David E. Kelley, and once again stars Nicole Kidman, who won a slew of awards for her portrayal of a woman living with domestic abuse in "Big Little Lies." Whereas "Big Little Lies" was built around an ensemble cast, the new mini-series, which debuts Sunday, centers on the character of Grace Fraser, a well-off therapist played by Kidman.



Nicole Kidman

'A Scandi-noir thriller'

Like "Big Little Lies," "The Undoing" unfolds gradually over six episodes. "So much of the series is on the psychological journey of this woman," Kidman, who co-produced both series, told Australian broadcaster Foxtel. For British star Hugh Grant, who plays Kidman's husband, the mini-series is "a Scandi-noir thriller with a massive, and I hope successful, whodunit element," as he told HBO. The Scandinavian touch comes from Danish director Susanne Bier ("Brothers" and "The Night Manager"). She gives the series a stark and disturbing aesthetic.

Grant, a veteran of highly successful rom-coms, shines here in a darker register, bristling with sharp edges—the sort of career-changing role he has embraced in recent years (see "A Very English Scandal"). But while American critics have praised the acting in "The Undoing," they have been less kind about the plotline, saying it is thin and less than compelling. Kelley, creator of a slew of hit series, from "Ally McBeal" to "Goliath," is already at work on a new project. —AFP

MASKS, PLEXIGLASS AND PUPPETS: ATLANTA TAKES OPERA TO THE COVID CIRCUS

The life-art imitation question is age-old, but if 2020 has anything to say the answer is clear: even the fictional characters of our operas have developed Covid-19. The Atlanta Opera premiered an outdoor series this week, set to run through mid-November, that features live performances of "Pagliacci" and "The Kaiser of Atlantis" under a circus tent on a baseball field, with scripts retrofitted for our virus-plagued times. In the southeastern US city's version of "Pagliacci," an 1890s opera from Ruggero Leoncavallo, the jealous clown Canio contracts coronavirus. "A world that is in the middle of a pandemic is a part of the storytelling," said Tomer Zvulun, the Atlanta Opera's director.

Performers sing and play instruments in plexiglass enclosures or wear masks, and the audience sits in four-person socially distanced pods. The unique move meets a disastrous moment for the performing arts, whose halls have been closed for months and likely won't open soon. Atlanta's normal venue fits some 2,700 people—a capacity the pandemic-friendly series can't touch. But Zvulun emphasized the strategy was less about money—in April the company slashed its \$10 million budget by 34 percent and like everyone else, anticipates losses—and more about adapting to a society in distress. "As artists we are nimble enough, we are desperate enough, we are committed enough to find a way to do what we do best and connect with a community." "We all are



People are seen in plastic boxes onstage during The Atlanta Opera's production of "Pagliacci".

very grateful for those handheld devices and TVs, but there is no replacement for live performance."

Less pristine, but relatable

It's most certainly not opera as usual: besides the masks and plastic boxes, the staging of "Pagliacci" sees new technologies onstage like Facetime deployed as well as centuries-old ones, with puppets allowing for some of the physical comedy. The tweaks might turn some purists off, but for Michael Mayes,

who plays the titular Kaiser in the run of the "Atlantis" opera, "what we're doing is incorporating something that's a major, probably permanent, part of our culture into the art form itself." "As much as you may be sacrificing some of the more pristine elements of the art form, you are giving people something they can relate to," the South Carolina-based artist told AFP.

The safety protocols are strict: performers have undergone frequent Covid-19 tests, and Mayes said he and his wife

rarely go anywhere besides rehearsals. But it's worth it, the 44-year-old said: When the self-confinement period began, the notion of singing opera at home was too painful, as he watched his career screech to a halt. "I've been in this business for 20-plus years and only in the past few have things really been viable—I've been able to do what I wanted when I wanted and without fear of going broke every day," he said. "When this thing hit, that anxiety returned in full force."

He and his wife turned to instrumental bluegrass as a "balm," and it wasn't until the Atlanta Opera came calling that he rediscovered his pipes. "I missed it terribly," Mayes said. "Being able to be a part of the ensemble that's in the community and meeting the public where they are... it's been a real bright spot." And singing behind a mask? "The sound is different, but it's just as valid," he said. "We as opera singers, who depend on the very nature of our instrument being acoustic and being unamplified and having to use our face as part of our toolkit... if we can do that, I think it's not so much to ask for folks to wear a mask when they go to the grocery store," Mayes continued. "I think it's a good example of how you can incorporate masks and things into our culture, and not always look at it as some sort of terrible impingement on our freedoms—hey, it's just part of reality now." —AFP



People wearing facemasks attend The Atlanta Opera's production of "Pagliacci".



People are seen in plastic boxes onstage.



A man sings without a facemask on while enclosed in a plastic box on stage.

