



5 Family of US police shooting victim settles case for \$12m



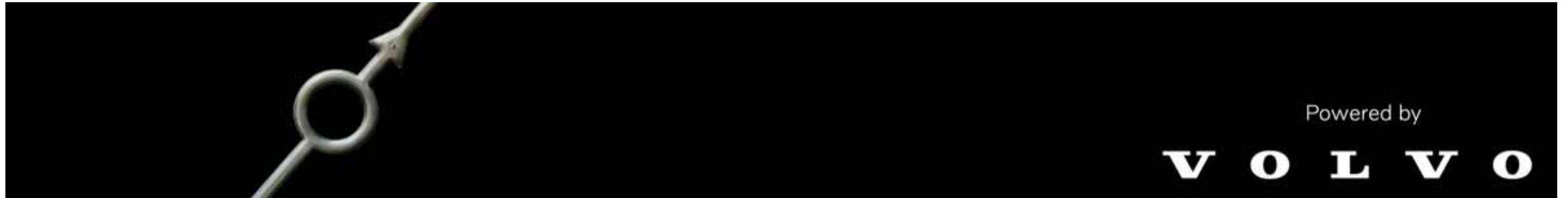
10 Apple bundles TV, music, and news in services push



13 Malaysian man on mission to clear beaches of glass



15 Qatar's Duhail win as Al Sadd hold Al Ain



Kuwait receives suspected remains of Kuwaiti POWs

Remains of 21 persons handed over by Iraq to undergo DNA tests



BAGHDAD: The remains of 21 persons are handed over to Kuwait Embassy officials at Baghdad airport yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait received yesterday remains suspected of belonging, according to initial information, to Kuwaiti prisoners of war who were captured by Iraqi forces during their 1990-91 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, a foreign ministry official said. The identities of the remains will be examined by forensic experts who will conduct DNA tests "and who are doing a very important job in this humanitarian issue," said Rabee Al-Adasani, chairman of the ministry's department dealing with prisoners and missing persons.

Speaking to KUNA during the reception of the remains, Adasani said examining the identities of the remains is "a complicated process which should be accurate, and it needs time to extract the DNA from the remains and match them with the data of prisoners and missing to identify the remains before announcing the identities". He said extensive search and verification of information related to the file of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing will continue through the technical and tripartite committees "until the closure of this humanitarian file".

Adasani, who signed the documents of the han-

dover, thanked the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Iraqi government, Saudi Arabia, Britain, France and UN for their commitment to resolving this issue. Kuwait's Embassy in Baghdad said earlier yesterday it received remains of 21 persons, presumably of Kuwaiti citizens missing during Iraq's 1990-91 invasion of Kuwait.

The handover of the remains took place near Baghdad International Airport with attendance of representatives of Iraq's defense ministry, ICRC and the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). "Handing over the remains is part of efforts related to the file of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and missing persons," Mohammad Al-Wuqayyan, Kuwait's Charge d'Affaires told KUNA.

"According to initial indications, it is believed that the remains belong to Kuwaiti prisoners and missing who were found in the desert of Samawa in southern Iraq," said Wuqayyan. He said the remains will undergo DNA tests in Kuwait to verify their identities. He thanked the Iraqi government for efforts to address this "humanitarian issue" and to UNAMI for providing logistical support. — KUNA

Smuggling, tax evasion, bribery at Beirut port

BEIRUT: The huge explosion at Beirut's port last month laid bare a dockside institution riddled with graft which critics say is a microcosm of a corrupt Lebanese state. Smuggling, customs tax evasion

and widespread bribery are just a few common violations at the port, which like all public institutions is riddled with the kind of corruption that has become characteristic of Lebanon's under-fire ruling elite.

The powerful Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement has a "free pass" there because of its ties to customs and port officials, according to a former judicial official. But Hezbollah is not alone. Lebanon's top political parties, including the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), founded by President Michel Aoun, the Amal Movement of parliament speaker Nabih Berri and the Future Movement,

headed by former prime minister Saad Hariri, all share the spoils, according to experts and security officials.

"The port is one of the (state's) most corrupt institutions, both within the management and the customs service," said Mohammad Chamseddine of the Beirut-based research and consultancy firm Information International. After Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, the port's management was handed to a temporary public commission that was never replaced. To this day, it runs the seaport as if it were a "private business", Chamseddine said.

As is the common practice in the multi-confessional country, Lebanon's political parties shared out the commission's seven seats among themselves in line with a broader power-sharing arrangement. Direct links between the political elite and members of the commission have allowed for the port to be managed in the same corrupt way as the state. "There is no efficient government oversight, whether on income or expenses," Chamseddine told AFP. "Everybody profits because the system of sharing the spoils of government also applies to the port."

Continued on Page 2

Israel jets bomb Gaza after rockets mar deal signings



GAZA: Smoke and flames are seen following an Israeli air strike in the town of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. — AFP

GAZA CITY: Israel bombed Gaza yesterday after militants fired rockets through the night, overshadowing the signing of landmark normalization deals with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in Washington. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the militants of seeking to stop the peace deals. Israel's first with an Arab country since 1994. But Gaza ruler Hamas warned Israel it faced an escalation if the bombing continued, barely two weeks after a renewed Egyptian-brokered truce halted near-nightly exchanges across the border through August.

The signing of the two agreements at a White House ceremony hosted by US President Donald Trump prompted protest rallies across the Palestinian territories. The

deals broke with decades of Arab consensus that there would be no normalization of relations with Israel until it had made peace with the Palestinians and drew accusations of "betrayal" against the Western-backed Gulf states.

At least 15 rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip between 8 pm (1700 GMT) Tuesday and early yesterday, nine of which were intercepted by Israeli air defenses, the military said. One hit the southern port city of Ashdod, wounding at least two people, emergency services said. The Israeli military said fighter jets responded with strikes on Hamas military targets.

The rocket fire came as the UAE and Bahrain signed accords establishing diplomatic relations with

Continued on Page 2

India virus cases cross 5 million

NEW DELHI: Coronavirus infections in India soared past five million yesterday, as the EU's chief warned against "vaccine nationalism" in the frantic global race to battle the disease. Worldwide cases are rapidly approaching 30 million, with more than 935,000 known COVID-19 deaths, the global economy devastated and nations struggling to contain new outbreaks since the virus first emerged in China late last year.

