



5 Parents of gunned-down teenager bring him back in AI election video



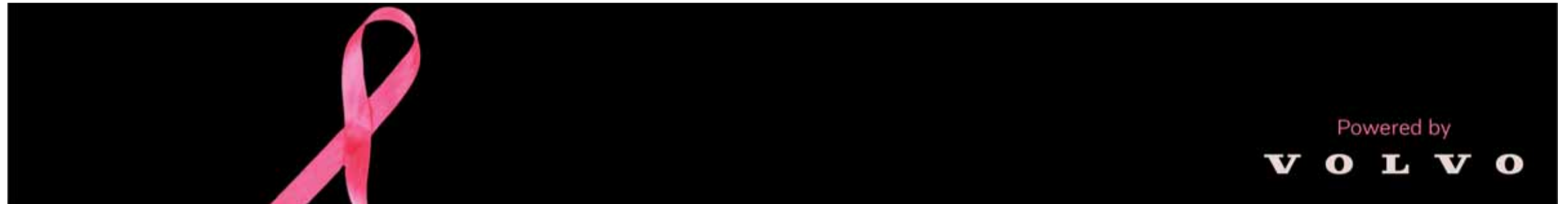
10 Berlin's ill-fated new airport is finally ready for take-off



13 Kardashian slammed for 'tone deaf' birthday tropical getaway



16 Dodgers end World Series drought with win over Rays



No change in quarantine procedures for arrivals

Priority for coronavirus vaccine for the elderly, chronic patients, frontliners

Massive blackout hits Hawally governorate



KUWAIT: Blackouts were reported in parts of Salmiya, Hawally, Maidan Hawally, Jabriya, Rumaithiya and Bayan after a fire in the main power transformer in Salmiya W, the ministry of electricity and water said yesterday. The fire force added it rescued 30 people trapped inside elevators.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government said yesterday that there has been no change in quarantine procedures for passengers arriving to the country, denying rumors that the two-week home quarantine has been reduced. Meanwhile, a special committee headed by Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah yesterday briefed the Cabinet during an extraordinary meeting on the coronavirus pandemic situation in the country and urged people to comply with health measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

A statement issued after the meeting said the committee also briefed the Cabinet on a potential vaccination campaign against the disease when vaccines become available. It said the sections that will be initially targeted for vaccination are elderly people and those suffering from chronic diseases, in addition to healthcare providers,

frontline workers and providers of basic services. The committee told the Cabinet that the planned campaign will continue for a year.

The Cabinet urged citizens and expatriates to comply with health measures, including wearing face-masks, observing social distancing, sanitizing hands and leaving home only when necessary. It also urged the public to pay special attention to elderly people, especially those suffering from chronic diseases.

The Cabinet statement also called on the need to continue the process of returning to normal life, stressing that only 50 percent of office staff should attend in both the private and public sectors. The committee also briefed the Cabinet on the situation of the disease in Kuwait and the number of new cases recorded in October, along with the treatment of patients in intensive care units.

NOTICE

On the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday holiday, Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition on Friday, October 30. Readers can stay informed with breaking news and information via KuwaitTimes.net and our digital media channels on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @KuwaitTimes

News in brief

Global virus cases hit record

PARIS: More than 500,000 new coronavirus cases were reported worldwide on Tuesday in a new record, according to a tally from health authorities compiled by AFP. In total, 516,898 new infections and 7,723 deaths were announced, according to the tally compiled yesterday. Europe has once again become the new epicenter of the disease which is spreading rapidly on the continent. The United States is also facing a rise in cases. — AFP

One death every 3 mins in Iran

DUBAI: One person is dying from COVID-19 every three minutes in Iran, state television said yesterday, as the health ministry reported a record daily toll of 415 fatalities. Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf tweeted that he had tested positive for the coronavirus, the latest among dozens of officials to be infected. Total fatalities from the disease have reached 33,714, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari told state TV. The number of confirmed cases rose by 6,824 in the past 24 hours to 558,648, she added. — Reuters

Qatar regrets invasive searches

DOHA: Qatar expressed regret yesterday after women on 10 flights were forced to endure invasive physical examinations, and announced an investigation that an informed source said could lead to criminal prosecutions. In its first account of events, Qatar said a newborn baby girl was wrapped in plastic and left to die in a bathroom rubbish bin, prompting a lockdown of the airport. Women were then led from aircraft to ambulances on the tarmac where they were subject to cervical examinations to see if they had recently given birth. — AFP

Top finance ministry officials resign over 'forced' reshuffle

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Finance Ministry Undersecretary Saleh Al-Saraawi and five assistant undersecretaries resigned yesterday in a letter to the prime minister in protest against a decision by Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan to rotate their posts. The top bureaucrats claimed in their letter that the minister

made the move without their knowledge, adding that the decision came after they refused to implement decisions by the minister that "violate the law".

But the finance ministry said in a statement yesterday that the minister has accepted the resignation of the six top officials of the ministry. The Cabinet has not yet made any comment on the issue. But MP Riyadh Al-Adasani called on the prime minister to accept the resignation of Sheetan and stop a major crisis in the finance ministry. Adasani has grilled the finance minister twice and the minister survived two no-confidence motions as a result, but following the second grilling, Sheetan placed his resignation at the disposal of the prime minister.

Meanwhile, 55 candidates including four women

yesterday registered to run for seats in the National Assembly election on the third day of candidate registration, raising the number of hopefuls so far to 193 including 18 women. Thirteen candidates filed from the first constituency, 10 from the second, 16 from the third, 10 hopefuls from the fourth and six from the fifth constituency.

The new candidates include five sitting MPs and six former lawmakers from the past assemblies. The MPs who registered in the hope of retaining their seats are Adel Al-Damkhi, Bader Al-Mulla, Awdah Al-Awdah, Ali Al-Deqbasi and former information minister and MP Mohammad Al-Jabri. The six former MPs include Ahmad Al-Shahoumi, Abdullah Al-Turaiji, Jamal Al-Omar, Abdullah Mayouf, Ammar Al-Ajmi and Hussein Mazyed.

Kuwait expands boycott; Erdogan blasts cartoon

KUWAIT/ISTANBUL: Kuwait's boycott of French products has expanded, with a leading union saying yesterday that most of its stores had stripped their shelves after French President Emmanuel Macron defended cartoons insulting Islam. Kuwait's Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies said 60 of its 69 stores had pulled French-made products, with the rest of the establishments to "soon" follow suit.

Fahd Al-Kishti, head of the union, told AFP there will be no backtracking on the decision unless "insults" against the Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH) stop. "There will be increased pressure in the coming days in case of any provocation," he said. "We will stop marketing all products and brands owned by the French, or those to which the French contribute."

Boycotts began Friday, and yesterday, images showed shelves stripped bare of French food products, perfumes and cosmetics. Kishti said that they stopped selling over 2,000 basic items, such as cheese and water. According to Ahmed Al-Thaidy, a professor at Kuwait University's College of Sharia and

Continued on Page 2

The tycoon who sued Britain over 1917 declaration

NABLUS: Sitting in an antique armchair in the dappled light of his Renaissance-inspired West Bank mansion, Palestinian billionaire Munib Al-Masri raised a subject that has angered him for eight decades. "Can you quote me the 58 words of Balfour's declaration?" he asked AFP, referring to the 1917 statement setting out London's support for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

Sometimes referred to as the "Godfather of Palestine", Masri is the patriarch of a family empire that has interests in telecommunications, finance, industry and Palestinian real estate. The 86-year-old lives alone in Beit al-Falestine (Palestine House), his mansion overlooking Nablus in the occupied West Bank. On display in the opulent home are photos of Masri with Nelson Mandela, US presidential candidate Joe Biden and iconic Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, whom Masri smuggled from Jordan to Syria in 1970 in the boot of his car.

He has served as a minister in the Jordanian government and in the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority. But despite his financial success, political achievements and advanced years, Masri told AFP that he remains consumed by the declaration by

British foreign secretary Arthur James Balfour, seen as a precursor to Israel's creation in 1948.

The Balfour Declaration begins by stating that "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object". After the sentence was read to him, Masri said: "you forgot the main thing." He then completed the declaration himself. "Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.

"That tells you that we have no political rights," Masri said. Earlier this month, he and several activists filed a lawsuit in Palestinian court seeking

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KUWAIT: French cosmetics and perfumes are removed from display at a perfume store yesterday as part of a boycott in protest against cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) published in French media. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

Amir receives Crown Prince, state officials

Pope Francis congratulates Amir on office



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



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, at Bayan Palace yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and His

Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Speaker Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh

Sabah Al-Khaled and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable from Pope Francis of the Vatican who congratulated him on assumption of office,

and wished him best of luck in continuing development process in the State of Kuwait. Pope Francis said he was looking forward to boosting relations between Kuwait and the Vatican. His Highness the Amir thanked, in a cable, Pope Francis for his wishes, and wished him good health. — KUNA

Kuwait, WFP sign agreement to establish office in country

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday signed an agreement to establish an office for the organization in the country. This came during a meeting between Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah with the WFP representative to the GCC, Abdulmajeed Yahya, who is on a visit to the country. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the distinguished relationship between Kuwait and the WFP, in addition to the activities carried out by the organization around the world. Jarallah congratulated the WFP on obtaining the Nobel

Peace Prize, which came in appreciation of the program's role and the prominent activity it undertakes. Meanwhile, Yahya praised Kuwait's great efforts in supporting humanitarian work and the program's activities, noting that the WFP decided to establish an office in Kuwait due to remarkable humanitarian efforts. Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Office of the Deputy Minister Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Protocol Affairs Abdulmohsen Al-Zaid attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and the WFP representative to the GCC Abdulmajeed Yahya sign an agreement to establish a WFP office in Kuwait. — KUNA

CBK maintains 'historical low' 1.5% discount rate

KUWAIT: As part of vigilant monitoring of economic, monetary, and banking developments and forecast trends, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) decided on Monday to maintain the current Discount Rate at 1.5 percent. Based on its periodic review of movements in interest rate trends on main currencies, the US Dollar being foremost, the CBK

maintained the current interest rate cap for loans extended to customers in Kuwaiti Dinar, according to a press release. In addition, CBK cut rates of other monetary policy instruments, by 0.125 percent for the entire interest rate yield curve terms matrix, up to the ten-year term.

This includes repurchases (REPO), CBK Bonds, the Term-Deposits system, direct intervention instruments, as well as Public Debt instruments, effective October 28, 2020. This came amid continued decrease in interest rates on federal funds of the US Federal Reserve inching closer to zero-levels, which widened the margin tipping the scale on the side of the interest on the Kuwaiti Dinar as opposed

to interest on the US greenback, thus bolstering the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti currency. The decisions also came as part of the CBK's special measures to cope with the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic on economic and banking conditions, most importantly employing facilitatory monetary policies regarding interest rates through cutting the Discount Rate to historical lows to reach 1.5 percent.

CBK Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel said in a statement that CBK market intervention measures fall within its monetary policy which aims to bolster economic recovery in non-oil sectors and to maintain and buttress the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti Dinar as a lucrative and reliable vessel for

domestic savings, the latter being a mainstay of monetary policy. The Governor added that the decisions were taken after a thorough scrutiny of the latest economic, monetary, and banking data and information available, including indicators of general economic performance, local liquidity levels, developments in deposits, and interest rates on both the Kuwaiti Dinar and on main foreign currencies. Dr Hashel concluded the statement by stressing the Bank's unwavering policy of vigilant monitoring of economic, monetary, and banking developments according to latest available data and in light of policies implemented towards safeguarding financial and monetary stability. — KUNA

Kuwait expands boycott...

Continued from Page 1

Islamic Studies, the boycott will likely continue until the "average Muslim feels that France has backed down". "Any positive statements that are respectful of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), I would imagine will gradually break the boycott," he told AFP.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vented his outrage at the "scoundrels" at the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo for mocking him in a front-page cartoon. His office also vowed to take unspecified "legal and diplomatic actions" over the depiction of the 66-year-old leader. The publication has stoked fury in Turkish political circles and added to a sense of crisis enveloping Turkey's deteriorating relations with France.

It came out just days after Erdogan called for a boycott of French products and questioned Macron's sanity for promoting a drive against radical Islam. Erdogan said he had never personally seen the Charlie Hebdo drawing because he did not want to "give credit to such immoral publications". But he called it "disgusting" nonetheless.

"I don't need to say anything to those

scoundrels who insult my beloved Prophet (PBUH) on such a scale," Erdogan said in a speech to his party's lawmakers in the parliament. "I am sad and frustrated not because of this disgusting attack on me personally but because of the impertinence taking aim at our Prophet (PBUH) we love more than ourselves," he said.

Erdogan yesterday accused "Macron and those who share the same mentality with him" of pursuing "vicious, provocative and ugly policies that sow the seeds of hatred". France's European Affairs Minister said yesterday that Paris would "push for strong European responses, which include sanctions" over Erdogan's series of "provocations".

Ankara prosecutors said they were launching an investigation into Charlie Hebdo for "insulting the head of state". The cartoon was published in the middle of an emotional debate over France's broader policy toward Muslims. That conversation has been lent urgency by the murder near Paris this month of a teacher who showed his class cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) previously published by Charlie Hebdo.

Macron's defense of the drawings saw tens of thousands march Tuesday through the Bangladesh capital Dhaka and protesters burn pictures of Macron and French tricolor flags in Syria. Smaller protests returned to Dhaka yesterday and also hit the Indian city Mumbai and parts of the Gaza Strip. — AFP

The tycoon who sued Britain over...

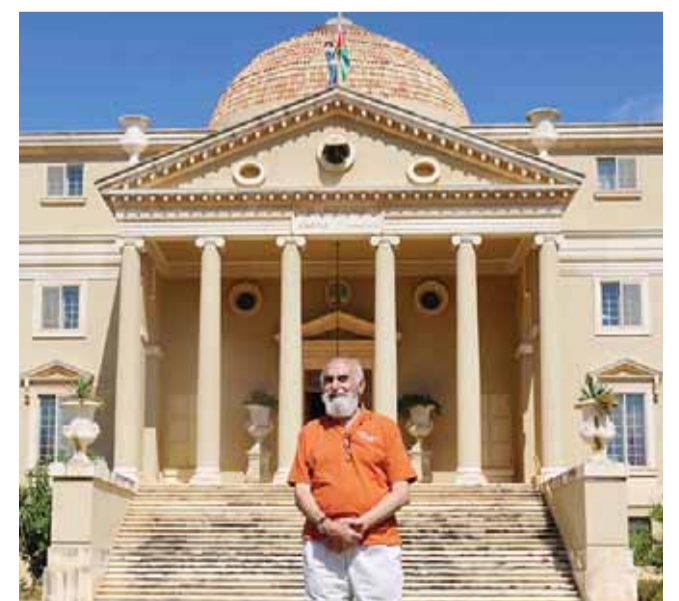
Continued from Page 1

compensation from Britain for the "wrongs" caused by Balfour. The largely symbolic gesture will almost certainly not force Britain to pay reparations, but Masri said filing the case fulfilled a childhood dream. "I remember the day the teacher told us about the Balfour Declaration and its meaning," he recalled, perched next to his fireplace. "I was eight years old. He read it and put it in my head. Since that day, I have been angry."

The entrance to Beit al-Falestine includes a painting of St Mark's Basilica in Venice, hung across from a depiction of the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem. Masri said the latter image serves as a reminder that Arabs "knew how to build domes" before the Europeans. The center of the building features a marble Hercules statue. There are also reminders of Palestinian setbacks, including frescoes of the "Nakba" (disaster) - the Palestinian term describing Israel's creation - and a portrayal of the "Naksa", the Arab defeat by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. "Today is the worst period in Palestinian history," Masri told AFP. "We live in a big prison."

Beyond the occupation, Masri voiced concern over the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain establishing relations with Israel, which broke decades of Arab League consensus against normalisation until the Palestinian conflict was resolved. Masri's business interests include servicing Gulf oil companies. Sudan has since said it will also establish ties with the Jewish state.

The father of six, with an untrimmed white beard, told AFP he had been enthusiastic about the Oslo peace accords in the 1990s but had since grown disillusioned. He voiced



NABLUS: Palestinian billionaire Munib Al-Masri poses for a picture in front of his mansion Beit al-Falestine (Palestine House) in this occupied West Bank city on Oct 2, 2020. — AFP

hope that the Fatah movement of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas can reconcile with its rival, the Islamist Hamas, to give the Palestinians a united voice.

Masri's political influence has waned, but he still writes letters in Arabic to Donald Trump, encouraging the US leader to change course in the Middle East, even if he has little hope of a reply. But Masri's main frustrations lie with Israel. He argued that Balfour gave the Jewish state a blank cheque to occupy and even annex Palestinian territory and that now Israelis, in control of the lands, refuse to "share the cake". — AFP

Local

Team identifies loopholes which led to foreign workers' surge, proposes reforms

Reports on four pressing issues presented to Prime Minister

KUWAIT: A government team tasked with addressing the demographic imbalance identified the administrative, legal and executive loopholes which led to the surge of foreign workers in Kuwait. It made proposals to restructure foreign workers in the public and private sectors, decrease the number of marginal workers, while taking into consideration the security, social and economic dimensions of this issue. It also recommended a number of legislative reforms to bring to account those responsible for the demographic imbalance.

The team is one of four groups of experts formed by the Cabinet to study and set proposals to tackle four of the most pressing issues in the country. The teams submitted their reports to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in a meeting at Seif Palace on Tuesday. The other three teams tackled the key issues of economic reforms, social media regulation, and education overhaul.

Economic situation

The economic reform team informed His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled about the coordination between relevant public and private insti-

tutions to assess the current economic situation, and its impact on state resources, as well as their proposed practical solutions to boost the state economy and its financial situation. The social media team apprised His Highness the Prime



Cabinet to choose 'optimal solutions'



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets members of the team on addressing demographic imbalance. — KUNA

Minister of their vision and recommendations to combat the negative aspects of social media in line with laws and without jeopardizing the constitutionally enshrined freedom of expression.

The team assigned with the educational strategy briefed His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled about their evaluation of the plans of the min-

istries of education and higher education as well as other public and private educational institutions to upgrade the educational process and to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. At the conclusion of the meeting, His Highness the Premier

thanked the teams for their sincere efforts and valuable reports. He noted that the Cabinet will thoroughly study the teams' reports and proposals to choose the optimal solutions for these pressing issues. — KUNA

Muhammad Al-Sayer runs for parliament

KUWAIT: Lawyer Muhammad Al-Sayer registered yesterday to run for parliament from the third constituency. In a statement to the press after announcing his candidacy, Sayer highlighted the need for politicians, and parliament hopefuls in particular, to take "serious and urgent steps to achieve development, put an end to corruption and hold accountable those who violated people's rights and public funds." Furthermore, Sayer urged voters to contribute not only through their votes, but also through sharing their visions and ideas "to help elevate the level of parliamentary work, and enforce the law and constitutional articles according to a fair political system that eliminates discrimination and guarantees equality."



Muhammad Al-Sayer

Kuwait reports 7 COVID-19 deaths, 814 new cases

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health said yesterday 814 new infection cases with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were recorded during the past 24 hours. In addition to the new batch of infections, ministry spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad announced that seven patients succumbed to the contagious disease during the same, raising the death toll to 763.

The total number of the registered infection cases reached 123,906, said Dr Sanad, adding that the number of patients that remained under medical care at intensive treatment units reached 107, whereas the whole count of confirmed cases that also continued to get medical care reached 8,220.