Sports

Photo of the day



Luciano Benavides rides in the Empty Quarter during stage 11 of the Dakar Rally. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Rays rally for two runs in 9th to stun Dodgers 8-7

Rays rally with walkoff stunner to level World Series

ARLINGTON: Brett Phillips's single scored two runs and the Tampa Bay Rays walked off with a stunning 8-7 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers Saturday that knotted the World Series at two games apiece. The Rays became the first team in post-season history to homer in four straight innings, but they trailed 7-6 heading into the bottom of the ninth. With two out and two on, Phillips - who entered the game in the eighth as a pinch runner - was down to his last strike in the ninth when he singled to right center field off Dodgers closing pitcher Kenley Jansen and Kevin Kiermaier scored from second base.

Randy Arozarena racing from first, rounded third after the ball bounced off the glove of Dodgers outfielder Chris Taylor. Arozarena tripped between third and home and looked done for, but Dodgers catcher Will Smith bobbled the throw to the plate and Arozarena was able to scramble forward and throw himself headfirst across the plate in time. "Golly, what a special moment," said Phillips, who last got a hit in the Rays' 58th game of the regular season on September 25. "I am having a hard time putting my emotions into words," Phillips said. "Baseball is fun."

Kiermaier called the ending - which sent the Rays into a frenzy of celebration on Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, "truly incredible." Arozarena notched a record-breaking ninth home run of the post-season. Kiermaier, Hunter Renfroe and Brandon Lowe also homered for the Rays, who are seeking the first World Series title in franchise history. The Dodgers, back in the World Series for a third time in four years after disappointments in 2017 and 2018, are seeking their seventh title-but a first since 1988.

"This is certainly a tough one," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "They were the best team all year in the American League. They are not going to give anything away. We've got to regroup and get ready for tomorrow." The spectacular ending, capped a tense back-and-forth battle with a World Series record eighth straight half-innings with a run scored. Justin Turner and Corey Seager homered for the Dodgers. Seager's was his eighth of the playoffs, temporarily tying the single post-season record until Arozarena notched his ninth in the fourth frame. For the second game in a row Turner got things rolling with a solo homer in the first inning.

Seager added a solo shot in the top of the third that put the Dodgers up 2-0, but Arozarena pulled back a run in the bottom of the fourth with a lead-



ARLINGTON: Randy Arozarena #56 of the Tampa Bay Rays slides into home plate during the ninth inning to score the game winning run to give his team the 8-7 victory against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game Four of the 2020 MLB World Series on October 24, 2020. —AFP

off blast to right centerfield off a 95 mph fastball from Julio Urias. Los Angeles stretched the lead to 3-1 in the fifth when Seager singled off Rays relief pitcher Pete Fairbanks and reached second on a wild pitch. With two outs in the inning Max Muncy reached first on a sharp line drive to right field that scored Seager. The Rays responded with a home run from Renfroe to cut the margin to one run in the bottom of the fifth.

Two-run double

The Dodgers pushed the lead back to two in the top of the sixth when Enrique Hernandez fired a double down the left field line that scored two. But Lowe

- the two-homer hero of the Rays' game-two victory - put the Rays in front for the first time with a three-run blast off Dodgers reliever Pedro Baez in the bottom of the sixth. In the seventh, Dodgers pinch-hitter Joe Pederson came up with the bases loaded and two out and delivered a two-run single that put Los Angeles back in front.

All seven Dodgers runs came with two outs - continuing a trend for them this series. The Rays however, wouldn't be denied, Kiermaier's homer off Baez knotting the score at 6-6. "We have no quit," Kiermaier said. "We have been doing that all year. We've been the comeback kids. To do it on the big stage makes it that much sweeter." —AFP

Stade de France due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Wayne Pivac's visitors lost a fourth straight international for the first time since the summer of 2016. They will host Scotland in the Six Nations, which had been put on hold since March due to the Covid-19 outbreak, in seven days' time. The match had been at risk of not being played at all due to player release issues between the French federation and the Top 14 league with Fabien Galthie's side only meeting up six days before the match.

"We won the match with one training session in the week and we scored five tries against the Welsh. It's not nothing," Galthie told France Televisions. "Before saying there are things we can improve on I'm very happy to have managed to start like this after such a long time away," he added. Pivac said his players lacked match practice ahead of the fixture with some only playing three

The six-time world champion, who had trailed the Finn in all three practice sessions and in the two opening parts of qualifying, reeled off a stunning best lap in one minute and 16.652 seconds at the new Algarve International Circuit. It was enough to outpace the Finn by 0.102 seconds and, as so often this year, to deliver heartbreak again after the pair had swapped from soft to medium tyres for their final runs. Hamilton's ninth pole of the season sets him up to move clear of Michael Schumacher's 14-year-old record of 91 race wins which he equalled in the Eifel Grand Prix at Nurburgring last time out.