India, home to 1.3 billion people, has reported some of the highest daily case jumps in the world recently, as a World Health Organization special envoy described the global pandemic situation as "horrible" and "grotesque". "It's much worse than any of the science fiction about pandemics," David

Continued on Page 2

Morocco village riffs on Hendrix legends, myths

ESSAOUIRA, Morocco: Some claim to have seen him, others to have spoken with him - 50 years after guitar legend Jimi Hendrix's untimely death, a village on Morocco's Atlantic coast pulsates with his memory. "I saw him here. He was young and carried a guitar on his back," swore Mohammed Boualala, who is in his 60s and grew up in the small settlement of Diabat before joining the army.

In the summer of 1969, Hendrix, the pioneering US guitar wizard whose hits included "Purple Haze" and "Hey Joe", made a brief stop in Essaouira, a former fort town and latter day tourist magnet located five kilometers from the village.

Continued on Page 2



NEW DELHI: A medical worker collects a swab sample from a man for a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) for COVID-19 at a government health center yesterday. — AFP



ESSAOUIRA: A picture taken in this Moroccan coastal city shows portraits of late US guitarist Jimi Hendrix on Sept 10, 2020. — AFP

Local

Kuwait 'concerned' over Iran's breaching of nuclear deal

Gulf state praises IAEA's efforts; seeks more cooperation with NATO

VIENNA: Kuwait on Tuesday voiced appreciation for IAEA's efforts concerning the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Specifically pointing to the agency's keenness for UN Security Council resolution 2231 to be implemented by concerned parties, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Sadeq Marafi told an IAEA session earlier Tuesday that the State of Kuwait is "concerned" over Iran's "continuous" breaching of items included in the JCPOA of 2015. Highlighting the "pivotal" role of the agency in this regard, Ambassador Marafi said that his country is following on developments of this file, at the same time that Kuwait is not denying any country the right to pursue acquiring nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and within the NPT.

Marafi called on Iran to fully abide by the Plan of Action, as well as urging the Islamic Republic to endorse the plan's supplementary protocol in order

to enable the Agency to provide credibility for Iran's nuclear dossier. In June 2019, Kuwait gained a two-year seat at IAEA's Board of Governors during the 63rd Annual Regular Session of the Agency's General Conference. Kuwait joined the Board of Governors during the years 1977-1979, 1987-1989, 1995-1997 and 2001-2003.

Strong commitment

Separately, Kuwait's Ambassador to NATO, EU and Belgium, Jassem Al-Budaiwi has stressed his country's strong commitment to deepening its mutual cooperation with NATO in every field. Budaiwi made that statement in his speech at the third annual review meeting of the work and activities of the NATO Regional Center for Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, held Tuesday held via video link. "I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the strong partnership between NATO and Kuwait that has developed through the Istanbul Cooperation

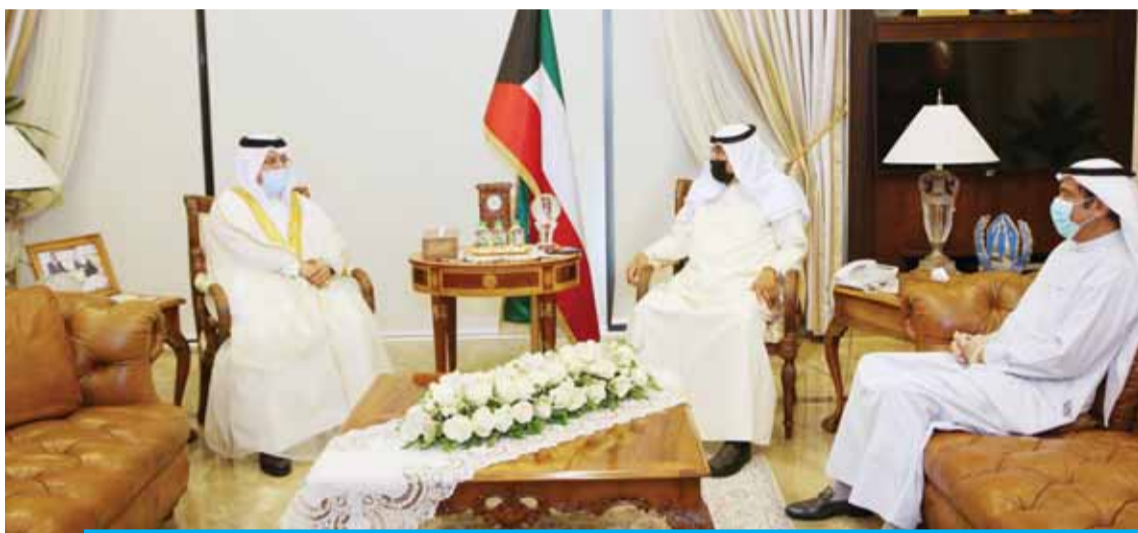
Initiative (ICI) and strengthened through the establishment of the NATO Regional Center in Kuwait," he said. "It is a true honor for me to see the NATO-ICI Regional Center in Kuwait maintaining its programs and activities and going ahead with a business as usual mentality during the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic," he noted.

Three activities

Budaiwi said that last year, Kuwait and NATO held three important activities, the first was reviewing the national Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP) held last autumn in Brussels, the second was reviewing the activity of the NATO Regional Center in Kuwait, also held in Brussels and the third was the ceremony in Kuwait to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the launch of the ICI between NATO and Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain. "We are here to discuss and review the activities of the NATO-ICI Regional Center. In this

regard I would like to quote the speech of Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah, President of National Security Bureau of Kuwait, given on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the launch of Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), in which he suggested few measures in order to further develop the relationship between both sides," he said.

These include possibility of holding an annual meeting at the ministerial level between the NATO-ICI countries and intensifying military cooperation through exchanging visits and transferring experiences. Budaiwi announced that both Kuwait and NATO have agreed to organize a joint meeting in Kuwait next year between the ICI countries' military chiefs of staff in addition to the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia and Oman, with the NATO military committee. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg opened the NATO-ICI regional center in Kuwait in 2017. The ICI includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and UAE. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Malki. — KUNA photos



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni.

