



HAPPY WAALI DIWALI

FREE 1 GM 22K GOLD COIN
ON PURCHASE OF DIAMOND, POLKI & PEARL JEWELLERY WORTH KD 250

FREE .200 GM 22K GOLD COIN
ON PURCHASE OF GOLD JEWELLERY WORTH KD 250
(On 12th, 13th, 14th & 15th November 2020)

OLD GOLD EXCHANGE
SELL/EXCHANGE GOLD JEWELLERY
PURCHASED FROM ANY JEWELLER

DIWALI PRE-BOOKING AVAILABLE
PAY 10% ADVANCE & GET GUARANTEED
GOLD RATE PROTECTION UNTIL 15TH NOVEMBER 2020

OFFER VALID TILL 15TH NOVEMBER 2020

Joyalukkas
World's favourite jeweller

Kuwait City: Panasonic Tower, Tel: 22279460 • **Al Rai:** Near Lulu Hypermarket & Friday Market, Tel: 2220 2466
Dajeej: Lulu Hypermarket, Tel: 2202 1378 • **Salmiya:** Al Salam Mall, Tel: 2206 0062 • **Fahaheel:** Makkah Street, Tel: 2392 2148

Kuwait supports Palestinian cause, slams Israeli policies

UN envoy demands probe into young Palestinian's death



Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait, addressing the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), affirmed that the Palestinian cause is a "central issue" for the Arab world. Kuwait also asserted the Arab identity of East Jerusalem in line with a resolution by the latest Arab ministerial council meeting held in September. Arab states are committed to peace as a strategic option, stated Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, during a UNSC session on the Middle East, namely the Palestinian cause, on Monday evening.

They are also committed to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict according to international law, relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. On these grounds, the Palestinian people must be allowed to reclaim full legit-

imate rights and establish an independent state on their territory with East Jerusalem as its capital, Otaibi stressed in his statement during the UNSC session.

However, Israel, the occupation power, pursues its aggressive policy against the Palestinian people and keeps reminding "us frequently" that it has not backed down from its schemes to annex more lands in the West Bank, said Otaibi, noting that Israel has maintained this intransigent approach in the shadows of the coronavirus that constitutes an existential threat to humankind.

Such policies affirm anew that Israel is seeking to maintain the occupation through illegal activities, expanding and building thousands of settlement units and merging territories in explicit breach of UN Resolution 2334. Recent UN reports have affirmed that Jewish settlement activities in

the West Bank including East Jerusalem are increasing after the Israeli government gave the green light to build thousands of new illegal settlement units.

These activities coincided with violent acts by Israeli settlers against unarmed Palestinian people and demolishing Palestinian buildings and properties to erect settlements in their places, said Otaibi, noting that these breaches by settlers have deepened concerns about the safety of the Palestinians. Amid these acts, chances for the Palestinians to establish their state are fading, he said.

The UN secretary general and the higher commissioner for human rights have repeatedly affirmed that there is "an atmosphere that encourages impunity for Israeli settlers who have seized Palestinian lands,

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Patients' brains age 10 years

LONDON: People recovering from COVID-19 may suffer significant brain function impacts, with the worst cases of the infection linked to mental decline equivalent to the brain ageing by 10 years, researchers warned yesterday. A non-peer-reviewed study of more than 84,000 people found that in some severe cases, coronavirus infection is linked to substantial cognitive deficits for months. — Reuters

Asymptomatics lose antibodies

LONDON: Asymptomatic coronavirus sufferers appear to lose detectable antibodies sooner than people who have exhibited COVID-19 symptoms, according to one of the biggest studies of its kind in Britain published yesterday. The findings by Imperial College London and market research firm Ipsos Mori also suggest the loss of antibodies was slower in 18-24 year-olds compared to those aged 75 and over. — AFP

Iran virus deaths exceed 33,000

TEHRAN: Iran's official novel coronavirus fatalities crossed the 33,000 mark yesterday, the health ministry said, as the country set new records in both daily deaths and infection cases. Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said Iran had registered 346 new fatalities in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 33,299. Lari said 6,968 people tested positive for the virus yesterday. The new infections bring officially reported COVID-19 cases in the Middle East's worst-hit country to 581,824. — AFP

Fighting cock kills police chief

MANILA: A Philippine police officer was killed during a raid on an illegal cockfight after a rooster's blade sliced his femoral artery, an official said yesterday. Monday's freak accident in the central province of Northern Samar happened when Lieutenant Christian Bolok picked up a fighting cock as he gathered evidence of the unlawful event. Its blade struck his left thigh and he bled to death. Three people were arrested and two fighting cocks seized along with two sets of spurs. — AFP

45 candidates file nominations on second day

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Forty-five candidates including eight women filed their nomination papers yesterday to contest the National Assembly election on Dec 5, raising the number of hopefuls in two days to 138 including 14 females. The new candidates include five MPs in the Assembly that just ended its term and as many as eight former MPs who were members in previous assemblies.

Prominent among the candidates who registered yesterday were Deputy Speaker Issa Al-Kandari, MPs Saleh Ashour and Khaled Al-Shatti, all from the first constituency, MP Safa Al-Hashem from the third constituency and MP Nayef Al-Merdas from the fifth constituency.

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: MP Safa Al-Hashem arrives at the elections department yesterday to register as a candidate in the upcoming National Assembly elections. — KUNA

Trump buoyed by Barrett's confirmation

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's struggling reelection campaign received a boost Monday with the confirmation of his latest Supreme Court nominee, tilting the top body to the right and clinching his judicial legacy in a landmark victory for American conservatives. The Republican-controlled Senate elevated Amy Coney Barrett to the lifelong position in a 52-48 vote, capping a rapid and deeply contentious process that

makes her the sixth conservative, and third Trump appointee, on the nine-member court.

"This is a momentous day for America, for the United States Constitution and for the fair and impartial rule of law," the president, standing alongside Barrett, said before beaming lawmakers and others who had gathered on the South Lawn of the White House. Barrett, 48, assures a strong conservative judicial legacy for Trump, who has also been able to appoint dozens of young, rightwing judges to federal courts in his four years in office.

Democrats have fumed over the process that confirmed a justice so close to a presidential election, and warn that Barrett might vote to

Continued on Page 2



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump watches as Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas swears in Judge Amy Coney Barrett as a US Supreme Court associate justice, flanked by her husband Jesse Barrett, during a ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House on Monday. — AFP

Moon richer in water than once thought

PARIS: There may be far more water on the Moon than previously thought, according to two studies published Monday, raising the tantalizing prospect

that astronauts on future space missions could find refreshment - and maybe even fuel - on the lunar surface. The Moon was believed to be bone dry until around a decade ago, when a series of findings suggested that our nearest celestial neighbor had traces of water ice in permanently-shadowed craters at its polar regions.

Two new studies published in Nature Astronomy on Monday suggest water could be even more widespread, including the first confirmation that it is present even in easier-to-access sunlit areas. If this

water could be extracted, it could give astronauts travelling to the Moon and beyond access to drinking water. They might even be able to split the molecules to make rocket fuel.

That is of particular interest to NASA, which is planning a human mission to the Moon in 2024 and wants to build a sustainable presence there by the end of the decade to prepare for onward travel to Mars. The new study was able to "unambiguously" distinguish the spectral fingerprint of molecular

Continued on Page 2

Local

Amir receives State Audit Bureau's annual report



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the State Audit Bureau's 2019-2020 annual report from the bureau's President Faisal Al-Shaya. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets President of the State Audit Bureau Faisal Al-Shaya.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the State Audit Bureau's 2019-2020 annual report from the bureau's President Faisal Al-Shaya.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, at Bayan Palace yesterday, President of the State Audit Bureau Faisal Al-Shaya who presented to him the bureau's 2019-

2020 annual report. Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Chief Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah, Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan

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

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received at Bayan Palace yesterday President of the State Audit Bureau Faisal Al-Shaya, who presented to him the bureau's annual report. — KUNA

Amir receives cables from world leaders

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable of condolences from the President of Croatia Zoran Milanovic, over the demise of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In the cable, President Milanovic sent his condolences, on

behalf of the Croatian government and people to His Highness the Amir, government, and people. President Milanovic also congratulated His Highness on assumption of office, looking forward to boosting ties in all domains and wishing success for His Highness the Amir. In turn, His Highness the Amir sent a cable in which he thanked the Croatian leader, expressing appreciation to the kind words and thoughtful message, wishing him good health.

His Highness the Amir received a similar cable from President of Zambia Edgar Lungu, who expressed his condolences, on behalf of the country's government and people to His Highness the Amir, government and people of Kuwait, commend-

ing the late Amir's contributions to strengthening stability in the Middle East. In turn, His Highness the Amir sent a cable thanking Zambia leader and expressing appreciation to the kind words and thoughtful message, wishing him good health and prosperity for his people.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir received cables from President of Burkina Faso Rock Marc Christian Kabore and President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou, who congratulated him on assuming office. They also said they were looking forward to boosting ties in all domains and wished success for His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Amir thanked both presidents and commended the

excellent relations between Kuwait and their respective countries, wishing them good health and for their countries progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir also received a congratulatory cable from the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana Dr Mohammad Irfaan Ali, expressing his best regards to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf on assuming power. Guyana's leader expressed hopes that both countries continue to bolster ties between them. In turn, His Highness the Amir sent a cable thanking the Guyana leader, expressing his appreciations to the kind words and thoughtful sentiments, wishing him good health and prosperity for his people. — KUNA

Chad envoy extols Kuwait's humanitarian role

KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Chad to Kuwait Batoul Zakaria commended Kuwait's role and efforts

in all humanitarian issues in order to help those in need, whether impacted by natural or man-made disasters. After Zakaria's meeting yesterday with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, she said that Kuwaitis are racing to reach out to everyone in need, pointing out that in every forum of human concern, Kuwait steps in to help, thanks to the directives and initiatives of its wise leadership and people. She deeply thanked KRCS, which has been keen

to support the staff in the Embassy of Chad in Kuwait by providing food and health baskets. Zakaria discussed with Dr Sayer about ways to support the Chadian people, after their country was hit by floods and landslides that caused extensive destruction to lands and properties. She also discussed many topics regarding humanitarian and volunteer work and ways to strengthen them between both sides, commending KRCS' efforts at Arab and international levels. Accordingly, Dr Sayer welcomed

Zakaria's visit to KRCS' headquarters, explaining the importance of supporting the impacted people in Chad, along with African countries that were recently flood-hit. KRCS will follow-up on developments in Chad to evaluate the humanitarian situation and help, taking into consideration what is being monitored by the Chadian authorities there, he underscored. During the meeting, Dr Sayer reviewed the humanitarian and relief work provided by KRCS inside and outside Kuwait. — KUNA

Moon richer in water than...

Continued from Page 1

water in a sunlit area, said lead author Casey Honniball, of the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and Planetology.

"If we find the water is abundant enough in certain locations we may be able to use it as a resource for human exploration," Honniball, who is also a postdoctoral fellow at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, told AFP. Previous research has found indications of water on the sunlit surface - but these were unable to distinguish between water (H₂O) and hydroxyl, a molecule made up of one hydrogen atom and one oxygen atom that is a common drain cleaner on Earth.

Using data from the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) Airborne Telescope, researchers used a more precise wavelength than had been used before - 6 microns instead of 3. They found a water concentration of about 100 to 400 parts per million at Clavius crater, one of the largest to be visible from Earth.

"That's roughly equivalent to a 12 ounce (350 milliliter) bottle of water within a cubic meter of volume of lunar soil," Honniball said in a NASA press conference. These are not "puddles of water", she stressed, but scattered molecules that do not form ice or liquid water. Researchers believe they originate from solar winds or micro-meteorites and think they might either be trapped in beads of glass or within the grains of the lunar surface to protect them from the harsh atmosphere.

In the second study, researchers looked at the Moon's polar regions, where water ice has been detected in lunar craters that never see sunlight.

NASA in 2009 found water crystals in a deep crater near the Moon's southern pole. But the new study found evidence of billions of micro-craters that could each cradle a minuscule amount of ice.

"If you were standing on the Moon near one of the poles, you would see a whole 'galaxy' of little shadows speckled across the surface," said lead author Paul Hayne of the Department of Astrophysics at the University of Colorado. "Each of these tiny shadows - most of them smaller than a coin - would be extremely cold, and most of them cold enough to harbor ice." This "suggests that water could be much more widespread on the Moon than previously thought", Hayne said.

The authors say this could mean that approximately 40,000 km² of the lunar surface has the capacity to trap water. They were able to reconstruct the size and distribution of these little craters using high-resolution images and lunar temperature measurements taken from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. The micro-craters should be as cold - around -160 degrees Celsius - as the larger, kilometer-scale lunar hollows, Hayne said, adding that there are "tens of billions" of them.

Samples from these cold traps could tell us more about how the Moon - and even Earth - got its water, Hayne said, perhaps providing evidence of water delivered by asteroids, comets and the solar wind. Jacob Bleacher, chief exploration scientist for NASA's Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, said it was crucial to find out more about where the water came from and how accessible it is.

"Water is extremely critical for deep space exploration. It's a resource of direct value for our astronauts," he told reporters, adding it was heavy and therefore expensive to take from Earth. "Anytime we don't need to pack water for our trip, we have an opportunity to take other useful items with us, for instance payloads to do more science." — AFP

investigation" after a Palestinian youth died following a weekend confrontation with Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank. Amer Abdel-Rahim Sanouber was pronounced dead on Sunday morning in a Ramallah hospital after being "beaten" around the neck, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli army acknowledged that the teenager had been involved in an incident with soldiers but denied they beat him. It said soldiers had been sent on Saturday night to Turmus Ayya, a village north of Ramallah, after receiving reports that people were hurling stones at an Israeli vehicle. A Palestinian youth who said he witnessed the incident alleged Sanouber had been beaten. "They beat him for five minutes. He was shouting incessantly, then his voice stopped suddenly," he told a local television station.

In a speech to the UN Security Council, Mladenov called for an independent probe. "There are conflicting claims about the circumstances and cause of death," the UN envoy said. "I urge a prompt and independent investigation into the events that led to the death of the boy." On Twitter, the British consulate in Jerusalem urged Israel "to investigate the allegations surrounding his death". — Agencies

45 candidates file nominations...

Continued from Page 1

Other prominent candidates include former minister and MP Roudhan Al-Roudhan, who said the last National Assembly was given full opportunity to deliver but failed.

He said he plans to contest the election for the speaker of the Assembly if he wins a seat from the third constituency. Roudhan failed four years ago

Trump buoyed by Barrett's...

Continued from Page 1

overturn the landmark 1973 decision that protects abortion rights, or to gut health care provision for millions of Americans. But Barrett, who took a constitutional oath at a Monday night ceremony, said she would keep her personal beliefs and judicial work separate. "I will do my job without any fear or favor, and... I will do so independently of both the political branches and of my own preferences."

With eight days until the Nov 3 election, the confirmation marks an undeniable victory for the president to tout as he barnstorms battleground states in a final bid to claw back ground against Democrat Joe Biden. The confirmation during an election "should be a stark reminder to every American that your vote matters," Biden said in a statement late Monday.

It remains to be seen whether the confirmation can be a game-changer for the Republican president, accused by his rival of abandoning the fight against COVID-19 with polls showing voters overwhelmingly disapprove of his pandemic response. Trump denied any surrender earlier Monday as he landed in swing state Pennsylvania for a trio of rallies and insisted, despite a new surge in infections, that the pandemic is in retreat. "We're absolutely rounding the corner," he said in Allentown. But the president betrayed his frustration at the health crisis dragging on his reelection hopes, with a tweet complaining about media coverage of "COVID, COVID, COVID, all the way to the Election."

While Barrett's confirmation provided a happy distraction for Trump, the virus is ever-present. More than 225,000 Americans have died, cases are spiking in several states and hopes have dimmed that a trillion-dollar coronavirus relief package could pass Congress before election day. Jitters over the resurgent pandemic weighed on markets, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average closing 2.3 percent down in its worst session in weeks.

Trump kept his game face on as he touted his economic record, saying voters had "a choice

to retain his seat.

Former minister Bader Al-Humaidi filed to run in the second constituency, while four former opposition MPs registered their candidacy from the fifth constituency - Ahmad Al-Azemi, Humoud Al-Hamdan, Jaber Al-Azemi and Marzouk Al-Hubaini.

As many as 93 candidates registered on the opening day on Monday. Registration of candidates closes on Nov 4. Withdrawal of candidacy has started and will continue until seven days before election day. Nadia Al-Othman, who filed to run in the third constituency, called for respecting and implementing in full the constitution of Kuwait and other laws.

between a Trump super-recovery and a Biden depression". Complicating Trump's argument that America has the upper hand against the virus, his chief of staff Mark Meadows conceded Sunday that "we are not going to control the pandemic", and that the focus was now on mitigation. Meadows' comments drew a rebuke from the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who warned it was "dangerous" to give up on attempts to stamp out the virus.

Biden, meanwhile, in a surprise campaign stop Monday at a polling station in Chester, Pennsylvania, seized on the "deadly admission" from the White House. "The bottom line is, Donald Trump is the worst possible president - the worst possible person - to try to lead us through this pandemic," Biden said. Earlier, Biden said Trump was waiving "the white flag of defeat" and hoping the virus - which has set records for new cases in recent days, with nearly 90,000 on Saturday - would just go away.

Biden, 77, has mounted a far more cautious in-person campaign than Trump due to coronavirus concerns. But he said he will hit the trail in coming days, beginning yesterday in Georgia, a reliably red state that is suddenly in play, followed by battlegrounds Florida, Iowa and Wisconsin. "In 8 days, we're going to take our democracy back," tweeted the former vice president, who leads Trump in the polls both nationally and in half a dozen key battlegrounds including Pennsylvania.

As of Monday, 64 million Americans - wary of the health dangers of crowded polling booths, and energized by a race framed as critical - had cast early ballots, far surpassing the total of 58 million pre-election ballots cast in 2016. And with data showing Democrats have an edge in terms of early ballots cast, even Republican leaders have begun to recognize that Trump's presidency may be imperiled.

"A lot of what we've done over the last four years will be undone, sooner or later, by the next election," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Sunday. But on Monday, as Democrats lamented Barrett's confirmation, calling it an "unjustifiable" move that will shatter Republicans' credibility, McConnell was blunt. "You can't win 'em all," the Republican leader said in a floor speech, "and elections have consequences". — AFP

Kuwait supports Palestinian...

Continued from Page 1

making Palestinian families homeless", the senior Kuwaiti diplomat added. Moreover, the latest report by the UN secretary general has noted that the Israeli ministry of justice investigates some cases of settler attacks but refrains from condemning them.

"Such practices must prompt us now than ever to activate international mechanisms and laws to bring Israel to account for the continuing breaches of the Palestinian people's rights that are guaranteed by international laws," Otaibi called. Despite the current extraordinary circumstances throughout the world, Kuwait along with other Arab states have continued exerting efforts to face Israel's bid to take advantage of nations' preoccupation with coping with the novel coronavirus, to stop the aggression, the war and the blockade of Palestinian territories.

Meanwhile, UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov on Monday demanded an "independent

Local

Mudhawi platform backs women voters, building support for upcoming polls

‘Female candidates are as qualified as their male counterparts’

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The National Assembly elections this year are affected by the coronavirus pandemic, like all other activities. Strict rules by the health ministry banning gatherings and setting up election tents have prevented candidates from meeting voters to talk about their plans and agendas. This has led to the need for other forms of media to reach the public.

Moreover, female candidates have fewer chances than men, and their numbers are small too. To support women candidates in the upcoming elections and in other elected positions, the Mudhawi's List platform was founded. Kuwait Times interviewed three of its members: Abir Al-Mutawa, Research Director, Dalal Bouresli, Founding Member and Zainab Al-Sammak, Research Director. Some excerpts:

Kuwait Times: Tell us more about Mudhawi's List. What is the goal of the platform? How will you measure success? Where did the idea come from and how has it worked so far?