"It's amazing, I can't tell you how hard that was today," said Hamilton. "I guess we have a great car, but you have to drive the nuts off it to pull out a lap." After a delay for repairs to drain covers around the circuit, the session began in warm sunshine and near-perfect conditions on

regional games. "We were very rusty. We came out of lockdown without a lot of big rugby played," Pivac said. "We need to make sure we come out with less mistakes and we left a couple of tries out there so we need to be a little bit more clinical," he added.

Galthie made three changes from loss to Scotland in March as Teddy Thomas, Vincent Rattiez and Cyril Baille replaced the injured Damian Penaud, centre Arthur Vincent and the retired Jefferson Poirot. Pivac's captain Alun Wyn Jones equalled former New Zealand skipper Richie McCaw's record of 148 Test appearances as hooker Sam Parry and winger Louis Rees-Zammit were handed international debuts from the bench. Pivac's men opened the scoring in quick fashion as Leigh Halfpenny crossed for his 15th Test try on 60 seconds after Gregory Alldritt dropping Dan Biggar's kick-off. —AFP

the slippery, newly-surfaced track. The Mercedes pair did battle throughout while Max Verstappen, who ended up in third for Red Bull, tried and failed to break up the F1 duopoly.

'Digging and digging'

Hamilton had gone out ahead of Bottas for the final session and took advantage by taking two flying laps, the second completed after the flag fell producing his clincher. "Valtteri has been so quick this weekend. He's topped every session so I've just been digging and digging and digging - trying to find that extra time," added Hamilton. "At the end, I chose to do three laps to give me a chance to have a stab and beat his time and I think he decided to do one so I was like 'ok, this could provide me with an opportunity' and it worked." —AFP

News in brief

Union seize first in the East

LOS ANGELES: Sergio Santos recorded a hat trick and Andre Blake collected his eighth shutout as the Philadelphia Union seized first place in the MLS Eastern Conference with a 5-0 rout of Toronto FC on Saturday. Jamiro Monteiro tallied a goal and an assist, Mark McKenzie scored a goal and Kacper Przybylko and Kai Wagner added two assists each for Philadelphia, who stretched their unbeaten streak to five straight and are 7-0 at home on the season. The Union and Toronto each have 41 points, but the Union are in first thanks to a better goal differential. Philadelphia are now 12-3-5 on the season. Toronto FC had their nine-game unbeaten streak snapped and dropped to 12-3-5. Philadelphia dominated play in the first half as Przybylko had a great scoring chance in the sixth minute but his header went just wide. —AFP

Wellens wins Vuelta stage 5

SABINANIGO: Belgian rider Tim Wellens outsprinted Frenchman Guillaume Martin to take the fifth stage of the Vuelta a Espana on Saturday, as defending champion Primoz Roglic finished fourth to retain the overall lead. Wellens of Lotto-Soudal and Martin of Cofidis were part of a long breakaway on the 184.4km ride from Huesca to Sabinanigo. Jumbo-Visma's Roglic outkicked the rest of the chasing pack on the short climb to the finish. "Feels supergood," said Wellens, who was forced out of the Tour de France after a training crash in late August. "I had a difficult period with a big crash and I needed to find for a long, long time my good legs," he said. "I was a little scared before I came to the Vuelta." Martin and Wellens were part of a three man break with Dutchman Thymen Arensman of Sunweb. "We went away with three we were all supergood together," said Wellens. —AFP

Chen wins 4th straight gold

LOS ANGELES: Nathan Chen captured his fourth consecutive ISU Skate America title on Saturday, easily beating a depleted field in Las Vegas that was limited to United States-based athletes because of the coronavirus pandemic. The reigning men's singles world champion scored 299.15 points to beat out Palo Alto's Vincent Zhou, who finished with 275.10 points. Keegan Messing, who lives in Alaska but has dual US-Canadian citizenship, placed third at 266.42 points. There were no fans in attendance at the Orleans Arena, just off the Vegas strip. Strict health and safety guidelines were in place and just a handful of overseas skaters took part because of the coronavirus pandemic. Chen said afterwards that he was not happy with his free skate performance despite beating the domestic field by a wide margin. —AFP

Richmond win AFL grand final

BRISBANE: Defending champions Richmond Tigers crushed Geelong Cats to win the Australian Football League grand final on Saturday, culminating the sport's most turbulent and unpredictable season in decades. World number one tennis star and staunch Tigers fan Ashleigh Barty handed skipper Trent Cotchin the trophy after Richmond won 12.9 (81) to 7.8 (50) for their third title in four years. "Credit to the boys, they just continue to show the resilience that we know they can," said Cotchin. "We came out here (Queensland) something like 110 days ago treating it like an adventure and it's been one hell of an adventure. To finish off like this is simply outstanding." Both clubs are from Victoria and ordinarily the decider of Australia's most popular spectator sport would be played at the cavernous Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of 100,000 fans. —AFP