Deputy Foreign Minister hosts two envoys

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with the Bahraini Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Salah Al-Malki, on the occasion of taking office as envoy of his country in Kuwait. The two sides discussed

bilateral relations, regional and international issues. Meanwhile, Jarallah met with the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni, discussing bilateral relations, regional and international topics. — KUNA

Security chief, US envoy discuss cooperation



KUWAIT: Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah met on Tuesday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski, and discussed with her mutual cooperation. The apparatus said in a statement that the talks dealt with bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, means of promoting these ties, in addition to issues of common concern at the regional and international levels.

Meanwhile, the General Administration of Customs Director-General Counselor Jamal Al-Jalawi discussed with the Ambassador Romanowski the Kuwaiti-American customs ties,

which dates back to 1993. In a statement Tuesday, the General Customs Administration said that the meeting discussed the cooperation agreement between the two countries, which made a quantum leap in developing customs work. The statement pointed out that the Kuwaiti Customs signed five agreements during the strategic dialogue between Kuwait and the United States. During the meeting, Counselor Jalawi expressed appreciation for the role of the American consultant office, saying that the relationship between the two parties contributed to facilitating and simplifying customs work and signing agreements, the statement added. — KUNA

Smuggling, tax evasion, bribery...

Continued from Page 1

The port's management has come under increased scrutiny after the Aug 4 blast, which killed more than 190 people, wounded thousands and ripped through large parts of the capital, making it the country's deadliest peacetime disaster. Lebanese at home and abroad were outraged when it emerged authorities had been aware for years of the huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate that blew up.

A month later, it is still unclear what started the initial blaze that set the highly explosive fertilizer alight, but an ongoing probe has led to the arrest of the head of the port commission and its customs director. Commission chief Hassan Koraytem is linked to the Future Movement, while customs chief Badri Daher is allied with the FPM.

Hezbollah, designated by the US as a terrorist group, exerts sizable influence over the port to help it

ship and receive its own cargos, multiple sources confirmed to AFP. Shukri Sader, a judge who used to head the State Shura Council, a government legal body, said that it is "well known that there are goods belonging to The Resistance (Hezbollah) that pass through the port and airport". Hezbollah gets a "free pass" to transport goods thanks to its ties with customs officials and port employees, he added.

Hezbollah security official Wafiq Safa, who serves as a Hezbollah interlocutor to the Lebanese security forces, was sanctioned in 2019 by the US Treasury because he used this network of ties to facilitate smuggling. "Safa has exploited Lebanon's ports and border crossings to smuggle contraband," including "illegal drugs and weapons", the Treasury said at the time. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has denied his movement has any illicit involvement at the port.

But it would not be the only one. Sader said that corruption at the dockside institution is so ubiquitous that "there is no need for evidence". A recent report by a state security agency, seen by AFP, names five customs inspectors it says "cannot be replaced" because of their political ties. Each of them is either backed by the FPM, the Future Movement, the Amal Movement and Hezbollah, or Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces, the report said. — AFP

Israel jets bomb Gaza after...

Continued from Page 1

Israel and Netanyahu accused the militants of seeking to derail them. "They want to prevent peace, they won't. We will hit everyone who tries to harm us, and we will extend a hand of peace to all who reach out to us to make peace," the prime minister said in a statement.

Trump said the agreements "will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive peace across the entire region". "After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East," he said. Speaking later to reporters, he said Israel would enter into similar deals with up to nine other countries, including regional power Saudi Arabia.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned that the deals would "not achieve peace in the region" until the US and Israel acknowledged his people's right to a state. "Peace, security and stability will not be achieved in the region until the Israeli occupation ends," he said. Abbas warned that "attempts to bypass the Palestinian people and its leadership, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, will have dangerous consequences".

Israel's arch-foe Iran said the UAE and Bahrain were reaching out to a regime that is "committing more crimes in Palestine every day". "Some of the region's countries, their people are pious Muslims but their rulers understand neither religion nor (their) debt ... to the nation of Palestine," President Hassan Rouhani told his cabinet yesterday. UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov arrived in Gaza yesterday for pre-scheduled meetings with Hamas officials. Hamas has joined the Palestinian Authority in condemning the UAE and Bahrain accords as a "betrayal" of their cause. — AFP

India virus cases cross...

Continued from Page 1

Nabarro told British MPs on Tuesday. "This is really serious - we're not even in the middle of it yet. We're still at the beginning of it."

The spread of the virus has accelerated in some of the most populous parts of the world such as India, where the latest million infections were detected over just 11 days. And some experts have warned that the total number of cases could be far higher in the vast nation, which has been easing one of the world's strictest lockdowns recently despite the surge to help its reeling economy.

With scientists rushing to find an effective vaccination seen as the way to end the pandemic, nine candidates are in late-stage human trials - the final stage of clinical testing, according to the WHO. But the United States has led wealthier nations already

buying up millions of doses of promising models, prompting the WHO to call for cooperation to equitably distribute doses to ensure poorer countries have access.

The US remains the worst-hit nation in the world in terms of both infections and deaths, and Trump is under intense pressure over his handling of the coronavirus crisis. The Republican leader said Tuesday that a vaccine may be available within a month - an acceleration of even his own optimistic predictions. "We're within weeks of getting it, you know - could be three weeks, four weeks," Trump said during a town hall event broadcast on ABC News.

Germany's health minister Jens Spahn said Tuesday the country aims to reach herd immunity through a voluntary coronavirus vaccine expected to be widely available by mid-2021. That came as airlines ramped up pressure on the European Union to coordinate virus measures, demanding an end to quarantine "chaos" and access to reliable and quick testing. The UN said Tuesday the pandemic cost the global tourism sector \$460 billion in the first six months of 2020. — AFP

Morocco village riffs on Hendrix...

Continued from Page 1

There are no soundtracks or images left from the rock icon's journey, but countless myths surround his fleeting trip. "He visited friends who were staying in the village. It was the last time that we saw him," sighed Boualala, clad in traditional brown qamis tunic. "They say he is dead but only God knows."

Hendrix choked on his own vomit in a hotel in London on Sept 18, 1970 after swallowing sleeping pills and drinking red wine. Images celebrating the American musician are a permanent fixture in Diabat's white houses, nestled in coastal sand. With its Cafe Jimi and the Hendrix inn, the village has an

air of sanctuary, half rock and half flower power. Action shots and colorful portraits commemorate the historic passing of the guitar wizard, but he wowed the crowds at Woodstock.