He revealed that up to 7,431 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, putting the whole number of such examinations at 896,986. Earlier yesterday, the health ministry announced that 807 COVID-19 patients recovered during the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of the recuperated to 114,923. The ministry's spokesman called anew on the public to remain vigilant and continue taking precautions against the pandemic. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force said that Wafra and Nuwaiseeb fire stations responded to a blaze reported in a Wafra farm warehouse containing feed, paint and other materials. The blaze was put out without injuries.

Crimes

Man stabs woman in Kuwait City street

KUWAIT: A man tortured a woman he claimed was his ex-wife, causing injuries to her tongue, face and ear, in addition to several stab wounds. The man was arrested with a knife in his hand and is being sent to the prosecution. Police received a call about a fight on Sour Street in Kuwait City between a man and a woman, who sought the help of passersby as she was bleeding. Police and detectives went to the scene and found the man with a knife in his hand, and the woman was next to him in a very bad condition. Paramedics rushed her to Amiri Hospital. The man, an Egyptian, was taken to Salhiya police station. He claimed the woman was his estranged wife, but investigations revealed she was not his wife and there is no relation between them. The man was charged with attempted murder.

Biker dead

A Lebanese man riding a motorcycle was killed in a collision with a vehicle on Airport Road. Police and paramedics rushed to the scene and found the motorcyclist in critical condition, but he died upon arrival to the hospital. The vehicle's driver was detained as investigations are being conducted.

Domestic violence

A woman accused her brother of beating and injuring her. The woman took a medical report to police and told them her brother beat her due to a dispute. The prosecutor ordered the case be recorded under domestic violence and ordered the arrest of the brother for questioning.

Resisting arrest

Two persons were sent to Fahheel police station for resisting arrest, as both did not have any identification on them. They exchanged blows with policemen, but were controlled and arrested. Both men seemed to be under the influence, so they were sent to the forensics department for tests, then returned to Fahheel police station for questioning after they sobered up.

Search for maid

A domestic helper stole KD 1,600 from her employer and disappeared, according to the sponsor's statements. The son of the employer told Sabah Al-Salem police that the Filipina helper stole KD 1,600 in cash and fled the house. A warrant was issued for her arrest.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

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Visit to US media institutions: Experience of different flavor

By Bedour Al-Mutairi

To revisit the United States of America as a member in a delegation from all over the world is not like visiting it with a family or as a tourist because it is an experience of a different flavor. I was lucky to be selected by the US state department to visit the US within the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) for 2020.

This program is one of the American media's smart strategies as the state department invites several young leaders in the fields of media, politics and economy each year to visit the United States and have a look at its experience in the concerned field, and this is in my view part of the soft power media strategy it uses.

This is a program sponsored by the state department and started in 1940 and invited more than 5,000 persons from all over the world, and may be the most famous among them is former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat in 1968, and the list is full of dignitaries who occupied senior posts such as presidencies, premierships and ministries.

The US state department invited me to join a group of 22 journalists from around the world and the visit was postponed due to "strange" events, and it was in this distinguished year, 2020, which left memories and events that combined wit with peculiarity.

Having 22 journalists of both genders from various countries with several ideas and cultures is a rich experience in itself, besides travelling within four states over three weeks to see the American journalism, its freedom, mechanism of managing papers and newsrooms. I will attempt to write about part of this exceptional trip.

In Washington

The trip began in the capital Washington, DC with a visit to the democracy and human rights office at the state department where we learned about the office's experience, as well as the way reports are written, prepared and monitored from regional and international organizations to strengthen democracy in all countries of the world.

The second stop was at the international journalists center, which has part of me personally, as I met many friends and teachers who taught me over seven months the electronic journalism and its development. It was an excellent opportunity to meet them again with a journalists' delegation from all over the world to talk about the center and journalists services.

The third stop was at the Washington Post, though it was not included in the official schedule but it was arranged by a friend, and this can be described as an exceptional and rich experience especially with journalist Scott Higham who is a winner of the Pulitzer prize in journalism, and is one of the most important investigative journalists in the world, that in addition to seeing firsthand how Washington Post works and



meeting more than 200 journalists who work there.



Massachusetts

We then went to Massachusetts and Boston in particular which has the largest and most prestigious university cities in the world, including Harvard University where we had an appointment with 'Nieman Journalism Fellowship,' which is a golden and exceptional opportunity for any journalist to be selected to stay at Harvard on a scholarship for one full year to learn about journalism.

The program included a visit to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for Civic Media, which is headed by Professor Ethan Zuckerman, and spent hours in discussions about his views about electronic media, being the experienced in this field being one of the founders of a web page during the nineties, and those discussions were rich in regards to the future of electronic journalism.

We visited Boston radio and television where we met Phillip Martin Sean Corcoran as discussions were about the current audience and its views about the radio in particular and the method of the new news content being followed there.

We met Sheriff Mark Napier of Pima town whose sentence "I am trying to always do what this town needs to be safe, as the stars on my shoulder will disappear one day, then I will be a private citizen and I will feel what I have done in developments in people's lives," drew my strong attention.

The obnoxious comparison

I learned many lessons and examples within the 'strategy of soft power media,' and the major experience was a stop to compare their journalism with ours without taking away from the competence of many media men in our local media because generalization is the language of the ignorant, and we cannot generalize. I do not want in this comparison anything other than to help each other and spot the defects in our profession and seek to develop it out of my belief in the importance of what we present to our society and the importance of struggle to make our pen always free, as Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, said "give me a media without conscious, I

give you ignorant people."

It is for sure that many people preceded me with such comparison, which makes us wonder: is our media a hopeless case? Or the problem is in us journalists? Or is it like all of our other problems which became chronic in the views of many?

The role of the journalist there is to hold any government or private agency to account in case they cause harm to people and has the absolute freedom to uncover corruption issues as long as he knows his journalistic tools with documents and evidence. The journalist is not to give a blind eye to any harm against the people, even if it is caused by a most senior official who hides behind the name of his family or post, as chairs vanish away while "people and the country remain."

The journalist's relation there with government officials is full with caution and parity, or to be more accurate, it is the relation of the 'friend/enemy,' as they agree when it comes to people's interests and part ways when it comes to corruption.

The American cinema documents many classic stories about exposing corruption at various levels, as it dealt with Watergate twice so far since the 1970s, along with 'All the President's Men,' and more recently the movie 'The Post' by Meryl Streep which reflected how the Washington Post believed in two young journalists when they uncovered a scandal that was going to an unprecedented conviction of an American president, and forced President Richard Nixon to resign when they published and revealed his connection with the break in the Democratic party headquarters.

The corruption shakeup continued to establishments that were immune from criticism and enjoy a spiritual authority with the movie 'Spotlight' that was taken from an investigative report by the Boston Globe in 2002 about the sexual violation of children in churches and Catholic parishes in the United States, and won a Pulitzer Prize for it in 2003.

That does not mean that their journalism is free of any mistakes, yet they have many positives that can be copied to develop our journalism that many want to limit it to official statements and that the journalist must be obedient and not elude to talking about any corruption, criticism or violations.

GCC ministers discuss security challenges

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh took part in a videoconference by the interior ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries on Tuesday. The meeting reviewed a number of security issues of common concern, including the combat against COVID-19 and the preparations to ease the related restrictions, according to a statement from the Interior Ministry's General Directorate of Security Relations and Media. At the beginning of the meeting, the GCC ministers expressed condolences for the State of Kuwait over the passing of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, recalling his contributions to the strengthening of the GCC march.

The ministers reviewed the latest reports and proposals of the joint expert committees on how to cement the GCC joint action and maintain regional security and stability, the statement pointed out. The meeting gathered also, from the Kuwaiti side, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lt Gen Esam Al-Nahham, Assistants Undersecretary for Legal affairs Maj Gen Majed Al-Majed and acting director-general of general directorate of follow-up on the affairs of ministerial councils and committees Col Adel Al-Sowaid. — KUNA

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E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Volvo Kuwait encourages checkups for early breast cancer detection

KUWAIT: In a continued commitment to the safety of its customers in every aspect of its business, Volvo Car Kuwait BNK Automotive marked the breast cancer awareness month of October with a series of initiatives that aimed to educate its female customers about breast cancer as well as have regular mammograms done to increase recovery and survival rates on the long term.

The Swedish luxury automobile brand started the awareness month by offering its female customers above the age of 35 checkup vouchers to have mammograms done at Kuwait Hospital. They were also invited to lectures and workshops led by Dr Dalal Al-Arabi, held at Kuwait Hospital to educate them about breast cancer facts and self-exam methods.

Speaking of these initiatives, General Manager of Volvo Car Kuwait BNK Automotive, Cherif ElSayed, said: "We place our customers at the forefront of everything we do at Volvo. Their safety is at the core of our DNA and brand values. And safety is not only about safe driving. It is synonym to safe living and the wellbeing of our community. We encourage every woman to get her exam done regularly because early detection is her best prevention. I take this opportunity to thank our female customers for choosing to drive a Volvo car. Driving a Volvo car is being part of a larger community that cares for one another."



Volvo Car Kuwait BNK Automotive also partnered with Kuwait Hospital and Cancer Awareness Nation (CAN) in a closed talk that brought together doctors, professionals and breast cancer survivors in a talk that aimed to raise awareness about breast cancer and the misconceptions around it.

Speakers were hosted at Volvo Studio and included Dr Dalal Al-Arabi - General Surgery Consultant and Head of the Breast Department at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, Dr Nadia Al-Mahmoud - Family Medicine Consultant, member of CAN, in charge of the awareness clinic at CAN and former head of awareness at the Ministry of Health, actress Zahra Al-Kharji, writer and author, Dalaa Al-Mufti, Dr Wajid Al-Othman - Nutritionist specialized in Nutrition Education, and Besma Al-Qassar - founder of the 'Women Support Forum' and expert in human resources, women mentoring and leadership. Volvo Studio located in Sharq and is showcasing artworks gifted by Wejha Arts. Proceeds from the sale of these artworks will be donated to women who need financial support during their breast cancer treatment.



KUWAIT: President of the International Women group (IWG) - Kuwait, Amreen Mustafa, wife of the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, along with members of the Executive Board, met with the wives of newly accredited Ambassadors to the State of Kuwait recently. The meeting was an opportunity to welcome the group's new honorary members by sharing some cultural and historical information about Kuwait and the activities of the IWG.



Lebanon, Israel in second round of maritime talks

Poverty stalks US middle class amid pandemic

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ANKARA: Turkish President and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Recep Tayyip Erdogan waves as he arrives to address his party's group meeting at the Turkish Grand National Assembly yesterday. — AFP

Facing Muslim anger, France warns citizens

In row with Macron, Erdogan seeks influence in Muslim world

PARIS: France has urged its citizens to be cautious and avoid mass gatherings in countries that have announced boycotts of French products in a fast-spreading protest against perceived anti-Muslim bias from Paris. Muslims have reacted angrily to President Emmanuel Macron's staunch defence of the right to mock religion following the beheading of a history teacher who had shown his pupils cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) during a class discussion on free speech.

Tens of thousands marched Tuesday in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, while in Syria protesters have burnt pictures of Macron and in Libya they torched French flags. "In several countries in recent days, there have been calls for a boycott of French products, particularly foodstuff, and more generally calls to protest against France," the French foreign ministry said on its website.

"It is advisable to avoid areas where demonstrations are held, to stay away from gatherings, and to follow the guidance of the relevant French embassy or consulate," it added. "It is recommended to be most vigilant, especially when travelling, and in places frequented by tourists and expatriate communities." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has led the charge against Macron, backing calls in the Islamic world to boycott French goods.

Depictions of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) are considered offensive by many Muslims, but in France such cartoons have become synonymous with freedom of expression and a proud secular tradition dating back to the Revolution. In the aftermath of teacher Samuel Paty's murder, Macron vowed the country "will not give up cartoons". Publication of the same drawings had sparked the 2015 massacre of cartoonists and others at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the beginning of a spate of deadly terror attacks on French soil. Earlier this month, Macron had unveiled a plan to defend France's secular values against a trend of "Islamist separatism", and described Islam as a religion "in crisis".

Erdogan seeks influence

Erdogan may present himself as the advocate of Muslims but his jibes at French leader Emmanuel Macron on Islam also aim to score points at the expense of Middle Eastern rivals, analysts say. In the space of a few days, Erdogan has called for a boycott of French-labeled goods and questioned the "mental health" of Macron over his hardened stance against radical Islam and defense of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

The French leader's robust defence of the right to mock religion followed the beheading of a French schoolteacher who had shown his pupils cartoons of the prophet. Ozgur Unluharsicikli, Ankara office director of the US German Marshall Fund think tank, says Erdogan, a pious Muslim, is "sincere" in his reaction. "But he also benefits from this spat with Macron on both the domestic and international fronts," he said. "Being in a conflict with Western leaders boosts Erdogan's image as a national leader who defies Western hubris against Turks or other Muslims," Unluharsicikli said.

This posture also allows him to "increase the grievances of Muslim societies towards their ruling elite in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which cannot match Erdogan's vigor in 'defending Islam'." The leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE - his regional rivals - have largely shied away from commenting on a subject which strikes a furious chord in the Arab-Muslim world.

These three countries indeed share Paris's tough line against Islamist movements which they accuse Erdogan of supporting, and which they consider a threat to their stability. Emirati political analyst Abdulkhaleq Abdulla summed up in a tweet the contrast between the position of these three countries and that of the Turkish leader. "The equation is very simple and clear. If Erdogan attacks Macron, that means that Macron is right," he wrote.

'Does not bow his head'

Didier Billion, a Turkey specialist at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs in Paris, believes Erdogan seeks to take advantage of "the strategic vacuum in the Middle East" caused by the declining influence of traditional heavyweights like Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He wants to play a more robust role in the region. "He wants to appear as the one who does not bow his head in front of the West," he said.

According to him, "Erdogan notes, and he is not wrong, that Islamophobia is deepening in France" and in this context, his invectives against Macron are "a desire to influence the Muslims of France". But he adds "this effort will be in vain" because Muslims in France have their own structures based on their countries of origins like Algeria or Morocco, "even if Erdogan exerts a fascination with some of the young Muslims." Jean Marcou, a professor at Sciences Po Grenoble, pointed to the geopolitical dimension of tensions between Turkey and France.

"Since last summer, we have witnessed a series of confrontations between the two countries in strategic theatres of conflict: Libya, the eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon, Mali and Nagorno-Karabakh", he said. "These clashes are the result of an offensive policy by Turkey which intends to impose itself as a regional power. "If Turkey finds Paris in its path, it is undoubtedly because, in the context of Brexit, France is the only country in the EU to have nuclear power and a seat at the UN Security Council," he added. "So France too is in a position to demand a place and a role to play on the borders of Europe (in the Middle East, in the Mediterranean or in Africa) where Turkey is located."

'Win-win' for both leaders

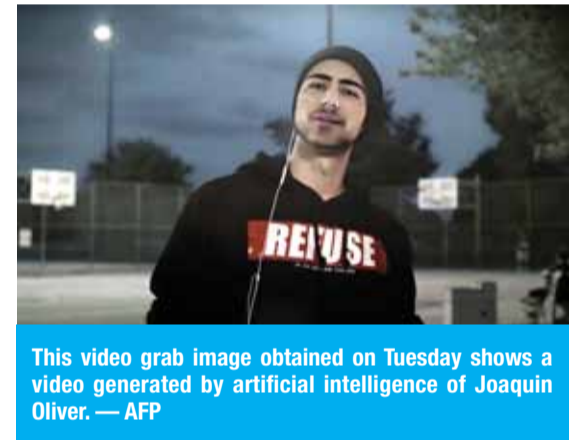
Billion compared the verbal confrontation between the Turkish and French leaders to a "cockfight", while also pointing to Macron's outbursts at Erdogan. "Macron seeks to show that he does not stand idly by in the face of political Islam," he said. "In this context, it is a boon for Macron to have a leader like Erdogan on the opposite side". Unluharsicikli of the German Marshall Fund agreed. "Macron also seems to enjoy this spat. Perhaps he also has a similar strategy of boosting his image as the leader who protects 'Western values' against others," he said. "This seems to be a win-win situation for the two leaders and lose-lose for their countries." — Agencies

Parents of murdered teen bring him back in AI election video

WASHINGTON: When the parents of a teen murdered in America's deadliest high school shooting were approached by an advertising agency to digitally resurrect their son for an election video, they didn't hesitate for a moment. "You're interviewing parents of a kid that was murdered inside his school," said Manuel Oliver, the father of Joaquin Oliver whose life ended at the age of 17 on February 14, 2018. "So, in order for us to feel impressed, it's really hard. The bar is very high. We said yes, immediately," Joaquin was one of 17 people killed that day at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida by a former student. Since then, Manuel and his wife Patricia Oliver have dedicated their lives to the cause of gun control.

First, they supplied the agency with photos of their late son. An actor who resembled Joaquin recorded the message. Then using artificial intelligence (AI), Joaquin's face was mapped onto the actor's, like a digital mask. The video was posted earlier this month on www.unfinishedvotes.com and YouTube, where it's received about 150,000 views. "Yo, it's me" opens AI Joaquin, wearing a sweatshirt and beanie as he speaks in front of a basketball court, to a backdrop of eerie music. Like the real Joaquin, the AI version sprinkles his speech with the word "bro" and gestures a lot with his hands.

"I've been gone for two years, and nothing's changed bro," he says. "The election in November is



This video grab image obtained on Tuesday shows a video generated by artificial intelligence of Joaquin Oliver. — AFP

the first one I could have voted in, but I'll never get to choose the kind of world I'll get to live in." He rails against politicians who care more about the gun lobby's money than people's lives, and ends with a haunting message: "Vote for me, because I can't." So-called "deepfakes" - highly-realistic videos generated by AI - have become notorious for their sinister associations, like putting words into politicians' mouths or celebrities' faces into porn videos.

Sometimes the technology is put to other uses, like bringing back deceased actors for movies. But Joaquin's video is a unique case. Is it ethical to make a dead child speak, even for a good cause? "This is a perfect example of the good side of these technologies," says his father Manuel. To his detractors who accuse the family of being unethical - of whom there are many in the YouTube comments section - Manuel responds angrily. "The unethical option of doing something like this, or the unethical way our politicians handle gun violence in our country?" —AFP

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International

Millions queue to vote as India state election gets under way

Indian PM urges voters to 'take all COVID precautions'

PATNA: Millions of Indians turned out to cast ballots in a state election yesterday in the world's biggest vote since the coronavirus emerged, with booths packed out and many ignoring government advice on wearing masks and social distancing. Some 70 million people are eligible to vote in Bihar, an impoverished eastern state governed by an alliance that includes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has promised a free vaccine for every person in the state if it wins.

The election comes as India, the world's second most-infected nation, records between 40,000 and 50,000 new cases each day and looks set to surpass the eight million mark. "I am a little afraid because corona(virus) is not a small disease," said Nidhi Kumari, a 21-year-old student queuing up to vote in the outskirts of the state capital Patna. "But there are precautions at polling booths. They are giving sanitizers and gloves." Voting in Bihar has been split across three days—Wednesday, November 3 and November 7 — to reduce crowding at booths. Coronavirus patients will be allowed to cast a ballot under the supervision of the health authorities.