Dalal Bouresli: The idea of Mudhawi's List came after years of work with civil society organizations and realizing that it is difficult for women to run for elected office in Kuwait and succeed. Mudhawi's List is a platform that aims to support women running for elected positions in Kuwait, which includes seats in the National Assembly, Municipal Council, cooperative societies, and so on.

Mudhawi's List supports the cause through raising awareness on the importance of having women in elected office positions with studies to back it up and campaigning to normalize their existence in such positions. Furthermore, Mudhawi's List links all female candidates with in-kind donation providers that are willing to offer campaign services and support to the candidates.

As for the platform's name, we wanted to give it an identity. Mudhawi is a fictional character that was created by our team. The character Mudhawi represents a unifying figure that acts as a protective umbrella to support ambitious individuals seeking to make a change in Kuwait.

Abir Al-Mutawa: Being an online platform that launched recently, measuring success takes time. However, we are happy to say that engagement with the candidates and followers has been extraordinary. People are reacting to our platform positively and supporting it wholeheartedly, especially since we are using nostalgic content to remind people that we went through a lot to gain our political rights in 2005, so we should exercise it properly. Furthermore, female candidates started to approach Mudhawi prior to running and announcing their candidacy, which for us is a major indicator of success.

Main challenges

Kuwait Times: It seems that women candidates have struggled to gain traction with voters in Kuwait. Why do you think that is the case? What are the strengths of women candidates? What are the challenges they face?

Zainab Al-Sammak: Yes indeed, it is difficult for women candidates to gain traction with voters in Kuwait. This can be due to multiple reasons, the first being women's lack of access to connections. For example, diwaniyas are essential places for campaigning and most of them are limited to men. Furthermore, the social and public acceptance of having women in elected office is still being resisted by the majority of the population.

Additionally, financial support for women candi-



Dalal Bouresli



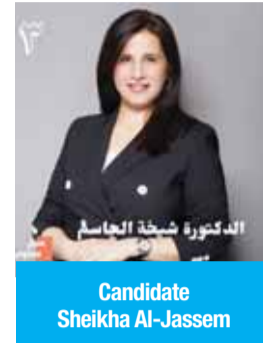
Zainab Al-Sammak



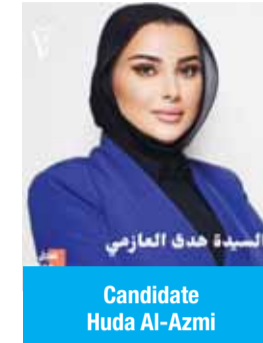
Candidate Dr. Bibi Ashour



Candidate Ghadeer Asiri



Candidate Sheikha Al-Jassem



Candidate Huda Al-Azmi

dates is limited. Nowadays, campaigning is expensive and requires a hefty budget to have an appropriate social media campaign, designers and advisors. Finally, voting behavior in Kuwait is skewed towards voting for your friends, family members or candidates belonging to the voter's tribe instead of voting for whom you believe in and who the voter will think will make a change or positive impact on the country.

Abir Al-Mutawa: Mudhawi's goal is to guide women candidates from the beginning until the end of their journey and ease some aspects of the campaigning process, like increasing their visibility. We believe that making a difference or a positive impact on society should not be a hassle, which is why the team works day and night to ensure a way to surround both our followers and candidates and their teams with positive energy, constant motivation, and endless support.

We think that the strengths of the female candidates are the same as their male counterparts. They are as well-educated, as well-spoken and as qualified as their male counterparts. However, we

“ We went through a lot to gain political rights ”

believe women perhaps are able to convey certain causes from the perspective of the female population of Kuwait.

We believe they are better decision- and coalition-makers and tend to focus more on issues and legislations that benefit the majority of the population positively. These points have been proven through our research and fact sharing on our online platforms. We believe in equality and balance, and in the coming years, we would love to see more women take part in political affairs - Mudhawi will be here to help!

Kuwait Times: How many women candidates do you think will run in this election and how many do you think have a chance of winning?

Dalal Bouresli: Fifteen will run, and we hope to see all 15 succeed. We also hope to see larger numbers in the future. All 15 candidates should be given the opportunity to represent their districts and present their views to the public. To everyone reading this article who believe they have the potential to run for office, go for it and reach out!

Public opinion

Kuwait Times: Do you think public opinion about

women candidates has changed since women got the right to vote in 2006? Why don't more women voters vote for women candidates?

Zainab Al-Sammak: It is unfair to expect women to vote only for women or vice versa. People should vote for the better candidate irrespective of gender, but sadly that doesn't always happen. When women first got their political rights, there was a sense of opportunity that has now diminished. The media backlash against the four female MPs that made it to office in 2009 is still felt to this day. There is a lack of knowledge and misinformation about the achievements of women in leadership positions, and often their message is distorted and isn't conveyed to the public properly. In addition, people have judged women's experiences negatively and taken that to mean that all women will be the same. That's why we have to raise awareness through our platform that there are multiple options out there to suit most mainstream voters' needs.

Kuwait Times: What do you think are the main issues that women voters need to address to improve their chances and raise their confidence/support among voters?

Abir Al-Mutawa: We believe that candidates should be more transparent with the voting population and have a direct line of contact between them in order to boost their level of trust among the voters. We also believe they should start speaking to them in a more down-to-earth tone and an easier language that will be understood better by the masses rather than the traditional political attitude.

Kuwait Times: How is Mudhawi helping women candidates?

Dalal Bouresli: Mudhawi is helping women candidates through its platform by making it easy to access information of female candidates. We take their agendas and CVs and present them in an easily-shareable format that many then use on their own platforms. We also help them in getting opportunities in the press and media and link them with volunteers for their political campaigns, as well as service providers.

Kuwait Times: Do you think there are different levels of support for women candidates in different electoral districts in Kuwait?

Zainab Al-Sammak: Women are more likely to feel supported when another woman is running in the same district. For example, the four women who were elected in 2009 were united, and together were able to make history. Perhaps the third district is seen as more female-friendly than others because it has room



Candidate Fatima Ramadan



Candidate Dr. Khadija Al-Qallaf



Candidate Anwaw Al-Qahtani

for multiplicity and liberal thought more than other districts today, as some other districts can be dominated by tribal, Islamist or mercantile voting patterns that are exclusionary to women. Each district has its own nature, so by reading the numbers and analyzing voter patterns and new approaches, we believe that women candidates can make an impact on every district if given the right support.

Candidates' qualifications

Kuwait Times: What type of experience or qualifications are voters looking for in female candidates?

Abir Al-Mutawa: Because the candidates are female, unfortunately, people tend to look deeper into them and question their qualifications and history more in detail. Perhaps voters are looking for civic engagement, their educational degrees, someone relatable and well-knowledgeable of existing laws and local politics.

Voters might be harsher when evaluating the qualifications and experiences of female candidates. Many voters view female candidates through a stereotypical gender bias lens and with that comes a prior perception which can be really hard to change. Therefore, voters might expect the female candidate to have qualifications that they do not expect male candidates to have, especially with regards to educational level.

Kuwait Times: What is your analysis of how the elections will play out for women? Do you see greater female participation in voting and greater numbers of female candidates?

Dalal Bouresli: We have not yet seen female candidate numbers reach the levels they did in the past, before the backlash and the open hostility, where almost double the number today would run for office. We are tentatively optimistic but realize that the odds are stacked against women. There are no representational quotas and they are still outside the traditional power structures that support male candidates and ensure their victory. This is only the beginning for Mudhawi's List, and we hope that as our platform grows, it will encourage more female participation in electoral office and more female votes.

News in brief

COVID patient commits suicide

KUWAIT: A Filipina domestic worker, a COVID-19 patient, committed suicide yesterday, according to police. The victim cut her wrists then threw herself from the second floor of her sponsor's house in Sabah Al-Nasser, preliminary investigations indicate. Further investigations are in progress.

House arrest for pardoned inmates

KUWAIT: The Amiri pardon committee adopted new conditions for pardons in 2021, which include releasing pardoned inmates who are jailed for minor offenses on probation and house arrest, and having them wear electronic bracelets for tracking, head of the committee Judge Mohammad Al-Duaij announced. This condition does not apply on inmates jailed for over three years or on serious offenses, he explained.

Kuwait 2nd worst for expats?

KUWAIT: An international index has ranked Kuwait among the worst countries out of 60 worldwide destinations for the sustainable expat, based on three categories: products and utilities, policies and peoples, and quality of environment. The InterNations 'Expat Insider 2020' released recently ranks Egypt, Kuwait and India respectively in the bottom three of its 'Environment and Sustainability Ranking.' "They perform much worse than other Middle Eastern destinations featured in the survey," the report reads.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Kuwait Times Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

KuwaitTimes 94488888

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait sets up team to supervise COVID-19 vaccination mechanism

Cabinet reviews preparations for legislative elections, rainy season

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah made a presentation during Monday's Cabinet meeting about the latest statistics relating to COVID-19 inside and outside Kuwait as well as the preventive measures to face up to the second wave of the pandemic. He also briefed the Cabinet on the efforts of his ministry to ensure provision of vaccines against the viral illness and the formation of an interagency committee to supervise the operation of a mechanism for vaccination in keeping with the health safeguards. The committee, chaired by Sheikh Dr Basel, includes representatives of the Ministry of Interior, the Secretariat of the Cabinet, the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT).

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh made a presentation on the efforts underway to set the stage for the legislative elections, including the registration of candidates and how to guard against the spread of COVID-19 during the electoral process.

The Cabinet members commended "the tremendous efforts" being made by the various state departments and civil society to combat the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the country. They also appreciated the cooperation given to the government by the National Assembly, reaffirming the government's commitment to the democratic practices ahead of the election of the 16th National Assembly, including protection of public freedoms, impartiality and transparency.

The Cabinet members were briefed about the resignation of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri. They were also apprised of two decrees nominating Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah as Acting Minister of Information, and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan as Acting Minister of Youth.

Amir's guidelines

At the start of its weekly meeting held at Seif Palace, the Cabinet congratulated His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince as well as



Ministers review Amir's speech

Kuwaiti people and the Muslim World on the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday, due to fall tomorrow. The Cabinet members reviewed the guidelines, set forth by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in his address to the last session of the outgoing (the 15th) National Assembly

hailed the truce deal reached by Azerbaijan and Armenia and the efforts recently made by the United States to deescalate the conflict in disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. They expressed hope that the two countries would be able to reach a political settlement to the dispute and restore security, stability and peace in the region.

In the meantime, the Cabinet members strongly denounced the continued attacks by the Yemeni Houthi militia against civilian targets in the southern parts of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The persistence of such drone and missile attacks runs counter to the rules of international law and norms and undermines the security of the entire region, thus necessitating an immediate international response, the Cabinet stressed, renewing Kuwait's support to Saudi Arabia in all acts it might take to protect its security and stability. The Cabinet condemned the recent terrorist attack on an educational center in Afghanistan which left scores of casualties. Expressing condolences for the families of the victims, the Cabinet reaffirmed Kuwait's solidarity with the Republic of Afghanistan in its fight against terrorism. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaleed Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's weekly meeting on Monday. — KUNA

last week. The Amiri speech reaffirmed commitment to the democratic course of the Kuwaiti people, and protection of the national unity and the fundamentals of the country's foreign policy charted by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saleh said following the meeting.

Meanwhile, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Rana Al-Fares and leaders of the her ministry and the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) also made online presentations on the preparations for rainy season and the precautions against traffic jams, in collaboration with 16 state bodies including a geological team. CAIT's Director-General Haya Al-Wad'ani gave a presentation to the Cabinet on the progress made in leveraging KuwaitApp and Shal across the government services to ensure easy access to the services and promote e-government. — KUNA

Kuwait reports 7 COVID-19 deaths, 775 new cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait registered 775 new coronavirus cases during the past 24 hours, raising the total number of cases to 123,092, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday. MoH spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said meanwhile that seven COVID-19 patients have passed away during the same period, putting the total number of deaths at 756. The number of patients receiving medical care at intensive care units reached 116, Dr Sanad said, adding that all confirmed infection cases that continued to receive medical care reached 8,220. The number of swab tests conducted, during the past 24 hours, amounted to 7,874, with the whole number of examinations hitting 889,555. The ministry had earlier announced that 725 patients recovered during the past 24 hours, with the total number of recoveries reaching 114,116. Dr Sanad appealed to the public to take all necessary precautions against the pandemic. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs at Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sulaiman Ali Al-Saeed received Indian Ambassador Sibi George in his office on Monday. They discussed bilateral ties, existing institutional cooperation and ways of further strengthening relations across all domains.



Deputy FM visits Diplomatic Institute

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah visited yesterday the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute, where he was briefed on the workflow of the institute's new diplomats' training course. Jarallah delivered a speech in which he welcomed the new diplomats and wished them success in their new diplomatic career. — KUNA

Kuwait govt resents publication of offensive cartoons

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Cabinet, during its weekly meeting, expressed resentment at the continued publication of cartoons offending Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The Cabinet echoed the statement of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) denouncing such cartoons and all slanderous acts against holy faith or religious icons. Meanwhile, the Cabinet members welcomed the signing by the Libyan parties of ceasefire agreement at the end of the fourth UN-sponsored session of the joint military commission held in Geneva on October 19-23. They voiced hope for success of the efforts of the UN envoy to Libya and all stakeholders to reach a political solution to the conflict, restore security and stability in the country, and realize the aspirations of the brotherly people of Libya. They also

Number of Filipino runaway maids down by half

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Despite the coronavirus pandemic, Filipino housemaids are continuing to abscond from their employers daily, according to the head of the social welfare office at the Philippine Embassy. But Welfare Officer Llewellyn Perez said the number of runaway housemaids has dropped to more than half. "We still receive 5-7 runaway maids daily," she told Kuwait Times.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the daily average was 12-15. The significant drop in housemaids running away could be because since December 2019, there have been no new housemaids deployed in Kuwait," she said. "We were supposed to begin deployment at the beginning of March 2020, but the pandemic struck. All Filipino housemaids in Kuwait today are those that were here prior to December, so it's about a year since we received our last household workers."

Perez said once domestic helpers seek help from the embassy, they will be immediately processed for repatriation. "Within two to three weeks - depending on the availability of chartered flights - we send them home," she said. The usual reasons for running away are mostly related to non-payment of salaries, mistreatment and harassment.

"So far since the pandemic, we haven't encountered any grave or serious problems regarding housemaids. All issues of domestic helpers are considered and we accept them as valid and in need for assistance. We are always hands-on in the protection of our kabayans (countrymen) - this is our mandate and we have sworn to protect the welfare of Filipinos deployed overseas," Perez noted.

Kuwait Times asked Perez about housemaids working illegally and against whom their Kuwaiti employers have filed absconding cases. "Those who are reported by employers as absconding have to wait until the employers cooperate. If the maids have their passports with them, they can easily leave the country. We normally ask recruitment agencies to help us in resolving their cases," she said.

"But many agencies have closed, so we don't know where to find the recruiting agents. If their agencies are still active, we communicate with them regarding their deployed workers. We also ask them to house the workers temporarily while



Llewellyn Perez

we secure their repatriation," Perez said.

Perez revealed around 200 runaway maids are currently at the shelter, and some are housed by the agency owners. "We don't allow them to be deployed anymore if they run away. That is our policy. We have their records at the embassy, so no redeployment," she said.

On Sunday, 99 domestic helpers were repatriated from the embassy shelter, with the cost of most if not all of their plane tickets shouldered by the Philippine government. "That is what our president wants - to bring home Filipinos if they decide to return to Manila, at the government's cost," Perez added.

Prior to the pandemic, the number of Filipinos in Kuwait was reportedly over 240,000, of which 165,000 were domestic helpers. "We don't have the latest update from the Kuwaiti government yet regarding the population of Filipinos now. But as per our records, since the resumption of flights in June up till the present, we repatriated over 1,000 Filipinos from the shelter," said Perez.

"If you include all domestic helpers, including those who left the country during the amnesty in April, our estimate is maybe 6,000. This figure does not include workers employed by various companies and those who were terminated and sent home by their companies. This data must come from the immigration department," she concluded.

Employers of domestic workers can often pay upwards of KD 1,200 to KD 1,500 to hire a helper from an agency. The work relationship is supposed to be regulated under Kuwait's domestic labor law and workers are to receive a full day off every week, no more than 12 hours work per day with rest, salaries paid on time each month and 30 days annual leave each year. Many employers, however, fail to meet these basic contractual obligations. Moreover, many domestic workers abscond in the hopes of earning more income by working illegally as a freelance helper. These workers face legal problems however if they are caught and are often deported and banned from reentering Kuwait.

Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net



US puts security threats at heart of India talks

Trump and Biden battle for prize of crucial Pennsylvania

Page 6

Page 7



DHAKA: Activists and supporters of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh, an Islamist political party, hold a protest march yesterday calling for the boycott of French products and denouncing French president Emmanuel Macron for his comments. — AFP

Huge anti-France rally held in Dhaka

Chechen strongman slams Macron • Saudi holds off from backing action against France

DHAKA: Tens of thousands of protesters marched through the Bangladesh capital yesterday in the biggest anti-France rally since President Emmanuel Macron defended cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Muslims across the world have reacted furiously to Macron's robust defense of the right to mock religion following the murder of a French schoolteacher who had shown his pupils cartoons of the prophet.

In Syria people burned pictures of France's leader, tricolor flags were torched in the Libyan capital Tripoli, while French goods have been pulled from supermarket shelves in Qatar, Kuwait and other Gulf states. Protesters in Dhaka set alight to an effigy of Macron during yesterday's march in which police said 40,000 people took part. Hundreds of armed officers used a barbed-wire barricade to stop the demonstrators, who dispersed without violence before they could get close to the French embassy in the Bangladeshi capital.

The rally was called by Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB), one of the country's largest Islamist parties, and started at the biggest mosque in the nation, which is around 90 percent Muslim. "Boycott French products", demonstrators chanted as they called for Macron to be punished. Ataur Rahman, a senior Islami Andolon member, told the rally at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque: "Macron is one of the few leaders who worship Satan."

Rahman called on the Bangladesh government to "kick out" the French ambassador while another protest leader, Hasan Jamal, said activists would "tear down every brick of that building" if the envoy was not ordered out. "France is the enemy of Muslims. Those who represent them are also our enemies," said Nesar

Uddin, a young leader of the group. Even after the rally was halted, demonstrators marched down other streets chanting "Boycott France" and "Macron will pay a high price".

Chechnya's strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov yesterday accused Macron of provoking Muslims and compared the French leader to a "terrorist". In a strongly-worded statement, the head of Russia's Muslim-majority southern region condemned Macron. "The president of France is himself beginning to look like a terrorist," 44-year-old Kadyrov said in the statement on the Telegram messaging app. "By supporting provocations, he covertly calls on Muslims to commit crimes."

He claimed that Macron's stance offended nearly 2 billion Muslims across the world, saying such policies could have "tragic" consequences. "Until it's too late, Macron, stop your provocations and attacks on faith. Otherwise you will go down in history as a president who has taken mad decisions," Kadyrov added. "You can easily call yourself the leader and architect of terrorism in your country." French teacher Samuel Paty was beheaded earlier this month by Abdullah Anzorov, an 18-year-old ethnic Chechen who was born in Moscow but later moved to France with his parents. The beheading has left France in shock. Kadyrov has said that Anzorov had no links to Chechnya.

Saudi Arabia condemned cartoons offending Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but held back from echoing calls by other Muslim states for action against images being displayed in France of the Prophet (PBUH). A foreign ministry official also said in a statement that the Gulf state condemns all acts of terrorism, an apparent reference to the beheading of the Paris teacher.

"Freedom of expression and culture should be a beacon of respect, tolerance and peace that rejects practices and acts which generate hatred, violence and extremism and are contrary to coexistence," said the statement carried by state media. Saudi Arabia's daily Arab News yesterday cited the head of the Saudi-based Muslim World League, Mohammed Al-Issa, as cautioning that an overreaction "that is negative and goes beyond what is acceptable" would only benefit "haters".