Six Nations title showdown

DUBLIN: Two tries from debutant Hugo Keenan helped put Ireland a bonus point win away from the Six Nations title after beating Italy 50-17 at an empty Lansdowne Road on Saturday. The 24-year-old wing scored his brace in the first-half to settle the hosts' nerves and they went on to achieve their aim of a bonus point win against a spirited Italy. The Irish will need to repeat that against France next Saturday in Paris to assure themselves of the title. Ireland top the table with a point advantage over England and France. If the title comes down to points difference they may rue conceding a late try to the visitors. "There was a lot of good play today," said captain Johnny Sexton. "However, France are an outstanding team and we have our work cut out. I don't know if we will rue that try at the end but we cannot go back and look at everything. We would have snapped your hand off for that result. He added: "If anyone can do it (a bonus point win in Paris) we can." —AFP

Zverev overpowers Sinner

COLOGNE: Top seed Alexander Zverev reached his second final in the space of a week in Cologne with a clinical 7-6(3) 6-3 victory over Italian wild card Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals of the bett1HULKS Championship on Saturday. The German world number seven claimed his first ATP crown of the year after besting Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3 6-3 to win the bett1HULKS Indoor title at the same venue last Sunday. Zverev, who was beaten by Sinner in the French Open last-16, made the more nervy start and soon found himself trailing 3-1 in the opening set. "I was playing a player I just lost to at Roland Garros. That was still in the back of my head. I was not going to lose today," Zverev said. The German broke Sinner in the seventh game and drew level at 4-4, but neither player was able to hold serve again as the set headed to a tiebreak, where Zverev's booming forehand came to the fore as he sealed the opener. —Reuters



Germany's Alexander Zverev

France beat Wales before Six Nations showdown

PARIS: France scrum-half Antoine Dupont scored twice in his side's 38-21 victory over Wales on Saturday ahead of next weekend's final round of the Six Nations. Dupont crossed before the interval thanks to superb play from Virimi Vakatawa on both occasions as Les Bleus prepared for Saturday's potential title decider with Ireland, which will also be played behind closed doors at the

Record-seeking Hamilton grabs dramatic late pole

PORTIMAO: Lewis Hamilton claimed a thrilling last-gasp pole position on Saturday to give him the perfect launchpad for his bid to win a record 92nd Formula One race in Sunday's Portuguese Grand Prix. In denying his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas in the final seconds of qualifying, Hamilton moved to within three of his 100th career pole as his team claimed its 12th pole from as many races this season.

Sports

'Rough diamond' Lukaku gets Inter back on track

Sampdoria shock Atalanta 3-1

MILAN: Antonio Conte hailed Romelu Lukaku's progress since joining Inter Milan last season as the Belgian scored his seventh goal this campaign in a 2-0 Serie A win over Genoa. Second half strikes from Belgium striker Lukaku and Danilo D'Ambrosio put Conte's Inter third, ahead of Atalanta who fell 3-1 to Sampdoria. "Romelu is now a different player, compared to a year ago, he's improved in every respect," said Conte after Inter bounced back after a 2-1 derby defeat to AC Milan and a 2-2 Champions League stalemate with Borussia Mönchengladbach.

"In the past, I said that he was a rough diamond, which is why he was always someone I wanted to work with. "He's improving on a daily basis and adding quality to his game. "He's also scoring on a consistent basis." After being on the back foot in the first half, Conte brought reinforcements off the bench, with Nicolò Barella coming on for Christian Eriksen and Achraf Hakimi replacing Ivan Perisic, just hours after the Moroccan defender tested negative for coronavirus.

Barella set up former Manchester United forward Lukaku to open the scoring with his fifth league goal this season in the 64th minutes, with his other two coming against Mönchengladbach. D'Ambrosio nodded in the second with 10 minutes to go. "We controlled the match from the very beginning," added Conte. Inter move up to third, two points behind leaders AC Milan, who host Roma on Monday, and one point ahead of Atalanta, fourth after a second straight defeat. Atalanta are level on points with Claudio Ranieri's Sampdoria who followed up wins over Fiorentina and Lazio with an impressive victory in Bergamo.

"I told the lads I wanted to see courage against Lazio and Atalanta," said Ranieri. "We gradually

gained confidence and were ready when the opportunities came." Fabio Quagliarella opened the scoring after a quarter of an hour with his fourth goal in as many games, but the veteran striker was denied a second from the penalty spot. Danish midfielder Morten Thorsby added a second before the hour mark, with Jakub Jankto sealing the points in injury time. Colombian striker Duvan Zapata had halved the deficit for Atalanta with 10 minutes to go from the penalty spot.