"Hendrix looked in good shape" when he visited, insisted Abdelaziz Khaba, 72, his memory seemingly unhindered by the sands of time. "He was surrounded by hefty bodyguards," Khaba added that he had posed for a snap with the guitar wizard, but "lost the photo". While trips to Morocco in the 1960s by celebrities including Jim Morrison, Paul McCartney and Robert Plant were well documented, mystery swirls around Hendrix's own stay, giving rise to a dizzying array of fantasies.

His "short visit... produced a mountain of erroneous information and fictitious stories," said Caesar Glebbeek, a Hendrix biographer, in an article on the website UniVibes. Local legend even has it that Hendrix's "Castles made of Sand" was inspired by the ruins of Diabat's Dar Sultan Palace. — AFP

Local

Around 800 expats from banned countries to return: Report

Including doctors, judges, maintenance experts and technicians

KUWAIT: Kuwait is looking to arrange for the return of a group of expatriates stuck in countries from which travel to the Gulf state is banned, so that they can go back to their jobs in state departments where their services are urgently needed, a local Arabic daily reported yesterday. In this regard, the Cabinet's supreme committee for the coronavirus emergency agreed to impose institutional quarantine on some expats from banned countries who work in various jobs in Kuwait on returning to the country, informed sources told Al-Rai. "The total number of expats approved to return and be quarantined at their own expense or the expense of the bodies they work for is initially 800," the sources explained, noting that a second batch of 600 others is awaiting approval. "The approved categories include doctors, judges, as well as maintenance experts and technical teams of the ministries of oil and electricity and water," the sources highlighted. The list does not include public school teachers, some of whom have been stuck abroad since Kuwait initially closed its airport over six months ago as a precaution against COVID-19.



Public school teachers off list

Institutional quarantine

Responding to a question about whether the government might consider allowing people to return from the banned countries provided that they adhere to the institutional quarantine condition, the sources said that would mean the list of banned countries is not needed, which contradicts with the need to keep assessing health situations in those countries that are witnessing a surge in the number of infections or are unstable. Although the sources stressed the economic feasibility of this proposal, they



stressed that health considerations remain the prime concern, especially in view of the increase in infected cases due to not following preventive measures. Upon resumption of commercial flights on August 1, Kuwait announced a list of 32 countries to and from which flights would remain suspended until further notice. The list includes Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Northern Macedonia, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka and Syria.

Dentist, clerk engage in parking lot brawl

KUWAIT: A dentist and a clerk - both Kuwaitis - working in a polyclinic in Ahmadi were arrested for fighting in the clinic's parking lot, said security sources, noting that patients coming out of the clinic saw the fight and called the police. A case was filed pending further legal action after both parties brought medical reports of their injuries.

Sheep stolen

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man reported that two unidentified robbers attacked the guard of his ranch, threatened him with a cleaver and stole eight sheep and the guard's mobile phone to prevent him from calling the police. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress to identify and arrest the robbers.

Fugitive arrested

KUWAIT: A bedoon man wanted for an unpaid debt was arrested in Jahra with the 'chemical' drug, said security sources. Case papers indicate that on a routine patrol, Jahra detectives suspected someone they had stopped was under the influence. However, on checking on him, detectives found he is a bedoon wanted for unpaid debts. On searching him, detectives found the drugs. The drugs were confiscated and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities.

Drug possession

KUWAIT: Ahmadi detectives arrested a Kuwaiti who looked nervous and tried to escape from a checkpoint when they asked for his ID, said security sources, noting that policemen chased the suspect and managed to control him. Detectives also found drugs with the suspect. He was referred to the drugs control department.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Ra

Life must go on

In my view



By Abdellatif Sharaa

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It was not long ago when we learned the word "herd immunity" when some countries and their officials were talking about controlling and containing the spread of coronavirus. Then many of those countries started imposing restrictions to the point of partial and full curfews in some parts of the world, which was relatively effective in reducing the number of infections.

Now it seems we are being warned about the so-called second wave, which I personally do not understand, because the virus is still here and did not go anywhere, to Mars for example, to return in the form of a second wave! It is true that it is we who have to act now following all the effort that was exerted by authorities who informed us about the virus, how it is transmitted among people and what are the steps that we have to take to avoid this lurking enemy in all corners of our cities and towns.

It is obvious now that the steps that were taken initially such as lockdowns and curfews are not to be re-implemented, at least not soon, because of economic reasons that are true in every country in the world, because they took a heavy and dizzying beating during the start of the pandemic back in February. Governments are highly aware that any interruption of the economic movement means deep recessions that are almost impossible to climb out from.

Already some companies are closed or downsized, and the number of the unemployed is worrying, so why don't we contribute to our own protection? Is it shameful to wear a mask in public? Is it hard to wash our hands more times than what we are used to? Why not maintain social distancing and refrain from shaking hands, which I still see taking place among some people. Again, all this for our own safety.

Speaking about contributing to our own safety, just one example that expresses our lack of cooperation: I was at a government authority that is frequented by thousands, and as people were in line waiting for their turn, they were very close to each other, to the point of almost touching, which is something that should not happen under normal circumstances. Officials and security men tried their best to make sense of the situation, but the sheer numbers made it impossible to organize, so it is us people who should understand and cooperate.

I still meet people, as life must go on. But I do not think full control over the virus can be attained without us acting. We must consider ourselves as infantry soldiers in the field as the war against this invisible enemy rages. Lines were drawn long time ago and it is high time that we join the battleground and behave as we should. Don't think the virus will disappear - we have seen many epidemics and pandemics caused by several types of viruses, and by time they became forgotten, but they are still in existence among us and will always be. God bless you.