The world's biggest vote

Long queues, few masks

Modi—who held several rallies across the state in the run-up to the polls—appealed to voters yesterday "to take all COVID precautions while participating in this festival of democracy". But at two booths vis-

ited by AFP, there were long queues of voters lined up heel-to-toe, and few masks in sight. Authorities have struggled to enforce social distancing and mask-wearing during rallies across the state that have attracted tens of thousands of people. The poll is the first in India since Modi imposed the world's biggest lockdown in late March that forced millions of poor migrant workers, many from Bihar, out of their jobs in cities. The state, one of India's poorest, has been ruled by an alliance of Modi's Hindu-nationalist BJP and the regional Janta Dal United party for over a decade.

But opinion polls indicate disquiet with the incumbent regime, particularly Chief Minister Nitish Kumar from the JDU, who has been in power for most of the past 15 years, over perceptions he has not done enough to lift the state out of poverty. Kumar's unpopularity has been further exacerbated by the lockdown, with hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who fled cities like Mumbai or Delhi because of the virus—many on foot—still unable to find jobs in Bihar.

"Here nothing changes, and there is no development. And now with corona(virus), all the schools are shut. We are poor and uneducated, how can we teach our children?" farmer Vinod Paswan told AFP. "Our village has lot of problems, we want proper roads and healthcare facilities," added 50-year-old housewife Madhuri Sinha. Unemployment and the cost of living have been major election issues, with the



MASAUHRI, Bihar: Voters queue up to cast their ballots for Bihar state assembly elections at a polling station yesterday. —AFP

national government also striving to keep the prices of onions—a key ingredient in Indian cuisine—in check amid a shortage after heavy rains damaged crops.

The main opposition regional Rashtriya Janata Dal party, which remains tainted by past corruption allegations and is in an alliance with the national

Congress party, has meanwhile promised to support unemployed youth and create thousands of new state government jobs. Bihar's ruling alliance has banked heavily on Modi, who remains popular in the state. He has promised to expedite development projects if the alliance is returned to power. —AFP

Suu Kyi and old guard frustrate young politicians

YANGON: Once celebrated as democracy champions, a tight elite of elderly former political prisoners at the helm of Myanmar's ruling party now stand accused of oppression, discrimination and censorship. The National League for Democracy (NLD) is widely expected to win next week's election—five years after it swept to power in a landslide victory. Throngs of young people signed up to the party when the Southeast Asian nation emerged from outright military rule, eager to play their role in cementing democracy.

But critics now say the top echelons of the NLD remain closed to anyone who did not serve time behind bars in the fight against the former junta—effectively sidelining the youth. "We thought, proudly, we'd be future political leaders," current NLD MP and former youth leader Aung Hlaing Win, now 37, told AFP. "But, unfortunately, it went the wrong way." The average age for the 12 members of the NLD's top decision-making body, including party boss and civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, is more than 70.

Lebanon, Israel in second round of talks

NAQURA: Lebanon and Israel, still technically at war and with no diplomatic ties, launched a second round of maritime border talks yesterday under UN and US auspices to allow for offshore energy exploration. The talks, expected to last for two days, were held at the headquarters of UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL in the Lebanese border town of Naqura, guarded by army roadblocks and with UN helicopters circling above.

After years of quiet US shuttle diplomacy, Lebanon and Israel this month said they had agreed to begin the negotiations in what Washington hailed as a "historic" agreement. The announcement came weeks after Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates became the first Arab nations to establish relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Lebanon—which last saw military clashes with Israel in 2006—insists that the negotiations are purely technical and don't involve any soft polit-

All of them were jailed or placed under house arrest for opposing the military regime. Younger members of the party were largely reduced to supporting acts for their seniors, required to ask permission to speak to anyone outside the party and submit speeches for "censorship", said Aung Hlaing Win. "It turned out to be an oppressive system - no different from the system of military rule," he added. "Just because they'd been political prisoners didn't mean they knew how to run a country."

The hopes for change were dashed for many young democracy activists, who accuse the NLD of operating no better than other parties. Political parties still ask new members about the role they played in the 1988 protests, complained 28-year-old activist Thinzar Shunlei Li, even though a majority of people in Myanmar were born in or after the 1980s. "This is not the right way to judge a person," she said. "Our issues, concerns and struggles are different."

'Older people have thicker skin'

The NLD emerged from Myanmar's 1988 pro-democracy movement as it fought against the junta. This was when Suu Kyi—now 75—was propelled to fame. She became a national hero, serving 15 years under house arrest, one of around 10,000 people imprisoned by the regime for their political beliefs. But critics say incarceration has become an unwritten requirement for rising up in her party.

ical normalization with Israel.

"Today's session is the first technical session," said Laury Haytayan, a Lebanese energy expert. "Detailed discussions on demarcation should begin." Lebanon, mired in its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war, is looking to settle the maritime border dispute so it can press on with its offshore quest for oil and gas. The search for hydrocarbons has already heightened tensions in the eastern Mediterranean following repeated Turkish exploration and drilling operations in waters claimed by both Cyprus and Greece.

'Maximalist approach'

In February 2018, Lebanon signed its first contract for drilling in two blocks in the Mediterranean with a consortium comprising energy giants Total, ENI and Novatek. Exploration of one of the blocks is more controversial as part of it is located in an 860-square-kilometre area claimed by both Israel and Lebanon. Lebanon is expected to adopt a "maximalist approach" to maritime border negotiations, said Haytayan.

The energy expert explained that Lebanese negotiators will likely try to claim areas that fall beyond the disputed 860 square kilometers zone, including the Karish gas field currently operated

"People who served jail time longer are more important—that's the philosophy of the NLD," former NLD MP The Th Khine told AFP. The 53-year-old was kicked out last year for not toeing the NLD line, and now heads a rival party. More than 120 current NLD ministers or MPs have served time in prison—from State Counselor Suu Kyi and the president down.

A similar number of the party's 2020 election candidates have also been jailed at some point. "Doing time is a badge of honor," explained Yangon-based analyst Richard Horsey, describing it as an "entry ticket to the upper echelons of the NLD". It is a policy the party makes no attempt to hide. "When we consider giving responsibilities to someone, we favor our old comrades," NLD spokesman and former '88 Generation activist Myo Nyunt said. "Older people have thicker skin, while newer members can be susceptible to criticism."

Unquestioning support

Critics have also pointed to the NLD's flipped role—a party led by victims of political repression that is cracking down on dissenters now that it is in power. The number of activists incarcerated under Suu Kyi's government has soared. In recent weeks, 15 protesters have been arrested and two sentenced to six years behind bars for condemning alleged abuses by Myanmar's military in Rakhine state. —AFP



NAQURA, Lebanon: Supporters of the Lebanese Communist Party take part in a demonstration denouncing talks between Lebanese and Israeli delegations yesterday. —AFP

by Israel, she told AFP. "We have to wait to see the reaction of the Israelis," she said. While the US-brokered talks look at the maritime border, a UNIFIL-sponsored track is also due to address outstanding land border disputes. "We have a unique opportunity to make substantial progress on contentious issues along" the border, UNIFIL head Major General Stefano Del Col said in a statement on Tuesday. —AFP



BOULOUNGA, Burkina Faso: Rasmane Badini, 64, displaced from Silgadji, stands by his shelter at a site for internally displaced people on Oct 15, 2020. —AFP

with pieces of plastic, and we have to build new huts every three to six months. "What are we to do? We can't let the children sleep out under the trees." —AFP

Burkina Faso victims dream of safe homes

BOULOUNGA: Sleeping in huts made of straw, fabric and plastic sheets, nearly 5,000 people forced from their homes by jihadist violence in Burkina Faso have some shelter but little else. The group faces a precarious future at Boulonga, 25 kilometers from the northern town of Kongoussi, as donor nations pledge more aid to the Sahel belt south of the Sahara.

The United Nations says the Sahel faces "one of the greatest humanitarian crises in the world". Earlier this month, it mobilized donor countries and institutions to step up financial aid, with promises of around \$1.7 billion (1.43 billion euros). "My dream is to have a real roof over the heads of my family and myself. Finding that, a good

tent will do to protect us from bad weather, mosquitoes and creatures at night," says Rasmane Badini, 64, at the Boulonga reception site.

"Look at this hut. More than 20 children sleep inside." Badini opens a decrepit door to reveal an old mattress rolled up in a corner of the shelter. Some charities provide tents in other camps, but Badini, who wears a long green African robe and a grey hat, says he has received nothing since he came to Boulonga 18 months ago. The 4,600 people who took refuge in the area built makeshift huts in the fields. "We make these huts with twisted mats of straw, pieces of wood we find and branches," he says. Badini and his family fled their home in Silgadji after jihadists attacked it in May 2019 and killed about 20 people.

"We couldn't take anything with us and here we have no source of income," he says among a small group of men who have settled in Boulonga. "It's hard to shelter everyone. We often have to sleep outside to make space for the children," he adds. There are 19 children in his family. "Straw lets in the rain. That's why we cover the huts

News in brief

Filipinos flock to cemeteries

MANILA: Thousands of people wearing masks and face shields poured into cemeteries in Manila yesterday for their last chance to visit dead loved ones ahead of a government-ordered closure of graveyards for All Saints' Day. The religious observance on November 1 is usually marked by festivities and impromptu family gatherings that authorities fear could fuel the spread of the coronavirus in the Catholic-majority Philippines. In a bid to prevent that happening, cemeteries across the country will be closed for the first time from Thursday until November 4. Charito Caones usually spends days scrubbing and repainting the tombs of his relatives in preparation for the annual rite. This year he had a few hours. "I hope this won't happen again and we'll be able to spend the night with them," Caones told AFP as he sat in front of the graves of his brother and nephew. —AFP

Ramaphosa in self-quarantine

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has gone into self-quarantine after learning that a guest at a charity dinner he attended tested positive for coronavirus, his office said yesterday. "President Cyril Ramaphosa has begun a period of self-quarantine," acting spokesman Tyrone Seale said in a statement. "The President is showing no symptoms at this time and will, in line with COVID-19 health advice, be tested should symptoms manifest." According to his office, Ramaphosa on Saturday attended a fundraising dinner of the Adopt-a-School Foundation. One of the guests tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday, prompting Ramaphosa to go into self-quarantine on Wednesday. The head of southern Africa's worst coronavirus-hit nation will perform his duties remotely and will observe the guidelines that apply to self-quarantine, the presidency said. —AFP

Facebook's India policy chief quits

NEW DELHI: Facebook's top India public policy executive, who was at the centre of a row over the alleged failure to address hate speech on the platform, has quit, the social media giant said Wednesday. The network sparked a political storm in India after the Wall Street Journal reported in August that policy chief Ankhi Das refused to take down anti-Muslim comments by a Hindu nationalist lawmaker as it could damage the firm's business interests. India is the biggest market for the US-based company and its messaging service WhatsApp in terms of users, and the firm is under pressure worldwide over the policing of hate speech. Ajit Mohan, Facebook India's managing director, said Das was leaving Facebook "to pursue her interest in public service". —AFP

Typhoon hits Vietnam coast

HANOI: At least 26 fishermen were missing at sea as one of the strongest typhoons in two decades tore into Vietnam's central coastline yesterday, uprooting trees and forcing hundreds of thousands into shelter. Typhoon Molave, packing winds of up to 135 kilometers per hour, made landfall around midday having caused two deaths and left dozens missing as it approached. The military prepared helicopters and amphibious vehicles and deployed or placed on stand-by 250,000 soldiers in preparation for what humanitarian groups anticipated could be a challenging aftermath. "We are mounting one of our biggest relief operations ever," Vietnam Red Cross president Nguyen Thi Xuan Thu said in a statement announcing a global emergency appeal for over \$4 million in relief funds. The typhoon will be another big test for Vietnam amid a spell of intense weather throughout October that caused the worst flooding in decades, and several deadly mudslides. —Reuters

International

US early voting continuing on historic pace, tops 70 million

Trump campaign website broken into by hackers

WASHINGTON: More than 70 million Americans have cast ballots in the US presidential election, more than half the total turnout of the 2016 election with one week to go until Election Day, according to a Tuesday tally from the US Elections Project. The tally, which shows a record-breaking pace that could lead to the highest voter turnout in percentage terms in more than a century, is the latest sign of intense interest in the contest between Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

It also highlights voters' desire to reduce their risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the pandemic regathers strength heading into winter. Democrats hold a significant advantage in early voting due to their embrace of mail balloting, which Republicans have historically cast in large numbers but have shunned amid repeated and unfounded attacks by Trump, who says the system is prone to widespread fraud.

Overall, Democrats hold roughly a two-to-one advantage in early voting numbers.

However, Republicans in recent weeks have narrowed the gap in early, in-person voting, data shows. The high level of early voting has led Michael McDonald, the University of Florida professor who administers the US Elections Project, to predict a record US voter turnout of about 150 million, representing 65% of those eligible to vote, the highest rate since 1908. US voters have already cast far more early votes during this presidential campaign than they did in all of 2016 when they passed the 47 million mark earlier this month, data shows.

In another development, hackers briefly broke into Donald Trump's campaign website on Tuesday, just a week before Election Day, officials and reports said. "This site was seized," said a message that popped up on donalddjtrump.com, which normally carries details of rallies and fundraising appeals. "The world has had enough of the fake-news spread daily by president donald j trump", the message went to say, US media reported.



Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh said the site was quickly fixed and no sensitive data was compromised. "The Trump campaign website was defaced and we are working with law enforcement authorities to investigate the source of the attack," Murtaugh said. The technology website TechCrunch said the hack appeared to be a scam intended to collect hard-to-trace cryptocurrency Monero. In their message, the hackers claimed to have confidential information on Trump and his relatives. They instructed people to send crypto-currency to one address if they wanted the information revealed and to another to keep it secret.

Biden vows to tackle virus

Meanwhile, Joe Biden flayed Donald Trump on Tuesday with accusations the US President has surrendered to a surging pandemic, as the Democrat took his campaign to the Republican stronghold of Georgia one week before the election. While the former vice president went on electoral offense, seeking to expand the campaign map and his state-by-state path to victory on November 3, Trump barnstormed the Midwest in a last-gasp bid to shore up states that voted for him in 2016 but which polls show are tilting Biden's way.

And with the campaign narrowing down to its final days, Biden tapped one of his top surrogates, popular former president Barack Obama, to deliver a closing argument for Democrats in Florida, a must-win swing state for Trump if he is to defy the odds and earn reelection. Biden, buoyed by poll numbers that show him leading the incumbent, drilled in on Trump's coronavirus response, reminding voters that Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows conceded at the weekend that "we're not going to control the pandemic."

Speaking in Warm Springs, Georgia, Biden branded the response "a capitulation" by a White House that "never really tried" to halt a pandemic which has now killed more than 226,000 Americans. Instead of acting as a wartime president to battle Covid-19 as he promised,

allowed to work, and they cannot gain Israeli citizenship. Saleh, who grew up in West Darfur, was just nine when his family fled war to neighboring Chad. "My parents are in a refugee camp," said the young man, who arrived after journeying through Libya and Egypt, and has lived in Israel for 13 years. "I will be the first one for normalization," he said. "But if I will be deported from here, then I will be in 100 percent danger," he added.

'Not safe to go back'

Former president Omar al-Bashir oversaw Sudan's civil war in the Darfur region from 2003. Some 300,000 people died in the conflict and 2.5 million were forced from their homes. Bashir, in detention in Khartoum, is wanted by the International Criminal Court over charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. "We are here because it is not safe to go back to Sudan yet," said 31-year-old Monim Haroon, who comes from a stronghold region of Darfuri rebel leader Abdelwahid Nour's Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction.

"The reason why we are here in Israel is not because of the lack of a diplomatic relationship between Sudan and Israel, but because of the genocide and ethnic cleansing that we went through," Haroon said. Sudan's transitional government, in place after the fall of Bashir in 2019, signed a landmark peace deal with an alliance of rebel

right to peacefully assemble and protest while keeping people safe."

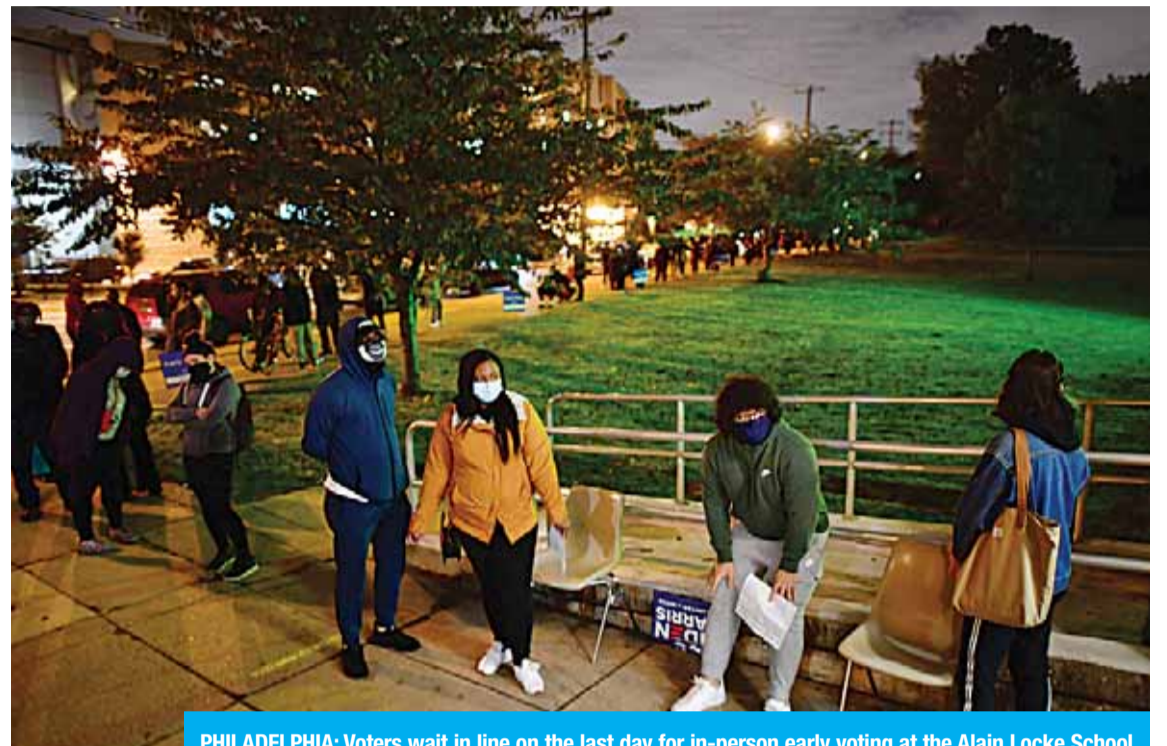
In a statement released early Wednesday the White House said it "stands ready, upon request, to deploy any and all Federal resources to end these riots." The fresh unrest came a day after the death of 27-year-old Walter Wallace, whose family said he suffered mental health issues. On Monday night hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets, with riot police pushing them back with shields and batons. "There's a lot of confusion about why" police shot the young man dead, Ezra Alidow, a 25-year-old artist, said Tuesday. "It's happening all over America. It's scary," he said. "The police were underrtrained."

Wave of protests

More than 90 arrests were made during the first night of sporadic riots and looting in the city Monday, and 30 police officers were injured, including one whose leg was broken when he was hit by a truck. "For today, and this evening, we anticipate the chance of additional incidents of civil unrest," Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw told reporters. "As such we will be taking additional steps to ensure order," including increasing police

told AFP on condition of anonymity. "I don't want to take more resources than I need. If I don't have to come every week I won't." Eight million more people have been driven into poverty as the United States struggles with the world's biggest coronavirus outbreak-triggering tens of millions of layoffs and a sharp contraction in growth. With a week to go before the November 3 election, it remains to be seen whether the dire state of the world's largest economy will help tip the vote from President Donald Trump in favor of challenger Joe Biden.