'Construction site'

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta scored 13 goals in their first three matches, but have now conceded seven in two games after losing 4-1 at Napoli last weekend. "There are games where the coach feels responsible for the result. Today I did a bit of experimenting, it was a sort of construction site," said Gasperini. "You want to bring in new players but when you play at high levels you can't do too many experiments." After their loss in Naples, Atalanta had opened their Champions League campaign with a 4-0 win at Danish club Midtjylland. Gasperini made seven changes to his side with Sam Lammers and Josip Ilicic starting, the latter playing at home for the first time in over three months.

Atalanta captain Papu Gomez was denied an early goal, before Mikkel Damsgaard set up Quagliarella to score. A Johan Mojica handball gave Sampdoria the chance for a second but Marco Sportiello kept out Quagliarella's effort from the spot. Thorsby got his head to a Jankto cross for Sampdoria's second before Zapata revived home hopes, converting his penalty after Keita Balde fouled the Colombian. Senegalese Keita made up for his error, sending Jankto through on goal to net



GENOA: Inter Milan's Belgian forward Romelu Lukaku (left) fights for the ball with Genoa's Italian defender Mattia Bani during the Italian Serie A football match Genoa vs Inter Milan at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium in Genoa on October 24, 2020. —AFP

a third two minutes into injury time.

In Rome, Lazio got their first home win this season, 2-1 against Bologna, thanks to goals from Luis Alberto and Ciro Immobile, who is now the second highest goalscorer in Lazio's history. Luis Alberto's stunning solo run through from midfield put Lazio ahead after 54 minutes and Immobile

headed in from close range with a quarter of an hour to go to score his 128th Lazio goal, one more than iconic forward Beppe Signori. Lorenzo De Silvestri pulled one back in injury time before Bologna fell to their fourth defeat in five games. Champions Juventus play at home against Verona on Sunday. —AFP

Ajax set Eredivisie record, hammer Venlo 13-0

VENLO: Ajax broke their own 48-year Eredivisie record on Saturday when they hammered Venlo 13-0 in the biggest ever win in the history of the division. Lassina Traore struck five times as the defending champions outdid Johan Cruyff's Ajax, whose 12-1 win over Vitesse Arnhem had stood as the top flight's record win since May 1972 — the season the Amsterdam club won the league title and the second of their four European Cups.

Traore became the first Ajax player to score five goals in an Eredivisie game since Marco van Basten in 1985 as his team racked up more goals in this match than they had in their five other league matches.

The 19-year-old's goals were his first of the league campaign and put him one behind Feyenoord's Steven Berghuis who tops the scoring charts, and he also set up three for his teammates. Afterwards, Traore said Ajax's midweek 1-0 loss to Liverpool in the Champions League "made us angry" and hungry to atone against Venlo.

"We have respect for them, but once on the field we gave everything and became even angrier," he told public broadcaster NOS. Ajax coach Erik Ten Hag agreed: "You don't see this type of result in the

Eredivisie. It's very special. "We were hungry in the field. We wanted to score goals—and I'm fine with that." The huge win puts Ten Hag's Ajax top of the division, two points ahead of PSV Eindhoven and three in front of third-placed Vitesse. Those two face off at Sunday lunchtime. Feyenoord and Twente, who lost 2-1 to Utrecht on Saturday, are four points back.

'Pour concrete over it'

Venlo are in mid-table on five points with a goal difference of -13 after conceding more than half of all the goals scored against them this season in just one match. They have not won since the opening day of the season. "All we can do is pick up the pieces tomorrow," Venlo coach Hans de Koning told reporters. "This is a game we want to bury deep underground and pour concrete over."

Jürgen Ekkelenkamp gave Ajax the lead after 13 minutes when he touched home Traore's close-range header. The Burkina Faso international turned from provider to finisher four minutes later when he headed home Antony's curling cross. Traore had the easiest of tap-ins to make it 3-0 in the 32nd minute, and Dusan Tadic ended the match as a contest a minute before the break when he span on the edge of the area and forced a low shot home. Venlo centre back Christian Kum was handed a straight red card six minutes after the break with his team four goals down, and soon after the floodgates opened.

Traore completed his hat-trick two minutes later and Ajax then scored three times in four minutes through Antony, Ekkelenkamp and Daley Blind.

clear of Lille, although the northerners can reclaim first place by beating Nice on Sunday.

The reigning champions were missing nine players due to injury or suspension, including Angel di Maria and Marco Verratti, while Mbappe was rested at kick-off ahead of a trip to Turkey to play Istanbul Basaksehir on Wednesday. In a game played behind closed doors in the French capital because of the health crisis, Kean came in and converted a Mitchel Bakker cross to open the scoring in the third minute. Neymar then headed against the post before setting up Kean's second goal midway through the first half.