Kuwait's COVID-19 cases near 100,000

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MOH) announced yesterday it registered 698 additional COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours, increasing the total number of infections to 96,999, while three new deaths were added to a death toll of 571. MOH's Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that the confirmed cases include patients who contracted the virus due to contact with infected people while others remained under examination to determine the source. The cases were distributed in the following health zones: 171 in Al-Ahmadi, 138 in Al-Farwaniya, 84 in Al-Jahra, 168 in Hawally and 137 in Al-Asimah (the capital). Additionally, there were 9,241 active cases, while 93 others were admitted in intensive care units, Dr Sanad elaborated. Health authorities conducted 5,384 swab tests over the past 24 hours with a total of 689,588, he revealed. Dr Sanad urged everyone in Kuwait to adhere to precautionary measures against the virus. Earlier yesterday, the ministry confirmed 968 fresh recovery cases, raising the total to 87,187 cured people so far. —KUNA

News in brief

PACI working hours extended

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) extended working hours to 8:00 pm, to give more time for people to collect their civil IDs. The PACI building in South Surra is now open to the public on weekdays for 14 hours: from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. People are required to verify on PACI's website (www.paci.gov.kw) or phone number (1889988) whether their civil IDs are ready or not before going to collect it.



Birds banned from Russia

KUWAIT: Kuwait banned importing all types of live birds, eggs and one-day-old chicks from Russia due to the spread of a severe bird flu in the country. All imports must commit to the regulations of the authority in accordance with the laws of the World Organization for Animal Health and the GCC states, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources said in a statement on Tuesday. Arriving bird shipments will be tested for diseases and if found, the owner bears costs for returning the shipment to the country of origin.

Oil price up

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil rose 31 cents during Tuesday's trading to end the day at \$39.90 per barrel (pb) compared with \$39.59 pb on Monday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. The price of benchmark Brent crude went up by 29 cents to \$40.53 pb and the West Texas Intermediate rose by \$1.02 to \$39.28 pb.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Kuwait eyes 135 projects during 2019-2020 development plan

Total 660 challenges facing execution of projects: SCPD

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Dr Khaled Mahdi said the total number of projects included in the annual 2019-2020 development plan amounted to 135, as opposed to 132 ventures in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Mahdi mentioned that in a speech he delivered on the sidelines of a press conference the General Secretariat of SCPD held on Tuesday, to announce results of the annual plan follow-up report of 2019-2020 that ended on



KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi speaks during the meeting. — KUNA

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan down

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan plummeted 77.5 percent from a year earlier to JPY 13.4 billion (\$127 million) in August, down for the fifth consecutive month on sluggish export performance, government data showed yesterday. But Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 12 years and seven months, as exports still outpaced its imports by a big margin, according to a preliminary report by the Finance Ministry. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan tumbled 71.7 percent year-on-year to JPY 19.9 billion (\$189 million) for the fifth monthly decline. Imports from Japan also plunged 38.7 percent to JPY 6.4 billion (\$61 million), down for the fourth month. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan dived 49.8 percent to JPY 272.9 billion (\$2.6 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region falling 48.0 percent from a year earlier.

Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 94.3 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, shrank 48.5 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan decreased 42.9 percent, chiefly due to weak sales of automobiles, machinery, steel and electric equipment. The world's third-biggest economy posted a global surplus of JPY 248.3 billion (\$2.4 billion) in August, marking the second straight month of black ink. However, overall exports slumped 14.8 percent from the year before, as global demand, especially motor vehicles, mineral fuels and vessels was weak amid the coronavirus pandemic. Imports also slid 20.8 percent on cheaper energy bills, such as crude oil, LNG and coal. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA



KD 3.2 billion
funds in
2019-2020 plan

March 31, 2020. He added that the continuous annual plan projects from previous plans amounted to 119, as well as 16 new ones, noting that the percentage of projects in the implementation phase for this year reached 50 percent. The completed rate of ventures are in the following: 10 projects with seven percent done, three projects with two percent, 67 others at 50 percent, 51 ventures with 38 percent, in addition to four projects at three percent, he explained.

Main challenges

The number of challenges facing execution of projects reached 660, including 248 administrative challenges, 190 technical challenges, 103 of financial natures, 91 challenges for supervisory authori-

Gulf Bank participates in Kuwait's largest cleanup campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its multiple efforts throughout the year to take action on preserving environmental sustainability, Gulf Bank will be participating in the largest campaign in Kuwait to clean public places, in honor of World Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 19, 2020.

ties and 28 legislative ones, he said, adding that 492 others were solved, accounting for 75 percent of the total hurdles that emerged in projects' execution. The completion rate of projects are in the following: the Clean Fuels project amounted to 98.8 percent, Al-Zour Refinery project at 95.4 percent, Shagaya Renewable Energy Park project reached 95.2 percent and Al-Mutlaa City project with 58 percent, he said. He explained the completion rate for the following projects: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project amounted to 52.7 percent, Kuwait International Airport Terminal 2 project reached 35.1 percent, Sabah Al-Salem University City project at 54.8 percent and Al-Sabah Hospital project was 73 percent. He indicated that 40 percent of the projects are in line with the schedule, 2 percent of the projects are ahead of schedule, while 58 percent are late.

Al-Nowair's Founder and CEO, Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, has signed an international agreement officially registering and adding Kuwait to the global list of countries participating in the cleanup campaign. By participating in World Cleanup Day, participants have the chance to organize the largest daily gathering of waste in Kuwait's history through various community programs and campaigns.

As part of the initiative, participants will take part in a cleanup day aimed at raising awareness on the importance of sustainability throughout the year. The initiative is supported by multiple public and private sector institutions, in addition to various volunteer groups that will be cleaning across Kuwait to contribute to the initiative.

Commenting on this initiative, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "We are very pleased to be one of the collaborators



Salma Al-Hajjaj

Strategic projects

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary General for Planning and Follow-up Nadia Al-Hamlan said in a similar speech that the number of strategic projects in the development plan amounted to 22 projects. The total funds in the 2018-2019 development plan amounted to KD 3.8 billion (about \$12.4 billion), as opposed to about KD 3.2 billion (\$10.4 billion) in the 2019-2020 development plan. The percentage of spending on projects decreased from 71 percent to 67.4 percent compared to last year, Hamlan added. She emphasized that the annual report monitors what was done during the 2019-2020 development plan, pointing out that the results are based on data that the participants from the plan include in the automated follow-up system, in addition to field visits to projects to learn about the operational position of each project, monitoring the obstacles they face. — KUNA

who are supporting this noble campaign. At Gulf Bank, we are committed to supporting sustainability at the community, economic, and environmental levels, through various initiatives that are strategically chosen to not only benefit the Bank, but to also give back to the country, as part of our commitment to our beloved Kuwait. With this spirit in mind, we are proud to see our Gulf Bank employees volunteer for this campaign, and we invite everyone to participate with us in promoting environmental sustainability in Kuwait this Saturday." Volunteers who wish to participate can register their names through the initiative's website: <https://www.alnowair.com/lets-doitkuwait/?lang=en>.