In Saudi Arabia, calls for a boycott of French supermarket chain Carrefour were trending on social media, though stores Reuters visited in Riyadh on Monday seemed busy as normal. A company representative in France said it had yet to feel any impact. United Arab Emirates-based Majid Al Futtaim, which owns and operates Carrefour supermarkets across the Middle East, said the chain supported regional economies by sourcing most items from local suppliers and employing thousands of people.

'Offensive cartoons'

As the backlash over France's reaction to the cartoons widened, leaders from European nations including Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Greece rallied behind Macron. However, Islamic and Muslim-majority nations have hit out and protesters have taken to the streets, though not in near the numbers seen in Dhaka.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - who has styled himself a defender of Muslims worldwide - has compared the treatment of Muslims in Europe to that of Jews before World War II, saying they were the object of a "lynching campaign". "You are in a real sense fascists, you are in a real sense the links in the chain of Nazism,"

he said, after urging Macron to have "mental checks". Tehran has summoned a senior French envoy, the charge d'affaires. Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim slammed Macron's comments on Islam being in crisis as "offensive" and "unreasonable", adding in a statement: "With freedom comes responsibility, a responsibility notably absent from the rabble-rousing smears essayed by Monsieur le President."

Macron has also drawn fire in Pakistan and Morocco, while the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah have also spoken out against France. More demonstrations were planned yesterday in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and South Yemen. — AFP

News in brief

Israel to approve homes in Hebron

JERUSALEM: Israel is set to approve construction of Jewish settler homes in a flashpoint area of the West Bank city of Hebron for the first time since 2002, the anti-occupation group Peace Now said yesterday. It condemned what it called an attempt to "squeeze in" the approvals before next week's US presidential election when Donald Trump faces Joe Biden, who views such settlements as illegal. Peace Now said Israeli military authorities had given the green light to the construction of 31 settler housing units "in the heart of Hebron". — AFP

Rebels retaliate after Russia strike

BEIRUT: Pro-Turkish Syrian rebels pounded Moscow-backed regime forces with rocket and artillery fire in northwest Syria yesterday, a day after Russian aircraft killed dozens among their ranks, a monitor said. The air strikes Monday hit a training camp of the Faylaq al-Sham faction near the Turkish border in Syria's last major rebel bastion of Idlib, killing 78 fighters and wounding 90 more. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the National Liberation Front bombarded pro-government fighters in regime-held areas adjacent to the stronghold. — AFP

Child malnutrition surges in Yemen

SANAA: Malnutrition among young children has soared to the highest levels ever recorded in parts of war-torn Yemen, the UN said yesterday, as coronavirus and shortfalls in aid funding worsen a humanitarian crisis. More than half a million cases of acute malnutrition among children under five were recorded in the south, and the results of a survey of the north currently under way are expected to be "equally concerning", it said. A 15.5 percent increase in severe malnutrition in the age group has left at least 98,000 at "high risk of dying" unless they receive urgent treatment. — AFP

Libya signs security deal with Qatar

DOHA: Libya's UN-recognized Government of National Accord and Qatar signed a security agreement Monday, official media said, in a deal condemned by its rival in the North African state. Qatar and ally Turkey have backed the GNA, which is based in Tripoli, in its conflict against eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar. The agreement was signed at a ceremony in Doha overseen by Libyan Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani. — AFP



PESHAWAR: Rescue workers collect remains at the site of a blast in a religious school yesterday. — AFP

Seven killed in blast at Pakistan religious school

PESHAWAR: At least seven students were killed and scores more wounded yesterday in a bomb attack on a Quran study class at a religious school in northwestern Pakistan, officials said. More than 60 people had been taking a lesson when the explosion tore through the madrasa in Peshawar, about 170 km west of Islamabad, said Waqar Azim, a senior police official. "The blast took place in a seminary during a Koran class. Someone took a bag inside the seminary," Azim told AFP.

He added that the person who had brought in the bag left the lecture hall before the blast at the Jamia Zuberia seminary. Mohammad Ali Gandapur, another senior police official, said at least seven people had been killed with more than 50 wounded. The death toll was confirmed by Mohammad Asim Khan, a spokesman at a local hospital, who told AFP that seven bodies and 70

wounded people had been taken to the facility. "Most of those killed and injured were hit by ball bearings and some were badly burnt," he said.

All of the dead were men aged between 20 and 40, he said. Teachers and boys as young as 7 were among the wounded. Teacher Safiullah Khan told AFP more than 1,000 students are currently enrolled at the religious school, which is divided into two sections - one for students aged 18 and older and the other for children. "The blast took place in the section where students above the age of 18 were taking a class," Khan said, adding that the wall between the two sections collapsed in the blast.

A live stream of the lesson showed a religious teacher speaking in Pashto and Arabic, explaining a saying from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), when the explosion took place. Shortly afterwards, rescue workers and locals were seen scouring the site and collecting students' books, caps and shoes. In a tweet, Prime Minister Imran Khan offered his condolences. "I want to assure my nation we will ensure the terrorists responsible for this cowardly barbaric attack are brought to justice asap," Khan wrote. — AFP

Virus-beating Melbourne readies party

MELBOURNE: Melbourne yesterday achieved what elated residents called the "double donut" - two days of no new coronavirus cases - as bars in Australia's second city readied for a midnight reopening after a grueling months-long lockdown. While much of Europe and North America looks ahead to a tough winter of restrictions, Melbourne is preparing its coming out party, with stay-at-home orders and forced closures of "non-essential" businesses coming to an end.

Melbourne and the surrounding state of Victoria has been the epicenter of Australia's second wave, with an outbreak that peaked at more than 700 daily cases in August. But on Monday the state recorded a "donut" - no new cases or deaths - and yesterday clocked 48 hours with no new cases or deaths for the first time since early March.

Greg Sanderson's inner-Melbourne bar Nick & Nora's launched just three days before counter-pandemic measures forced it shut in March. He said that after months of hardship, he is raring to go, with customers booked in for a champagne celebration the moment it is permitted - at 11.59 pm yesterday. "We have been waiting a long time," he told AFP. "We've been closed for 61 percent of the year, so we're pretty keen - we want to get into it straight away." "It's definitely been a rollercoaster of emotions and struggles. Some days have been better than others and some weeks better than others - no one has escaped their own personal hardship."

'Great confidence'

Across Victoria, there are now just 87 active coronavirus cases and a hand-

ful of people in hospital with the virus. State Premier Daniel Andrews said high testing rates in recent weeks had been "nothing short of stunning". "It gives us great confidence that these numbers are an accurate picture of how much virus is out there," he told a press conference.

Visiting other people's homes will be allowed for the first time in months from midnight yesterday, he added, although it will come with rules on how many people can attend and how far they can travel. Australia had largely curbed the spread of COVID-19 when the virus leaked into the community from Melbourne hotels used to quarantine travellers from overseas.

Aside from Melbourne's population of five million, much of the rest of the country has long since returned to a semblance of normality. Fabrizio Succi, who jointly owns Melbourne eatery Tiamo, told AFP his team was scrambling to prepare for reopening after being given the green light on Monday. "We had to man the phones - everybody all of sudden had all this freedom and wanted to book, which was wonderful," he said.

But the short notice from authorities means it will take until Thursday morning before the Italian restaurant will be ready to cook up its pasta and sauces, as workers race to dust off long-dormant tables and ready staff. Business owners have also raised concerns that strict rules on the number of patrons mean many will initially be operating at a loss.

Beauty salons and retail stores will also be permitted to welcome back customers from midnight, but gyms will be forced to wait until Nov 8. Restrictions on travel between Melbourne and regional parts of the state will also be lifted from Nov 8, with a 25-km travel radius for city residents set to be removed the same day. But for now, the state remains cut off from the rest of Australia, which overall has recorded about 27,500 cases and 905 deaths in a population of 25 million. — AFP

International

Trump and Biden battle for prize of crucial Pennsylvania

Trump supporters asked to shun opinion polls and rely on 'hidden voters'

MARTINSBURG, US: President Donald Trump barnstormed Pennsylvania with three mass rallies Monday and his Democratic opponent also made a surprise appearance, hoping to defend his lead in a swing state that could well decide the outcome of the election in eight days. Hopping from rally to rally, Trump demonstrated how badly he wants to claim the state on November 3, telling large, enthusiastic crowds of supporters to ignore polls showing Biden leading there and across other battleground states.

"We get Pennsylvania, we win the whole thing," he said in Allentown, before flying to another rally in Lititz, then a final event in Martinsburg in the evening. Trump touted a poll from Rasmussen, which has long gone against the flow of more established polling companies to give him favorable numbers, and said many "hidden Trump voters" would back him in the polling booth on November 3.

Biden, who has maintained a startlingly low profile during his campaign, made a surprise appearance in the Pennsylvania town of Chester, making the short trip from his home in neighboring Delaware where he'd been scheduled to spend the day without public events.

Sticking to his main campaign theme, he hammered Trump's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, accusing him of giving up on mastering the virus. "He said we're not going to control it. The bottom line is Donald Trump is the worst possible president, the worst possible person to try to lead us through this pandemic," Biden said. Trump "doesn't have any idea of what to do or he just doesn't care."

Trump and Biden wage unexpected duel in Georgia

ATLANTA, US: Neighbors and volunteers are handing out water and snacks to the masked voters waiting patiently in line to cast their ballots on a hot October day in the Atlanta suburb of Smyrna. Americans go to the polls on November 3 but the enthusiastic early voting here has already given the morning an air of Election Day.

Georgia has been a reliably Republican, conservative bastion and a Democrat has not won in the Peach State since Bill Clinton, a fellow Southerner, in 1992. But Democratic candidate Joe Biden, 77, and Republican incumbent Donald Trump, 74, are running neck-and-neck in the polls in Georgia.

And Democrats believe they may have a shot this time at winning not only the state's 16 Electoral College votes for president but also its two seats in the US Senate. Democratic wins in the two Senate races in Georgia could help give the party a majority in the chamber.

Nearly 40 percent of Georgia's eligible voters have cast their ballots early. Jamal and Michelle Jenkins, an African-American couple, have been waiting in line for

I voted!: Florida ex-inmates cast ballots

MIAMI: The sticker on Yraida Guanipa's sweater exclaimed "I VOTED!", a badge of honor for her and many other ex-convicts in Florida who have won back their right to cast a ballot for America's next president. The line for early voting ahead of the November 3 election was long under the hot Miami sun, but it was nothing compared to the years Guanipa and others like her have been fighting to be allowed to vote again. "When I was selecting the president, I was feeling like I'm walking toward my final freedom, or total freedom, after this conviction," the 58-year-old said. Guanipa, who is originally from Venezuela, was released from prison in 2007 after serving nearly 12 years on a drug distribution charge.

Protests after police shoot dead Black man in Philadelphia

NEW YORK: Protests erupted overnight in Philadelphia after police shot dead a 27-year-old Black man holding a knife in the latest police killing to spark anger in the United States, just a week before the election. Local media reported that two officers shot the man on Monday afternoon after he refused to drop the knife as his mother tried to restrain him, though his family questioned why lethal force was needed. Hundreds of protesters gathered after the shooting, with riot police pushing them back with shields and batons.

During a night of sporadic riots and looting in the city, around 30 police officers were injured, including

"Mr president, you have to have a little bit of shame, just a little bit of shame, because people are dying," Biden said.

Trump sees 2016 repeat

At the rallies, Trump cast his struggling campaign in an optimistic light, predicting that his surprise 2016 victory over Hillary Clinton would be repeated. "The same thing is happening," he said: "a similar result and maybe even a bigger margin." Trump's message largely ignored the Covid-19 crisis, with infections surging nationwide, and instead focused on what he said would be a strong economic comeback.

Fixing on Biden's promises to encourage a shift to renewable energies, Trump told each of the rallies in Pennsylvania—a major natural gas producing area—that the Democrat would "abolish the entire US oil industry." "Biden's plan is an economic death sentence for Pennsylvania's energy sector," he said. Clearly irked by Trump's message, Biden used his own quick appearance in Chester to insist: "I'm not shutting down oil fields, I'm not eliminating fracking, I'm investing in clean energy."

Trump also intensified his personal insults, calling Biden "sleepy" and unable to cope with foreign leaders who are "100 percent sharp." And the former reality television performer showed his talent as entertainer with a series of exaggerated and colorful warnings about life under a Democratic presidency. "You will have a depression the likes of which we have never seen outside, perhaps, 1929," he said, predicting that Americans would no longer have air conditioning and that the Democrats would ban cows.

about 40 minutes outside the Smyrna Community Center. "Oh I'm decided," said 33-year-old Michelle Jenkins, smiling beneath a black hat with little cat's ears. She and her 31-year-old husband, who was carrying their baby daughter, Asia, in a kangaroo pouch, are both voting for Biden. Cobb County, where Smyrna is located, voted Republican for the past 40 years until the 2016 election when it went for Hillary Clinton. "I feel like it's very important," Jamal Jenkins said of the shifting politics in the state. "This is pretty much, like our mayor said, the Black capital." Jamal Jenkins said of Atlanta, the city where civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr got his start.

'Turnout game'

With a population of 10.6 million that is one-third Black, trending younger and better educated, there are very few undecided voters in Georgia, just four percent, said Trey Hood, a professor of political science at the University of Georgia. "For the parties, it's about getting their supporters turned out," Hood said. "A mobilization or a turnout game as opposed to your persuasion game."

Trump held a campaign rally in Macon, Georgia, earlier this month, a sign he may be playing defense in a state he won by five points last time. Biden is to visit Georgia today and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris was here on Friday.

Hood said various factors were making it a close race. "Part of it is sort of a long march of demographic

"It's freedom, it's power, it's voice," she added after casting her first ballot since the 1992 election.

One hundred and fifty years ago, a law designed to prevent newly freed slaves from voting also disenfranchised ex-convicts. In 2018, Floridians voted for Amendment 4, which restored the unconditional right to vote to 1.4 million ex-felons, except for those guilty of rape or murder.

After Guanipa's release from prison, she founded the YG Institute, an NGO that helps other ex-convicts in their transition to freedom. It's not clear how many ex-cons now eligible have registered to vote, but an estimate from the Tampa Bay Times, Miami Herald and ProPublica put the number at 31,400.

However, simply serving out their prison term is not enough in Florida. Ex-convicts are required to first repay their debts to the judicial system—fines, legal fees, damages. The law disproportionately affects Hispanic and Black voters. For some human rights activists, the legislation is a glaring example of voter suppression among minorities, who tend to vote Democratic. Desmond Meade, also an ex-

one whose leg was broken when hit by a truck. The US has seen a wave of protests and rioting since the police killing of George Floyd in May in Minnesota, when an officer was filmed pressing his knee to handcuffed Floyd's neck until he went limp. Many of the protests have accused the police of racism and brutality, but President Donald Trump has focused on the unrest to bolster his claims to be the "law-and-order" candidate in his election battle against Joe Biden.

"We'll be standing by and prepared to deploy federal resources, if necessary," White House director of communications Alyssa Farah told Fox News yesterday. "President Trump will not tolerate any violence directed at America's law enforcement. We're going to let the investigation play out, but we will not tolerate lawlessness in our streets." US media said a phone video of Monday's killing showed Walter Wallace, who suffered mental health issues, pushed his mother away and then walked toward the police. "Put the knife down," one of the officers shouted in the video, which panned away as officers opened fire. —AFP



LITITZ, PA: President Donald Trump holds a rally on Monday in Lititz, Pennsylvania. —AFP

Low profile Biden

Biden was in Pennsylvania Saturday and is due to campaign Thursday in Florida—another hugely important swing state—before trips to Iowa and Wisconsin on Friday.

But many days he is hunkered down at home doing online video talks or sending allies like popular former president Barack Obama to campaign on his behalf—making him the most lightly traveled presidential candidate in recent history. By contrast, Trump now flies on Air Force One to two to three big rallies a day, with a plan to ramp up to at least

five in the final sprint.

Biden argues he is sticking to medical guidelines on COVID-19, while Trump, who himself was hospitalized this month with the coronavirus, regularly brings together thousands of people without masks.

"I am not over-confident about anything," Biden told reporters. "The big difference between us, and the reason it looks like we're not travelling: we're not putting on super-spreaders." Trump, though, mocked Biden during his speech in Lititz, noting his own frenetic pace and saying that if Biden "loses, he should be ashamed of himself because he didn't work." —AFP



CHESTER, PA: Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden speaks to reporters while visiting a voter mobilization center on Monday in Chester, Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, yesterday was the last day to request a mail-in ballot or vote early in person. —AFP

change that has been going on for decades," he said. "And part of it is real enthusiasm I think among Democrats to vote against Trump." Ashley Dawson, a 26-year-old white woman, comes from a conservative family and did not vote in 2016.

"Joe Biden, 100 percent," Dawson said. "Really I'm voting for Harris. Joe Biden's okay but Harris is who I really want in there so..." "I don't think that Trump has our best interests at heart as far as females in this country and our rights and our reproductive rights," she said. —AFP



Yraida Guanipa is an ex-convict who voted for the first time in decades after Florida changed its law.

convict and leader of Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, called for a march to the polls for people like him. "I am 53 and this is my very first presidential election I've ever voted," he told reporters. —AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Protests erupted after police shot and killed a 27-year-old black man on a Philadelphia street after yelling at him to drop his knife.

Poll: Biden has solid lead in Wisconsin, narrower edge in Penn

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden leads President Donald Trump by a solid margin in Wisconsin and maintains a narrower advantage in Pennsylvania with just over a week until Election Day, Reuters/Ipsos opinion polls showed on Monday.

Reuters/Ipsos is polling likely voters in six states — Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Florida and Arizona — that will play critical roles in deciding whether Trump wins a second term in office or if Biden ousts him. Below is a state-by-state look at Reuters/Ipsos findings, based on the online responses of likely voters, which include responses from some who cast ballots ahead of the formal Nov. 3 Election Day. Early voting has shot to record levels amid the coronavirus pandemic:

WISCONSIN (Oct 20 - Oct 26):

- * Voting for Biden: 53%
- * Voting for Trump: 44%
- * Biden's advantage is marginally wider than his 51%-43% lead the prior week.
- * 33% said they already had voted.

PENNSYLVANIA (Oct. 20 - Oct. 26):

- * Voting for Biden: 50%
- * Voting for Trump: 45%
- * Biden's lead is marginally wider than in the prior week when he was up 49%-45%, an advantage that was on the edge of the survey's credibility interval.

FLORIDA (Oct. 14 - Oct. 20)

- * Voting for Biden: 50%
- * Voting for Trump: 46%
- * Biden's apparent lead is on the edge of the survey's credibility interval.

* Prior poll showed the two essentially even, with Biden at 49% and Trump at 47%.

- * 21% said they already had voted.

ARIZONA (Oct 14 - Oct 21):

- * Voting for Biden: 49%
- * Voting for Trump: 46%
- * With the margin within the survey's credibility interval, the race is statistically tied.

* Prior poll showed Biden with a 50%-46% lead that was on the edge of the survey's credibility interval.

MICHIGAN (Oct 14 - Oct 20):

- * Voting for Biden: 51%
- * Voting for Trump: 44%
- * Biden was up 51%-43% the prior week.
- * 28% said they already had voted.

NORTH CAROLINA (Oct. 14 - Oct. 20):

- * Voting for Biden: 49%
- * Voting for Trump: 46%
- * Since the margin is within the poll's credibility interval, the race is statistically tied, as it was in the prior poll when Biden had 48% to Trump's 47%.
- * 18% said they already had voted. —Reuters

International

US puts security threats at heart of India talks; data deal signed

Esper, Pompeo support a 'free and open Indo-Pacific for all'

NEW DELHI: The United States and India are united against "aggression", the US defense secretary said yesterday after top level talks between key ministers from the two countries. US Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made China the focus of their meeting with India's foreign and defense ministers as the South Asian nation confronts China on their disputed Himalayan border.

"We stand shoulder to shoulder, in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific for all, particularly in light of increasing aggression and destabilizing activities by China," said Esper after the meeting.

Pompeo said there were "robust discussions about the Chinese Communist Party", which he added was "no friend to democracy, the rule of law, transparency, nor to freedom of navigation". India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh did not mention China by name during the meeting, but the foreign minister said peace was only possible when all countries respect "the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states".