Released on the counter-attack by Julian Draxler, Neymar ran half the length of the field with the ball before leaving Kean with an easy finish. PSG lost Draxler to injury in the second half before Mbappe replaced Kean and ran onto a Neymar pass to make it 3-0 eight minutes from time. In the 88th minute Neymar produced a lovely pass to pick out Pablo Sarabia, who teed up Mbappe to seal the win. Marseille won 1-0 at Lorient earlier with a second-half goal from Argentine defender Leonardo Balerdi



VENLO: Ajax's Dutch forward Klaas Jan Huntelaar (2nd right) scores the 0-11 goal during the Dutch Eredivisie football match between VVV Venlo and Ajax Amsterdam at De Koel stadium in Venlo, south-eastern Netherlands, on October 24, 2020. Ajax won 13-0 against VVV Venlo, the biggest victory in the history of the Dutch championship. —AFP

Antony laid on a headed goal for Traore that was an almost carbon copy of his first in the 65th minute and substitute Klaas-Jan Huntelaar scored the 10th from the spot with 16 minutes remaining before tapping home his second two minutes later. It only took another two minutes for demoralized Venlo to concede a 12th. Lisandro Martinez strolling forward and curling home a smooth finish. Traore completed the destruction with three minutes remaining when he lashed home his fifth on the counter. —AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar is fouled during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Dijon at the Parc de Princes stadium in Paris on October 24, 2020. —AFP

moving them up to fourth just behind Rennes, who lost 2-1 at home to Angers on Friday. Andre Villas-Boas's side host Manchester City in the Champions League on Tuesday. —AFP

into the break with a 22-0 lead. But the Panthers refused to go away and powered back into contention in the second stanza. "It's a great feeling, but jeez, we did it the hard way there," said Smith.

"As an organization and a team we have admired what Penrith have done this year, to win 17 in a row is a special effort on top of what everyone's been through this year." "You've got to give credit to Penrith," he added. "But I'm just really proud of this (Storm) squad. We haven't been home for five months and it's a remarkable effort to be here tonight and get a victory."

In was their fourth premiership, having also won in 1999, 2012 and 2017. They were triumphant in 2007 and 2009 but the titles were stripped from the club because it breached salary cap rules. The final culminated a rollercoaster season with the 16-club league suspended after just two rounds in March due to the pandemic. Cash-strapped but hugely popular, the sport rolled out an emergency rescue package to ensure all clubs could stay afloat and play finally resumed in late May behind closed doors with teams in bio-secure bubbles. —AFP

News in brief

Atletico Madrid see off Betis

MADRID: Atletico Madrid beat Real Betis 2-0 at home on Saturday in La Liga thanks to goals from Marcos Llorente and Luis Suarez after coach Diego Simeone sprung a double change at halftime. Llorente put Atletico in front at the start of the second half, tearing into the box from the left wing and tucking the ball inside the near post from a tight angle. Betis had played well in the first half and dominated the ball. However, Atletico took control of the game after Simeone hauled off Lucas Torreira and Thomas Lemar for Yannick Carrasco and Hector Herrera for the second period, instantly giving the team more pace and purpose in midfield. The visitors were reduced to 10 men with 20 minutes remaining when Martin Montoya was sent off for hauling down Carrasco. The referee initially gave the defender a booking before he revised the play in a VAR review and changed it to a straight red card. —Reuters

Reading go five points clear

LONDON: Reading moved five points clear at the top of the English Championship after a 3-0 victory over Rotherham on Saturday while Bristol City climbed to second. Norwich are into the top six courtesy of a last-gasp winner against Wycombe and Stoke saw off last season's beaten play-off finalists Brentford 3-2. Yakou Meite struck in either half and Lucas Joao added a late third from the penalty spot at the Madejski to preserve Reading's unbeaten start to the season in the league. Bristol City are one place below them after Nahki Wells' late spot-kick secured a 1-1 draw against Swansea. Jamal Lowe's 51st-minute goal put the Swans in control at Ashton Gate but Wells made no mistake from the spot in the 83rd minute. Chris Mepham netted deep into stoppage time to secure Bournemouth a 1-1 draw against Watford in a battle between two sides relegated from the Premier League last season. —AFP

Exeter beat Wasps 19-13

LONDON: Exeter Chiefs completed a momentous double when they beat Wasps 19-13 in a rain-lashed arm-wrestle of a Premiership final in a near-empty Twickenham on Saturday a week after winning the European Champions Cup. In appalling conditions of relentless rain and swirling wind where the only noise in the 82,000-capacity ground came from the hyper-vocal squad members of both teams, the match featured two first-half tries but was eventually decided by the goalkicking of ice-cool 23-year-old Chiefs captain Joe Simmonds. Exeter join Saracens, Wasps and Leicester as the fourth English team to complete the double. It was their fifth successive appearance in the English club final and their second victory, after three defeats by Saracens and another win over Wasps in 2017. All in all, an amazing achievement for a club playing in the Championship 10 years ago. —Reuters