But with the effects of trillions of dollars in stimulus early in the pandemic fast wearing off, there is little doubt the US middle class is in a perilous situation. "This is the first time I came here to ask for food but I have no choice," said 40-year-old Joey, who started picking up meals from the charity in Bethesda after losing his job at



PHILADELPHIA: Voters wait in line on the last day for in-person early voting at the Alain Locke School satellite polling station on Tuesday. —AFP

Trump "shrugged, he swaggered and he surrendered," Biden said. "I'm here to tell you: We can and we will control this virus," he added.

'Working my ass off!'

Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by five points in Georgia in 2016, but polls have the 74-year-old running neck and neck with Biden in the Peach State. Georgia last voted for a Democrat for president nearly three decades ago-Bill Clinton in 1992 - but the Biden campaign has high hopes of flipping the state, and also winning its two US Senate seats which are up for grabs. Biden, 77, held a socially distanced drive-in rally later in Atlanta, Georgia's largest city, where he repeated some of the same attacks on Trump but also urged voters to

recognize how vital the state suddenly is to winning the White House.

"We win Georgia, we win everything!" Biden said, his voice rising. "These are the final days, so keep that sense of empowerment with you, that sense of optimism." Trump meanwhile maintained his hectic campaign pace, holding an open-air rally in Michigan followed by a similar one in Wisconsin and then Nebraska. Attendees did not practice social distancing, and many were maskless. Michigan and Wisconsin are Midwestern battlegrounds which he won by razor thin margins four years ago, but Trump insisted "we're leading almost everywhere" thanks to his frantic campaign schedule. "I've got to say I'm working my ass off here!" he boomed in Lansing, Michigan, eliciting a huge cheer. —Agencies

Sudanese in Israel fear being returned after normalization

TEL AVIV: Sudanese asylum seekers living in Israel fear being kicked out once ties are normalized between the two countries, though some hope their presence will be seen as an advantage. Technically at war with Israel for decades, Sudan on Friday became the third Arab country this year to announce it is normalizing ties with the Jewish state, following the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in August.

But since the announcement, members of the Sudanese community in Israel have been "very afraid" of being sent back, said 26-year-old Barik Saleh, a Sudanese asylum seeker who lives in a suburb of Tel Aviv. Israel counts a Sudanese population of around 6,000, mostly asylum seekers. Thousands of others left or were forced to return after Sudan split in 2011 when South Sudan won its independence-only for the fledgling country to plunge into civil war.

Some of the Sudanese-often labeled as "infiltrators" for crossing illegally into Israeli territory before being granted permission to stay-were minors when they arrived. They are not always

2nd night of clashes in Philadelphia after police kill Black man

NEW YORK: Hundreds of people demonstrated in Philadelphia late Tuesday, with looting and violence breaking out in a second night of unrest after the latest police shooting of a Black man in the US. The police department warned on Twitter that "a large crowd" of around 1,000 people was looting businesses in the area of Castor and Aramingo, advising citizens to "avoid the area." Footage from a news helicopter appeared to show people breaking into and looting a Foot Locker store and another business.

An AFP reporter at a different location, in West Philadelphia where another crowd of an estimated 1,000 people had gathered, saw police armed with batons clashing violently with several dozen protesters. Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's office announced the deployment of several hundred National Guard troops to the city "to protect the

Poverty stalks US middle class amid pandemic

BETHESDA: As the Covid-19 pandemic swept the United States, Keith managed to keep his job in financial services, but his income dried up as commissions grew scarce. Suddenly struggling financially, Keith began relying on meals handed out by a charity in Bethesda, a suburb of Washington known for the wealth of which the 52-year-old now finds himself bereft. "We try to save what we can," Keith, well-dressed in a red-striped polo shirt,



TEL AVIV: Sudanese asylum seekers gather on Oct 25, 2020 in an area in the southern part of Tel Aviv where thousands of them are living. —AFP

groups earlier this month. But Nour's rebel faction was not one of them. Some of those in power in Sudan today were also in control under Bashir.

They include Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, vice president of Sudan's ruling transitional sovereign council.

He heads the feared Rapid Support Forces, long accused by human rights groups of committing widespread abuses in Sudan's Darfur provinces. "For me it is very dangerous," said Haroon, who was previously head of Nour's office in Israel. "Unless Abdelwahid signs a peace agreement, I cannot go back." —AFP



PHILADELPHIA: A truck displays a sign as protesters march in West Philadelphia on Tuesday to demonstrate against the fatal shooting of 27-year-old Walter Wallace, a black man, by police. —AFP

presence at key locations and deploying the looting response team, she added. 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. —AFP

a nursing home in April, and did not give his last name.

Located just north of the capital, suburban Montgomery County in the state of Maryland is one of the richest areas in the US but even in towns like Bethesda, there are stark gaps in wealth. Anne Dorse, deacon at St. John's Episcopal Church, which runs its own free meal program, said there were 65,000 people who were food insecure before the pandemic. The figure has now grown to 95,000. "As economic conditions do not improve, it's continuing to grow," she said.

At their meal program, the church's volunteers are receiving almost twice as many families in a given day than expected, and often run out of food in less than an hour. "Some people are really in need right now. One of them said, 'I never thought I would have to do this.' —AFP

News in brief

US sex cult leader jailed

NEW YORK: A "self-help" guru convicted of running a cult-like organization of sex slaves who were branded with his initials was sentenced to 120 years in prison by a New York judge Tuesday. The effective life sentence for Keith Raniere, 60, comes after he was found guilty of coercing women into having sex with him as the charismatic leader of Nxivm, a life-coaching group that attracted a coterie of rich and famous devotees. Followers signed up for \$5,000, five-day self-help courses, but some were then financially and sexually exploited and forced to follow a restrictive diet, as Raniere - known as "Vanguard" - exerted control, his six-week trial heard. He established a faction within the group called DOS, a pyramid structure in which the women were "slaves" and "Grand Master" Raniere sat at the top. The "slaves" were made to have sex with Raniere, hand over personal information and compromising photos - and some of the women were branded like cattle as other members held them down. —AFP

Bolivia's Morales calls for calm

LA PAZ: Exiled former Bolivian president Evo Morales called for calm on Tuesday after several hundred right-wing protesters demanded that a "military junta" replace socialist president-elect Luis Arce. On Monday, hundreds of demonstrators marched to military barracks in the eastern city of Santa Cruz - a right-wing stronghold - and called for "military help" to prevent the Movement for Socialism (MAS) party from regaining power following a year under conservative Jeanine Anez's interim government. Morales wrote on Twitter, however, that "the constitution is very clear on the role of the armed forces and the Bolivian police: We, as we always have done, will respect them as institutions." "We must all act calmly in a constitutional way." —AFP

Briton narrates 'torture' ordeal

DUBLIN: A British man convicted in France in his absence of a 1996 killing in Ireland said yesterday he is in "recovery" after Dublin blocked his extradition to serve a murder sentence. Last year, Ian Bailey was found guilty by a court in Paris of murdering Sophie Toscan du Plantier, the wife of film producer Daniel Toscan du Plantier. The 39-year-old's body was discovered at Christmas outside a holiday home in southwestern Ireland, beaten on the head with a concrete block and dressed in night clothes. Bailey has always denied any involvement and though arrested and questioned he was never charged in connection to the case in Ireland. On October 12, Ireland's High Court turned down a third extradition request by the French authorities and on Tuesday it was confirmed the decision will not be appealed. —AFP

Palaces to review slavery links

LONDON: The British charity that manages six royal palaces, including the Tower of London, has launched a review into their historical links to slavery. The Times said yesterday. The chief curator of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), which runs the regal sites across Britain, is leading the probe into their past relationship with the slave trade. Lucy Worsley, who is also a television historian, told the newspaper her review was overdue and the charity had a duty to make public any slavery connections. "We've been thinking really hard and planning all sorts of changes," she said. —AFP

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020

Virus gloom engulfs global economy: UN

More protests in Italy against virus curbs amid devastating economic impact

ROME: Italian police fired teargas at demonstrators protesting virus restrictions yesterday for the second night running, as dire figures on global tourism and investment highlighted the devastating economic impact of the pandemic. Thousands protested again in Italian cities with the cry of "freedom" punctuated by clashes with police, with many traders and employees fearing a second wave economic slump as much as the rising virus numbers.

The protesters are upset at the mandatory early closure of restaurants and other businesses. Some of the rallies were turned violent, particularly in Milan and Turin on Monday night, where angry youths threw petrol bombs and stones at police cars and smashed up shop fronts.



France eyes tougher restrictions

The clashes are "a black page" in Turin's history, said local police chief Giuseppe De Matteis, "which cannot be attributed to social discontent but... to orchestration by individuals dedicated to crime".

Late yesterday, the Italian government announced the release of five billion euros (\$5.9 billion) of funding for the worst hit professions, including restaurants, taxi drivers and live entertainment venues. However, unhappiness over the measures in Italy and elsewhere in Europe—once again the global epicenter of the pandemic—is palpable among the business owners and residents who are once again facing lengthy restrictions as economies struggle to recover.

The United Nations, which is battling its own outbreak, forcing it to halt all face-to-face meetings at its

New York headquarters, published a slew of data laying bare the travails of the global economy. While the World Tourism Organization said tourism had collapsed by 70 percent this year leading to a \$730-billion loss in revenues, the UN's trade body UNCTAD said foreign direct investment was likely to slump by 40 percent.

The grim economic outlook was compounded by continuing spikes in virus cases across Europe and beyond—Iran and Russia both registering record highs for daily cases yesterday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is self-isolating after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19, his ministry said yesterday. Worldwide more than 1.1 million have died from the virus since it emerged late last year in China. The United States is the worst-affected country with 225,739 deaths.

'Out of control'

In France, battling one of the worst outbreaks in the world, officials said they were facing "hard choices" as hospitals warned they were just days away from being overrun with patients. "The outbreak is out of control," said infectious disease specialist Gilles Pialoux, urging the government to lock down. "The economy can bounce back, but you don't bounce if intensive care fails."

France on Sunday recorded a grim record of 52,010 coronavirus infections in 24 hours and officials said Tuesday that tougher restrictions are looming to counter the alarming surge in Covid-19 cases as doctors warned many hospitals are just days away from being overrun with patients.

Media reports say President Emmanuel Macron, who was to address the nation again yesterday evening, might extend the hours of an existing curfew, possibly with a full lockdown on weekends, or order targeted lockdowns in the hardest-hit regions.

Europe's economy has been hard hit. Almost one-fifth of jittery eurozone banks tightened lending



ROME: A far right demonstrator holds an Italian flag during a protest over the restrictions put in place to curb the COVID-19 infections, in Rome on Tuesday. — Reuters

requirements in the third quarter, compared with just one percent in the previous period, a survey by the European Central Bank showed in an indication that the banks' faith in a recovery is faltering.

And the UN's revelations on the tourism slump were thrown into sharp relief as the airline industry body IATA said revenues are expected to be 46 percent lower in 2021 than the \$838 billion booked in the last pre-coronavirus year of 2019, in a marked worsening of its forecasts. Japanese airline ANA forecast a record \$4.87-billion net loss for the year, announcing it would retire aircraft and send hundreds of staff to work for other companies.

On the pharmaceutical front, Pfizer executives expressed measured optimism Tuesday over the prospect of providing a coronavirus vaccine in 2020.

Pfizer Chief Executive Albert Bourla said the drug giant could supply some 40 million doses in the United States in 2020 if clinical testing proceeds as expected and regulators approve a vaccine. Meanwhile Russia has applied to the World Health Organization for accelerated registration and prequalification of its Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine.

In contrast to the restrictions being imposed in Europe, residents of Australia's second-biggest city Melbourne were getting ready to party—with bars set to open fully for the first time since March after the city recorded two days with no new infections. "We have been waiting a long time," bar owner Greg Sanderson said, saying customers had booked in for a champagne celebration the moment it is permitted at 11:59 pm (12:59 GMT) on Tuesday. — AFP



LONDON: In this file photo, a British Airways Airbus A320 comes in over houses, to land at Heathrow airport in west London. — AFP

Britain's Heathrow Airport loses European crown

LONDON: London's Heathrow is no longer Europe's busiest airport, ceding its long-held crown to Paris during the pandemic and blaming government inaction for its passenger numbers plunging even more than rivals. Heathrow said Paris Charles de Gaulle had overtaken it as Europe's busiest airport, dealing a blow to Britain's global trade ambitions as the country's current relationship with the European Union is due to end in two-month time.

The airport criticized the UK government for being slow to introduce an airport testing regime to replace 14-day quarantine rules, and said the delays were causing additional harm to the economy.

Heathrow also cut its outlook for next year's pas-

senger numbers saying it now expected 37 million passengers, 41 percent lower than a June forecast, as tightening coronavirus restrictions crush hopes for a recovery in travel demand. CEO John Holland-Kaye said Heathrow's slide down the rankings—Amsterdam and Frankfurt could also overtake it based on passenger numbers—should spur the government into action.

"I hope the government will realize that if we sit on our hands then Britain will lose many of the things we take for granted like having the best connected airports in the world," he said in a telephone interview. Passenger numbers at Heathrow have plunged, down 84 percent in the three months ended September, pushing it to a 1.5 billion pound (\$1.95 billion) loss over the first nine months of the year.

Britain has said it will announce shorter quarantines based on COVID-19 testing to revitalize travel by the beginning of December, but Holland-Kaye said he was also hopeful that there would also soon be progress with a plan to allow quarantine-free UK-US travel. "There's at least a 50-50 chance," Holland-Kaye said when asked about the chances of this starting by late November. — Reuters

Nigeria's former minister proposed as WTO chief

GENEVA: A key group of WTO ambassadors has proposed Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to lead the World Trade Organization, trade sources told Reuters yesterday, clearing a path for her to become the first woman and African to head the global watchdog in its 25-year history. The decision, yet to be finalized, caps a more than four-month selection process involving intensive lobbying which saw her square up against South Korean trade minister Yoo Myung-hee in the final round.

The recommendation of former minister Okonjo-Iweala was made by three WTO ambassadors, the so-called "troika", after consulting with members in a series of closed-door meetings in Geneva as part of an intricate and secretive process that some have compared to a papal succession. The troika, led by



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

New Zealand's Ambassador David Walker, was due to make the formal recommendation to a closed-door meeting of heads of delegations later. It still needs to be approved by consensus at a meeting of the WTO's 164 members. Many members such as China and the United States have declined to name their preference publicly although some African, Caribbean and other states have voiced support for Okonjo-Iweala. The European Union endorsed Okonjo-Iweala on Oct 26. However, three sources following the contest said that Washington had privately indicated a preference

Sudan doubles fuel prices

KHARTOUM: Sudan doubled domestic fuel prices on Tuesday, a move that should help reduce a gaping budget deficit but is sure to anger many of the country's impoverished citizens. The government, which has long fixed fuel prices at some of the lowest levels in the world, raised the price at the pump of locally produced diesel to 46 Sudanese pounds (\$0.8364) a liter from the previous 23 pounds, acting energy and mining minister Khairy Abdel Rahman told a news conference on Tuesday evening.

It increased the price of petrol to 56 pounds from 28 pounds, he added. The Sudanese pound is officially pegged at 55 to the dollar, but on the black market on Tuesday one dollar fetched 235 pounds. Sudan suffers from severe fuel shortages, and long queues of cars can be seen in front of fuel stations in the capital Khartoum. Yet the cost of subsidizing fuel has weighed heavily on the state budget. Frustration over the queues to buy fuel and bread helped trigger the uprising that ousted long-time President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

The government will also permit importers to ratchet up the price of imported fuel far above that produced domestically, with importers being allowed to sell diesel for 106 pounds a liter and petrol for 120 pounds, the minister said. Until now imported fuel was sold at the same prices as local fuel. The minister added that the prices of imported fuel will be revised weekly. Sudan in April allowed private sector and banks to import fuel for transportation, mining and industry. — Reuters

for Yoo, although it is unknown whether it would block Ngozi. The leadership void was created after outgoing WTO chief Roberto Azevedo, from Brazil, stepped down a year early in August. The WTO is currently being steered by four deputies. Okonjo-Iweala, a 66-year-old former finance minister and World Bank managing director, will face considerable challenges with rival economies bickering amid rising tensions and protectionism during a coronavirus-induced trade plunge.

Her inbox will also feature an overhaul of the WTO's top appeals body - which US President Donald Trump's administration has brought to its knees by blocking judge appointments - and a major trade conference in 2021.

Okonjo-Iweala, a development expert, has branded herself a "do-er", saying she has the political clout to command influence in capitals. "I feel I can solve the problems. I'm a known reformer, not someone who talks about it. I've actually done it both at the World Bank and in my country," she told Reuters. Currently chair of the of GAVI vaccine alliance board, Okonjo-Iweala has also said the WTO should play a role in helping poorer countries access COVID-19 drugs and vaccines. — Reuters



Singapore said it would create 55,000 green jobs over the next decade in the environment and agriculture sectors, while South Korea in July pledged to spend \$95 billion on green projects to boost the economy.

Asia's 'green-collar' workers hope for jobs in COVID recovery

KUALA LUMPUR: A Singapore-based website tapping into the growing demand for environmentally careers in Asia is hoping it would be the link to "meaningful" employments as countries try to revive economies hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The "Green Collar" portal, which lists jobs from renewable energy to farming and climate change, is billed as the first such initiative in Southeast Asia, a disaster-prone region that often comes under threats from floods to typhoons.

It started when its co-founder Heng Li Seng, who runs a social enterprise in Singapore on reducing waste and coastal cleanups since 2017, began to receive growing number of enquiries about sustainability-related jobs.

When Singapore's trade-reliant economy plunged into a recession in July, forcing some companies to cut jobs, he thought it was time to act. "A lot of people are losing jobs and we figured if we want to help people to find jobs, it cannot be the same old jobs," the 32-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

"It has to be jobs of the future which provide an opportunity for longer-term meaningful impact," Heng said, adding that he hoped the initiative would bridge an information gap for job-seekers.

The portal currently has about 250 listings in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, with plans to gradually include job opportunities in other parts of the region. While the listings are free for now, Heng said he is looking to potentially charge eventually. "Putting (the green jobs) on a separate portal offers a higher chance that these jobs are taken up by qualified individuals," said Heng. "By listing these jobs in a clearly defined manner, we also help companies starting to understand what it takes to have a sustainable role because some companies are looking to their peers."

The demand has been partly boosted by countries around the world pledging to a so-called green recovery, with stimulus measures aimed at revitalizing their coronavirus-hit economies and fighting climate change at the same time. Before the pandemic, the United Nations' International Labour Organization (ILO) projected 14.2 million green jobs could be created in Asia by 2030 if the region moved towards measures to slow global warming, such as boosting the use of renewable energy or electric vehicles. — Reuters

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait reports 8% improvement in EBITDA, 2% in customer base in Q3 2020

Ooredoo Kuwait witnesses tremendous increase in digital user numbers and digital sales



KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announces its third quarter financial result for the year of 2020, taking pride of its ongoing improvements which allows the company to sustain its strong position in the market. Ooredoo Kuwait also witnessed a multi-fold increase in digital user numbers and digital sales backed up by an easy to use Ooredoo App. Furthermore, Ooredoo enabled students in Kuwait to access distance learning platforms using its strong network and took the lead in launching competitive "Back to School" offers & products to support the online education for all students.