Al-Nowair is a non-profit initiative founded in 2013 by Sheikha Intisar Al Sabah, and is the first initiative of its kind in the region. Dedicated to promoting a positive attitude in Kuwait, Al-Nowair was born out of scientific research and the founder's personal experience that a positive attitude is the most important contributor to a community's overall wellbeing and happiness. Al-Nowair's work is rooted in research in positive psychology and aims to bring about positive social behavioral change in Kuwait, and has also been recognized by the United Nations Development Program.

Kuwaiti charity builds school for Syrian refugees

ANKARA: The Kuwaiti Al-Najat charity on Tuesday laid the corner stone of a large educational complex for Syrian refugees in the south-eastern Turkish town of Sanliurfa. Ibrahim Al-Bader, the director of external education at the

Kuwaiti association, said that the planned complex would accommodate 3,000 students. The huge building would also include sections for computer teaching classes. The teaching facility is named after the Kuwaiti philanthropist Abdulaziz Al-Hassan, renowned for various and much applauded charitable activities. Meanwhile, teams of the society distributed food to 300 Syrian refugee families. They were also involved in psychological remedy programs for Syrian refugee orphans. Moreover, they distributed clothes to the orphans and distributed school supplies, including bags, among students. — KUNA



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Locked up, back up:
Thai dissidents who
refuse to give in

Trump says coronavirus vaccine could be ready in a month

Page 7

Page 6



TOKYO: Newly elected leader of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Yoshihide Suga (C) is applauded by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Taro Aso (L), Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi (2nd L) and other officials after he was elected as Japan's prime minister by the Lower House of parliament in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

Yoshihide Suga named Japan's new PM

Suga's new cabinet announced with several ministers keeping their jobs

TOKYO: Yoshihide Suga became Japan's new prime minister yesterday, with the former chief cabinet secretary expected to stick closely to policies championed by Shinzo Abe during his record-breaking tenure.

Suga, 71, won an easy victory in a parliamentary vote, where his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) holds a commanding majority. He bowed deeply as lawmakers applauded his win, but made no immediate comment. He is not expected to speak until late Wednesday, when he gives his first press conference as prime minister.

Suga's new cabinet was announced shortly after the vote, with several ministers keeping their jobs, including Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Finance Minister Taro Aso.

Abe's brother Nobuo Kishi, who was adopted by his uncle as a child and carries his surname, is the new defence minister, replacing Taro Kono, who becomes administrative reform minister.

Suga is seen as a continuity candidate and has said his run was inspired by a desire to pursue Abe's policies, although analysts warned of challenges ahead. "Tough issues are mounting before the Suga cabinet," said Shinichi Nishikawa, a professor of political science at Meiji University in Tokyo.

"The coronavirus is the top priority to tackle. On the diplomatic front, there are many uncertain factors, including the US presidential election," he told AFP. Abe formally resigned earlier Wednesday along with his cabinet, ending his record run in office with a year left in his mandate.

He was forced out by a recurrence of ulcerative

colitis, a bowel disease that has long plagued him. Tokyo stock markets were largely unmoved by Suga's election, and no major policy changes were expected when the Bank of Japan ends a two-day meeting on Thursday.



This is my mission



'This is my mission'

Suga has spent decades in politics, and has a reputation for pushing government policies through a sometimes intractable bureaucracy.

He doggedly defended the government as its chief spokesman, including in sometimes testy exchanges with journalists. His upbringing, as the son of a strawberry-farmer father and schoolteacher mother, sets him apart from Japan's many blue-blood political elites.

But while he has championed some measures intended to help rural areas like his hometown in northern Japan's Akita, his political views remain something of a mystery.

was killed. Those include more oversight from commanding officers about search warrants, the hiring of a team of social workers, and encouraging officers to do community service.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said the city "is not waiting to move ahead with needed reforming to prevent the tragedy like this from ever happening again."

Taylor was killed when three plainclothes police officers executing a "no knock" search warrant burst into her apartment late at night.

Taylor's boyfriend, who was in bed with her, grabbed a gun and exchanged fire with the officers. He later said he thought they were criminals.

The officers, who had not activated their body cameras as required, shot Taylor eight times, killing her. A police sergeant was also wounded.

The agreement signals an end to the civil proceedings but not to the criminal investigation, which has yet to lead to any charges, six months after Taylor's death.

The three said they had announced themselves before entering. They later filed an after-action report that was found to be rife with errors.

The raid was carried out simultaneously with a handful of others targeting Taylor's ex-boyfriend, an alleged narcotics dealer. But Taylor had broken up with him months before.

"As significant as today is, it's only the beginning of getting full justice for Breonna," said her mother,

He is viewed as more pragmatic than ideological, and during his campaign spoke more about the need for administrative reforms than any grand guiding principles.

Suga has said kickstarting the economy, which was already in recession before the pandemic, will be a top priority, along with containing the virus — essential if the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics are to open as planned in July 2021.

His recipe for doing that? More of the same. "In order to overcome the crisis and give the Japanese people a sense of relief, we need to succeed in what Prime Minister Abe has been implementing," Suga said after being elected LDP leader on Monday. "This is my mission."

'All my strength'

His cabinet was seen as evidence of those plans, with a slew of familiar faces, among them just two women — the Olympics and justice ministers — down from the three who served in Abe's last government.

Suga is expected to stick with his predecessor's signature "Abenomics" programme of vast government spending, massive monetary easing and the cutting of red tape.

And on the foreign policy front, where Suga is a relative novice, he is also likely to tread the path charted by Abe, prioritising the key relationship with the United States, regardless of who is president after November's election.

Relations with China may prove trickier with a global hardening of opinion against Beijing after the coronavirus and unrest in Hong Kong.

Tamika Palmer. "It's time to move forward with the criminal charges."

No criminal charges yet

Taylor's family filed a civil complaint in April seeking redress, claiming that the search warrant was in error and that the officers had fired blindly and without due diligence.

One of the three officers, Brett Hankison, has since been fired, and the other two were suspended. The city has also banned "no knock" warrants. The case has sparked international outrage, and earned celebrity attention.