Women's Big Bash League

SYDNEY: Defending champions Brisbane Heat and a clinical Adelaide Strikers posted commanding victories as Australia's Twenty20 women's Big Bash League started yesterday on a wet Sydney day that caused havoc. Grace Harris (53) and Georgia Redmayne (37 not out) steered Heat past the Perth Scorchers' 132 for seven with 18 balls to spare for a seven-wicket win. It was seen as an upset given the world's top-ranked T20 batswoman Beth Mooney defected from Brisbane to a new-look Scorchers this season, seemingly weakening their chances of another title. South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt was the Strikers' hero, smashing an unbeaten 51 from 42 balls to power her side to an eight-wicket thrashing of the Hobart Hurricanes. A hostile Darcie Brown took 3-13 to skittle Hobart for just 84 and leave her team with a comfortable run chase, which they easily managed despite missing West Indies captain Stafanie Taylor, who is still in coronavirus quarantine after a late arrival in Australia. —AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

| ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Brighton & Hove Albion v West Brom | 20:30 |
| beIN Sports HD 2 | |
| Burnley v Tottenham Hotspur | 23:00 |
| beIN Sports HD 2 | |
| SPANISH LEAGUE | |
| Levante v Celta de Vigo | 23:00 |
| beIN Sports | |
| ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE | |
| AC Milan v AS Roma | 22:45 |
| beIN Sports HD 1 | |
| GERMAN BUNDESLIGA | |
| Bayer 04 Leverkusen v Augsburg | 22:30 |
| beIN Sports | |

Storm cling on to beat Panthers and win NRL final

SYDNEY: Veteran skipper Cameron Smith bagged 14 points as Melbourne Storm held off a desperate late surge to scrap past Penrith Panthers 26-20 and win the Australian rugby league grand final yesterday. Both sides scored four tries in front of 40,000 socially distanced fans at ANZ Stadium in Sydney—the maximum allowed under coronavirus restrictions—as Storm snapped Penrith's 17-game winning streak.

Smith, 37, was at the heart of the action in his 430th National Rugby League game—potentially his last amid speculation he could call it quits. He nailed three conversions and two penalties, and scored a try as the Storm took an early stranglehold, going

14 Rays rally for two runs in 9th to stun Dodgers 8-7



15 Ajax set Eredivisie record, hammering Venlo 13-0



15 Kean, Mbappe send PSG top: Lens game called off



Record-breaking Hamilton in dreamland

Lewis Hamilton usurps Schumacher with record 92nd F1 win



PARIS: A combination of photos shows the 92 victories held by British Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton from June 10, 2007 to October 25, 2020. Lewis Hamilton became Formula One's record all-time race-winner yesterday when he claimed his 92nd victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix. — AFP

PORTIMAO: Lewis Hamilton said he was in dreamland yesterday after powering to victory in the Portuguese Grand Prix to become Formula One's record all-time race winner. His 92nd win lifted him one clear of seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher's 16-year-old record of 91 wins and opened up a 77-point lead ahead of Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who finished second, in the title race. With five races remaining in the coronavirus-affected season, Hamilton is within reach of a record-equaling seventh championship and a record-increasing 100th pole position.

"I only ever dreamed of being where I am today," he said after the race and a long hug with

his father Anthony, who managed his early career. "I didn't have a magic ball when I chose to come here (Mercedes) - and all we have ever tried to do is make the most of it every single day. We are all rowing in the same direction. "I have got my dad here which is amazing and my step-mum Linda-and Roscoe (his dog) - so it's a very special day. It's going to take time to sink in, but I was still pushing coming across the line. "Even now, I am still in race mode mentally so I can't find the words right now to describe my emotions at the moment... Maybe I will be able to later on."

On team radio he emotionally told Mercedes that it was "such an honor to work with you" and his race engineer Peter 'Bono' Bonnington replied,

saying: "It's the same here, an honor, genuinely." After the race, he added: "I really owe it all to these guys for their teamwork, continually innovating and pushing the barrier ever higher every year. "It's such a privilege working with them. It really is absolutely incredible. "Thanks to everyone for continually pushing, no one is sitting back, everyone is pushing. It's the most incredible thing to be surrounded by these guys, it really inspires you-the collaboration-there is nothing like it."