Ooredoo expanded and upgraded the network in Kuwait ensuring an uninterrupted learning journey for students in every grade. With increased internet demand during current pandemic, Ooredoo stepped up to the plate by expanding network capacity specifically supporting businesses working-from-home where employees got used to the new normal of staying indoors. Ooredoo in Kuwait launched attractive 5G offers to enable customers to experience a whole digital lifestyle which resulted in a greatly diverse increase in the 5G customer base as well as the digital sales.

Ooredoo Kuwait revenues were KD 155.4 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 169.7 million for the same period in 2019 and EBITDA KD 40.6 million at 9M 2020 compared to KD 53.1 million for the same period in 2019. Ooredoo Kuwait offered special benefits for workers in the ministries and governmental organizations to support their efforts in fighting crisis and free 5GB data a day and unlimited local calls for all its customers, during the COVID-19 crisis.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors commented: "During this challenging period, we focused on providing uninterrupted connectivity for all our customers, while supporting our employees and the wider community through innovative services and access to data. In Kuwait, we became the first telecommunications company to launch an e-learning solution to support schools across the country and witnessed also a multi-fold increase in digital user numbers and digital sales backed up by an easy to use Ooredoo App. In Tunisia we supported hospitals and confinement centers with free data access throughout the pandemic.

As we refocused our efforts on expanding our digital customer acquisition and care channels, we maintained a healthy consolidated customer base of 25.3 million at the end of the first nine months of 2020 compared with 26.8 million for the same period last year. However, as with the telecom sector globally, our financial results for the first nine months of 2020 were impacted by the pandemic and resulting economic slowdown, which further deteriorated economic conditions in some of our markets of operations. NMTC reported revenues of KD 441.7 million during the first nine months of 2020, down 6 percent compared to the same period last year. The decline in revenue flowed through to our EBITDA and Net Profit.

Ooredoo Kuwait witnessed an increase of 8 percent improvement in EBITDA and a 2 percent in customer base in Q3 2020 compared to Q2 2020, reflecting a gradual recovery from the Covid-19 situation. In Kuwait, we continued to invest in our digital strategy and expanded our 5G offering to serve our customer base of 2.4 million users. In Tunisia our revenues grew 4 percent to KD 94.7 million for 9M 2020 compared to the same period last year, despite a challenging economic backdrop.

Our performance in Algeria continued to be impacted by challenging economic conditions, intense price competition and currency depreciation as the Algerian Dinar depreciated by 4 percent year on year.

In Palestine, our focus on efficiency and cost optimization continued to deliver results. EBITDA increased 19 percent during the first nine months of 2020 compared to the same period last year to KD 7.7 million. In Maldives we continued to develop our enterprise offering with the launch of Ooredoo Centribiz, a simplified, managed telephony solution for small enterprises."

Financial Highlights:

• Consolidated customer base decreased by 6 percent to 25.3 million in the nine months ended 30 September 2020, compared to 26.8 million for the same period in 2019.

• Revenues in dinar were impacted by lower sales in Kuwait (substantial support for local customers



Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani

free of charge), a decrease in Algerian revenue mainly due to the weak economic environment, currency devaluation, price competition and the impact of the Corona virus and related business limitations across all operations. Consequently, consolidated revenue decreased by 6 percent to KD 441.7 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2020, compared to KD 470.0 million for the same period in 2019.

• EBITDA decreased by 13 percent for the nine months ended 30 September 2020 to KD 151.6 million, compared to KD 174.4 million for the same period in 2019.

• Net profit attributable to NMTC was KD 5.9 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2020 compared with KD 23.5 million for the same period in 2019, due to the decline in EBITDA

• The consolidated earnings per share was 11.7 fils for the nine months ended 30 September 2020, compared to 46.9 fils per share earned for the same period last year.

Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Ooredoo - Kuwait operations

• Ooredoo Kuwait Revenues were KD 155.4 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 169.7 million for the same period in 2019 and EBITDA KD 40.6 million at 9M 2020 compared to KD 53.1 million for the same period in 2019. Ooredoo Kuwait offered special benefits for workers in the ministries and governmental organizations to support their efforts in fighting crisis and free 5GB data a day and unlimited local calls for all its customers, during the COVID-19 crisis. Ooredoo Kuwait also witnessed a multi-fold increase in digital user numbers and digital sales backed up by an easy to use Ooredoo App. Furthermore, Ooredoo enabled students in Kuwait to access distance learning platforms using its strong network and took the lead in launching competitive "Back to School" offers & products to support the online education for all students. Ooredoo expanded and upgraded the network in Kuwait ensuring an uninterrupted learning journey for students in every grade. With increased internet demand during current pandemic, Ooredoo stepped up to the plate by expanding network capacity specifically supporting businesses working-from-home where employees got used to the new normal of staying indoors. Ooredoo in Kuwait launched attractive 5G offers to enable customers to experience a whole digital lifestyle which resulted in a greatly diverse increase in the 5G customer base as well as the digital sales.

Ooredoo - Tunisia

Ooredoo's customer base in Tunisia decreased to 8.8 million customers at 9M 2020 (9M 2019 9.1 million). Revenues increased by 4 percent to reach KD 94.7 million at 9M 2020 compared to KD 91.5 million for the same period in 2019. EBITDA was KD 41.6 million at 9M 2020 compared to KD 43.7 million for the same period in 2019.

Ooredoo - Algeria

Customer base in Algeria decreased to 12.3 million at 9M 2020 compared to 13.4 million for the same period in 2019. Business in Algeria was negatively impacted by the devaluation of the Algerian dinar, a weak economic environment and intense price competition. Consequently, revenues decreased to KD 142.1 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 157.3 million for the same period in 2019. EBITDA was KD 48.5 million at 9M 2020, down from KD 55.3 million for the same period in 2019. Algerian dinar depreciated by 4 percent year on year.

Mohammed Al-Thani is new chairman of Ooredoo Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, announced the appointment of Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ooredoo Kuwait, as of 27 October 2020.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani succeeds Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, who held the position of Ooredoo Group Chief Executive Officer since November 2015. Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani expressed his appreciation for the distinguished efforts made by Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani during his tenure as Chief Executive Officer in Ooredoo Kuwait from 2014 until early this year, during which he led the company towards a journey full of countless accomplishments and success, in which he was a major contributor in increasing the company's market share in the country. In the same vein, Sheikh Saud Al-Thani expressed his gratitude and high confidence in Sheikh Mohammed's experience and his great role in the development plan and the enhancement of the company's future strategy.

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani will carry out the success journey that he started in Kuwait, as it falls on his list of priorities to crystallize the company's development strategy and activate the operational plans for the coming years, based on his experience that extends to more than 16 years in the field of communications,



Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani

digital transformation, accounting and finance. Indeed, Sheikh Mohammed has held many positions at Ooredoo since joining the company in 2009, the last of which was the position of the CEO of Ooredoo Kuwait which he held since 2014, and previously held the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ooredoo Algeria. Currently, he is also Ooredoo's Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Qatar since March 2020, in addition to the position of Indosat Ooredoo's Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani holds a master's degree in finance and accounting from the University of Cardiff, United Kingdom, and a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Qatar University.

Ooredoo - Palestine

Customer base in Palestine increased by 3 percent to reach 1.3 million customers at 9M 2020. Revenue increased by 4 percent to KD 23.1 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 22.2 million for the same period in 2019. EBITDA was strong, increasing 19 percent to KD 7.7 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 6.5 million for the same period in 2019, driven by operational efficiencies across the business.

Ooredoo - Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives reported a 10 percent decrease in revenues to KD 26.3 million at 9M 2020, compared to KD 29.3 million for the same period in 2019. EBITDA was KD 13.1 million at 9M 2020 compared to KD 16.0 million for the same period in 2019. Ooredoo Maldives now serves a total of 35.4k customers.

Enjoy the Internet

Financial Results Nine Months 2020

The Board of Directors of National Mobile Telecommunication Company K.S.C.P ("Ooredoo") is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company achieved a consolidated Net Profit attributable to shareholders of **KD 5.9 million**, translating to an earnings per share of **11.7 fils** for the nine months of 2020. The revenue for the nine months of 2020 reached to **KD 441.7 million**.

The Board of Directors takes this opportunity to express their gratitude and appreciation to NMTC (Ooredoo) esteemed shareholders, our valued customers and to all our employees for their continuous efforts during the past months.

Customer Base	Revenue	Net Profit to NMTC
25.3 Million Customers	441.7 KD Million	5.9 KD Million

Compared to the previous quarter, reflecting gradual recovery from the COVID-19 situation:

+2% Customer Base	+5% Revenue	+8% EBITDA
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Financial Highlights

	Quarterly Analysis			Nine Months Analysis		
	Q3 2020	Q3 2019	% change	9M 2020	9M 2019	% change
Consolidated Revenue (KWD m)	147.6	159.7	-8%	441.7	470.0	-6%
EBITDA (KWD m)	52.6	58.5	-10%	151.6	174.4	-13%
EBITDA margin (%)	36%	37%	-	34%	37%	-
Net Profit attributable to NMTC (KWD m)	4.2	6.2	-32%	5.9	23.5	-75%
Consolidated Customers (m)	25.3	26.8	-6%	25.3	26.8	-6%

Business

Berlin's ill-fated new airport is finally ready for take-off

Project has been dogged by one failure after another since its start

BERLIN: Nine years late and eye-wateringly over budget, the Berlin region's new international airport will finally open on Saturday—in the middle of a global pandemic that has crippled air travel.

"We are ready for take-off!" insists the management team at the new Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER), set to replace the German capital's ageing Tegel and Schoenefeld airports.

But the mood is one of relief rather than celebration. Ever since construction began on BER in 2006, the project has been dogged by one failure after another, becoming a financial black hole and a national laughing stock—not exactly an example of German efficiency. The airport, located in the south-east of the capital, was originally due to open in 2011. Now it is opening its doors in the middle of the worst crisis the aviation industry has ever seen, as Covid-19 restrictions continue to suffocate air travel. And as if that were not enough, there's also the climate crisis: pressure group Extinction Rebellion is planning acts of "civil disobedience" on the opening day to protest against the impact of aviation on global warming.



Opening amid pandemic that crippled air travel

'Not have a party'

Against that backdrop, "We will simply open, we will not have a party," according to Engelbert Luetke Daldrup, president of the airport's management company, Lufthansa and EasyJet will be the first two airlines to touch down on the tarmac of what will be Germany's third-largest airport, after Frankfurt and Munich.

A few days before the opening, around 200 staff were busy disinfecting the 360,000-square-

metre Terminal 1. Some 100 alcoholic hand gel dispensers have been installed and robot vacuum cleaners hum over the floors.

The "Magic Carpet", a huge, bright red artwork by American artist Pae White suspended from the ceiling, brings a touch of color to the check-in hall. The airport has been designed to welcome 27 million passengers a year, but in November it will see only 20 percent of usual air traffic thanks to the pandemic.

Terminal 2 won't open until spring 2021. About 15 shops and restaurants out of just over 100 will remain shut, while the rest will be forced to keep "limited opening hours" because of low traffic through the airport, a spokesman told AFP. None of this good news for BER, initially projected to cost 1.7 billion euros (\$2 billion) but already past the 6.5-billion-euro mark (\$7.6 billion).

The airport has been granted 300 million euros (\$353 billion) in state aid to help safeguard the jobs of the 20,000 people who will eventually work there until the end of 2020.

Job losses

The health crisis is already having an impact on employment at the hub: at the end of July, Berlin's airports announced the loss of 400 jobs out of a total of 2,100. EasyJet has said it will cut 418 jobs in the German capital, and Europe's leading airline Lufthansa, Germany's flagship carrier, is to shed 30,000 jobs worldwide. "We fear even greater job losses in the future," a spokesman for the Verdi union said. Luetke Daldrup hopes the situation will improve "from the spring onwards".



BERLIN: An elevated view shows the "BER Terminal 5" of the Berlin's airport "Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt" (BER) after a ceremony to rename the former Schoenefeld airport to "BER Terminal 5" ahead of the opening of Berlin's airport. —AFP

But the International Air Transport Association (IATA) does not expect global air traffic to reach pre-crisis levels until 2024. In the state of Brandenburg, which surrounds Berlin, local leaders remain optimistic about the prospects for development. "No hotel has so far postponed its investment plans because of the pandemic," insists Olaf Luecke, president of the local branch of Germany's hotel and catering trade union (DEHOGA).

Construction work began in September on

two 14,000-square-metre (150,000-square-foot) hotel complexes, due to open in 2022. And in anticipation of the opening of BER, US electric-car giant Tesla has chosen Brandenburg as the location of its first European factory, which is set to employ 40,000 people. "Having new, modern infrastructure will be beneficial in any case, despite the pandemic," according to Carsten Broenstrup of the state employers' association. But "if there is not a vaccine soon, it will be a very big problem," he admits. —AFP

News in brief

Traton, Hino in truck venture

FRANKFURT: Volkswagen truck unit Traton and Toyota's commercial vehicles arm Hino Motors said yesterday they would create a joint venture to develop electric trucks as manufacturers pivot to the growing e-vehicle market. Traton and Hino will develop battery-electric and fuel-cell trucks, alongside components and common software and interfaces, the companies said in a joint statement. Like the entire Volkswagen group, Traton has made electrification one of its strategic priorities, as it races to comply with EU carbon emissions goals.

France's PSA sales hold up

PARIS: French auto giant PSA reported third quarter sales yesterday of 15.5 billion euros, down just 0.8 percent despite massive disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. PSA, which groups the Peugeot, Citroen and Opel brands, said that while it had sold fewer cars in the three months to September it had improved profitability. Over the first half of the year, PSA saw sales plunge 34.5 percent to 25.1 billion euros, with net profit down 67.5 percent to 595 million euros. —AFP

Deutsche Bank posts surprise profit

FRANKFURT: Deutsche Bank yesterday swung to a surprise net profit in the third quarter as it shook off losses driven by the coronavirus pandemic and ploughed on with a wide-ranging restructuring. Germany's largest lender posted a net profit of 182 million euros (\$214 million), compared with a loss of 942 million euros in the same period of the previous year. The results beat expectations for a loss of 82 million euros, based on a survey by FactSet, as Deutsche Bank started to move on from years of poor management and overblown investment banking ambitions with a transformation plan that launched last year. —AFP

Trump or Biden's big challenge: Struggling Americans

WASHINGTON: The winner of the race for the White House will face a generation of low-to-middle income Americans struggling to get back to work because of a health crisis not seen in more than 100 years. Whether it's President Donald Trump or Democratic challenger and former Vice President Joe Biden, the reality is grim: about half of the 22 million who lost their jobs during the pandemic are still out of work. New hiring is slowing, dimming prospects for the low-wage workers hit hardest by job losses. Infections of the virus that killed more than 225,000 Americans are rising to new records. Hotels, transportation companies and food providers warn that more layoffs are coming, and the government aid that helped many pay the bills is long gone.

Securing a future for a vast, growing underclass "is the most important challenge America faces over the next few years, 10 years, 20 years," said Gene Ludwig, a former comptroller of the currency under President Bill Clinton and author of "The Vanishing American Dream," a book about the economic challenges facing lower and middle income Americans. —Reuters

Sony first-half net profit doubles, forecast revised up

TOKYO: Sony yesterday said net profit doubled in the April-September period and revised up its full-year forecast, citing growth in key sectors including gaming, which has been boosted by coronavirus lockdowns worldwide. The results beat analyst expectations and came as the Japanese tech giant gears up to launch its much-anticipated PlayStation 5 console next month, setting up a holiday season head-to-head with the new Xbox.

The gaming sector has been one of the few beneficiaries of the pandemic, with people forced indoors sending title downloads and streaming soaring. Sony said net profit leaped 103.8 percent to 692.89 billion yen (\$6.65 billion) for the first half, and forecast annual net profits of 800 billion yen up from an earlier 510 billion yen forecast. The first-half results were

due in part to financial factors, including positive tax benefits, but also reflected a strong performance in games and network services, music streaming and financial services.

"Enhanced restrictions on exports to China by the US government are negatively impacting our business in the imaging and sensing sector, while our gaming segment is benefiting from demand for stay-at-home activities," Sony's Chief Financial Officer Hiroko Totoki told reporters.

Game-playing hours among PlayStation users peaked in April, but demand for games "will continue through the last half of the year", he added. Strong performance in the game and music sectors also drove the upwards revision in the full-year net profit forecast, with Sony saying it was seeing "higher-than-expected sales of games software, primarily add-on content" and an increase in music-streaming revenues.

It was not all good news, however, with decreasing sales of sensors for mobile products only partially offset



TOKYO: Sony PlayStation 4 gaming items are on display for sale at a store in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

by an increase in sales of sensors for digital cameras.

The firm's movie unit has also struggled as the pandemic keeps cinemas around the world shuttered and delays new releases. "There are signs of

recovery, but theatres are still closed in major US cities," Totoki said. "It's possible revenue recovery will be delayed because of fierce competition caused by busy movie release schedules even after movie theatres reopen." —AFP

Late Samsung chief laid to rest

SEOUL: South Korea's richest and most powerful industrialist, Lee Kun-Hee, who turned Samsung Electronics into one of the world's biggest tech companies, was buried yesterday following his death at the weekend. Lee died at the age of 78 on Sunday, six years after being left bedridden by a heart attack.

Under his leadership, Samsung became the world's largest producer of smartphones and memory chips, and the firm's overall turnover today is equivalent to a fifth of South Korea's gross domestic product. It is by far the largest of the chaebols, the sprawling family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in the country.

As well as his son and heir Lee Jae-yong, the Samsung Electronics vice-chairman, who has been the group's de facto leader since his father was incapacitated, several chaebol chiefs gathered at the Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, where the four-day funeral rites

were held. They included Lee's sister Lee Myung-hee, who is chairwoman of the Shinsegae retail group, and nephew Lee Jae-hyun, who heads the entertainment and food service conglomerate CJ Group, according to reports, along with the chairman of the Hyundai Motor group, Chung Euisun.

"I have been to many countries in the world, but I have never seen a man like him who did better than his father," a childhood friend said in a eulogy, according to reports. Afterwards a stretch Lincoln hearse carrying his coffin and an LED light display reading "May the soul of the deceased rest in peace" emerged slowly and passed by around 100 reporters.

His eldest daughter Lee Boo-jin, the chief executive of Hotel Shilla, was seen sobbing on board a following bus. The cortege passed by locations including Lee's home and office in Seoul, and Samsung Electronics' chip complex in Hwaseong, south of the capital, where employees stood holding chrysanthemums—a flower of mourning in Korean culture—to pay their respects.

"We will remember your footsteps



SEOUL: Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong (right), his mother Hong Ra-hee (center) and his sister Lee Boo-jin (left), president and chief executive of Hotel Shilla, arrive to attend a funeral ceremony of the late Samsung Electronics chairman Lee Kun-Hee at Samsung Medical Center in Seoul yesterday. —AFP

forever," read a banner hung at one entrance, Yonhap news agency reported, while some workers shed tears. Samsung flags have been flying at half-mast on company buildings. Lee was laid to rest at a family grave site in Suwon where the

late patriarch's grandparents are buried. The chaebols drove South Korea's transformation from war-ravaged ruin to the world's 12th-largest economy, but have long been accused of murky political ties and stifling competition. —AFP

TikTok moves into e-commerce with Shopify alliance

OTTAWA: Canadian e-commerce company Shopify announced Tuesday a partnership with TikTok that will allow its more than one million online retailers to hype their wares on the teen-centric platform for short-form videos.