He also called for a "multi-polar Asia" albeit where China is the number one economic and military force.

Data deal

The United States and India signed off on a series of accords including one which will allow the US military to share sensitive satellite and sensor data with its Indian counterparts. This will help New Delhi to better use US technology in targeting missiles and placing its troops. It will also allow the United States to provide the latest navigational technology on any fighter

jets it supplies to India.

Esper has been pressing the case for India to buy US F-18 jets and move away from its reliance on Russian weaponry. But India wants more of its military equipment made domestically and is demanding greater investment. Pompeo and Esper had already called for a deeper relationship during one-on-one talks with their Indian counterparts on Monday.

Jaishankar tweeted after his meetings with Pompeo that relations between the emerging allies have "grown substantially". Esper and Singh "welcomed the expansion of information-sharing", a US statement said, while the Indian Defense Ministry reported the two officials had discussed "potential new areas of cooperation", without giving details.

Relations with China have grown increasingly tense for both the United States and India in recent years. Washington is in a tense trade battle with Beijing and President Donald Trump's administration has stepped up warnings about China's growing economic and military power.

India has sought greater international military support since a deadly border showdown with China in June. At least 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the clash. China has acknowledged it also suffered casualties. Both sides have since sent tens of thousands of troops to their disputed frontier in the Ladakh region and are digging in for a long, hard winter in the freezing high-altitude area.

India is shopping for US cold-weather equipment, officials said, and has also agreed to expand naval manoeuvres in the Indian Ocean next month to include Australia.

Traditionally, the MALABAR exercises have

remained engaged in peace talks to end the country's long-running conflict. Afghan and US officials have repeatedly warned that the rising bloodshed was threatening the peace talks being held in Qatar since last month.

Most attacks by the Taliban have targeted Afghan security forces, although scores of civilians have also been killed.

Civilian toll

Nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded in the first nine months of the year as heavy fighting between government forces and Taliban insurgents rages on despite efforts to find peace, the United Nations said yesterday. From January to September, there were 5,939 civilian casualties in the fighting - 2,117 people killed and 3,822 wounded, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a report. "High levels of violence continue with a devastating impact on civilians, with Afghanistan remaining among the deadliest places in the world to be a civilian," the mission said in a quarterly report. Civilian casualties were 30 percent lower than in the same period last year but UNAMA said violence has failed to slow since the beginning of talks between government negotiators and the Taliban that began in the Qatari capital of Doha last month.

The Taliban were responsible for 45 percent of

More than 70,000 people remain in over 800 evacuation centers. The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons every year, making them a dangerous and disruptive part of life in the country. Many of the storms are deadly, and they typically wipe out harvests, homes and infrastructure, keeping millions of people perennially poor. The country's deadliest typhoon on record was Super Typhoon Haiyan, which left more than 7,300 people dead or missing in 2013.

Meanwhile, flood-ravaged Vietnam has begun evacuating more than half a million people from its central coastal region as it braces for Typhoon Molave, the fourth storm to hit the country in weeks. Schools and beaches have been closed and many flights cancelled ahead of the severe typhoon. It is forecast to make landfall south of Danang around 1 pm (0600 GMT) today, packing maximum sustained winds of 140 kilometers (85 miles) per hour, according to the Hong Kong Observatory. More heavy rain is expected across the region, which has since early October suffered severe flooding and landslides that have claimed 130 lives. Floodwater has inundated 178,000 homes, said the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

With some houses still under water, residents are preparing for the arrival of Molave, which killed at least three people as it blew through the central

Bantval, 56, who chairs the Biden campaign's five-member rapid response team focused on South Asian voters, has tracked dozens of concerning messages of unknown origin and crafted about 50 rebuttal graphics and texts over the last three months. His team and similar ones at nonpartisan groups are trying to fill WhatsApp's moderation void by joining big WhatsApp groups and asking community leaders to report items. Fighting fake news on social media such as Facebook and Twitter has become standard practice for campaigns. But apps for secret messaging such as WhatsApp have flown under the radar despite serving as a crucial political forum among middle-aged Indians, Latinos and other immigrant groups.

South Asian voters, mostly Indian Americans, will be pivotal in the Nov 3 contest in swing states such as Florida, North Carolina and Pennsylvania where results will be close and predict the national outcome, researchers and nonpartisan voting advocacy groups say. About 72 percent of Indian-American registered voters plan to back Biden, according to a September survey by Carnegie Endowment. But South Asian Biden supporters



NEW DELHI: (Left to right) US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attend a joint press briefing in the lawns of Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

involved India, the United States and Japan. US officials have said they want the four-nation so-called "Quad" alliance to be given a more permanent structure, in moves that China's foreign ministry said it had "noted". For Pompeo, India was the first leg of a tour also taking him to Sri Lanka,

the Maldives and Indonesia. China's growing investment and influence in Sri Lanka and the Maldives have sparked concern in Washington and Delhi. Ahead of the visit, Beijing's embassy in Colombo warned Pompeo not to "coerce and bully" Sri Lanka against China. —AFP

Two dead, several hurt in attack on Afghan police base

KHOST: A car bomb attack on an Afghan police base followed by an ongoing gun battle have killed two policemen and wounded dozens of people in a city bordering Pakistan, officials said yesterday. The complex attack in the city of Khost was launched early in the morning, and has wounded 14 security personnel and nine civilians. A gun battle near the base was ongoing, an AFP correspondent reported. The car bomb was detonated at the gate of a special police forces base in Khost city, a security source said.

After the blast a group of attackers tried to enter the base compound resulting in a gun battle with security forces, Afghanistan's interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told reporters. Four attackers have been killed while two more were still fighting, Arian said. Khost provincial health official Gul Mohammad said women and children were among the wounded.

No group has so far claimed the attack on the base. Violence has surged across Afghanistan in recent weeks even as the Taliban and Afghan gov-

3 dead, dozen missing as Typhoon Molave pummels Philippines

MANILA: Three people died and a dozen others are missing after a typhoon triggered flooding across the central Philippines, officials said yesterday, with thousands still sheltering in evacuation centers. Typhoon Molave struck Sunday, inundating low-lying villages and farmlands, knocking down power lines and destroying hundreds of houses as it crossed the archipelago.

The typhoon is now sweeping across the South China Sea towards Vietnam, the national weather forecaster said. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) warned the number of casualties could rise as regional authorities assess the damage in their areas.

The three deaths were all from drowning, NDRRMC spokesman Mark Timbal said. Among them was a woman who was swept away by surging currents as she tried to cross a river, Rizajoy Hernandez of the Civil Defense office in the Central Visayas told AFP. Twelve people, mostly fishermen, have been reported missing after being caught in rough seas.

Fake news spread on WhatsApp to Indian Americans plays stealth role

OAKLAND, Calif: New Jersey tech entrepreneur Arun Bantval is US presidential candidate Joe Biden's top fake-news watchdog on messaging service WhatsApp about the Democrat and his Indian American running mate Kamala Harris.

Messages on WhatsApp, owned by Facebook Inc, are confidential and cannot be seen by moderators who police misleading memes, claims and other content on the social media giant's flagship platform. Two billion users rely on WhatsApp's free app to chat with individuals and groups of up to 256 people.



KHOST: A wounded man receives medical treatment at a hospital after a car bomb attack on an Afghan police base in Khost province yesterday. —AFP

civilian casualties while government troops caused 23 percent, it said. US-led international forces were responsible for 2 percent. Most of the remainder came in crossfire, or were caused by Islamic State militants or "undetermined" anti-government or pro-government elements, it said. Ground fighting caused the most casualties followed by suicide and roadside bomb attacks, targeted killings by the Taliban and air strikes by Afghan troops, the UN mission said. —Agencies



POLA: Residents ride on a tricycle back to their homes after tropical storm Molave hit the town of Pola, Oriental Mindoro province on Monday. —AFP

Philippines. "Molave will be one of the worst storms, with the strongest winds, of the past 20 years," said Hoang Phuc Lam, deputy head of Vietnam's national forecasting center, according to state media.

More than 500,000 people will be moved to temporary accommodation, Vietnam's Disaster Management Authority said. Vietnam is prone to natural disasters in the rainy season between June and November, with central coastal provinces commonly worst affected. —AFP

and nonpartisan activists worry that misinformation on WhatsApp will affect turnout and support.

"There's just a lot of inaccurate information for an already confusing process," said Chavi Khanna Koneru, executive director of nonpartisan group North Carolina Asian Americans Together. "And this year is different for everybody because we're relying on virtual connections more than ever." Each day, users can receive hundreds of memes, videos, voicemails and texts spanning greetings, social invitations and political propaganda. Users regularly forward shocking and humorous messages, with the original sender's name automatically stripped, making it hard to trace them. "It's almost like going viral on Facebook," Bantval said. WhatsApp said its role in US politics is small. But political misinformation on WhatsApp in Brazil, India and elsewhere prompted the service beginning in 2018 to limit recipients when forwarding messages.

It also introduced a chatbot that users can message to access fact checks by internationally recognized organizations. But when Reuters queried the system for topics in messages sent to South Asian voters, it generated zero

News in brief

US boy fatally shoots self

HOUSTON: A three-year-old Texas boy has died after shooting himself with a gun he found during his own birthday party, police said Monday. The youngster was celebrating with family and friends on Saturday in Porter, 25 miles (40 kilometers) northeast of Houston, when adults heard a gunshot while playing cards. The boy was found with a gunshot wound to his chest and rushed to a fire station where he died, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department said. Authorities said the boy had found a pistol that had fallen out of a relative's pocket. —AFP

Greek warship collides with freighter

ATHENS: Two crew members of a Greek warship were slightly hurt yesterday after it collided with a Portuguese cargo ship off Piraeus, the port next to Athens, the navy said. There were 27 sailors on board the minesweeper at the time of the accident, who were rescued by coastguard patrol boats. The two injured were taken to hospital for treatment. The vessel suffered serious damage to the stern and it was towed back to the naval base on the nearby island of Salamina, the merchant navy ministry said. —AFP

Plastic dumped in Med to double

MADRID: Nearly 230,000 tons of plastic is dumped into the Mediterranean Sea every year, a figure which could more than double by 2040 unless "ambitious" steps are taken, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature said yesterday. Egypt, Italy and Turkey are the countries that release the most plastic into the sea, mainly due to large coastal populations and huge amounts of "mismanaged waste," an IUCN report found. But on a per capita basis Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia have the highest levels of plastic waste leakage into the Mediterranean. —AFP

HK teen activist arrested

HONG KONG: A young Hong Kong activist who was among the first arrested under Beijing's new national security law was detained yesterday close to the US consulate, police and local media said. Tony Chung, 19, was led away from a coffee shop opposite the consulate by unidentified men, the South China Morning Post reported, citing a staff reporter who witnessed events. Student Localism, a pro-independence group that Chung was once involved in before the security law was passed, said he and two other former members were arrested yesterday. —AFP

results. WhatsApp also said users can search the web from heavily forwarded messages to find relevant fact checks, though Reuters again found no related results.

A campaign spokeswoman for Republican incumbent Donald Trump said WhatsApp was not a focus for its social media staff. But some misleading messages on the app target him over racial justice policies and alleged extramarital affairs, according to Indian voters from both parties. "There's more on the Democratic candidates, but there is fake news about the Republican side, too," said Kannan Srinivasan, an Orlando businessman.

It is unclear where WhatsApp misinformation originates or whether the examples observed by Bantval and others are part of organized efforts. They said spelling and wording suggest some authors are Indian residents who view Trump as better for bilateral relations. Messages seen by Reuters and sent to swing-state voters portray Biden's views on Pakistan, Islam, China, taxation and policing in ways debunked by fact-checking groups. Bantval said the misrepresentations preyed on older Indian immigrants' concerns about crime, wealth and religion. —Reuters

Business

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2020

Ant Group launches \$34bn dual IPO

For Chinese consumers, Alipay app is part of the fabric of life

SHANGHAI: The most essential item in aircraft engineer Tao Rui's possession during a recent outing in Shanghai was the Alipay smartphone app from Ant Group, a company little known outside China until it unfurled plans for the biggest IPO in history. As Tao and a friend strolled the city at the weekend, he used Alipay to buy a cup of milk tea, a deep-fried octopus snack and a box of candy. He also used it to play a basketball game at an arcade, make a small donation to a street musician, and produce a health code signalling he was coronavirus-free before entering a Buddhist temple.



Alipay boasts in excess of 700m users

With a name belying its giant ambitions, China's Ant Group yesterday launched a history-making \$34 billion IPO in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Backed by Jack Ma, China's richest man who founded the Alibaba e-commerce empire from his bedroom two decades ago, Ant is a financial technology titan that is stitched into the everyday life of hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

They topped the day off with bowls of Japanese ramen noodles, also purchased with a scan of an Alipay code. Tao's day underscores why the planned \$34 billion stock listing of Ant Group, the financial arm of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, is such a big deal. Like hundreds of millions of Chinese consumers, the 22-year-old admits he simply cannot survive without Alipay, the crown jewel of the Alibaba empire. "I use Alipay to order a cab, to buy things, to shop on (Alibaba e-commerce platform) Taobao, to buy clothes, and air and train tickets," said Tao.

"It's indispensable for getting around in China."

HSBC continues to take hit from virus, trade row

HONG KONG: HSBC said yesterday its third-quarter post-tax profits fell 46 percent on-year as the Asia-focused banking giant continued to take a hammering from the coronavirus pandemic and spiralling China-US tensions. However, the profit falls were not as bad as some analysts had predicted and HSBC said it expected credit losses to be at the lower end of a previously announced \$8 billion to \$13 billion range.

The global economic slowdown caused by the virus has hit financial giants hard and there is limited optimism on the horizon as Europe and the United States head into the winter with infections soaring once more. HSBC has a further headache-geopolitical tensions via its status as a major business conduit between China and the West. As a result, the lender is in the midst of a worldwide overhaul, aiming to slash some 35,000 jobs by 2022, primarily in its less profitable European and American divisions. "We are accelerating the transformation of the Group, moving our focus from interest-rate sensitive business lines towards fee-generating businesses, and further reducing our operating costs," chief executive Noel Quinn said in a statement accompanying the results.

Reported post-tax profit for the third quarter came in at \$2 billion with revenue down 11 percent at \$11.9 billion, the statement said. Adjusted pre-tax profit slid 21 percent to \$4.3 billion in the period, beating a \$2.8 billion estimate by Bloomberg analysts. Quinn described the latest figures as "promising results against a backdrop of the continuing impacts of Covid-19 on the global economy" as well as low interest rates.

China and Brexit

In the first six months of 2020, HSBC's post-tax profits were down 69 percent, meaning the third-quarter results were something of an improvement as some major economies relaxed some of their coronavirus restrictions. The bank said its board would consider whether to pay "a conservative dividend" for 2020 based on final end of year results and how the global economy looks in early 2021. Earlier this year, UK regulators called on British banks to scrap dividends for the year to preserve capital during the pandemic crisis. HSBC makes 90 percent of its profit in Asia, with China and Hong Kong being the major drivers of growth. As a result, it has found itself more vulnerable than most to the crossfire caused by the increasingly bellicose relationship between Beijing and Washington. The bank has tried to stay in Beijing's good graces.

It vocally backed a tough national security law that Beijing imposed on Hong Kong in June to end a year of unrest and pro-democracy protests. The move sparked criticism in Washington and London but analysts saw it as an attempt to protect its access to China, which has a track record of punishing businesses that do not toe Beijing's line. "Geopolitical risk, particularly relating to trade and other tensions between the US and China, remains heightened," HSBC said in yesterday's profit statement. The US has sanctioned nearly a dozen key Hong Kong and Chinese officials over the national security law, telling international banks to stop doing busi-

Economy of the future

The raw numbers and growth potential of Ant Group have investors salivating over the world-record IPO. Alipay boasts in excess of 700 million active users-half of China's population and more than double that of the United States. Along with the WeChat Wallet function of Alibaba's chief tech rival Tencent, it has helped propel China forward into what may represent the economy of the future.

At restaurants, grocery stores and cafes, at subway turnstiles, train stations and airports, and when buying fruits and vegetables from a street-side peddler, purchases across China are routinely made by consumers old and young with a quick QR code scan. Even the occasional beggar is on board, sprawled on a sidewalk next to a neatly laminated printout of a QR code.

Tao said that in China's paper-money olden days, his family would have to hail a cab to get to a distant government office just to pay the household water and electricity bills-in cash. "Now, we pay all our utility bills through Alipay, which directly deducts the amount online," he said. "We don't have to go out at all. You can do it from home."

It's revolutionary

But direct point-of-sale payments are only part of the Alipay picture. Ant Group has built an ecosystem around Alipay in which third-party vendors-for everything from meal deliveries to travel services or taking out a loan-are housed under its umbrella. Smartphone users need only open Alipay to find the service they want and place an order.

Payment, of course, is processed via Alipay. Ant Group, spun off from Alibaba in 2011, says about half its revenue is derived from such providers. But its super-sized ambitions also include forays into personal finance that have put traditional Chinese banks on notice by offering easy access to a range of financial services including consumer credit, small-business loans and money-market funds.

"It's revolutionary, what they're doing," said Jeffrey Towson, a private equity investor and lecturer at Beijing University. "We are going to see digital finance



BEIJING: A vendor works behind Alipay (top) and WeChat (bottom) QR payment codes at a market in Beijing, on the day Alipay's parent company Ant Group launched a history-making \$34 billion IPO yesterday. — AFP

do things we never thought it could do, and go into businesses everywhere that we never saw coming."

'Big Brother' fears

The Chinese consumer buy-in is so complete that many merchants today only grudgingly accept cash.

That's fine with Communist Party policy-makers. They have long fretted that despite decades of amazing growth, China's economy was built on a shaky foundation relying too much on manufacturing and government investment, like a chair missing a leg. The party wanted to unleash China's growing consumer spending power as another pillar, and the e-commerce revolution ushered in by the likes of Alibaba and Tencent has helped pave the way.

Ant Group's attraction to investors, Towson says, is that the consumers and businesses captured in its embrace will only grow and potential rivals may find

Alipay's success "impossible to replicate".

But Alipay's growing profile in Chinese daily life has led to some concerns. Ant was forced to apologize in 2018 after users said they felt misled into allowing Alipay to share data on their spending habits with Ant's credit-scoring arm and other third-party services. And "Big Brother" fears surround an ill-defined "social credit" system being rolled out in China and facilitated by Alipay in which data on undesirable behaviour is captured digitally and compiled in a "credit score" that could affect a person's access to jobs or various services.

But Tao's main complaint is that Alipay has become too central to his life. He has been stranded at times when his phone died and his pockets were otherwise empty. "I won't completely rely on Alipay," he said. "I'll still bring some cash with me for those special situations." — AFP



HONG KONG: In this file photo, commuters wearing face masks travel on a tram past HSBC signage displayed outside the bank's local headquarters in Hong Kong. — AFP

ness with them. China's national security law, however, forbids businesses in Hong Kong from adhering to foreign sanctions regimes, leaving many in an unclear regulatory tight spot.—AFP

BP pares losses as oil demand edges higher

LONDON: British energy giant BP yesterday reported a net loss of \$450 million for the third quarter, down very sharply from the previous quarter's mammoth losses due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The loss after tax for the July-September period compared with a net loss of \$16.85 billion in the second quarter. BP was aided in the third quarter by an absence of huge write-downs coupled with a small recovery in oil demand and steadier prices. "The underlying business performance in the (third) quarter remained resilient and we made substantial progress in strengthening our balance sheet," BP chief financial officer Murray Auchincloss said in the earnings statement.

BP is axing 10,000 jobs, or 15 percent of its global workforce, after the pandemic caused huge asset writedowns. After companies worldwide closed their doors and airlines grounded planes at the height of the Covid-19 outbreak towards the end of the first quarter, oil prices dropped off a cliff, even briefly turning negative.

Prices then rebounded sharply and have traded around \$40 a barrel for some time. With the market stabilizing, BP yesterday announced a quarterly dividend of 5.25 US cents per share.