Hamilton defies cramp

He had cramp, he said, in his right calf in the closing stages of the race. "Lifting my foot down the straight, it was pretty painful. I could feel it pull,

but I had to get through it. It is what it is." His Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff, who has helped guide Hamilton to five of his world titles and the team to an unprecedented six in a row, said: "Who would've thought when we started this project in 2013? It's almost a surreal number of wins. "From Lewis, it's his absolute passion and energy and its everything he puts into the sport - and the talent and the ability. He's just standing out." Bottas said: "The opening lap was good, I was really pleased to get the lead, but after that I just had no pace and I don't understand why. "I tried to defend, but Lewis was close and there was nothing really that I could do... I was just off the pace. The start was my high point today." — AFP

Saints end Everton's unbeaten start 2-0

LONDON: Southampton ended Everton's unbeaten start to the season as goals from James Ward-Prowse and Che Adams sealed a 2-0 win against the Premier League leaders yesterday. Everton had gone eight games without defeat in all competitions this term, but they paid the price for a lethargic display at St Mary's. Carlo Ancelotti's side fell behind to Ward-Prowse's first-half goal and Adams doubled their lead before the interval. Everton left-back Lucas Digne was sent off for a dangerous challenge on Kyle Walker-Peters in the second half despite his claims he tripped when he stood on the Southampton defender's heel.

Without the suspended Richarlison and injured Seamus Coleman after the stormy Merseyside derby draw with Liverpool last weekend, Everton lacked the drive and quality that had been the hallmark of their strong start to the campaign. They remain above champions Liverpool on goal difference after a result that should serve as a reality check. Southampton have now only lost twice in 13 league matches and climbed within three points of first place. An entertaining encounter got off to a fast start when Danny Ings picked out Ryan Bertrand and his pass found Nathan Redmond for a shot that whistled past the post.

Everton's first serious threat came from Alex Iwobi as the former Arsenal winger forced a

good stop from Alex McCarthy. Gylfi Sigurdsson went even closer with a blistering 20-yard drive that cannoned off the crossbar with McCarthy grasping at thin air. Jordan Pickford was in action for the first time since his ugly tackle on Virgil van Dijk left the Liverpool defender with a serious knee injury. Pickford had been subjected to vicious abuse on social media, but Ancelotti refused to take the error-prone keeper out of the spotlight.

Pickford made a good save to deny Oriol Romeu's blast, but the England international had no chance when Ward-Prowse put Southampton ahead in the 27th minute. Ward-Prowse passed into Ings, who returned the ball to the midfielder, who took one touch before firing into the far corner for his first goal of the season. Adams doubled Southampton's lead eight minutes later when Ings' rampaged past Ben Godfrey and Yerry Mina before lofting a cross to his strike partner, whose shot deflected off Sigurdsson on its way past Pickford.

Southampton were in complete control. Stuart Armstrong had a strike disallowed for offside just before half-time. Everton had never won a Premier League game when they trailed by two or more goals at half-time. The visitors were marginally better in the second half, but James Rodriguez wasn't having his usual influence on Everton's play and their attacking threat was neutered. Ings almost made it three from Armstrong's cross, but couldn't make strong enough contact. Everton's last hope vanished in the 72nd minute when Digne was dismissed for his awkward foul on Walker-Peters. — AFP

MMA's champion Nurmagomedov in shock retirement

PARIS: MMA world lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov announced his shock retirement from the sport on Saturday after revealing he "promised his mother" that his clash with Justin Gaethje would be his last fight. The Russian, who won by a second-round technical knockout, was fighting for the first time since the death of his father and coach Abdulmanap in July. "I'm the UFC undisputed, undefeated champion with a 13-0 record (in UFC), and 29-0 in all of my pro MMA career," he said after his win in Abu Dhabi.

"Today I want to say this is my last fight. No way am I coming here without my father. When UFC comes to me about Justin I spoke with my mother for three days. "She didn't want me to fight without father and I said this is my last fight - and I have given her my word. He added: "Thank you so much Justin. I know you are great, I know how you take care of your people. Be close with your parents, because you never know what is going to happen tomorrow. Thank you coach, thank you guys. Today is my last fight in the UFC."

"It was my father's dream. Justin and Conor (McGregor) will fight in January, I have choked both out, I am not interested in this." Abdulmanap Nurmagomedov, 57, passed away after suffering complications from Covid-19 in the summer. Long time rival McGregor of Ireland, who lost to Nurmagomedov in 2018, was amongst the first to congratulate the 32-year-old Russian on his career. "I will carry on. Respect and condolences on your father



MAKHACHKALA: In this file photo, UFC lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov of Russia raises his champions belt upon the arrival in Makhachkala. — AFP

again also. To you and family. Yours sincerely, The McGregors," he tweeted.

UFC president Dana White joined the tributes and revealed at a news conference as Fight Island ended that Nurmagomedov had broken his foot in the build-up to Saturday's event. "What this guy's been through, we're all lucky we got to see him fight tonight," said White. "Apparently he was in the hospital. He broke his foot three weeks ago. So he has two broken toes and a bone in his foot that's broken - that's what his corner was telling me. Never told anybody. "He is one of the toughest human beings on the planet and he's the number-one pound-for-pound fighter in the world and, seriously, you have to start putting him up there with GOAT (greatest of all time) status with whoever else you think is the GOAT." American Gaethje, 31, is now 22-3 in his career in UFC. — AFP