The deal comes amid scrutiny of the China-based app and a pending court hearing on TikTok's future in the United States, where it

reaches more than 100 million users monthly.

"We're thrilled to be the first partner to welcome TikTok to the world of commerce, particularly right now, as our merchants prepare for a busy online holiday shopping season," Shopify vice president Satish Kanwar said in a statement. Shopify hosts e-stores for mostly small- and medium-sized businesses and in the eyes of many merchants has emerged as an alternative to Amazon's online marketplace.

Its partnership with TikTok, it said, will allow TikTok users to simply click on shoppable video ads to buy products from Shopify merchants. The two companies said they will also "collaborate to test new commerce features over the coming months."

US President Donald Trump's administration has insisted on the need to ban TikTok over national

security concerns. It claims TikTok has links to the Chinese government through its parent firm ByteDance. TikTok has repeatedly defended itself against allegations of data transfers to the Chinese government.

A US court is to consider next month whether to allow the government to effectively ban its use in the United States. The stakes are high given that the TikTok mobile app has been downloaded about 175 million times in the US and more than a billion times around the world, offering everything from make-up tutorials to dance routines and cookery tips. Meantime, several potential American suitors have come forward looking to buy a stake in TikTok, including Silicon Valley giant Oracle and Walmart. But they appear to be in limbo. —AFP

Classifieds

Thursday, October 29, 2020

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 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 with speed of 06 - 22 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 28/10/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	33 °C	22 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	36 °C	16 °C			
ABDALY	35 °C	16 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	36 °C	19 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	30 °C	25 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWAISIB	34 °C	18 °C			
WAFRA	36 °C	16 °C			
SALMY	34 °C	16 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	10/29	Rather hot and some high clouds will appear	36 °C	15 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h
Friday	10/30	Rather hot	35 °C	15 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h
Saturday	10/31	Rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	35 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Sunday	11/01	Rather hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	35 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:38
Sunrise	05:58
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:42
Sunset	17:06
Isha	18:23

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	36 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	70 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Shaikh Hassan Bathusha Azhikottayil Kunhimon**, holder of Indian passport no. M5457545 issued at Kuwait on 03.03.2015 hereby change my name to Shaikh Hassan Bathusha. (C 5808) 29-10-2020

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

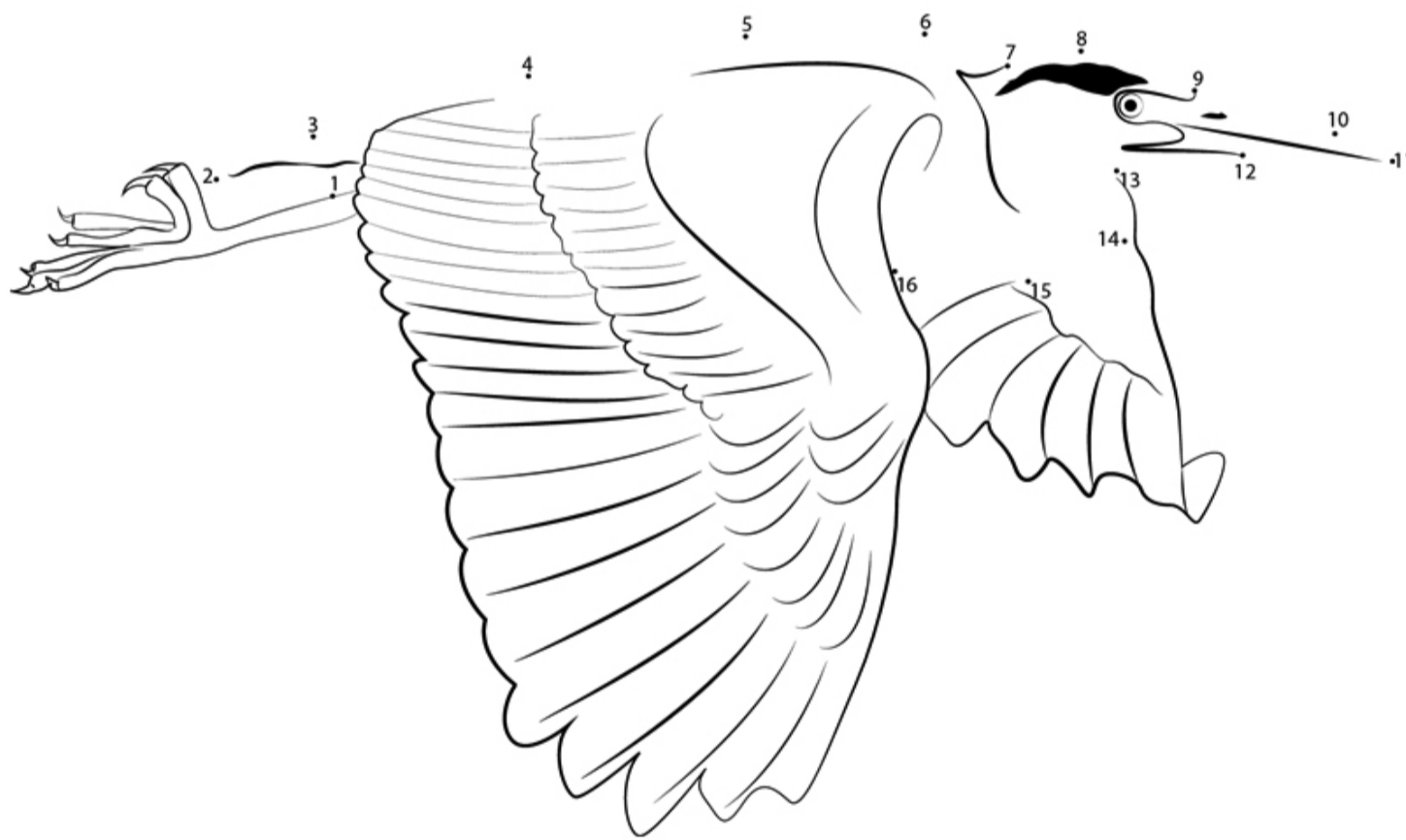


Dragon Word Search

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| ADVENTURE | DREAM | MYSTICAL |
| AWE | FIRE | MYTH |
| BEHEMOTH | FLYING | REPTILE |
| CASTLE | GIANT | SCALES |
| CAVE | GREEN | SORCERER |
| CLAWS | HOWL | SPELL |
| COLOSSAL | KINGDOM | TAIL |
| CONQUER | LEGEND | TREASURE |
| CUNNING | MAGICAL | VANISH |
| CURSE | MEDIEVAL | WINGS |
| DRAGON | MONSTER | WRINKLED |



Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)
 Today you could complete a creative project that you've been working on for a while, Aries. You will be more than happy with the results and inspired to move on to bigger and better things. You will feel strong enough to take on just about any type of project. It's possible that you might get started on the next one right away. Don't wear yourself out!

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
 Your time finally seems to be your own, Cancer. There are probably no rush jobs to finish, no urgent phone calls to make, and no one looking over your shoulder. This causes a significant release of stress, and you're better able than usual to focus on what you have in front of you. In the evening, relax at home, order delivery, and watch a movie.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
 A community issue may come up today concerning you and your neighbors, Libra. Perhaps a virtual meeting will be held. Something requires change in your neighborhood, and most of you are probably firmly united behind it. This bodes well for your future, so you will probably feel good about the entire situation after the gathering breaks up. Onward and upward!

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
 Decisions regarding investments, savings, or other financial matters might need attention today, Capricorn. Don't panic. You're in the right frame of mind for this. Your business sense is at an all-time high, as is your ability to focus on the task at hand. Intuition plays a strong role. Even if you don't feel like it, it's important to get this done. Tomorrow you might not be quite as focused as you are today.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
 Things seem to be returning to normal after the hectic pace of late, Taurus. Life has slowed down, and the energy is lower but more peaceful. There's also no rush to get anything done. The deadlines can be postponed to another day. You might take whatever spare time you have to just lie back and enjoy the quiet. Don't feel guilty. You can work hard again tomorrow!

Leo (July 23-August 22)
 A love relationship seems more stable than usual today, Leo. The security wraps itself around you like a blanket as you consider the events leading up to this new sense of commitment. You and your partner may spend the evening doing nothing more than being together, which feels great! Mark this day in your memory so you can recall it whenever your insecurities get the better of you.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
 A new opportunity could come your way today, Scorpio. There's no promise or guarantee, but there is an indication that if you devote yourself thoroughly, your chances of progress are pretty good over the next month for any activity that you begin today. Keep up the good work and keep smiling! The latter action is as important as the former.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)
 Have you and a friend been discussing the possibility of going into business together? If so, Aquarius, the two of you might want to have some serious discussions now about the nature of the business, how it should be structured, and what the financial arrangements may be. You're both sharp enough to see both the promise and the downside of your enterprise. Get some paper and pens and go to it!

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
 Have you been waiting for a letter or call from a business or romantic partner for a long time, Gemini? If so, you will probably receive it today. Don't be surprised if it's long! News and useful information could be exchanged. You will feel energized and determined once the communication is completed. The partnership's future goals will be more strictly defined as a result.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)
 Today you may not feel much like working, and you might even decide to play hooky from your responsibilities, Virgo. If you have nothing urgent to do, consider indulging this whim. Relax with a good book and a cup of tea. Watch a favorite movie. Take a long walk in a beautiful park. In the evening, cuddle with a love partner. Savor the day's gentle energy.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
 Have you wanted to take a certain online course or workshop, Sagittarius? If so, this is a good day to consider all the details, make some phone calls, or enroll. As far as your educational goals go, you're very focused. You're apt to stick with any program you decide to tackle. You're also apt to learn more quickly and retain more. Think about it, read the pertinent literature, then make some calls!

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
 Has a certain project been a drag for you lately, Pisces? Don't be surprised if today you get your second wind. You're looking at your tasks in a practical manner, your interest in them is up, and you're able to accomplish them quickly and efficiently with minimal stress. Relationships should also be going well. Make the most of this while you can!

Korean immigrant drama 'Minari' pushes language, acting barriers

A critically acclaimed family drama about Korean immigrants in the US is being touted as an Oscar contender after "Parasite" broke down barriers to non-English-language movies winning the highest-profile accolades. Based on Korean-American director Lee Isaac Chung's own experiences growing up in rural America in the 1980s, "Minari" won both the audience and grand jury prizes for US dramas at this year's Sundance Film Festival. After a sold-out Asian premiere last week at the Busan film festival, Asia's largest, Hollywood trade outlet Variety reported the film's stars-including Korean-American actor Steven Yeun-will campaign for acting categories at the Academy Awards.

But the critical success of "Minari" comes with Asian-American experience still vastly underrepresented in Hollywood, which has generally preferred to focus on Americans' experiences of Asia, particularly in war, or Asian-set fantasies such as "Mulan". The slew of awards for "Parasite" represented a nod towards international diversity, said Brian Hu, a film professor at San Diego State University, "not



This undated handout photo shows Korean-American director Lee Isaac Chung, director of THE Korean immigrant drama "Minari", posing for a photo.— AFP photos

American diversity, which still requires a lot more work". "It would be hugely historical for a Korean American film to be nominated" for the Oscars, he told AFP. Despite their shared Korean roots, the two movies are very different: "Minari" is an American film shot almost entirely in Korean, featuring Asian-American experiences, while "Parasite," a dark parable about the gulf between rich and poor in Seoul, was solely a South Korean production.

Childhood revisited
"Minari" stars Yeun-best known for his role in the "Walking Dead" zombie television series-as Jacob, a young, Korean-born father who moves his family to an all-white town in rural Arkansas in pursuit of a better life. He wants to start his own farm but his wife is skeptical and feels isolated, while their seven-year-old son, David-a character inspired by director Chung's younger self-finds himself increasingly torn between two cultures. Yeun is renowned for his bilingual talent, receiving a best supporting actor prize from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association for his Korean-language performance in the acclaimed thriller, "Burning". In "Minari", Yeun often speaks Konglish, a style of sometimes-broken English used by Korean speakers, for which he said he channeled his own immigrant parents who took him to the US when he was five. The film reflected his own experience growing up as an immigrant in Michigan, he said, especially "this feeling of belonging nowhere, just caught in between the gaps of places". "You're not Korean. You are not American. You kind of just fit in this weird



This undated handout photo obtained from the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan on Wednesday shows Korean-American actor Steven Yeun (right-red cap) in a scene from Korean immigrant drama "Minari".

space where you don't feel grounded anywhere," he told an online press conference at the Busan festival. "It reminds me of my family and why we, you know, held each other so tight because that's all we really had."

'Stereotypical representations'

The four Oscars for "Parasite" included Best Picture and Best Director, but nominations for any of the "Minari" actors would be the first for any Korean in the per-

formance categories at the Academy Awards. Film experts and activists say there has been very limited Asian-American presence in Hollywood, with many Asian roles even played by white actors. In one notorious example of "yellowface", Luise Rainer won the 1937 Best Actress Oscar for playing a Chinese character in "The Good Earth". More recently, the casting of Emma Stone as a part-Hawaiian, part-Chinese character in 2015's "Aloha" sparked controversy. "Talented Asian and Asian-American actors have existed since the silent film era," said Terry K Park, a lecturer in Asian American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. "But they haven't been given the same opportunities to inhabit even stereotypical representations of their own identities, let alone complex ones." But films like "Parasite" and "Minari" could open doors to other subtitled movies and actors of Asian descent, experts say. It was "extremely curious that Hollywood, located in LA, with a significant presence of Asian Americans, so long denied their very existence," said John Lie, a sociology professor at the University of California, Berkeley. The mainstream US "dream factory" clung on to "an older vision of America long after it was relevant", he said, while cable TV dramas have become "not only more interesting but also more multiethnic". "So Hollywood is belatedly catching up." — AFP

'PIONEER' OCTOGENARIAN VIETNAMESE ARTIST GETS FIRST SOLO EXHIBIT

Aged almost 90, Vietnamese artist Mong Bich picks a spot on the tiled floor of her favorite room, checks the light and sits down to paint. A "pioneer" who has inspired generations of women artists in Vietnam, Bich has won plaudits overseas and she has a watercolour in the British Museum's collection. But for years she has been overlooked in her home country-and has had to wait until this month for her first solo exhibition.

"Painting is like eating rice for me-I have to eat rice and I have

sell my work so I did not see the point. My paintings are my memories," she said ahead of this month's opening in the capital. Specializing in silk paintings of daily life and ordinary people-women in particular-Bich ploughed a lonely furrow during years of war against the United States, when artists were steered towards drawing soldiers or frontline workers. "Portraits of individuals were not appreciated at that time, but they were Mong Bich's forte," said Phan Cam Thuong, an eminent art critic and researcher.



Vietnamese artist Mong Bich painting at her house.

They lived in desperate poverty while she raised their two children. Needing to earn a living, in 1956 she enrolled in one of the first classes of the newly

and a mother breastfeeding a baby, a drawing considered so scandalous it was initially removed from an exhibition in 1960. "I paint on my own, in my style," she said. "Some may like my paintings, some not-I really don't care."

Despite everything she had to deal with, her "pioneer spirit" shone through, and she persevered with her work, said Nora Taylor, professor of South and Southeast Asian art history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. "I think many women subsequently looked up to her." Bich's watercolour portrait of an elderly woman seated on the floor won first prize in 1993 at the Vietnam Fine Arts Association Annual Exhibition, but fame did not follow. The lack of recognition is due to "a kind of erasure of women's contributions in Vietnam's art history, said Taylor, as happened across much of the world.

But that is finally changing, and there is growing acknowledgement that Bich's life, and her paintings, are testimony to what many went through in 20th century Vietnam. "In many ways, her story is Vietnam's story. She did not have an easy life," said Thierry Vergon, director of L'Espace, the French cultural center that hosted the Hanoi exhibition. "There was a lot of pain, a lot of death but she kept going." For Bich, her work has always been a way of coping with whatever life threw at her. "Happiness was when I could make a sketch or a painting," she said. "That was my way of dealing with life's difficulties." — AFP



A visitor's shadow cast on a wall displaying paintings by 89-year-old Vietnamese artist Mong Bich.



Visitor looking at a painting by 89-year-old Vietnamese artist Mong Bich.



Visitor looking at a painting by 89-year-old Vietnamese artist Mong Bich.



89-year-old Vietnamese artist Mong Bich holding a painting inside her house in Bac Ninh province.



This photograph shows 89-year-old Vietnamese artist Mong Bich addressing guests during the opening of her first solo exhibition at the French Cultural Centre in Hanoi. — AFP photos

to paint," Bich told AFP at her home on the outskirts of Hanoi, where she still works for up to eight hours a day. At first, she had hesitated over holding a solo show, but her children encouraged it. "I do not want to

'Painting is happiness'

Born in 1931 during the French colonial era, Bich spent decades caring for her husband, a violinist and independence fighter who was wounded fighting French forces in Laos.

opened Vietnam College of Art in Hanoi and took a job drawing propaganda cartoons for a newspaper. But she never stopped sketching what she saw on the streets-a poor, old woman curled up on the floor

'Assassin's Creed' takes to Netflix in Ubisoft alliance

Video game titan Ubisoft on Tuesday announced a deal with Netflix to create shows based on its hit "Assassin's Creed" franchise. The first project by the French-based video game group and the leading television streaming service is a series intended to be "an epic, genre-bending live action adaptation" of the game franchise, according to the companies. Word of the

alliance comes ahead of the November 10 release of the latest installment of the game, "Assassin's Creed: Valhalla" that sets play in a time of Vikings. The agreement opens the door for Netflix and Ubisoft to create live action, animated, and anime series spinning off Assassin's Creed game story lines.

"We're excited to partner with Ubisoft and bring to life the rich, multilayered storytelling that Assassin's Creed is beloved for," said Netflix vice president of original series Peter Friedlander. "We are committed to carefully crafting epic and thrilling entertainment based on this distinct (intellectual property)." The action role playing games are known for historical fiction, setting adventures at significant points in time such as the Crusades and the

Renaissance as well as the French and American revolutions. Assassin's Creed protagonists have included a Renaissance Italian, a 12th-Century Syrian, a pirate, and a Native American during the colonial period.

The connecting thread in the games is shared ancestry with an assassin part of a group battling oppressive forces. Since its launch in 2007, the Assassin's Creed series has sold more than 155 million games worldwide to rank among top selling franchises, according to Ubisoft. A team at Ubisoft is devoted to spreading its hit game franchises to other modes of entertainment. "We're thrilled to create an Assassin's Creed series with Netflix and we look forward to developing the next saga in the Assassin's Creed universe," said

Ubisoft film and television unit head Jason Altman.