This matched the second-quarter payout, which had been halved from the first quarter-the first cut since the Deepwater Horizon oil rig disaster in 2010 that damaged BP's finances and reputation.—AFP

Heartland job growth lagged under Trump

CLYDE, Ohio: The voters of Monroe County, Michigan, may have expected an economic windfall when they flipped from supporting Democrat Barack Obama to help put Donald Trump in the White House in 2016. But it went the other way: Through the first three years of the Trump administration the county lost jobs, and brought in slightly less in wages in the first three months of 2020 than in the first three months of 2017 as Trump was taking over. And that was before the pandemic and the associated recession. With the US election just a week away, recently released government data and new analysis show just how little progress Trump made in changing the trajectory of the Rust Belt region that propelled his improbable rise to the White House.

While job and wage growth continued nationally under Trump, extending trends that took root under President Obama, the country's economic weight also continued shifting south and west, according to data from the US Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages that was recently updated to include the first three months of 2020.

A recent study from the Economic Innovation Group pointed to the same conclusion. It found relative stagnation in economic and social conditions in the Midwest compared with states like Texas or Tennessee where "superstar" cities such as Dallas and Nashville enjoyed more of the spoils of a decade-long US expansion.

Lagging the country

Across the industrial belt from Wisconsin to Pennsylvania, private job growth from the first three months of 2017 through the first three months of 2020 lagged the rest of the country - with employment in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio growing 2 percent or less over that time compared to a 4.5 percent national average, according to QCEW data analyzed by Reuters.

Texas and California saw job growth of more than 6 percent from 2017 through the start of 2020, by contrast, while Idaho led the nation with employment growing more than 10 percent. Perhaps notably for the election, a Reuters analysis of 17 prominent counties in the five battleground states of Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin showed the limits of Trump's controversial tax and trade policies in generating jobs where he promised them. All 17 of the counties had a voting age population greater than 100,000 people as of 2016, supported Obama in the 2012 election, and voted for Trump in 2016.

In 13 of those counties, all in the Rust Belt region, private job growth lagged the rest of the country. Employment actually shrank in five of them. Of the four with faster job growth than the rest of the country, two were in Florida, one was in Pennsylvania and one was in Wisconsin. The findings show that under the "greatest economy ever" boasts that Trump made before the pandemic, when job and wage growth were indeed strong, the fundamental contours of regional US prosperity seemed largely unchanged.

Some of that may have stemmed from Trump's own policies. The use of steel tariffs, for example, may have



US President Donald Trump tours Whirlpool Corporation washing machine factory in Clyde, Ohio

ended up costing Michigan jobs. "The key battleground areas...have not fared well under President Trump, even prior to the pandemic," said Moody's Analytics Chief Economist Mark Zandi. The swing state counties most supportive of Trump in 2016, he said, were "especially vulnerable" to the president's trade war tactics because of their ties to global markets.

Dramatic shift

But Trump was also swimming against a very strong tide, driven by forces bigger than a Tweet or a tariff can likely counter. For decades people, capital and economic output have been shifting from a mid-20th century concentration in the US Northeast and Midwest to the open land, cheaper wages and more temperate climate of the Sun Belt, and the innovation corridor from Silicon Valley to Washington state. Trump, in his 2016 campaign, put a premium on manufacturing jobs - last century's path to the middle class - and as president used a combination of trade policy, tariffs, and blunt force arm-twisting on companies to try to shore up the prospects of the industrial heartland that formed his electoral base.

It didn't happen. Texas, according to QCEW data, gained more manufacturing jobs from 2017 to the start of 2020 than Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania combined; the smaller but increasingly competitive manufacturing cluster in Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama gained as many factory positions as those legacy manufacturing states.

While Trump may have failed in his efforts to reinvigorate the Rust Belt, the forces acting against the region pre-date his administration. A longer-term analysis by the EIG, looking at outcomes across an index of social and economic measures, showed little progress from the start of the century through 2018. According to a Reuters analysis of EIG data, two to three times as many counties in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin slipped further down the think tank's Distressed Communities Index as climbed to a more prosperous bracket over those nearly two decades.

In Florida and Washington state, by contrast, five times as many counties moved into a more well-off bracket, and in California three times as many counties prospered.

EIG research director Kenan Fikri said it was "easy to forget" that the Midwest and Great Lakes regions were once the "pinnacle of what the US had to offer" before the economy shifted to a more tech, service-oriented and global footing. "We have seen the gravity of economic wellbeing take a dramatic shift to the west ... It continued unabated through the first several years of the Trump administration," he said. — Reuters

Business

stc records KD 209m revenues, KD 27.5m net profit during first 9 months of 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2020.

On this occasion, Dr Mahmoud Ahmad Abdulrahman - stc's Chairman, stated: During the third quarter of the year 2020, the telecommunications sector witnessed a gradual recovery concerning the operational and financial results throughout the continuous negative economic consequences of the current COVID-19 crisis, which has heavily affected numerous sectors worldwide.

Since the onset of the crisis, stc has been always keen on supporting the Kuwaiti society by launching a number of corporate social responsibility initiatives, in support of the preventive measures taken by the government. stc has also worked with some government agencies and medical companies to prevent the infectious diseases in addition to undertaking several preventive precautionary measures and procedures to avoid outbreaks of contagious diseases, in accordance with the health guidelines and instructions provided by the Ministry of Health. stc has also adopted the highest safety standards and instilled it into the culture of performance among its staff to continue offering high quality services while protecting its customers and employee.

In addition to being a pioneer in providing innovative integrated advanced digital solutions and technological advances for both individuals and enterprises throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, stc was able to achieve these results through adopting a flexible operating model, in addition to being flexible in implementing the company's digital transformation strategy and providing advanced technical solutions in line with the government outlook with regard to social distancing for individual and enterprise segments. Through capitalizing on the 5G network to deliver a range of digital services, which have become a significant part of the Kuwaiti Community's daily activities, stc was able to satisfy the high demand for broadband high-speed networks following the latest governmental decisions of pursuing the current Academic Year using the online platforms in addition to the corporates' incumbent for the online cloud and digital solutions".

Commenting on stc's financial results for the nine-months period, Dr. Abdulrahman, commented: stc's total revenues stood at KD 209.0 million for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2020 in comparison to KD 215.6 million for the same period last year. On the other hand, EBITDA reached KD 57.9 million during the first nine-month period of 2020 compared to KD 60.1 million during the same period in 2019. stc's EBITDA margin reached 27.7 percent during the 9M-2020 period compared to 27.9 percent in 2019. As a result, stc

- Growth in stc's financial results during Q3-2020 in response to its operational performance & digital transformation strategy
- stc achieved 13% growth in company's revenue during Q3-2020 compared to Q2-2020
- stc achieved 16.3% growth in EBITDA during Q3-2020 compared to Q2-2020
- stc achieved 23.7% growth in net profit during Q3-2020 compared to Q2-2020
- stc's customer base has grown by 7.1% to reach 1.84 million customers by the end of Q3-2020 compared to Q2-2020
- stc strengthened its position as the second largest telecom operator in Kuwait with a market share of approx. 35% in terms of sector's market share of revenues

The financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2020	
Revenue	KD 209.0 mn
EBITDA	KD 57.9 mn
Net Profit	KD 27.5 mn
EPS	55 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 411.9 mn
Shareholder's Equity	KD 217.8 mn
Book Value Per Share	436 Kuwaiti fils
Customer base	1.84 mn

recorded a net profit KD 27.5 million (earnings per share of 55 fils) with a profit margin of 13.1 percent for the period".

Dr Abdulrahman added: stc's financial results for the first nine-month period of 2020 demonstrated the company's ability to compete and enhance its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti telecom market with a revenue market share of approx. 35 percent. With the ongoing repercussions and challenges we are facing due to the COVID-19 crisis, the cost optimization program in order to achieve the best results and enhance profitability through adopting a balanced and effective financial policy in relation to the operational and capital expenditure.

Commenting on the quarterly results for the three months period ended 30 September 2020, Eng. Maziad Bin Nasser Alharbi - stc's Chief Executive Officer, added: "The Company's financial results have witnessed remarkable growth in the third quarter compared to the second quarter of 2020 as the revenue recorded KD 72.6 million in Q3-2020 compared to KD 64.2 million in Q2-2020 representing a growth of 13 percent. While EBITDA grew by 16.3 percent to reach, KD 22.0 million in Q3-2020 compared to KD 18.9 million in Q2-2020. As a result, the net profit for the same period increased by 23.7 percent to reach KD 11.6 million

compared to 9.3 million.

stc successfully achieved these results despite the economic challenges the world has witnessed following COVID-19. stc has managed to achieve good levels of revenues and enhance its operational efficiency to add value to its customers and achieve better returns for its shareholders.

Considering the Company's financial position as of 30 September 2020, total assets reached KD 411.9 million, while total shareholders' equity reached KD 217.8 million, with a book value of 436 Kuwaiti fils per share. Furthermore, stc boasts a strong financial solvency position, considered to be amongst the best in comparison to telecom companies in the Middle East. Furthermore, stc's customer base stood at 1.84 million customer at the end of September 2020.

Alharbi added: the third quarter of 2020 witnessed the launch of a series of promotions and services that can benefit and add value to the user experience of both individuals and corporates. During the quarter, we launched the dedicated backup access solution in a step to build on the series of offerings introduced by the Company to its enterprise customers. The new solution aimed at preventing any disruptions in primary internet connectivity that may lead to interruptions in business functions, while keeping in mind the current chal-



lenges companies and SMEs are facing in their return to normal business operations.

Upon subscribing to the limited time and exclusive promotions, new customers and those renewing their subscriptions received several complimentary gifts and enjoyed benefits that range from 500 free local minutes to double the GBs, reaching up to 100 GB on the largest 5G network in Kuwait.

Additionally, stc was the first operator in the Middle East to launch unlimited 5G roaming for all its postpaid, prepaid and enterprise customers across all GCC Countries. Following the chain of exclusive and innovative offers released by the Company, the innovative and ground-breaking service could be added to any of stc's packages for both existing and new customers. By subscribing to the roaming service, customers were able to enjoy the telecom operator's ultra-fast 5G speeds throughout all GCC countries without any price increases to offered roaming packages.

stc also announced the launch TURBONET, a product developed with the latest state-of-the-art technology capable of delivering fixed internet speeds. TURBONET was available to customers with monthly plans, in addition to a complete mesh WiFi solution and outdoor router that guarantees maximum home coverage at no additional cost.

By offering its range of "Always ON" postpaid plans, packaged with new unique benefits designed to meet customers' connectivity requirements, customers were able to unlock the new-to-market features by subscribing to one of stc's plans. The plans featured the highly convenient Always ON service that permits users to always remain connected to the internet, as well as benefits ranging from telecom to premium digital services.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen its 5G network and provide better solutions to its customers, stc expanded its 5G network on a 2.1 GHz frequency band, the first of its kind in Kuwait. The deployment of the network not only improves the overall user experience for customers, but it also prepares for the exploration and development of 5G vertical industry applications".

IPO to rocket Alibaba founder Ma's wealth

BEIJING: Chinese tech titan Jack Ma is set to become the world's 11th richest person after the financial arm of his e-commerce titan Alibaba raises billions in a mammoth public listing, according to the Bloomberg News. Ant Group said Monday it plans to raise \$34 billion in a listing shared between Hong Kong and Shanghai-making it the biggest IPO in history.

The e-payments behemoth, which runs China's dominant online payment system Alipay, plans to sell 1.67 billion shares at HK\$80 (\$10.30) each in Hong Kong from yesterday. Ant Group's split float would exceed the \$29 billion chalked up by Saudi Aramco in December, a high-profile win for a Chinese company during a period of bad headlines for mainland tech firms as Beijing and Washington face off on a number of fronts.

According to Bloomberg former English teacher Ma's 8.8 percent stake in Ant is worth \$27.4 billion based on the stock pricing, and will lift the entrepreneur's fortune to \$71.1 billion. That would send him rising up Bloomberg's Billionaires Index, with his wealth exceeding that of Oracle's Larry Ellison, L'Oreal heiress Françoise Bettencourt-Meyers, and

individual members of the Waltons, whose family own US retail giant Walmart.

The charismatic Chinese businessman was a cash-strapped entrepreneur when someone showed him the internet on a 1990s trip to the United States. He launched various internet-related business projects in China that met with mixed success before convincing a group of friends to give him \$60,000 to start his Alibaba e-commerce venture in 1999.

Bloomberg said at least 18 other people will become billionaires from the IPO, including director Lucy Peng, the biggest individual Ant owner after Ma, and chairman Eric Jing. Ant operations have expanded over the years from consumer e-payments to offering business credit

and areas including cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

A study last week from the Hurun Report found Ma's wealth had climbed a whopping 45 percent this year, as online shopping firms saw a surge in business owing to people being shut indoors for months during strict lockdowns to contain the virus. —AFP



Coronavirus pummeling FDI, says UN

GENEVA: The coronavirus crisis is expected to drag foreign direct investment down by up to 40 percent this year, with a recovery not expected until 2022, UN economists said yesterday.

A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade, Investment and Development (UNCTAD) found that lockdowns and the prospect of a deep global recession had dramatically shrunk FDI, which is a measure of cross-border private sector investment. The agency said that worldwide, FDI was 49 percent lower during the first half of 2020 than during the same period in 2019 — and that every major form of foreign investment took a hit, ranging from infrastructure funding to mergers and acquisitions.

"The decline was quite drastic," James Zhan, UNCTAD's investment and enterprise chief, told a virtual press conference. The rate of decline is expected to slow in the second half of 2020, resulting in a drop of 30 to 40 percent over the whole year, with FDI expected to retract much more moderately in 2021 before recovering in 2022.

"The outlook remains highly uncertain, depending on the duration of the health crisis and on the effectiveness of policy interventions to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic," Zhan said. "Geopolitical risks also continue to add to the uncertainty."

In the first half of this year, developed economies saw the biggest fall in investment, UNCTAD said, with FDI in the wealthier countries witnessing a 75-percent drop from 2019 levels to just \$98 billion during the first half of the year-a level last seen in 1994. "The trend was exacerbated by sharply negative inflows in European economies," the report said. —AFP

Total Revenues

209

KD Million

The Board of Directors of Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 27.5 million for the nine months' period ended 30 September 2020.

EBITDA	Net Profit	EPS	Subscribers
9 Months 57.9 KD Million	9 Months 27.5 KD Million	9 Months 55 Kuwaiti Fils	30 September 2020 1.84 Million Subscribers

Business

US solidifies sanctions against Iran oil sector before election

Embargo covers sales to Syria and Venezuela

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's administration on Monday slapped fresh sanctions on Iran's oil sector including over sales to Syria and Venezuela, reducing Joe Biden's room for maneuver if he wins next week's election. The Trump administration has since 2018 enforced sweeping sanctions aimed at ending all of Iran's key oil exports, seeking to choke off all cash sources for the regional nemesis of US allies Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Under the new measures, the administration designated the National Iranian Oil Company, Iran's petroleum ministry and the National Iranian Tanker Company under a counterterrorism authority, raising the bar for any future administration to reverse course. The Treasury Department issued the sanctions by linking the three entities to the Revolutionary Guards' elite Qods Force—which was earlier designated as a terrorist organization by the United States and whose commander, Qasem Soleimani, was killed in a US attack at Baghdad airport in January. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the sanctions should send a warning to "the few remaining buyers of Iranian crude oil."

"These designations are an important step in the maximum pressure campaign to limit the Iranian regime's ability to threaten its neighbors and destabilize the Middle East," Pompeo said in a statement.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh denounced the sanctions as a "passive reaction to the failure of Washington's policy of reducing (Iran's) crude oil exports to zero." "I have no assets outside of Iran to be subject to the sanctions. I would sacrifice my life, belongings and reputation for Iran," Zanganeh, who was also targeted personally, wrote on Twitter.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called the United States a "#SanctionAddict," tweeting, "Kick the habit."

Inhibiting Biden?

If Trump loses the November 3 election, Monday's sanctions could be among his last volleys against Iran's leaders. Biden, who leads in polls, favors diplomacy with Iran and backed an accord negotiated by previous president Barack Obama under which Tehran sharply curtailed nuclear work in exchange for promises of sanctions relief.

Henry Rome, a senior analyst at the Eurasia Group risk consultancy, said that Biden if elected could still ease sanctions but would face an added political obstacle by letting critics accuse him of glossing over terrorism. "The new designations are almost certainly designed to inhibit a potential Joe Biden administration's diplomatic efforts with Iran," Rome said.

Behnam Ben Taleblu, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which presses for a hard line against Tehran, said that any administration would face a "significant" burden in clearing Iran over the oil sales in question.

"It's likely that the impact of these penalties, even this late in the game, could outlive the politics of 2020," he said. The Treasury Department said that a network backed by the Qods Force shipped more than one dozen tankers of oil in spring 2019 — mostly to Syria, where Iran is a top backer of President Bashar al-Assad as he emerges from a brutal civil war.

Separate from the terrorism designations, the



An oil tanker destined from Iran to Venezuela that was seized by the United States is seen in this August 2020 picture.

Treasury Department imposed sanctions on a British-based Iranian businessman, Mahmood Madanipour, and related companies for transactions with Venezuela. The Treasury Department accused him of arranging the shipment of tens of thousands of metric tons of gasoline to Venezuela, where Trump has been trying unsuccessfully to depose the leftist leader, Nicolas Maduro, who has recently stepped up economic ties with Iran.

Earlier this month, the administration took another major step to cripple the Iranian economy by imposing sanctions on the nation's banks-making most transactions with the outside world difficult.

The measures alarmed European allies of the United States which warn of dire consequences even to humanitarian trade, although the Trump administration insists it is not targeting food or medicine. — AFP

In Pennsylvania, fracking debate triggers tremors

DEEMSTON, US: Bryan Latkanich says he was once "the biggest cheerleader there was" for the fracking industry—but now blames gas wells for destroying his southwestern Pennsylvania farmhouse and his family's health. Retired teacher Rose Friend, whose family has owned a home in the area for generations, says gas producers cut down her century-old trees and made her life miserable with dust and noise pollution from never-ending lines of trucks trundling through her property.

Despite their personal nightmares, both say they'll vote November 3 for Donald Trump, who has positioned himself as a champion of hydraulic fracturing, as well as fossil fuel energy generally.

Their cases illustrate some of the complexities around a debate that is center stage during the 2020 US presidential election, even as some residents of the country's most heavily fracked region have soured on an industry that had promised economic revival. "I was completely down and out when they come in and say:

"Hey, you're a millionaire," Latkanich, 49, said about an early meeting with Atlas America, later bought by Chevron.

He'd just had brain surgery for a tumor that left him blind in one eye, was going through a divorce, and had lost his job, when he was told gas deposits on his land could fetch him \$13 million.

Instead, he says he got just \$135,000 before the company packed up and left. Bryan first noticed problems in 2013, when he gave his son a bath, only to find burns all over the child's body.

Ryan, now 10, still experiences symptoms like asthma and ear infections while Bryan reports heart problems, asthma and neuropathy, which he attributes to well water contamination.

Latkanich is now deeply critical of fracking, but will still vote Trump, because "I believe in gun rights and protections." Friend says she favors increased regulation for fracking, but definitely won't vote for Joe Biden. "I am anti-abortion, that's one of the big things—I do not believe in killing babies," the 83-year-old said.

Regulation calls

Fracking—gas and oil extraction from deep underground rock using an injection of water and chemicals—boomed in the mid-2000s thanks to new technology.

By 2014, it made the US the world's biggest oil and gas producer. But its costs are high: the drilling triggers earthquakes, while research links its air emissions

would be completely covered by insurance. Damages from a ship spilling oil, hitting an iceberg or becoming marooned can run into the hundreds of millions of dollars. "It's all very much new territory," said Helle Hammer, chair of the policy forum with the International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI), the leading association for the global marine insurance market. Without years' worth of data on the number of casualties, accidents, collisions or oil spills, she said, "it's impossible to do the risk modelling."