Oprah Winfrey paid for billboards in Kentucky deploring justice for Taylor. US Open champion Naomi Osaka wore a face mask bearing Taylor's name during her run for the title.

Formula One star Lewis Hamilton wore a t-shirt that read "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor" on the podium at Sunday's Tuscan Grand Prix. A portrait of Taylor graced the cover of Vanity Fair magazine's September issue.

But so far, none of the officers has been charged — a fact that has fueled daily anti-racism protests in Louisville for weeks. Armed militia members, claiming to want to prevent acts of vandalism, have also been present, notably on the sidelines of the Kentucky Derby on September 5. — AFP

There has been speculation that Suga could call a snap election to consolidate his position and avoid being seen as a caretaker prime minister, but he has been circumspect on the prospect.

Abe, who served as prime minister for a total of eight years, will stay on as a lawmaker, with some mooting the possibility he could undertake diplomatic missions. On Wednesday morning as he prepared to resign, Abe said he had given "all my strength" and was ending his tenure "with a sense of pride". "I owe everything to the Japanese people." — AFP

UAE, Bahrain will bear 'consequences' of Israel deals: Iran

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain will be responsible for any 'consequences' resulting from their normalisation of relations with Tehran's arch-foe Israel.

The remarks came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates signed agreements establishing full diplomatic ties at a ceremony at the White House.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said that Israel is "committing more crimes in Palestine every day". "Some of the region's countries, their people are pious Muslims but their rulers neither understand religion nor (their) debt ... to the nation of Palestine, to their brothers speaking their language," he said in televised remarks.

"How could you reach out your hands to Israel? And then you want to give them bases in the region? All the severe consequences that would arise from this are on you."

US President Donald Trump said similar Washington-brokered deals were close between Israel and several Arab countries, including Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia. "After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East," Trump said.

Iran had previously warned Bahrain that its deal made it a partner to Israel's "crimes" and accused the UAE of betraying the Muslim world. In 2016, Bahrain cut diplomatic ties with Iran and the UAE downgraded relations amid rising tensions between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic republic.

Sunni-ruled Bahrain has faced long-running unrest among its large Shiite community that it has consistently blamed on Iran. — AFP

Family of US police shooting victim settles civil case for \$12m

WASHINGTON: Relatives of Breonna Taylor, a black woman killed in a police shooting in her own home, announced Tuesday they have settled their wrongful death suit with the US city of Louisville for \$12 million, as well as promises of local law enforcement reforms.

The civil settlement was substantial and relatively quick, reflecting the public pressure and emotion surrounding the case of the 26-year-old, which became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement.

After Taylor's death on March 13, another black citizen, George Floyd, died on May 25 in Minneapolis while a police officer knelt on his neck, sparking protests across the country against racism and police brutality.

Taylor family attorney Ben Crump called the \$12 million settlement "historic" but said the "comprehensive reform" plan was "equally important."

Authorities in Louisville and the state of Kentucky pledged to implement measures that might head off incidents similar to the botched raid in which Taylor

International

West Africa leaders hope for Mali civilian transition 'in days'

Sanctions placed against Mali will be lifted by ECOWAS

PEDUAISE: West African leaders said they hope to see a civilian-led transition government installed in Mali "in days" after holding talks on Tuesday with the military junta that seized power in the fragile state last month.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) slapped sanctions on Mali after the putsch, including closing borders and a ban on trade and financial flows, and has called for elections within 12 months.

"We need a civilian leadership of the transition," Ghana President Nana Akufo-Addo, who currently chairs ECOWAS, told journalists after hosting the meeting.

"The minute that leadership is put in place through the processes they themselves have agreed upon in Mali, the sanctions that have been placed against Mali will be lifted by ECOWAS."

Akufo-Addo said that a mediator from the bloc would travel to Bamako in a week and that regional leaders wanted the process finished.

"I'm hoping that by the time he gets there these things would have been completed," the Ghanaian leader said. "We're talking hopefully in days not in weeks."

ECOWAS had given Mali's new military rulers until Tuesday to name a civilian president and prime minister to head a transitional government.

The junta missed that deadline but its leader Colonel Assimi Goita, who was appointed interim head of state, attended the talks in Ghana on his first trip abroad since his seizure of power.

Ivory Coast's President Alassane Ouattara insisted the meeting had made progress by "confirming

that the president and the prime minister must be civilians". "As soon as they are designated, we will lift the sanctions," he told journalists.

Opposition criticism

The military junta over the weekend backed an arrangement for an 18-month transition government in which the junta would be given the leading role in choosing the interim president.

But the document was rejected by Mali's protest movement. It underscored its objections on Tuesday, while stressing it did not want to "break or get involved in a conflict" with the junta.

The communique said that consultations about the transition — which culminated in a document published on Saturday after a three-day forum — were marked by "intimidation (and) anti-democratic and unfair practices" and "the desire to monopolise and confiscate power to the benefit of (the junta)."

"Corrections must be able to be made to the national consultation documents," said Mountaga Tall, a leader of the so-called June 5 Movement, or M5, an alliance of political parties, trade unions, religious figures and NGOs.

Mali's former president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, 75, was toppled after months of protests by the M5 demanding his resignation. He had been facing deep anger over an eight-year-old jihadist insurgency, economic problems and entrenched corruption. The M5 wants to be given equal status with the junta during the transition.

Other criticism it has made of the junta-backed transition charter concerns the powers that would



ACCRA: Ghana President Nana Akufo-Addo (L), chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), interacts with an official at the ECOWAS meeting in Accra, Ghana, as part of several efforts to resolve the political crisis in Mali. —AFP

be given to the vice president, tasked with defence and security — a job description considered to be tailor-made for Goita.

Unstable past

Mali's neighbours, who are anxious to avoid the fragile Sahel state spiralling into chaos, have not yet reacted to the transition roadmap. Last month's coup is Mali's fourth since gaining independence from France in 1960.

According to analysis by Amnesty International, the yet unidentified woman was killed along a road in the small town of Awasse.

The executioners were heard shouting in Portuguese that she is a member of al-Shabaab, the name of shadowy jihadist group that has led a growing insurgency against the government since 2017.