Ubisoft has expanded the franchise into books and film. An Assassin's Creed film starring Michael Fassbender released four years ago met with mediocre reviews and box-office results. Ubisoft also announced Tuesday deals to make its online subscription service available at cloud game platforms Luna and Stadia fielded, respectively, by Amazon and Google. Ubisoft+ service will begin testing meshing with Luna in the US next month and with Stadia by the end of this year, according to the company. Ubisoft+ offerings will include new releases such as Assassin's Creed: Valhalla. — AFP



In this file photo Creative Director at Ubisoft Jean Guesdon introduces 'Assassin's Creed: Origins' during the Microsoft Xbox E3 briefing at the Galen Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Fashion is on display during the press preview for The Costume Institute's exhibition "About Time: Fashion and Duration", which will be on view from today to February 7, 2021 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. — AFP photos

**KARDASHIAN
SLAMMED FOR 'TONE
DEAF' 40TH BIRTHDAY
TROPICAL GETAWAY**

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian faced a backlash Tuesday after chartering a private jet to fly her entourage to a remote tropical island for lavish 40th birthday celebrations during the Covid pandemic. Kardashian and her "closest inner circle" spent last week dancing, kayaking and swimming with whales on a private isle where they could "pretend things were normal just for a brief moment in time," she tweeted. The trip took the celebrities, including sisters Khloe and Kourtney and half-sister Kendall Jenner, some 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) from Los Angeles to Tahiti on board a Boeing 777, according to E! and TMZ. Husband Kanye West reportedly joined the party midway through the week. "Before COVID, I don't think any of us truly appreciated what a simple luxury it was to be able to travel and be together with family and friends in a safe environment," she wrote.



In this file photo taken US media personality Kim Kardashian West attends the WSJ Magazine 2019 Innovator Awards at MOMA in New York City. — AFP

But the glamorous festivities-and Kardashian's posts trumpeting them-were immediately condemned as "distastefully tone deaf" by social media users at a time when coronavirus has killed more than 226,000 Americans, and California remains under a non-essential travel ban. "Cool, people have had to say goodbye to loved ones over the phone while they died alone in a hospital. but neat trip to post all over social media while the world suffers. so humble and so down to earth, truly," tweeted @JBomb11, in a post swiftly drawing 11,000 "likes." "Are you that insensitive you don't realize this is not what the majority of people during the worst covid spike yet want to hear? People are going to food banks not private islands," posted British musician Peter Frampton. Kardashian said her guests had been asked to quarantine for two weeks before departure, and had undergone multiple "health screens." She is not the first celebrity to face the wrath of social media users for flaunting their privilege during the Covid-19 pandemic. In March, as the US followed much of the world into lockdown, Hollywood stars led by Gal Gadot ("Wonder Woman") were ridiculed for a video montage of themselves singing "Imagine" from their sprawling homes. The video, intended to provide hope, was slammed as being out of touch with the lives of everyday people. — AFP

**FASHION'S PAST AND PRESENT
COMMUNE AT NEW YORK'S MET**

Whether by repetition, rupture or reinvention, fashion has always maintained a complex relationship to time, a link New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art is exploring in a new exhibition opening today. The show, delayed for months by the pandemic, was also tweaked last minute to take into account the Black Lives Matter movement that galvanized the nation this summer. Normally the city's social event of the year, 2020's Met Gala organized by Vogue Editor-In-Chief Anna Wintour—which usually opens the costume exhibit—was cancelled, like every major indoor gathering since mid-March.



Fashion revisiting itself

The concept creates an ongoing dialogue between older pieces that date back as far as the 1870s-when the Met was founded-and more recent items from the 1960s and beyond. Elements common in 1870s-era wardrobes are seen again in the work of modern designers considered particularly innovative, including Alexander McQueen, Yohji Yamamoto and John Galiano. Certain cuts, buttons, sequins, embroidery or lacing-formerly signs of opulence and particular social status-are now tools of novelty with purely aesthetic significance.

"Fashion is always for the movement, always about this succession of time and notions of, novelty and ephemerality and sometimes obsolescence and that's one

aspect of time," Bolton said. "But at the same time fashion looks back on itself often." With shorter skirts and dresses and cuts that flow rather than restrict, modern designers give a contemporary edge to older pieces, like the iconic Chanel jacket. A mini-skirt pairing gives the piece a facelift, thanks to the innovation of Karl Lagerfeld, a master of reinterpretation. Today's designers play with a far wider spectrum of materials than were available to their predecessors, thanks to technological progress and the evolution of use and taste.

Raf Simons embellishes a 2013 black strapless bustier dress with the satin fluffers of Hubert de Givenchy (1957)—but in leather, a material only in recent decades popular with womenswear. And

sometimes older styles stand the test of time: Yves Saint Laurent's tuxedo for women, for example, or his belted mini-dress of 1966.

New commitment to diversity

Forced to postpone the show six months, Bolton decided to modify it in light of the enormous anti-racism protests that followed the police killing of George Floyd in May. The original version, he said, included "some designers of color... but not a huge amount." Bolton said he and Wintour worked together closely to make the tweaks. Vogue's doyenne has faced accusations since June from some collaborators-and recently in a lengthy article in The New York Times-of long favoring fashion created by and for white people, and sidelining people of color at Conde Nast.

Wintour, 70, attended the press preview of the exhibit but didn't say a word. "Undoubtedly, I have made mistakes along the way, and if any mistakes were made at Vogue under my watch, they are mine to own and remedy and I am committed to doing the work," one of fashion's most powerful figures told the Times recently. Changes at the exhibit include a contribution from Black American pioneering designer Stephen Burrows, next to a Xuly Bet dress from the Franco-Malian designer Lamine Kouyate. Bolton vowed the initiative would not be short-lived, saying all exhibitions will now include diversity efforts. — AFP



**Johnny Depp
libel case
verdict due
next week**

Hollywood star Johnny Depp will learn next week if he has won his blockbuster libel lawsuit against The Sun, after the British newspaper branded him a "wife beater" in 2018. Judge Andrew Nicol will deliver his much-anticipated verdict at 1000 GMT on Monday, following three weeks of charged testimony at the High Court in London including claims of drug abuse and domestic violence. The "Pirates of the Caribbean" actor sued the tabloid's publisher News Group Newspapers (NGN) over claims he was violent to ex-wife Amber Heard during their volatile two-year marriage. Branded "the biggest English libel trial of the 21st century", the 16 days of proceedings in July exposed the former Hollywood couple's troubled relationship in painful detail.

ing faeces in the couple's bed and another in which he scrawled messages on a wall with the bloodied stump of his severed finger while high on drugs, were aired in the Royal Courts of Justice. Depp vehemently rejects accusations he hurt Heard while battling a drug addiction over a three-year span that ended with her 2016 decision to get a restraining order and file for divorce. The 57-year-old actor faced days of withering cross-examination in which he admitted to only hazily remembering some events because he was consuming copious amounts of drugs. Meanwhile Heard, who also took the stand, was portrayed by Depp and his

legal team as a manic depressive who was making up the allegations for money and personal fame.

NGN argued they had a valid basis for their 2018 claim by detailing 14 alleged instances of Depp abusing Heard. But legal commentators have said the odds appear to be stacked against them, with England's ancient defamation law-one of the strictest in the Western world-putting the burden of proof on the media. Nicol's judgment will be delivered remotely and it is not known whether Depp or Heard will attend court again. — AFP



Johnny Depp

**Plus-size model prompts
Instagram nudity policy change**

Instagram has relaxed its nudity policy in response to a campaign to let people show pride in their bodies even if they don't fit beauty stereotypes. Instagram modified its rules to allow showing people hugging, cupping or holding their breasts after controversy over the removal of images of Black plus-size model Nyome Nicholas-Williams. UK-based Nicholas-Williams prompted the controversy after posting pictures of herself topless but covering her breasts with her arms on her @curvynyome Instagram account. "We are grateful to our global community for speaking openly and honestly about their experiences and hope this policy change will help more people to confidently express themselves," Instagram global head of policy programs Carolyn Merrell said Tuesday in response to an AFP inquiry.



Nicholas-Williams

"We know people feel more empowered to express themselves and create communities of support - like the body positivity and acceptance communities - if they feel that their bodies and images are accepted," Instagram policies on nudity keep in mind that the platform is intended for people as young as 13 years of age. Images of breasts being

squeezed were banned because they are typically associated with pornography, but images of plus-sized women hugging themselves topless in artful expressions of pride caused Instagram to amend the policy. Imagery of breasts being grabbed and squeezed still break Instagram rules. — AFP

Sordid stories, including one involv-

Sports

Photo of the Day



Dani Morshead shows off her talent at Red Bull Bay Climb in San Francisco, California. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Jailed Belarusian basketball star speaks out for political change

Olympic, WNBA star held after demonstrating against president

MOSCOW: Belarus basketball star Yelena Leuchanka has twice represented her country at the Olympic Games, but until this year she had always stayed out of politics. That changed abruptly when her country was engulfed by protests. When she joined a street demonstration against President Alexander Lukashenko, one of the country's best known athletes found herself arrested and jailed in a lice-ridden cell. Released after 15 days, the former center who played four seasons in the US Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) has added her name to an open letter of protest signed by nearly 1,000 Belarusian sports figures.

"I want us to be free in a new Belarus, where we can freely express our opinions and not be afraid to be fired, imprisoned, fined, beaten or intimidated for it," the 37-year-old Leuchanka said. The open letter condemns the Aug. 9 presidential election won by Lukashenko as fraudulent and demands a re-run. It calls for the release of all those detained during more than 11 weeks of street protests and strikes against the veteran leader.

The athletes - including freestyle skier Hanna Huskova, who was the 2018 Olympic champion in aerials, and swimmer Aliaksandra Herasimenia, a three-time Olympic medalist - say they will stick together. "If information emerges about attempts to pressure the sports representatives who have signed this letter, or threats to sack them or infringe

their rights, all the athletes will act in solidarity including by potentially refusing to turn out for the national team," the letter says. The Belarusian Olympic Committee did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Breaking stereotypes

The protest highlights how discontent has seeped even into social groups traditionally loyal to



Nearly 1,000 sports figures sign open letter of protest

the state. In former Soviet countries, it is rare for elite athletes to publicly criticize the government, which often provides much of their funding. "I think we are breaking stereotypes because for a very long time everyone thought that athletes are only athletes.... that we only train," said Leuchanka, who was detained at Minsk airport on Sept. 30 as she

was about to fly to Greece for medical treatment.

"How can we remain silent when it is time for us to be fans of our people?" Leuchanka says she had never even voted until this year. It was a combination of factors - Lukashenko's dismissive attitude to the coronavirus, the imprisonment or self-exile of other presidential candidates, and police violence against demonstrators - that compelled her to join the protests.

"I could just close my eyes to this, leave and live comfortably," she said. "But I can't." "The people of Belarus woke up this summer. We wanted some changes, we wanted to try something new. We've been living under the same president for 26 years." Standing a towering 196 cm (6 feet 5 inches) tall, Leuchanka was crammed into a Minsk prison cell with up to four other people, where she tried to keep fit with breathing exercises and squats.

With no mattress, flushing toilet or access to showers, she says she contracted lice and developed dermatitis all over her body. Her old athletics injuries flared up. She finally flew to Greece last week to receive the treatment she had planned before her time in jail. Reflecting on her ordeal, Leuchanka believes the authorities chose to make an example of a well-known professional athlete. "I feel sorry for them," she told Reuters. "We (demonstrators) are in a prison, behind bars, but, believe me, we are much more free than they are." — Reuters

Fahaheel Sports Club's Al-Hassan reigns

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Fahaheel Sports Club table tennis player Ibrahim Al-Hassan defeated his brother Salem Al-Hassan 3-0 in the final match and won the final championship of the season. Tadhamon's player Jaber Al-Balhan ended in third place after defeating Marzouq Al-Rashidi - also from Tadhamon Club 3-2. The tournament saw 72 players from 15 clubs participating.

The final matches were attended by Fahaheel Club chairman Hamad Al-Dabous, deputy chairman of referees committee at the Table Tennis Federation Nawaf Al-Qahtani, Technical Director Sabri Jamaan and administrative Director Ahmad Al-Qallaf. The chairman of Kuwait Table Tennis Federation Ali Al-Dabous lauded the cooperation of the clubs for making this the most successful and longest season in the history of the game due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, member of the federation and deputy chairman of referees committee said that all players complied with the health protocols to protect against the virus as the tournament did not receive any objection.



Losing leg, winning gold: Inspirational para-badminton star

NEW DELHI: India's Manasi Joshi lost her leg in a horrific road accident, but found her calling - and international recognition - on the badminton court. Now the inspirational world champion, who has featured on the cover of Time magazine and has had a Barbie doll created in her image, is targeting Paralympic gold when the sport debuts in Tokyo next year. Eight years ago, she was a 23-year-old software engineer riding her scooter to work in Mumbai when a truck smashed into her, crushing her left leg and breaking both arms. Joshi's severely injured leg was amputated by doctors and she faced months of reha-

bilitation to learn to walk again.

But the accident could not damage her spirit and the young woman was determined to build her strength by playing her favorite sport, badminton. "It has been a journey about learning and accepting different things," Joshi, now 31, told AFP in a phone interview from her home in the western city of Ahmedabad. "Working hard on things that looked hard but are a new normal now. So I have come a long way." Fitted with a prosthetic leg three months after the accident, she returned to the court to pursue her passion.

She started playing badminton at six years old and used skills honed through success in school, college and office competitions to find her winning edge again. Five months after putting on the artificial limb, Joshi won her first gold in an office tournament against able-bodied players. "I used more of my mind. Made people run, made sure that wherever I put the shuttle they end up giving it to my hand so that I could finish the point," she said. "It was a turning

point after my injury and the win certainly boosted my confidence."

'Everything is possible'

Emboldened, she trained harder with the support of her family and eventually quit software engineering to play badminton full-time in 2016. Two years later, she joined national coach Pulela Gopichand's academy in Hyderabad, and became a member of India's national para-badminton squad. Last year, Joshi won singles gold at the para-badminton world championships - making 2019 a seminal year for India's female badminton players with PV Sindhu also victorious as world champion. Time magazine featured Joshi on the cover of their Asia edition this month as one of eight global "next generation" leaders. The makers of America's famous Barbie doll celebrated the achievements of Joshi on the International Day of Girl Child on October 11 with a Barbie modeled on her. "I feel honored to be a part of all this." — AFP

Djokovic wins Vienna opener to close in on Sampras record

VIENNA: Novak Djokovic defeated Filip Krajinovic in the first round in Vienna on Tuesday to edge closer to Pete Sampras's all-time record of ending the year as world number one on six occasions. Djokovic beat compatriot Krajinovic 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 and needs to win his next match in Austria against Borna Coric to ensure he equals the achievement of his childhood idol. The 33-year-old Serb has been the top-ranked player at the end of a season five times: in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018.

He shares that mark with career rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Sampras achieved the feat six years in succession between 1993 and 1998. Djokovic was playing in Vienna for the first time since he won the title there in 2007, and dropped serve twice in a tricky opening set. Krajinovic served for the first set at 5-4 and then held a set point in the tie-break but couldn't take advantage. A couple of breaks in the second set allowed Djokovic to clinch victory — his 38th in 40 matches this year.

"First set, I think he was the better player. He was serving for the first set and I was lucky. He missed a smash at 6/6 in the tie-break," said Djokovic. "A few points here and there can change the momentum of the match. In the second set, I stepped it up, I played better and I am just pleased with the way I finished the match." The 17-time Grand Slam title winner is appearing at his first tournament since his heavy loss to Nadal in the Roland Garros final two weeks ago. Djokovic is also attempting to beat Federer's all-time best of 310 weeks spent on top of the rankings. — AFP

News in brief

In-form Reading extend lead

LONDON: Reading scored inside 10 seconds as they continued their best start to a season for 35 years with a 4-2 win at Blackburn on Tuesday. The Royals are a surprise package following unknown boss Veljko Paunovic's appointment midway through pre-season as they won for a seventh time from eight games. The foundations of the victory at Ewood Park were laid in a frantic opening 18 minutes, with Reading going 3-1 up, thanks to goals from Yakov Meite - clocked as the fastest in the club's history - Michael Olise and Josh Laurent. Adam Armstrong had made it 1-1 and then got Blackburn back in it in the second half, but Lucas Joao killed the game in the final 10 minutes. Wycombe picked up their first-ever point in the second tier as they held Watford to a 1-1 draw. The Chairboys, playing at this level for the first time in their history, had lost their opening seven games but stopped the rot against the Hornets. — AFP

Tunisia football row rages

CHEBBA: Hundreds of residents of a Tunisian coastal town are threatening to embark on illegal sea crossings to Italy in protest at their local football club's suspension from the league. The Tunisian Football Federation on October 17 slapped a one-year ban on CS Chebba, officially over an incomplete and late membership application. The club's president has for months been at odds with the federation's chief, Wadie Jary, especially after Facebook posts criticising the TFF's financial dealings. Hundreds of angry fans have taken to the streets of the town blocking roads and setting tyres on fire in protest at the suspension. "In response to the silence of the authorities, residents have decided to leave the country and head for Italy," Mohamed Ali Abbas, a support committee member, told AFP. — AFP

FIFA chief tests positive

LAUSANNE: FIFA president Gianni Infantino has contracted coronavirus, the world's governing body announced on Tuesday. The 50-year-old has mild symptoms and will remain in isolation for a further 10 days. "All people who came into contact with the FIFA President during the last few days have been informed accordingly and they are being requested to take the necessary steps," the body said. "FIFA sincerely wishes President Infantino a speedy recovery," it added. Infantino's last public appearances was at FIFA's Compliance Summit which ended on October 16 when all attendees were present via video. Cases, hospitalizations and deaths from Covid-19 in the body's base, Switzerland, have doubled from one week to the next throughout October. The country's government is expected to decide on new measures to control the spread of the virus. — AFP

Woods wins Vuelta stage 7

MADRID: Canadian Michael Woods timed his move to perfection on Tuesday to win the seventh stage at la Vuelta, as Richard Carapaz retained the overall lead. Woods came out on top by four seconds after a tense finish involving five riders in northern Spain and claimed his second stage victory in the event. The 34-year-old finished alone, ahead of the Spanish duo of Omar Fraile (Astana), who was second, and Alejandro Valverde (Movistar) in third, while it was France's Nans Peters and Guillaume Martin in fourth and fifth respectively. "It was a special day and amazing to be racing in the Basque Country," said Woods of EF Pro Cycling. "I got away with those four guys, they were riding super strong, and I felt bad that I couldn't pull through. With Valverde in the group I just couldn't pull through because we had Hugh Carthy in the peloton and I just couldn't give him any more time in the general classification." — AFP

Sports

Bayern and English clubs win in Champions League

Real Madrid scramble draw; City thrash woeful Marseille

PARIS: Holders Bayern Munich continued their perfect start to their Champions League title defense on Tuesday as Real Madrid had Casemiro's late goal to thank for scrambling a 2-2 draw away to Borussia Mönchengladbach. Liverpool and Manchester City also made it six points out of a possible six in Europe this season, after Bayern needed a late Joshua Kimmich strike to claim a 2-1 win at Lokomotiv Moscow in Group A.

Leon Goretzka put the Germans ahead early on in front of a limited crowd in the Russian capital, but Anton Miranchuk tucked in an equalizer for Lokomotiv in the second half. Miranchuk's twin brother Aleksei scored for Atalanta in the Champions League last week. But Bayern were not to be denied a record 13th straight win in the competition as Kimmich controlled a Javi Martinez pass and volleyed home low from outside the box 11 minutes from time. "We had to work hard for the victory," Kimmich admitted to broadcaster DAZN.

In the same group Atletico Madrid came from behind to beat Salzburg 3-2, with Joao Felix grabbing their late winner. The Portuguese starlet had hit the bar with a stunning overhead kick before Marcos Llorente put Atletico ahead in the Spanish capital. Dominik Szoboszlai leveled before the break and then a Felipe own goal put Salzburg ahead just after half-time. However, Joao Felix equalized on 52 minutes and then won it five minutes from the end.