More than 10 insurance companies or brokers interviewed by Reuters said they still had too little knowledge of the water to resolve all questions about liability. In the past few years, marine insurers in general have been paying out more for ship damage than they collected in premiums, according to IUMI data. Brokers say some are pulling out of the market completely. So the appetite to underwrite risks in the Arctic market is not high.

It's "not like the rest of the world, with tried and tested shipping routes and known risks," said Michael Kingston, an Arctic marine consultant and adviser to the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum on Arctic affairs. For insurers that do contemplate new ice routes, there is a dramatic precedent: The Titanic, which hit an iceberg and went down in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic in April 1912. The loss was as devastating then as more recent catastrophes

emphasis," Nestle CEO Mark Schneider said? last week after reporting third-quarter sales. "because affordability, especially when it comes to the economic consequences of COVID, will become ever more important."

Unilever, which markets food and consumer products in 190 countries, said it is making sure every market has low unit-price packages and cheaper brands. On a conference call with reporters last week, Chief Financial Officer Graeme Pitkethly said the maker of Hellmann's mayonnaise and Lipton tea launched new variants of its Savital shampoo, which is priced below its Dove and Tresemme brands, in Latin America.

Consumer product companies usually pass along price and "promotional allowances" to a retailer, which then uses it to offer limited-time promotions such as 2 for \$5 value deals, or everyday low prices. Many companies initially pulled back on price-focused promotions, such as 'buy one, get one free,' in March and April when coronavirus-related shutdowns drove shoppers to hoard everything from hand sanitizer and cleaners to toilet paper and flour.

The demand spike strained supply chains and all parties just focused on keeping stores clean



Farmer Bryan Latkanich shows a toxicology report for his son during an interview at his home in Deemston, Pennsylvania.

and water contamination to myriad health problems.

Then there's global warming. While methane is the cleanest burning fossil fuel, it also leaks out from drilling wells and becomes a highly potent greenhouse gas. In Washington County, home to over 1,600 fracking wells, many residents welcomed the promise of economic renewal in the wake of the coal industry's demise. — AFP



As climate change opens new sea routes, experienced polar captains like Whatley are coveted for Arctic voyages that can save money on the run between Europe and Asia.

like Hurricane Katrina have been since, leading global insurance market Lloyd's of London says. That cruise liner went down in relatively familiar waters. But only about 6% of the Arctic Ocean is charted, said Ian Church, an ocean acoustic mapping specialist at the University of New Brunswick. — Reuters



KIEV: Customers gather near checkout lanes as they buy goods in a supermarket in Kiev, Ukraine. — Reuters

and shelves stocked.

Chef Boyardee pasta maker ConAgra told Reuters it has increased price promotions, though not to pre-COVID levels, since early spring on products such as Pam cooking sprays, Bird Eye frozen vegetables and Marie Callender pies. — Reuters

News in brief

Spain unemployment jumps

MADRID: Spain's unemployment rate jumped to 16.26 percent in the third quarter as the country's tourism-dependent economy was ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic, official data showed yesterday. The reading for the July-September period compares with a jobless rate of 15.3 percent for April to June in the eurozone's fourth-largest economy, national statistics office INE said in a statement. There were an additional 355,000 people out of work in Spain in the third quarter, still an improvement over the second quarter when over a million jobs were lost, mainly in the tourism sector. — AFP

S Korea economy bounces back

SEOUL: Asia's fourth-largest economy returned to quarter-on-quarter growth in the July to September period, South Korea's central Bank of Korea announced yesterday. The South largely overcame an early coronavirus outbreak through an intensive track-and-test model, and everyday life in the country has returned largely to normal. It is now widely expected to see one of the least bad 2020 economic performances among the OECD group of developed economies. Gross domestic product expanded 1.9 percent in the third quarter over the previous three months, the BOK said, although the economy still shrank 1.3 percent on-year. — AFP

AIG names new CEO

NEW YORK: Global insurer AIG announced a multi-part shake up on Monday, naming a new CEO and splitting its business in two. Once the world's largest insurer, which needed a US government bailout to survive the 2008 global financial crisis, named Peter S Zaffino to lead AIG starting March 1, 2021, in addition to his current role as the company's president. Current CEO Brian Duperreault will become executive chairman of the board, the company said in a statement. "Peter has been instrumental in the significant turnaround and transformation at AIG and his vision, determination and pursuit of excellence will help ensure the company's future success," Duperreault said. — AFP

EU backs Nigerian WTO candidate

BRUSSELS: Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala picked up crucial backing from the EU on Monday, sources said, giving her bid to become the first African head of the WTO a major boost. The World Trade Organization will announce its new director general next month, but sources said the EU will publicly announce its support for the 66-year-old economist today. Okonjo-Iweala was Nigeria's first female finance minister and has long career at the World Bank as a development economist. — AFP

Consumer firms pitch discounts, bargain products

NEW YORK: Unilever, Procter & Gamble and other major consumer goods manufacturers are touting lower-priced brands, smaller packages and discounts to woo penny-pinching shoppers struggling through the most severe global recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Nestle told Reuters earlier this month that it has recently launched single-use sachets of Maggi seasonings in Indonesia and smaller sachets and cooking sauces in the Philippines. The world's biggest packaged food company is working on "enhancing the meatiness of its bouillon" for when meat itself becomes a luxury, Nestle head of culinary products Agnes Lalanne said.

It also is promoting recipes that call for cheaper proteins like eggs and canned meat in the Philippines. "We'll give this (affordable products) more

Classifieds

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

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



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

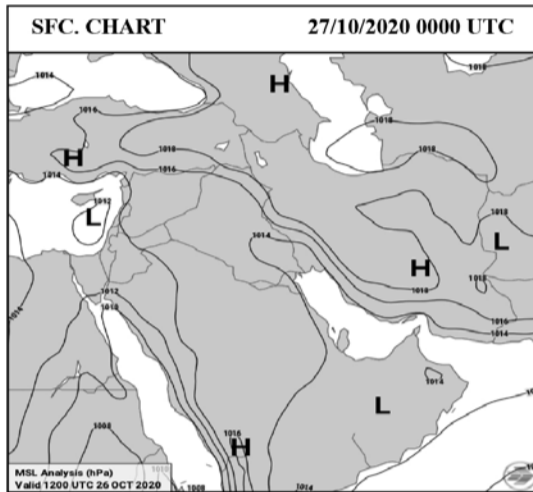
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Rather hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	35 °C	22 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	36 °C	15 °C
ABDALY	37 °C	20 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	37 °C	20 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	34 °C	24 °C
SALMIYAH	33 °C	25 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	33 °C	17 °C
WAFRA	37 °C	15 °C
SALMY	37 °C	18 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	10/28	Rather hot	36 °C	15 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Thursday	10/29	Rather hot	36 °C	15 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Friday	10/30	Rather hot	35 °C	16 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Saturday	10/31	Rather hot	35 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:38
Sunrise	05:58
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:42
Sunset	17:07
Isha	18:24

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	36 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	60 %
MIN. RH	05 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

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



Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1

EMERGENCY 112
 Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

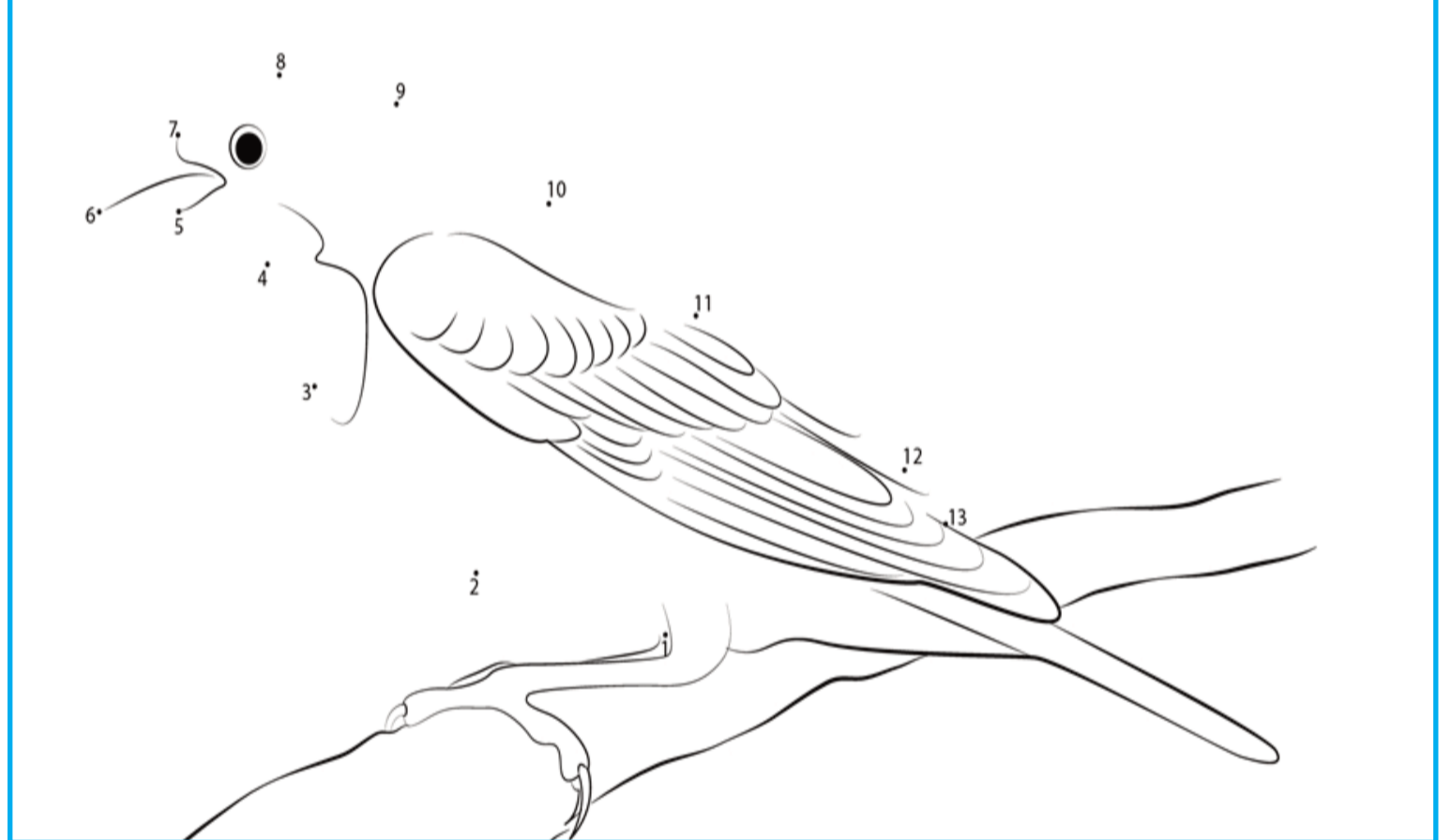
Word Search

Italian Desserts Word Search

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

Biscotti	Bombolone	Ciambella	Gelato	Nutella	Panna Cotta	Pignolata	Pizzelle	Semifreddo
Struffoli	Tiramisu	Torta Caprese	Zabaglione	Zuppa Inglese				

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19) A phone conversation with someone who lives far away might have you feeling a bit sad, reflecting on how much you miss that person. This can lead to pondering about your life. You might question the direction you seem to be moving in and consider other possible options. You're likely to be cautious when it comes to making final decisions, Aries. You will consider every detail.	Cancer (June 21-July 22) You might wake up this morning and decide your home is a total wreck. The desire to spend the day cleaning and sprucing up your house might prove almost obsessive. Do what you have to do, but don't get so caught up that you forget about the big picture. Whatever you do today, Cancer, view it in its proper perspective. The world won't end if your house isn't flawlessly clean.	Libra (September 23-October 22) Today you might perform some service to people who live in your neighborhood. Perhaps you will chauffeur people around to do their shopping. Perhaps you will help people with household tasks. Pets may also need some attention. Whatever it is, you will enjoy helping in whatever way is possible, and be appreciated as well. Expect to have a very busy day.	Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Emotions stemming from past experiences might cause you to assume undue responsibilities, particularly concerning family members. This is fine as long as you realize what you're doing is as much for you as for the other person. Whatever tasks you assume may allow you to release old traumas and give form to your plans and ambitions. And don't be surprised if those you help today go to bat for you later.
Taurus (April 20-May 20) Today you might be in a reflective and meditative mood. You may think about mundane matters, such as how to increase your income, or more complex issues, such as the purpose of life. You aren't likely to want to do much socializing today, Taurus. It's probably the perfect day to stay in, relax, and enjoy your own company. Reading could prove especially informative now.	Leo (July 23-August 22) Extra time and attention that you have been devoting to your career should pay off about now. You've worked hard to be where you are, and you aren't through climbing the ladder of success just yet. You aren't likely to rest on your laurels. Today you might spend a lot of time planning your next goal. A little ingenuity will definitely pay off here, Leo. Use whatever advantages you have.	Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Meticulous and sincere effort on your part may have led to a recent increase in income. Today you might be thinking of reworking your budget. While others might throw caution to the wind at a time like this, today you might go too far in the opposite direction. Be careful and realistic, Scorpio, but don't be overly frugal. You've worked hard to get where you are, and you deserve a reward.	Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Relatives or neighbors may come to you today asking for favors. Some may know exactly what buttons to push in order to get you to do what they want. Don't be sucked into guilt or other negative emotions. Help others if you wish, Aquarius, but recognize that you're doing it because you want to and not because you feel you have to. You might even learn something about yourself in the process.
Gemini (May 21-June 20) Obligations to friends and groups could interfere with time that you want to spend with your partner. A number of people in your home might demand more of your time, energy, and attention, and you might find this disconcerting. You're no one's servant, Gemini. You're entitled to enjoy yourself. Save some time for your mate at the end of the day.	Virgo (August 23-September 22) An older male visitor could contact you, possibly offering to help you with some work that needs to be done. Family members may have abandoned you for the day to go out and do their own thing. You will welcome the offer. Practical matters, such as the household budget, might need attention, so set aside some time to work out the details.	Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) A sense of duty toward family members, children, and your sweetheart may cause you to take on responsibilities today that you wouldn't normally assume. Sincere efforts on behalf of those you care about are likely to bring the results you want. It won't just make you happy but will also please those you are helping. This not only makes you feel appreciated, it will also boost your physical strength.	Pisces (February 19-March 20) A temporary lack of belief in your abilities might have you hesitating to start a project or take on a task that you'd normally snap up. This could involve something you've wanted to try or helping someone else. Your faith in yourself should never flag, but if it does, it's important to remember that hard work can be as important as talent - and you aren't afraid of that!

Lifestyle | Features



People visit the HEX!, a museum of Witch Hunt in Ribe, Denmark. — AFP photos



The Political Witches is displayed at the HEX!, a museum of Witch Hunt.



The Trepanned Skull is displayed at the HEX!



The Wizards is displayed at the HEX!

Danish museum brings witch hunts to life

The fire crackles and a woman shrieks as flames lick her body, burning her alive—a museum in Denmark is bringing the dark period of witch-hunting to life. Located in the home of a former witch hunter, the "Hex! Museum of Witch Hunt" in the town of Ribe sheds light on how a fear of witches led to persecutions that swept across Denmark and Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. While today's Danish kids happily dress up as witches and wizards for Halloween, Denmark at the time was a religious and superstitious Lutheran society where fear and distrust were often intertwined with the secret use of magic to keep God's wrath at bay. Across Europe, approximately 100,000 people went on trial for witchcraft, with as many as 50,000 burned, museum historian Louise Hauberg Lindgaard told AFP.

Denmark sentenced 1,000 people to death for witchcraft which, she said, "is quite a lot" given the country's population

was around one million at the time. Most were women believed to be colluding with the devil. By comparison, Germany—the country in Europe with the most witch hunts—had 16,500 trials, more than 40 percent of which ended with the accused being burned at the stake.

Zealous king

Denmark's hostility to witchcraft is largely attributed to King Christian IV (1577-1648), Hauberg Lindgaard said. Under his rule, the country's first legislation against the practice was adopted in 1617, sending black magic practitioners to the stake. In the eight years after the law was adopted, persecutions were rampant, with a witch burned every five days. For the monarch-like many contemporaries including brother-in-law King James VI of Scotland and England, another champion of witch hunts—the persecutions were a way to retain power and project an image of a good Christian car-

ing for his subjects.

Hauberg Lindgaard explained monarchs assumed this responsibility after 16th century French philosopher Jean Bodin declared if a king did not persecute witches then he was solely responsible for his subjects' misfortune. At the time, anything could be a pretext to be denounced as a witch, from an offhand remark to a suspicious charm, and the accused were then put on trial. The museum opened at the end of June, attracting 10,000 visitors in the first month—a strong showing attributed to both cool summer weather and the popular subject matter. "People love to watch and read about all things 'witchy'... such as novels, movies and TV series, and also about the more historic aspects," Hauberg Lindgaard said.

"Interestingly, the 'historic truths' pertaining to the witch hunt era have since been blurred and reinterpreted by more popular notions of the topic, and we can



The Wax Doll is displayed at the HEX!

definitely feel the desire to understand 'what actually happened' among our guests," she said. Visitors learn that while most witches were women, "up to one in four was a man," she said. They were often "single and living on the edge of society, quite poor." Brooms, amulets, dolls and other items are on display, as well as torture instruments and animated reconstructions of witch trials, all accompanied by eerie background music. For

21-year-old Danish visitor Mathilda, the museum was an opportunity to learn more about a period she hardly knows.

"It's very exciting to hear about this stuff. It's something that not only happened here in Denmark but also in a lot of other countries," she said. And the building that houses the museum has a history of its own: it was built in the late 16th century by a witch hunter who played a key role in seven trials, three of which ended up with the suspects being burned at the stake. The picturesque town of Ribe itself is also hallowed ground. Founded in the Viking era, people once believed that it was where witches learned their craft in the 1600s, and it is the Danish town that held the most trials per citizen, Hauberg Lindgaard said. The last person accused of being a witch and burned in Denmark was Anna Bruds, in 1652. — AFP



A visitor walks by the painting "Last Dream of a Virgin" by Manuel Villegas Brieve during the exhibition "Uninvited Guests."



A woman wearing a face mask walks past the painting "The Satyr" by Antonio Fillol during the exhibition "Uninvited Guests."



A woman stands in front of the painting "Falenas" by Carlos Verger Fioretti during the exhibition "Uninvited Guests." — AFP photos

Misogyny in art? Spain's Prado pleads guilty

Slave, witch, prostitute or mother: a new exhibit at Spain's Prado explores how misogyny influenced the way women were portrayed in art, and the role that the museum itself played. "Uninvited Guests", the museum's first post-lockdown exhibition, is divided into sections with names such as "mothers under judgment", "guidance for the wayward" and "the art of indoctrination". One of the aims is to put the spotlight on "an ideology, a State propaganda regarding the female figure", which existed between 1833 and 1931, curator Carlos Navarro told AFP. The artworks from this period reveal a "bourgeois thinking which sought to validate the role that society attributed to women," he added.

With this show the Prado, one of Europe's finest painting collections which celebrated its 200th anniversary last year, hopes to make amends for the role it played in this process. The museum acknowledges that during the period in question, discrimination operated not just against female artists but in the way women were represented in the works the state bought and exhibited. The show focuses on the period between 1833 and 1931 because that is when the Prado says it started to play a "key" role in the "acquisition and

display of contemporary art". That gave it "an important role in the construction of the idea of a modern Spanish school" of art.

Young nudes

The exhibition explores how paintings by men at the time relegated women to secondary roles, usually as attractive accessories. Two works by Spanish painter Pedro Saenz Saenz, his 1897 "Chrysalid", and "Innocence" completed two years later, both depict a naked, prepubescent girl in a suggestive pose. Young models at the time were forced to pose naked, in tears, for painters during an era when there was "no age limit or violence in the nude," said Navarro as he stood before the paintings. The few times women are the protagonists it is often against their will.

"The Rebel", for example, a 1914 work by Spanish painter Antonio Fillol Granell, depicts a Roma girl being expelled by her family from their camp—presumably for some kind of moral transgression. The second half of the exhibition features works by women from that era, who were marginalized because of their gender. It includes many still-lives—representation of household objects such as flowers or food. But there are few portraits, as these were reserved for male painters.

'Missed opportunity'

This section includes works by two women, France's Rosa Bonheur and Spain's Maria Antonia Banuelos, who did not get the recognition they deserved in Spain at the time, Navarro said. No works by Banuelos can be found in Spain today, he added. Ironically, shortly after the exhibition opened, the Prado was forced to remove a painting from this section after it was found to have been painted by a man, and not a woman as previously thought. And of the 130 works in the exhibition, 70 are signed by men, prompting complaints from some feminist groups that it does not dedicate enough space to works by women.

A group called Women in the Visual Arts, which has over 500 members, said the show was a "missed opportunity" to give overlooked female artists their due. Navarro, who is the lead curator for the exhibition, dismissed the controversy, saying it was sparked by "historians and especially contemporary art critics who had hoped to be part of the project". "Uninvited Guests" opened to the public on October 10 and is due to run until March 14. — AFP

Cars, electro and sequins: Drive-in raves in virus-hit US

Clearly visible from afar with her flashing earrings and sequined jacket, Charity Valente is attending her first drive-in rave: a night of electronic music where the party-goers are in or around their cars, owing to the coronavirus pandemic. "We've been waiting for live music for seven months," she said, after driving four hours from Pittsburgh to see US jam group "Disco Biscuits." On a remote hilltop in Scranton, Pennsylvania, dubbed "Electric City" because it was home to the first electric streetcars in America, more than 100 cars are lined up, their headlights trained on the stage where two giant screens have been set up. "We think it's the safest way for people to get together and enjoy music" during the pandemic, said Donnie Estopinal, who has since May been organizing drive-in raves in several states, including Texas, South Carolina and Florida.

Each one had a different theme—a DJ or a band, a dedicated radio frequency, multiple stages, fireworks—but there is one constant: the ravers stay in their vehicles, or next to them. The trend was born in Germany in April, where the first in-vehicle raves sprang up after music festivals and clubs were shut down. But with the drive-in being a classic part of America's heritage, the phenomenon quickly caught on here with raves organized in a dozen states since the spring. On average, between 150 and 450 cars show up, with up to 2,500 party-goers.

Distance dancing

Dylan Star, striking yoga poses by her rented white Toyota before the start of festivities, really appreciates having her "own space" to dance. Tickets go for between \$100 and \$300 per vehicle. That buys a parking spot and an area marked off by a metal barricade to party in, a short distance from the other attendees. In order to avoid

lines and the risk of infection, instead of a bar there are golf carts that rumble down the dimly lit aisles delivering drinks to ravers who bought them on an app. The experience is out of the price range for many, but for some the financial sacrifice is worth it. "Being able to see live music for the first time since the start of the quarantine brings me so much happiness, and it will definitely have a lasting impact on my mental health," said Claire Gibson, 26, while two of her friends groove to the beat beside her.

security guards, charged with making sure everyone stays in their allotted spaces and wears a mask. "People don't really respect the rules," said security guard Tom Bohnemberger, wearing a high-visibility vest as he patrolled the grounds with a colleague. "You have to tell them to put their masks on, again and again and eventually they listen."

"We had zero reports of any Covid-related transmissions during our event," said Steve Masterson, organizer of the Scranton event, who said he fol-



The Disco Biscuits band performs on stage during the Montage Mountain rave in Scranton, Pennsylvania. — AFP photos

The young woman with pink hair has Type 1 diabetes and is thus more susceptible to more serious health repercussions if she catches the virus. "I was nervous about going to an event like this, as I have been extremely cautious," she said. Even though she knew plenty of people at the event, she decided to stay within her designated space and take advantage of the drinks delivery service.

'Better than nothing'

"People are being respectful and following the rules," said Tiffany Griffiths, as she waved her luminous rainbow cape between the aisles. She risked being stopped by the handful of



People attend the Montage Mountain rave in Scranton, Pennsylvania.



Attendees watch the Disco Biscuits perform during the Montage Mountain rave.



An Iraqi man reaches out to touch an artwork by visual artist Tara Abdallah, in the city of Sulaimaniyah in Iraq's autonomous northern Kurdish region. — AFP photos



Cars pass beneath an artwork by Iraqi visual artist Tara Abdallah, hanging above a highway in the city of Sulaimaniyah.



Iraqi visual artist Tara Abdallah speaks during the unveiling of an artwork on gender-based violence.



An artwork by Iraqi visual artist Tara Abdallah hangs above a highway in the city of Sulaimaniyah.



Iraqi visual artist Tara Abdallah (left) arrives for the unveiling of an artwork on gender-based violence.

5-KM-LONG ARTWORK PAYS HOMAGE TO ABUSED IRAQI KURD WOMEN

Along a five-kilometer (three-mile) stretch of road in Sulaimaniyah, an Iraqi Kurdish artist on Monday unveiled a stitched collage of clothes from women survivors of domestic violence. "Three months ago, I started collecting the clothes of women subjected to violence by their husbands and fami-

lies throughout the region," Tara Abdallah, who stitched the artwork that has been strung up across the city, told AFP. The visual artist had asked women survivors to donate a scrap of clothing that symbolized their trauma and sewed them together to create a giant, colorful patchwork. "I heard lots of stories about

violence that women in our society endured in the course of my research... Every piece in this work has a story behind it," she said.

The UN regularly condemns "honor killings" of women in Iraqi Kurdistan, which promotes itself as progressive, over sexual conduct. About 37.5 percent

of Kurdish women aged between 15 and 49 are also forced to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) in the autonomous Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, according to the United Nations. The figure is less than one percent for women in the rest of Iraq. Out of desperation, Iraqi Kurdish women often commit

suicide to escape domestic violence or forced marriages. Rights groups say domestic violence surged globally during the lockdown earlier this year to curb the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

SECOND-HAND SITE VINTED HAPPY TO SCARE CLOTHING RETAILERS

With more than 1.3 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in sales last year on its platform and a new acquisition under its belt, second-hand clothes innovator Vinted believes it is starting to scare fashion retailers for the good of the planet. The group, founded in EU member Lithuania and a standard-bearer of the so-called "circular economy", announced a new takeover yesterday of a Dutch competitor, United Wardrobe, for an undisclosed sum. Once completed, the merged group says it will bring together 34 million users who buy and sell clothing online from vintage to designer labels, as well as used high-street brands at knock-down prices.

Vinted chief executive Thomas Plantenga said the acquisition would "help us accelerate faster within Europe and I think that people who are trying to grow the new sales of fashion are afraid of us. I think that's great." The company's philosophy is that the fashion industry, long criticized by environmentalists for encouraging excessive consumption and producing waste, "needs to change... needs to be more circular and that will benefit society," Plantenga told AFP. The group became Lithuania's first tech unicorn in November 2019 — an industry term for a start-up valued at more than \$1.0 billion.

It raised 128 million euros from investors in a funding round that it said would allow it to double its then 300-strong staff and fund acquisitions. This year's coronavirus-related lockdowns in major European markets such as France and Spain dealt a severe economic blow when the group was forced to shut down its operations. But Vinted believes it is well-placed to benefit from long-term trends driven by young, more environmentally conscious consumers shunning established retailers and so-called "fast fashion". And difficult economic conditions in Europe could lead more consumers to clear out their wardrobes to raise some money—the original idea of founders Justas Janauskas and Milda Mitkute who started the site in 2008. — AFP



View of two "Catrina" Barbie dolls and a Frida Kahlo one at the Museum of the Old Mexican Toy.



View of a "Catrina" Barbie doll at the Museum of the Old Mexican Toy in Mexico City.

Day of the Dead 'skeleton' Barbie splits opinion in Mexico



View of two "Catrina" Barbie dolls at the Museum of the Old Mexican Toy in Mexico City.

She's been a princess, a president, a Marine Corps sergeant, an astronaut and a Star Wars stormtrooper. In Mexico for the Day of the Dead festival, Barbie is even a skeleton. Yet while fans of the iconic doll see it as an homage to the country's rich tradition, critics say it is little more than cultural appropriation. Mattel has launched the second Barbie based on "Catrina", a skeletal representation of death created by cartoonist Jose Guadalupe Posada that is a symbol of one of Mexico's most important festivals. The US toymaker says the doll "honors the traditions, symbols and rituals" of the Day of the Dead, which is celebrated on November 1-2.

But some in Mexico see the Barbie—which has a price tag of around \$72 — as just another example of big brands cashing in on the country's heritage. "The cultural, hereditary and symbolic importance that this holiday has for Mexico opens up in the eyes of the market opportunities that are exploited by these firms," said sociologist

Roberto Alvarez. The Day of the Dead "should be a solemn subject," but it has become a commercial event in the United States since featuring in movies such as "Coco," the computer-animated fantasy released by Disney's Pixar studio in 2017, Alvarez said.

Fans of the iconic doll see "Catrina" Barbie—which bears certain similarities to renowned painter Frida Kahlo—as a respectful tribute. "It means that they take notice of our traditions," said Zoila Muntane, a 54-year-old artist and doll collector who has 2,000 Barbies. Fellow fan Carlos Sandoval says the doll represents "a very beautiful tradition, like few others in the world."

'Cultural hybrid'

This year Barbie wears a blush-colored lace dress and a crown of skeleton hands holding roses and marigolds, unlike the first Day of the Dead edition in 2019 which was dressed in black. Its creator, Mexican-American designer Javier Meabe, said he sought to "create more awareness

about the celebration," which UNESCO in 2003 named an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The festival is believed to be when the gateway separating the living and the deceased opens, allowing people to pay their respects to those who have passed.

Librada Moreno, a sociologist and academic at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, sees the Barbie as a "cultural hybrid" and product of migration to the United States, home to 37 million people with Mexican ancestry. More than one billion Barbies have been sold globally since the American brand's launch 60 years ago. An earlier Barbie inspired by Kahlo was not sold in Mexico because her family considered its image at odds with that of the late artist. Mattel is not the only US brand launching products linked to the Mexican festival: there is also a "Catrina" Minnie Mouse and a Nike Day of the Dead collection. — AFP



Mexican doll collector Zoila Muntane poses with two "Catrina" Barbie doll boxes at the Museum of the Old Mexican Toy.



Mexican doll collector Carlos Sandoval poses with two "Catrina" Barbie dolls at the Museum of the Old Mexican Toy.



Mexican doll collector Carlos Sandoval shows part of his Barbie doll collection. — AFP photos

Sports

Photo of the Day



Jakub Przygonski and Tom Colsoulnavigating in the sand at the Dakar Rally in 2019. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Blame game: Koeman and Barca's sense of injustice clouds Juve test

No admittance of failure from coach Koeman

MADRID: Two days before Barcelona were due to face Juventus in the Champions League, their toughest match in Group G, the Catalan club were still bemoaning the one thing they said won the Clásico for Real Madrid - VAR. There was no talk Monday of Barca's lack of creativity that meant Madrid, as the away team, had more shots at Camp Nou, nor their timid response that allowed their opponents to coast through the last half an hour with a one-goal lead.

There was no admittance of failure from coach Ronald Koeman, whose substitutions proved ineffective or, worse, counter-productive. There was no addressing the question of defeat, or a single question at all, by Barca's senior players, not even captain Lionel Messi, who has now gone six games without scoring against his team's greatest rivals. The players had just lost their fourth match in 10 games including the dismal end to last season, and their new coach has overseen only three wins from his first six in charge.

When the president Josep Maria

Bartomeu sacked Ernesto Valverde in January, Barca were top of the table. Under Bartomeu's first replacement they capitulated at the end of last season. Under his second, they sit 12th. The disappointments keep coming for Barcelona, but those prepared to take any responsibility continue to shrink from view. Up next are Juventus today, when another set-back would not be irretrievable thanks to last week's 5-1 drubbing of Ferencvaros.

But a growing sense of deflation and injustice - initiated by sections of the Catalan press but now adopted fully by players, coach and president - will be harder to be rid of, regardless of the result in Turin. After the final whistle blew on Saturday, Koeman was not with his team in the dressing room but waiting for the referee. After the match, his press conference was less an assessment of his team's performance than a tirade against VAR.

Messi silence

"Koeman explodes" read the front page of Mundo Deportivo on



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Dutch coach Ronald Koeman (right) congratulates Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane at the end of the Spanish League football match between Barcelona and Real Madrid on October 24, 2020. — AFP

Sunday. His anger ignored the fact Sergio Ramos's controversial penalty put Madrid just 2-1 up, hardly out of sight, and there were still 27 minutes plus added time remaining to retrieve something from the match. It also conveniently masked Koeman waiting too long to make three substitutions,

none effective. "Was it a penalty?" Koeman asked a reporter, who responded he thought that it was. "Well we disagree. Hopefully one day you can explain the issue of VAR here in Spain. We have had five games and VAR has only intervened against Barca." — AFP

Things we learned from the Premier League

LONDON: Liverpool unveiled their 'fab four' as the Premier League champions moved within touching distance of first place. Manchester United and Chelsea's goalless draw showed the flaws in both teams, while Manchester City are still searching for their peak form. AFP Sport looks at things we learned from the weekend's Premier League action:

Liverpool on song with Jota

Diogo Jota staked his claim to become part of Liverpool's 'fab four' as the Portugal forward capped their comeback in a 2-1 win against Sheffield United. Jurgen Klopp's side had fallen behind to Sander Berge's penalty at Anfield, but Roberto Firmino equalised before Jota headed the winner to move Liverpool level on points with leaders Everton. Jota has

scored twice in four league games since signing from Wolves for £45 million in September.

He was deployed as the right-sided forward in a 4-2-3-1 system as Klopp fielded all four of his main attackers together for the first time. In the hometown of The Beatles, Jota's contribution conjured memories of the period when Philippe Coutinho played alongside Firmino, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane in Klopp's original Anfield 'fab four'. "The player he is: he is quick, he has the physicality, he is strong, he is good in the air, he is good on the ground," Klopp said. "A lot of good things. He has exactly the quality we need, so that helps a lot."

No joy for United, Chelsea

As rain lashed down on Old Trafford, Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Chelsea boss Frank Lampard looked as gloomy as the conditions that left them drenched on the touchline. A dour goalless draw showed the problems both men have to resolve if they are to turn their teams from top four contenders into title challengers.

Pirlo sees positives as Juventus miss Ronaldo

MILAN: Andrea Pirlo sees positives despite preparing for his biggest match since taking over as Juventus coach with Covid-19-stricken Cristiano Ronaldo in doubt against Lionel Messi's Barcelona in the Champions League today. Pirlo took over after Maurizio Sarri was sacked immediately after Juventus' last 16 exit to Lyon in August, the veteran coach lamenting another failure in a "competition cursed for Juve".

The Turin side have won the tournament twice, but not since 1996. They have been runners-up seven times, including twice in the last five years. In fact, 41-year-old Pirlo's last Juventus game as a player came in the 3-1 loss to Barcelona in the 2015 Champions League final. Juventus signed

Portuguese star Ronaldo in 2018 with the aim of lifting the coveted European trophy, and his absence against Messi's Barcelona could weigh heavy.

The 35-year-old will need to test negative 24 hours before being allowed to feature in Turin. The return at the Camp Nou is on December 8. "We miss him right now, of course," said Colombian teammate Juan Cuadrado. "He's a champion. In these very difficult matches, his strength, his mentality and his desire shine through." Ronaldo scored three goals for Juventus in their first two league games, before contracting the virus while on international duty.

Even if Pirlo has yet to record a loss this season, Juventus are fifth in Serie A, with three draws in five games. "Barcelona? It doesn't worry me, they are two different matches," said Pirlo after Sunday's 1-1 stalemate against Hellas Verona. "Verona play differently than Barcelona, against teams that play like this you have to prepare a certain type of match. "We're in the construction phase," continued the novice coach. "We're sorry to leave points on the road, but

we are on the right path. We are building a long-term project. I only see positive things."

Pirlo's main weapons in Ronaldo's absence have been Spanish forward Alvaro Morata, who scored both goals against Dynamo Kiev, and Swedish striker Dejan Kulusevski, who rescued the point against Verona. Former Chelsea and Real Madrid player Morata returned to Juventus this season with Kulusevski signed from Atalanta in January before being loaned back immediately to Parma. The 20-year-old Swede was up and running immediately, scoring on his club debut in September and came off the bench to give Juventus the edge against Verona.

Pirlo has also been impressed with how Paulo Dybala performed "well above expectations," in his seasonal debut against Verona after over three months out. Captain Giorgio Chiellini's presence is in doubt, with fellow defender Leonardo Bonucci's thigh strain being monitored, although Gianluca Frabotta, 21, has stepped into the breach, with Alex Sandro also out. — AFP

Man Utd search for home comforts as Leipzig test looms

LONDON: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has stopped the rot at Manchester United but he must rediscover the winning formula at home as he prepares for today's visit of RB Leipzig in the Champions League. United's collapse against Tottenham in early October plunged the club back into crisis mode as the Norwegian scrambled to fix his broken defense.

The sense of panic has receded, with a 4-1 win at Newcastle followed by an impressive 2-1 away victory against Paris Saint-Germain in United's European opener. But the Red Devils played out a drab 0-0 stalemate against Chelsea at an empty Old Trafford at the weekend, leaving them without a Premier League win at home this season. Solskjaer's team became the first United side since the 1972/73 season to fail to win any of their opening three home league matches-leaving them languishing in the lower reaches of the table.

Despite the underwhelming result, the manager was sanguine after Saturday's home draw, which came after an embarrassing 3-1 reverse against Crystal Palace and the humiliating 6-1 thumping by Tottenham both at Old Trafford. "We had a clean sheet, we had some pressure, we stopped the home run of defeats," he said. "We wanted to win, of course you want to win at home, but I think it's a solid performance when you think of the week we've had. We've had a very good week with two wins and a draw." — AFP

News in brief

UAE, Israel leagues sign MOU

DUBAI: The soccer leagues of the United Arab Emirates and Israel signed remotely on Monday a memorandum of understanding to bolster cooperation, state-run Emirati news agency WAM reported yesterday. Confirming the deal, Israeli soccer league chairman Erez Halfon said he foresaw possible UAE sponsorship for teams in Israel. "This will take (us) a step forward," he told Army Radio. The two countries agreed to normalize relations in August under an accord brokered by the United States. — Reuters

Controversial pay-per-view

LONDON: Newcastle owner Mike Ashley has called the Premier League's controversial pay-per-view arrangements "not acceptable" as clubs prepare to discuss the policy at a shareholders' meeting yesterday. Matches played after October's internationals that were not selected for regular television broadcast were made available on a pay-per-view basis on Sky Sports or BT Sport at £14.95 (\$19) each. Fans' groups have urged a price cut, with many supporters opting to donate to food banks and other charitable causes instead of paying the fee. Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said earlier this month the price was "defensible" while BT Sport said it was simply covering its costs. Ashley, who explained his initial vote in favor of the pay-per-view proposal as being due to a lack of "realistic or viable alternatives", has now proposed a reduced-price version. "I am calling on the Premier League to immediately act and review its current pay-per-view arrangements for live matches in the UK," he said in a statement. — AFP

Pogba slams retirement rumors

LONDON: Manchester United's Paul Pogba said reports claiming he had retired from international duty in protest against French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about radical Islam were "fake news". According to reports in the Middle East picked up by British tabloid The Sun, World Cup winner Pogba wanted to end his international career after Macron vowed to take the fight to Islamic radicals after the October 16 beheading of history teacher Samuel Paty. "Unacceptable, fake news," Pogba, a converted Muslim, posted on Instagram with a screenshot of The Sun's article. Paty had shown cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed to pupils in a class discussion on free speech in a school near Paris. Macron's comments triggered protests in Muslim-majority countries at the weekend, with people burning pictures of Macron in Syria and setting fire to French flags in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

Egypt woman coach men's team

GIZA: Faiza Heidar grew up playing soccer in the streets with the boys and went on to captain Egypt's national women's team. Now she has become the first woman to train one of the country's professional men's clubs. Heidar has been signed up by the fourth division side Ideal Goldi, based in Giza. "There is usually some mockery at the beginning," the 36-year-old said. "But then they realise that they will learn something, that they will develop their skills." She said she was the first Egyptian coach - male or female - to gain the Premier Skills Coach Educator status, certified by England's Premier League. Soccer remains an overwhelmingly male sport in Egypt. "I would tell her not to go. She would say: 'No, I will go.' She loved the sport," said Heidar's mother, Khodra Abdelrahman. "I let her go and prayed that God help her. And she did go, and she has done so well." — Reuters

EPL Table

English Premier League table after Monday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Everton	6	4	1	1	14	9	13
Liverpool	6	4	1	1	15	14	13
Aston Villa	5	4	0	1	12	5	12
Leicester	6	4	0	2	13	8	12
Tottenham	6	3	2	1	16	8	11
Leeds	6	3	1	2	12	9	10
Southampton	6	3	1	2	10	9	10
Crystal Palace	6	3	1	2	8	9	10
Wolves	6	3	1	2	6	8	10
Chelsea	6	2	3	1	13	9	9
Arsenal	6	3	0	3	8	7	9
West Ham	6	2	2	2	12	8	8
Man City	5	2	2	1	8	8	8
Newcastle	6	2	2	2	8	10	8
Man United	5	2	1	2	9	12	7
Brighton	6	1	2	3	10	12	5
West Brom	6	0	3	3	6	14	3
Burnley	5	0	1	4	3	9	1
Sheffield Utd	6	0	1	5	3	9	1
Fulham	6	0	1	5	5	14	1

Solskjaer and Lampard finished last season with reasons for optimism after taking their clubs into the Champions League via top four finishes. But there have been precious few signs of progress this term, with United failing to win any of their first three home league games for the first

time in 48 years. Even the debut came from Edinson Cavani, who nearly scored with his first touch after coming off the bench, couldn't inspire United, who looked a pale shadow of the team that surprisingly beat Paris Saint Germain in the Champions League in midweek. — AFP

Sports

'FC Erdogan' - Title-winners aim to unsettle Champions League elite

Istanbul Basaksehir face a tough baptism in Champions League

ISTANBUL: Newcomers Istanbul Basaksehir face a tough baptism in the Champions League after shaking up the Turkish football hierarchy and earning a reputation as the plaything of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Basaksehir earned their place in Europe's elite club competition by pipping Turkey's traditional giants to win the title for the first time.