City cruise

In Germany, Real were heading for another defeat in Group B, six days after losing 3-2 at home to Shakhtar Donetsk, as Marcus Thuram netted twice for Gladbach, either side of half-time. But Casemiro set up Karim Benzema to reduce the deficit in the 87th minute and the Brazilian midfielder then scored himself deep in injury time to salvage a point for Zinedine Zidane's team. "If we continue to play like that, we'll do great things and



MOSCOW: Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski and Lokomotiv Moscow's Brazilian defender Murilo Cerqueira vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League football match between Lokomotiv Moscow and Bayern Munich on October 27, 2020. —AFP

we'll win matches, that's for sure," said Zidane. It is Shakhtar who lead the section, though, by two points from Inter Milan and Gladbach, after a 0-0 draw with the Italians in Kiev. Pep Guardiola's City eased to a second straight win in Group C with Kevin De Bruyne setting up Ferran Torres for the early opener against Marseille after the hosts had carelessly ceded possession. Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling added late goals to make it 3-0, leaving Marseille without a point.

Guardiola was confident City could build on their victory after an indifferent start to the Premier League season which has seen them come in for criticism. "Part of the criticism was right, but you've got to accept it. It's part of our job," Guardiola told BT Sport. "It's about where we've come from in the last month, with lack of preparation, injuries and Covid-19, but the Champions League is in a good place now." In the same group Porto beat Olympiakos 2-0 in Portugal with

beyond Catalonia. Bartomeu said he accepted a proposal on Monday for Barcelona to play in "a future European Super League" which "would guarantee the financial stability of the club". Earlier this month, Barcelona announced losses of 97 million euros (\$114m) for last season, with debt more than doubling to 488 million euros.

'Weak and imaginary competition'

Bartomeu and his board could even be held personally liable for the financial shortfall, which could be why he was keen to present a Super League as their money-making solution. La Liga president Javier Tebas tweeted: "Unfortunate statement from Bartomeu on his last day about Barcelona joining a weak and imaginary competition which would be their ruin. It confirms his ignorance about the football industry." An election for Bartomeu's successor will take place within three months, with an interim board taking charge in the meantime.

The position of Ronald Koeman, appointed coach in August, becomes more uncertain. A new president could bring in their own coach, either immediately or at the end of the season. Bartomeu's

Although the new code is currently voluntary, 42 clubs from across the Premier League, English Football League, Women's Super League and Women's Championship have signed up to its provisions.

Former Chelsea and Celtic defender Paul Elliott, head of the FA's inclusion advisory board, said: "Many clubs are already doing good work in this area and we have been pleased to see football stand together this year to challenge the injustice we are seeing in society. "However, positive and tangible action is required to drive change and take the next step." Under the code, clubs will be

that feat in the second encounter. Former African champions Zambia are preparing for two crucial Cup of Nations fixtures with Botswana during November after losing to Algeria and Zimbabwe in previous Group H matches.

Libya

Civil war in Libya led to the cancellation of the past two football seasons, so the 2017-2018 standings have been used to choose clubs for the CAF club competitions. League winners Al Nasr and runners-up Al Ahly Benghazi will compete in the Champions League and third-place Al Ahly Tripoli and cup winners Al Itihad in the Confederation Cup. Libya came closest to lifting a CAF trophy when Al Ahly Tripoli reached the 1984 African Cup Winners Cup final before Muammar Gaddafi barred them from playing Al Ahly because of political differences with Egypt.

Gabon

English Premier League duo Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Arsenal and Mario Lemina of Fulham have been included in the Gabon squad for two Cup of Nations qualifiers against Group D leaders the Gambia. Both missed the recent friendly loss to Benin in Portugal because of injuries with the absence of 2015 African Footballer of the Year Aubameyang particularly noticeable. Coach Patrice Neveu included 11 players with French clubs in a 23-strong squad, including Saint-Etienne forward Denis Bouanga.

South Africa

Carlisle United is not a club name normally found on international squad lists, but South Africa have called up midfielder Dean Furman from the English fourth-tier outfit. He is part of a 25-man squad for home and away Cup of Nations Group C qualifiers against minnows Sao Tome e Principe next month. Born in Cape Town and brought up in England, the 32-year-old recently joined Carlisle from Pretoria-based South African Premiership club SuperSport United.



LIVERPOOL: Midtjylland's Danish midfielder Anders Dreyer (center) hits this shot into the side-netting late in on the UEFA Champions league Group D football match between Liverpool and Midtjylland at Anfield in Liverpool on October 27, 2020. —AFP

Fabio Vieira and Sergio Oliveira on target.

'Tough night' for Liverpool

Meanwhile, Liverpool built on their 1-0 victory at Ajax last week by defeating Danish champions Midtjylland 2-0 in a low-key game behind closed doors at Anfield in Group D. Diogo Jota finished off a fine move to give Jurgen Klopp's team the lead early in the second half, before Mohamed Salah made sure of the points with a late penalty. Klopp rested Salah, Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino from his starting line-up but his defensive worries deepened as Fabinho went off with an

apparent hamstring injury.

"It was a tough night," Klopp told BT Sport. "It's a bit like in a marriage, there are good and bad times. It's not a bad time but it's a tricky time." He added: "It was a hard game to play. But winning 2-0 is completely fine so that's it-let's carry on." Liverpool now have a double-header against Atalanta, who came from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at home to Ajax. A Dusan Tadic penalty put the visitors ahead on the half-hour and Lassina Traore made it two, only for Duvan Zapata to save Atalanta with two goals in the space of seven second-half minutes. —AFP

Bartomeu resigns as Barcelona president

MADRID: Josep Maria Bartomeu resigned as Barcelona president on Tuesday, along with his board of directors, and left with a bombshell admission that he had accepted a proposal for the club to play in "a future European Super League". Bartomeu's departure comes following mounting pressure from fans and his public falling-out with Lionel Messi. His resignation could affect the future of Messi, who will now be given a new project after trying to leave in August.

"I want to communicate my resignation along with the rest of the board," said Bartomeu in an official announcement. "It's a composed and relaxed decision, agreed with all my fellow directors." However, it was his revelation about a Super League which seems certain to make the biggest waves

English FA launches new diversity code

LONDON: England's governing Football Association (FA) unveiled a new diversity code on Tuesday in the hope of ensuring more ethnic minority candidates land senior jobs within the sport. The Football Leadership Diversity Code will ask clubs to achieve targets in both coaching positions and significant management roles.

Africa roundup: Zamalek finish second to book Champions League spot

JOHANNESBURG: An early Mostafa Mohamed goal set up Zamalek to defeat Ismaily 3-1 in Cairo to clinch second place in the Egyptian Premier League and secure qualification for the 2021 CAF Champions League. Had the White Knight not collected three points, they could have been overtaken by 2020 CAF Confederation Cup runners-up Pyramids and lost out on a place in the elite African club competition. Champions Al Ahly will be the other Egyptian representatives in the Champions League with Pyramids and fourth-place Al Mokawloon Al Arab entering the CAF Confederation Cup. Here, AFP Sport rounds up football news from Africa.

Egypt

Zamalek swiftly stamped their authority over mid-table Ismaily as Mohamed and Democratic Republic of Congo-born Kabongo Kasongo scored within 24 minutes. Moroccan Achraf Bencharki stretched the lead to three goals during the second half before Wagih Abdelhakim reduced arrears after goalkeeper Mohamed Abougabal blundered. Zamalek now switch their attention to the 2020 Champions League as they will defend a 1-0 lead over Raja Casablanca of Morocco this Sunday in the second leg of a semi-final in Cairo.

Zambia

Zambia made it four wins in five 2021 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying warm-up matches this month under new Serb coach Mlutin Sredojevic by defeating Ethiopia 3-2 and 3-1 in Addis Ababa. Albert Kangwanda bagged a brace in the first international friendly and Emmanuel Chabula matched



BARCELONA: Barcelona FC president Josep Maria Bartomeu and Real Madrid president Florentino Perez (right) attend the Spanish League football match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona. —AFP

six-year tenure saw a dramatic decline in the performances of the team, culminating in the 8-2 defeat by Bayern Munich in last season's Champions League. He then oversaw Messi, the club's greatest ever player, trying to leave for free. —AFP

expected to make 15 percent of new executive positions available to people from minority backgrounds. Gender diversity is also part of the code, with 30 percent of new appointments in senior leadership positions to be female candidates.

Meanwhile women's football clubs will be expected to have at least 50 percent female coaching staffs. In men's professional football, 25 percent of new hires will be of black, Asian or mixed heritage. If applicants meeting the job specifications apply, interview shortlists will need to have at least one male and one female black, Asian or of mixed-heritage candidate. —AFP



Mostafa Mohamed

Guinea

The Guinean Ligue 1 Pro season has kicked off after a long coronavirus-induced suspension of football in the west African nation and Hafifa and Wakriya are the pacesetters with four points from two matches. Hafifa were African giants in the 1970s, reaching five African Cup of Champions Clubs (predecessor to the CAF Champions League) finals and winning three. African commitments have delayed the debut of CAF Confederation Cup semi-finalists Horoya, who will be seeking a sixth straight league title.

South Sudan

Cameroon-born South Sudan coach Cyprian Ashu Bessong has included 10 Australia-based players in his squad for back-to-back Cup of Nations qualifiers against Uganda during November. Those called up include Melbourne City goalkeeper Majak Mawith, defender Ruon Tongyik from Central Coast Mariners, Perth SC midfielder Jackson Morgan and forward Yuel Kauch from Western Union. South Sudan are desperate for points against Group B frontrunners Uganda having lost away to Malawi and at home to Burkina Faso. —AFP

Arsenal seek Europa boost as confident Spurs go to Belgium

PARIS: English rivals Arsenal and Tottenham are aiming to build on winning starts in the Europa League today while Zlatan Ibrahimovic will look to transfer his incredible Serie A form to the continental stage. Smarting from a 1-0 loss at home to Leicester at the weekend, the Gunners host Irish side Dundalk in their second Group B fixture following a come-from-behind victory in Austria in their opening match. Dundalk are just the third Irish representative to reach the group stage, having matched their achievement in 2016/17 and that of Shamrock Rovers in 2011/12.

They lost 2-1 at home to Norwegians Molde in their first game, and their Italian coach Filippo Giovagnoli is acutely aware the odds are stacked against the club from County Louth on Ireland's east coast. "Arsenal have better players, better coaches and better everything than us, but this is the challenge. We need to play with a lot of heart, run a lot and be a little crazy and brave, but we're going to try," said Giovagnoli.

Tottenham's solid start in the Premier League has stirred up talk they could potentially end a long title drought, with no team yet to truly assert themselves after a truncated pre-season. "We know with the team we have got and the players we have got we can do something special," captain Harry Kane, who is two goals shy of 200 for Spurs, told the BBC after Monday's 1-0 win at Burnley. Jose Mourinho's side head to Belgium to play Antwerp this week after easing past Austrian outfit LASK Linz 3-0 in their Group J opener.

Gerrard's Rangers unbeaten

Leicester, the third English club in the competition, travel to AEK Athens as they too chase a second straight victory in Group J. Scottish Premiership leaders Rangers are at home to Lech Poznan in Group D. Steven Gerrard's men are unbeaten this term and have won their last seven games. Celtic, who are targeting a record 10th successive Scottish title, lost ground to Rangers at the weekend and have work to do in Group H after they were beaten 3-1 by Milan. The task won't get any easier with a visit to Lille, who are level on points with Paris Saint-Germain in France and the only unbeaten team left in Ligue 1.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has scored seven times in five games this season despite missing a handful of matches after testing positive for coronavirus. The 39-year-old former Sweden international netted twice for the third time in a row in Serie A as Milan drew 3-3 with Roma on Monday. Ibrahimovic would become the second-oldest scorer in Europa League history if he hits the target against Sparta Prague. Molde's Daniel Hestad holds the record, scoring against Celtic in November 2015 aged 40 years and 98 days. Real Sociedad host Napoli as two famous European names do battle for the first time in Group F. —AFP

14 Losing leg and winning gold: India's para-badminton star



15 Bartomeu resigns as Barcelona president, drops European Super League bombshell



15 Bayern and English clubs win in Champions League



Dodgers capture World Series title

Dodgers end World Series drought with 3-1 victory over Rays



ARLINGTON: The Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate after Julio Urias #7 strikes out Willy Adames (not pictured) of the Tampa Bay Rays to give the Dodgers the 3-1 victory in Game Six to win the 2020 MLB World Series at Globe Life Field on October 27, 2020. — AFP

ARLINGTON: The Los Angeles Dodgers ended their 32-year wait for a World Series title on Tuesday, beating the Tampa Bay Rays 3-1 to claim the Major League Baseball crown at last after a string of agonizing near-misses. Corey Seager drove in the go-ahead run, Mookie Betts homered late and a stream of Los Angeles pitchers stood firm as the Dodgers won the seventh World Series in club history but their first since 1988.

Back in Major League Baseball's championship showcase for the third time in four years, the Dodgers eased the disappointment of defeats in 2017 and 2018. They beat the Rays four-games-to-two at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, where the first neutral site World Series in baseball history capped a pandemic-shortened campaign. "This is what you think about when you are a kid," said Seager, who was named Most Valuable Player of the series after batting .400 with two home runs and five runs-batted-in.

"You strive to hear that," he said of being called a World Series champion. "To do it with this group couldn't be any more special." Added catcher Austin Barnes: "We had our hearts broken so many times." The Dodgers win completed a championship double for Los Angeles, whose LeBron James-led Lakers won their first NBA title since

2010 earlier this month. As the Dodgers celebrated on the field, one key contributor was missing, as third baseman Justin Turner was pulled in the late innings after testing positive for coronavirus—a final sombre reminder of the shadow cast on the season by the pandemic.

It was the first positive test since baseball put teams in quarantine bubbles for the League Championship Series, prompting commissioner Rob Manfred to call it a "bittersweet night" for MLB. The Rays, needing a victory to force a decisive game seven, couldn't take advantage of a dominant performance from starting pitcher Blake Snell, who gave up just two hits and no runs with nine strikeouts in 5 1/3 innings. But Rays manager Kevin Cash opted to pull Snell with one out and one on in the bottom of the sixth with the Rays leading by just one run thanks to Randy Arozarena's first-inning homer.

"I wanted to keep going, man," Snell said. "I felt so confident in how I adjusted. I wanted to go the whole game." Sure enough, when Snell departed, the momentum shifted. Dodgers rightfielder Mookie Betts promptly smacked a double up the left field line off Rays relief pitcher Nick Anderson. Barnes, who had singled off Snell, advanced to third and scored on a wild pitch. Seager then made it to first on a fielder's choice, with

Betts beating the throw to home to give the Dodgers a 2-1 lead. "Snell was pitching a great game," Betts said. "That's all we needed."

A parade of Dodgers pitchers—it would total seven in all—kept it close after rookie sensation Arozarena clubbed his record-extending 10th home run of the post-season off an 88 mph slider from Tony Gonsolin, the rookie righthander whose impressive regular season numbers haven't translated in the playoffs. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts had said he was hoping for five or six innings from Gonsolin. But he lasted just 1 2/3 innings before giving way to Dylan Floro. Snell, meanwhile, retired the first six batters he faced before giving off a leadoff single to Chris Taylor in the third, then retired nine more as the Rays preserved their one-run lead through five innings.

'Our year'

After Arozarena cracked a single to left field with two outs in the top of the fifth off the Dodgers' fourth pitcher of the night—Pedro Baez—Victor Gonzalez took over on the mound and recorded the last out of the inning. Gonzalez retired three straight in the top of the sixth, and after the Dodgers seized the lead in the bottom of the frame Brusdar Graterol took over on the mound for Los Angeles in the seventh.

Last 10 World Series winners

ARLINGTON: Last 10 winners of the World Series after the Los Angeles Dodgers' victory over the Tampa Bay Rays on Tuesday:

- 2020 - LA Dodgers (beat Tampa Bay Rays 4-2)
- 2019 - Washington Nationals (beat Houston Astros 4-3)
- 2018 - Boston Red Sox (beat LA Dodgers 4-1)
- 2017 - Houston Astros (beat LA Dodgers 4-3)
- 2016 - Chicago Cubs (beat Cleveland Indians 4-3)
- 2015 - Kansas City Royals (beat NY Mets 4-1)
- 2014 - San Francisco Giants (beat Kansas City Royals 4-3)
- 2013 - Boston Red Sox (beat St Louis Cardinals 4-2)
- 2012 - San Francisco Giants (beat Detroit Tigers 4-0)
- 2011 - St Louis Cardinals (beat Texas Rangers 4-3)

With two outs in the inning Graterol gave up a line drive single to Mike Zunino and was replaced by game-four starter Julio Urias of Mexico—who didn't allow a baserunner in closing out the victory. "Man this was just awesome," said Seager, who is among the core of players who lived through the Dodgers' recent World Series defeats, a group that also includes star pitcher Clayton Kershaw—who finally added a World Series title to his Hall of Fame resume.

"The resilience, the energy, everything that this team's done this year, it's been fun to be a part of," Seager said.

"We won a World Series, I can't believe it," Kershaw added. "Let me say it a few more times. It feels really good." Betts was a newcomer this year, traded prior to the season from the Boston Red Sox team that broke Dodgers' hearts in 2018. Roberts said he was a key component as the team finally got over the hump. "Mookie is a superstar player who is present in every conversation," Roberts said. "He's that sort of player." Roberts, who rattled superstitious Dodgers fans when he declared before the series "This is our year," was vindicated. "This is our year," Roberts said. "We said it." — AFP

Saudi set for 2021 F1 debut; Miami race on hold

LONDON: Saudi Arabia is set to host a Formula One grand prix for the first time next year with a street race in Jeddah featuring on a record 23-round draft calendar presented to teams, F1 sources said yesterday. A second US race in Miami appears on hold for at least

another year, however. A proposed new Brazilian Grand Prix track in Rio de Janeiro has yet to be built and faces mounting environmental concerns, meaning the calendar could ultimately drop to a still-record 22 races. The new coronavirus pandemic adds uncertainty, although the sport's ability to race this year has boosted the chances of a fuller calendar.

The 2020 season would have featured 22 races, with Vietnam due to debut and the Dutch Grand Prix returning for the first time in 34 years, but was reduced to 17 due to COVID-19. F1 teams were shown a draft 2021 calendar on Monday, with a final version unlikely to be published for some weeks. Saudi Arabia was the

addition, likely to be paired with the season-ending round in Abu Dhabi, one informed source told Reuters.

Jeddah, the country's second city, would host the race until a purpose-built circuit in Qiddiya—about an hour's drive from the capital Riyadh—is built. The vast Qiddiya entertainment resort is at the heart of an ambitious strategy to open the economy and ease social restrictions. Saudi Arabia hosts the Dakar Rally in January while the all-electric Formula E series has two races in Diriyah scheduled for Feb 26-27. A new Extreme E off-road electric series is due to race in Al Ula on March 20-21 while tennis, boxing and golf have held events in the country.

Formula E and Extreme E founder Alejandro Agag, speaking to Reuters from Saudi Arabia, said he had heard lots of rumors about Formula One coming next year. Formula One this year announced a long-term global partnership with state-owned energy giant Saudi Aramco and has been in talks for some time about a Saudi race. Saudi Arabia has come under heightened international criticism over its human rights record after journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered and dismembered by Saudi operatives inside its Istanbul consulate in 2018. A Saudi race would be the third in the Middle East after Bahrain, which comes in the early part of the year, and Abu Dhabi. — Reuters