They could scarcely have asked for a harder draw as a reward. They host Paris Saint-Germain today after losing 2-0 to RB Leipzig last week. After that they play Manchester United home and away.

A win against PSG, last season's runners-up, would be symbolic beyond the pitch at a time when Ankara and Paris are locked in a diplomatic stand-off over Islam and freedom of speech. Basaksehir's title triumph was coming after they finished second in 2017 and 2019. Yet their rise has been remarkable. The achievement stands out given the traditional dominance of Turkey's Super Lig by Istanbul's big three of Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Besiktas. Between them, that trio had won all bar one of the previous 35 titles, with the exception being Bursaspor in 2010.

Links to power

For their detractors, Basaksehir owe their success to the support of the government and the financial clout of companies close to the ruling Islamist-rooted AKP party of President Erdogan. The close relationship between the club and the Turkish leader is such that rival supporters have labelled Basaksehir "FC Erdogan". Created in the 1990s by the municipality of Istanbul, the club was sold in 2014 to a consortium of businessmen reputedly close to Erdogan. The club's main backer is Medipol, a group of private hospitals run by Turkey's health minister. The club is based in the district of Basaksehir in the European part of Istanbul, far from the heart of the sprawling city.

The modern high-rise suburb is seen by Erdogan as a showcase for the conservative "new Turkey" that he has promoted. Following the 2014 takeover a 17,000-capacity stadium was built, named after the legendary former player and manager Fatih Terim, who ironically manages Galatasaray. Erdogan blessed the club's new look when in July 2014 he donned Basaksehir colours to play in a charity game at the new stadium and scored an improbable three goals in 15 minutes.

In a country where football, business and political power are intricately linked, the creation of the modern Basaksehir, a year after the widespread "Gezi Park" anti-government protests in which "ultra" supporters of different Istanbul clubs played a key role, had clear political undertones. "During the Gezi Park protests, they (the government) could see the political power of the supporters. Basaksehir is a project aimed at creating a club under their control," said one Besiktas ultra who wished to remain anonymous for fear of losing his job in the civil service.

'The old system is broken'

But beyond their links to power, Basaksehir owe their success to a strict economic model which is in stark contrast to the country's traditional giants whose elected presidents are compelled to spend, sometimes recklessly, to satisfy demanding supporters. "The major Istanbul clubs are in financial ruin after being run into the ground by presidents and boards who come, leave and rarely put anything back into the club," says Emre Sarigul, co-founder of the website Turkish Football.

"The old system is broken. Basaksehir are run in what can be described as a more modern, corporate-minded, accountable system and it is no surprise they are doing so well. "They are perhaps the only professionally-run club in the top tier with a long-term strategy," Huseyin Avcilar, who co-runs



LEIPZIG: Istanbul Basaksehir's Belgian defender Boli Bolingoli Mbombo (left) and Leipzig's Spanish midfielder Dani Olmo both jump to head the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group H football match RB Leipzig v Istanbul Basaksehir FK in Leipzig. —AFP

the supporters group Basaksehir 1453, says their success can also be put down to "a tailor-made transfer policy". While Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Besiktas have splashed the cash to sign foreign stars who are past their peak, Basaksehir's squad is a mix of local talent, like Irfan Can Kahveci, and unearthed treasures like the Bosnian Edin Visca.

There are some foreign veterans, though, with the Brazilian ex-Manchester United full-back Rafael recently arriving from Lyon to join Demba

Ba and Nacer Chadli. Yet it would be a stretch to call Basaksehir the fourth giant of Istanbul. Before coronavirus restrictions, their stadium was rarely more than a quarter-full. After winning the league in July, the team paraded through Basaksehir, but the streets were deserted. "It will take a huge effort for Basaksehir to build a football culture and become accepted as a genuine rival to the big three," says Sarigul. "It would take at least a generation to build up any sort of support." —AFP

Roma level three times in Milan stalemate 3-3

MILAN: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored twice but AC Milan dropped their first points of the Serie A season as Roma came from behind to draw 3-3 at the San Siro on Monday. In a game played in an empty stadium after the imposition of a coronavirus curfew, Milan were without goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and young Norwegian striker Jens Petter Hauge, who the club announced earlier on Monday had tested positive for Covid-19.

Veteran Romanian goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu, who joined Milan in September, made his debut in place of Donnarumma, and was twice caught on his line from corners and also spilled a shot in the build up to Roma's second-half penalty. Ibrahimovic struck after just two

minutes, running onto a diagonal pass behind the defense from Rafael Leao and poking the ball past goalkeeper Antonio Mirante.

Milan's problems at corners were not entirely the fault of Tatarusanu. Edin Dzeko was unmarked in front of goal when he headed his team's first equaliser after 13 minutes. Milan started the second half as they had the first. Portuguese winger Leao outpaced his fullback and laid the ball back to Belgian Alexis Saelemaekers who guided a shot in from 10 yards. French midfielder Jordan Veretout levelled from the penalty spot after 70 minutes following a clumsy challenge by Ismael Bennacer.

Ibrahimovic completed his third double in three league appearances with a penalty after 78 minutes, but had an unwitting assist as Roma leveled for a third time. The Swede jumped to meet an 83rd minute corner but only deflected it to the far post where Roma's Albanian defender Marash Kumbulla slid in



MILAN: AC Milan's Swedish forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic vies with Roma's Brazilian defender Bruno Peres (right) during the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and AS Roma at the Meazza Stadium in Milan on October 26, 2020. —AFP

to volley Roma's third equalizer from close range with Tatarusanu stranded. Milan, with 13 points, remain at the top of the standings,

two points ahead of Napoli who have won all four games they have played, and Sassuolo. Roma remained ninth. —AFP

Bulgaria's cricketer 'master blaster'

KUWAIT: Kevin Chris D'souza, a young Kuwait-based student of 22 years earned the title of the "MASTER BLASTER" as he played for the cricket team of the "Medical University of Sofia- Bulgaria, in the European T10 cricket league tournament series hosted by ECN. In the T10 innings that he played, he scored a total of 198 runs, comprising of 19 sixes and 9 fours, he being a 2 down batsman, that's where he was announced the "MASTER BLASTER" a prestigious milestone indeed, in his

newly begun career as a cricketer.

He was almost instantly absorbed into the National cricket team of Bulgaria which played Malta in a 4 match T20 series late September. In views of the formalities to be followed, he made his debut for Bulgarian International cricket team on the 23rd of September this year, 2020 against Malta, this being the qualifier series for the ICC world cup T20 tournament in Europe.

Kevin Chris D'souza was born on September 16th 1998 in Kuwait to his proud parents Norbert D'souza and Clera Noronha, who hail from Karnataka, India. He draws appreciation from his elder sister, Nicole D'Souza. Kevin received his early education from United Indian School, Kuwait where he acquired his higher secondary education certificate with a



very good percentage and thereby qualified for his further studies in Medicine at the Medical University of Sofia, Bulgaria. During his school years, he represented the school in

the basketball and football team and won many trophies and medals for the school and himself. He is a right-hand batsman and his bowling style is right arm medium.

First Rafael Nadal Academy Kuwait Tennis Tournament

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The first Rafael Nadal Academy Kuwait (RNAK) Tennis Tournament was concluded in the presence of President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah and National Guard Undersecretary Lt General Engineer Hashim Al-Rafae. The tournament which started on October 21st was one of a series of tournaments organized by RNAK in cooperation with KTF. The matches were played at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah international tennis complex. The first men's tournament was won by Abdelhameed Jumaa (from Salmiya Sports Club) and is a lieutenant at the

National Guard. He defeated his teammate Essa Qabazard 2-0. The women's tournament was won by Iman Al-Mitwally who beat Yasmeen Al-Shimali in the final match 2-1.

KTF Secretary General Faleh Al-Otaibi, Treasurer Ali Al-Daihani, Technical Director Abbas Al-Busairi, representative of the women's committee Dana Al-Fulaij, RNAK Director General Martijn Belgraver and Head Tennis Coach Nuno Marques attended the final match. The Academy plans to organize two similar tournaments in November to be followed by the fourth - for the masters where the best 8 players in the three tournaments will participate. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber was pleased with the success of this first RNAK tournament - following a long period of lack of activities abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the series of tournaments will make it easier for the players as they get ready for the third Gulf games to be hosted by Kuwait from March 7-17, 2021.



Hamilton's record keeps the 'GOAT' debate raging

PORTIMAO: Damon Hill hailed Lewis Hamilton as the "GOAT" (greatest of all time) as he and Jackie Stewart led tributes on Monday following their compatriot's record-breaking 92nd win in Sunday's Portuguese Grand Prix. "Well I guess I can't say I've beaten the best driver in F1 anymore. I had a good run though. Thanks @schumacher and welcome @LewisHamilton. GOAT." 1996 world champion Hill said on Twitter. Stewart was less effusive, referring to Hamilton's "remarkable success" and "hugely impressive career", but without declaring him one of the sport's greatest drivers.

"He is undeniably one of the best athletes in history and an inspiration to so many young people," he added, just weeks after excluding him from his leading all-time greatest F1 drivers. The comments provoked argument, not least because Hamilton's statistical landmark of 92 wins is likely to be enlarged by him after passing seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher's 14-year-old record of 91 wins.

He is also set to equal Schumacher's haul of drivers' titles this season and, in all likelihood, claim an eighth next year. Stewart's reluctance to include either Hamilton or Schumacher alongside his idols - Argentine Juan Manuel Fangio and fellow Scot Jim Clark - sparked widespread debate. Few paddock observers agreed, but clues to Hamilton's success since being beaten by team-mate Nico Rosberg, were articulated late Sunday by the team's track performance boss Andrew Shovlin and rival Max Verstappen of Red Bull. Stewart, an admirer of Alain Prost's 'professorial' style, has often said he values studied and well-prepared consistency and "smooth" driving above raw speed and aggression in his evaluations. It is why he overlooked three-time world champion Ayrton Senna, Schumacher and Hamilton.

Yet, since 2016, Hamilton has transformed his approach and style to become the sport's most consistent finisher with a record 45 consecutive points finishes and 161 career podiums - a metronomic return that left Verstappen full of admiration. "Everybody knows he's very quick," said the Dutchman. "But I think what has also been a very strong point is that he's consistent and he very rarely makes a mistake - and that's why I think he got through these numbers so quickly." —AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
FK Krasnodar v Chelsea	beIN Sports HD 2	20:55
Istanbul Basaksehir v PSG	beIN Sports HD 1	20:55
Sevilla v Stade Rennais	beIN Sports HD 3	23:00
Ferencvárosi v Dynamo Kiev	beIN Sports HD 6	23:00
Juventus v Barcelona	beIN Sports HD 1	23:00
Club Brugge v Lazio	beIN Sports HD 4	23:00
Dortmund v Zenit St Petersburg	beIN Sports HD 5	23:00
Manchester United v Leipzig	beIN Sports HD 2	23:00

14 Man United search for home comforts; Leipzig test looms



15 'FC Erdogan' - Title-winners aim to unsettle Champions League elite



15 Ibrahimovic strikes twice; Roma level 3 times in Milan stalemate



CALIFORNIA: Robert Woods #17 of the Los Angeles Rams fumbles the ball after getting tackled by Robert Quinn #94 of the Chicago Bears in the fourth quarter at SoFi Stadium on October 26, 2020 in Inglewood, California. — AFP

Rams' defense clamps down on Bears

Los Angeles defense makes a statement in 24-10 victory

CALIFORNIA: Jared Goff threw two touchdown passes and the Los Angeles defense made a statement Monday night in the Rams' 24-10 victory over the Chicago Bears at Inglewood, Calif. Malcolm Brown rushed for 57 yards and a touchdown while Gerald Everett and Josh Reynolds each caught touchdown passes as the Rams (5-2) improved to 3-0 at their new \$5 billion stadium. Goff was 23 of 33 for 219 yards. The Rams' defense held the Bears (5-2) to 49 rushing yards while recording four sacks and two interceptions. The unit entered giving up 19 points per game, fifth

best in the NFL, before the start of Week 7. Los Angeles has given up just 33 second-half points in seven games.

Chicago's only touchdown came on an 8-yard fumble recovery and return in the fourth quarter by safety Eddie Jackson. The Bears entered allowing 19.3 points per game (seventh in the NFL through Week 6). Bears quarterback Nick Foles was 28 of 40 for 261 yards. After a tight first half, Los Angeles opened the lead to 17-3 early in the second half on a 1-yard run by Brown that capped a seven-play, 55-yard drive.

The Bears were poised to answer quickly, driving to the Los Angeles 9-yard line, but Foles had his pass in the end zone intercepted by safety Taylor Rapp. Los Angeles boosted the advantage to 24-3 on a 12-yard pass from Goff to Everett with 1:34 remaining in the third quarter. The Bears' lone touchdown came with 7:30 remaining when Jackson picked up a fumble by Robert Woods and went into the end zone untouched. The Rams had 223 yards of total offense in the first half while building a 10-3 lead. The Bears' offense had just 126 yards of offense in the opening

two quarters. The Rams took a 7-0 lead in the first quarter when Goff hit Reynolds on a 4-yard pass to cap a seven-play, 52-yard drive. The Bears answered by driving 58 yards in eight plays and getting a 42-yard field goal from Cairo Santos on the second play of the second quarter. Los Angeles made it 10-3 five minutes before halftime on a 22-yard field goal from rookie Sam Sloman. The Rams improved to 2-1 against the Bears over the past three seasons with the losing team scoring 10 points or fewer in each of the contests. — Reuters

West Brom score late to frustrate Brighton

BRIGHTON: Karlan Grant scored his first goal for West Brom as they came from behind to claim their first away point of the Premier League season in a 1-1 draw at Brighton on Monday. An unfortunate own goal from West Brom's Jake Livermore gave Graham Potter's side a first-half lead but the Seagulls were unable to hold out for the win.

The home side looked more threatening early on. Neal Maupay converted Adam Lallana's cross only

for his effort to be ruled out for offside before Leandro Trossard's shot was saved. Five minutes before half-time their pressure paid off when an attempted clearance from Branislav Ivanovic struck Jake Livermore and rebounded into the back of the net. Slaven Bilic's West Brom started the second half positively and had a Conor Gallagher effort blocked just after the restart.

The Baggies continued to put pressure on the home defense as the match wore on, forcing Mat Ryan into another save from Filip Krovinovic. Matheus Pereira had a good chance for the visitors midway through the second half but he put his effort wide before later clipping the outside of a post. But West Brom's second-half pressure finally paid off when Grant turned a Callum Robinson ball past Ryan in the 83rd minute to ensure that the Baggies would leave the south coast with a point. — AFP

Son strikes again as Spurs beat Burnley to move 5th in EPL

BURNLEY: Son Heung-min pounced to steal a 1-0 win for lacklustre Tottenham on Monday, linking up with Harry Kane yet again as Jose Mourinho's side climbed to fifth in the Premier League table. All of the traditional "big six" clubs have dropped unlikely points in the early weeks of the season and Spurs looked set to leave Turf Moor frustrated. But South Korea forward Son scored his eighth league goal of the season in the 76th minute, heading in from close range after a headed pass from Kane. Spurs now have 11 points from six games, just two points behind leaders Everton after their third win of the season.

Mourinho hailed his attacking stars, who have now combined for 29 Premier League goals-only Didier Drogba and Frank Lampard have managed more, with 36. "It is an understanding that comes from Mauricio (Pochettino's) time," said Mourinho. "I don't want all the credit myself, let's share with Mauricio. They play together for a long time, probably a different way because Harry is not always a nine now. What pleases me more about them both is that they are two top players but close friends, no jealousy, they both play for the team."

Relief

The hard-earned three points will be a huge relief to Mourinho, whose side looked like world beaters earlier this month when they hammered Manchester United 6-1 before blowing a 3-0 lead against West Ham. Tottenham's attacking momentum vanished at Turf Moor, where they struggled to make an impression against Sean Dyche's side, who remain in the relegation zone, without a win this season.

Kane was able to get behind Burnley's defense in the early minutes following a Toby Alderweireld ball over the top but the England striker's first touch took him too wide and his shot sailed harmlessly over. There was a lengthy stoppage as Alderweireld needed treat-



BURNLEY: Burnley's English goalkeeper Nick Pope dives to keep the ball in play during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Tottenham Hotspur on October 26, 2020. — AFP



BRIGHTON: West Bromwich Albion's English striker Kyle Edwards (left) vies with Brighton's Dutch defender Joel Veltman during the English Premier League football match between Brighton and Hove Albion and West Bromwich on October 26, 2020. — AFP

ment on a bloody right eyebrow after being caught inadvertently by Ashley Barnes' flailing arm. The Belgian had his head bandaged before play continued.

Slightly against the run of play, Burnley had the ball in the back of the net when Barnes seemingly sprang the offside trap and buried the ball past Spurs goalkeeper Hugo Lloris but the flag went up. It was not until the 38th minute that the game had its first shot on target, Ashley Westwood bringing a low save out of Lloris after Josh Brownhill had stolen the ball off Tanguy Ndombele on the edge of the area. Johann Berg Gudmundsson then cut in from the right and forced Lloris into action once more as the home side ended the half on top.

Tottenham again struggled to find their rhythm in the early stages of the second half, with Burnley coming close to taking the lead. James Tarkowski put a header wide from close range before Mourinho threw on Erik Lamela to replace Lucas Moura in the 57th minute, with Gareth Bale still waiting for his first Premier League start in seven years. The match sparked into life late on, when Kane cleared another header from Tarkowski off the line. Son failed to take advantage of a clear chance before Kane flicked on a corner to the South Korean, who dived headlong to break the deadlock and seal the win. — AFP