Deprose Muchena, Amnesty's regional director for east and southern Africa, said the incident was consistent with the watchdog's recent findings of rights violations and crimes "committed by the Mozambican armed forces."

Human Rights Watch (HRW) researcher Zenaida Machado said the government had failed to keep the security forces in line. "Instead ... what they invested on is a campaign of denial, a campaign of attacking groups like ours, activists and anyone who condemns the attitude and conduct of security forces," Machado said.

Military forces have been struggling to regain control of Cabo Delgado, which is home to one of Africa's biggest liquefied natural gas projects. The jihadist violence has claimed more than 1,500 lives and displaced at least 250,000 people since 2017. —AFP



BANGKOK: This photo taken on September 5, 2020 shows activist Somyot Prueksakasemsuk (C), who was jailed on lese majeste charges, speaking with fellow anti-government protesters during a student rally in Bangkok. —AFP

people directly".

But dozens of student protesters have been hit with a sedition charge instead — potentially facing up to seven years in jail — and also accused of breaking coronavirus distancing rules by taking part in demonstrations. Some prominent activists have been charged multiple times for taking part in the protests.

The situation remains "dangerous", said Prontip Mankhong, a former playwright who spent two years in prison for a work deemed defamatory by a court. Her experience was captured in a memoir, "All They Could Do to Us", which had a second print-run this year due to its popularity with protesters.

but did not directly criticise Pyongyang. "I believe the North has willingness to comply with the (2018) agreement in its own way," he said.

With less than two years of his single presidential term remaining, time is running out for the South's Moon — who has long championed engagement with Pyongyang — to reach a settlement with the North.

But Pyongyang has repeatedly said it has no interest in talking to Seoul since the breakdown of the Hanoi summit over sanctions relief and what the nuclear-armed North would be willing to give up in return. Regardless, Moon has called for another meeting between Kim and US President Donald Trump before the US presidential election in November — even though that process is currently deadlocked. —AFP



Talking hopefully

Amnesty seeks probe into Mozambique naked woman execution

JOHANNESBURG: Rights watchdog Amnesty International on Tuesday called for an independent probe into the killing of a naked pregnant woman by men in military uniform in Mozambique's restive north, an atrocity the government blamed on jihadist rebels.

Video footage emerged this week showing men in army uniform beating a woman they accused of being an insurgent and then pumping bullets into her. The Amnesty call came as the government in Maputo blamed the killing on militants who have waged a violent insurgency in the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province for the past three years.

"The authorities in Mozambique must immediately launch an independent and impartial investigation into the extrajudicial killing of a defenceless naked woman,"

Amnesty said. The government had on Monday vowed to investigate the video killing. But Interior Minister Amade Miquidade on Tuesday said the killers were jihadists dressed in uniforms "identical" to that of government troops.

"The video showing atrocities against a pregnant woman is propaganda by terrorists," he said in an audio statement. "The video was made by terrorists ... to confuse the public and it is not the first time that this has happened," he said.

The video first circulated on social media on Monday, but was first shared privately on mobile phones on September 7, the day it is suspected to have been taken, according to Amnesty.

It showed what appears to be government troops shouting and marching behind a woman stripped of her clothing before beating and shooting her 36 times.

'Campaign of denial'

Amnesty said the footage was yet "another gruesome example of the gross human rights violations and merciless killings taking place in Cabo Delgado by the Mozambican security forces."

"He made all the rules and called it democracy," anti-junta activist Pai — real name Jatupat Boonpattaraksa — told AFP. Pai also fell afoul of the notorious royal defamation law.

Arrested in 2016 after sharing a BBC article about King Maha Vajiralongkorn on Facebook, he was jailed for more than two years before receiving a royal pardon in 2019. "This generation of kids is coming out to say what we have not dared say before," said the 29-year-old.

Today, he helps fire up the crowds alongside his Gen-Z counterparts, many of them inspired by Hong Kong's leaderless pro-democracy protests.

'Still no freedom'

Just six people were behind bars on lese majeste charges before the 2014 coup, according to legal aid groups. Somyot was among them, ensnared by the law in 2011 after his now-defunct "Voice of Thaksin" magazine published satirical articles about a fictional king. Part of the "Red Shirt" movement, he supported former billionaire premier Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a 2006 coup and lives in self-imposed exile.

Somyot said he was disappointed to see the junta still in power when he was released in 2018. "I came out to this society that still has no freedom." By the end of the junta's five-year regime, the number of lese majeste convictions had surged to at least 169 although use of the law has slowed in recent years.

Prayut has said this is due to the "mercy" of the king. Using lese majeste is not good for the monarchy's image, Somyot said, explaining it implies the institution is "confronting the

towards transport links, and a visit by Kim to Seoul — have come to pass.

Instead relations have been at a standstill since the collapse of a Hanoi summit between the North and the US last year, and this June Pyongyang blew up a North-South liaison office on its side of the border. But Seoul's unification minister Lee In-young said: "I hope that communication channels, including the inter-Korean liaison office, can be restored and we can resume open-minded dialogue at an early date."

Lee spoke in front of a pine tree which Moon and Kim planted together in Panmunjom, the truce village in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, during their first summit two years ago.

Lee, a political heavyweight, described the demotion of the liaison office as a "regrettable affair",

Locked up, back up: Thai dissidents who refuse to give in

BANGKOK: Jailed seven years for publishing satire of a fictitious royal family, activist Somyot Prueksakasemsuk is in awe today as university students spearhead a growing movement demanding reforms to Thailand's ultra-powerful monarchy.

Young activists have staged near-daily protests for the past two months calling for frank discussions of the unassailable royal family's role — once a taboo topic because of Thailand's draconian royal defamation laws.

And they have inspired Somyot to join the rallies in Bangkok, even if he is fearful of a possible crackdown. "The struggle is not finished," the veteran activist, 58, told AFP. "I'm really proud that our efforts in the past continue... The new generation is discovering the reality — that there is no hope for them under this system."

Among the students' demands is the abolition of the so-called "112" law, which shields the royal family from defamation but has been broadly interpreted to target any criticism.

It carries a maximum sentence of 15 years per charge. They are also calling for the resignation of premier Prayut Chan-O-cha — a former army chief who masterminded the 2014 coup — and a rewrite to the military-scripted constitution they say stacked last year's election in his favour.

Seoul minister seeks to warm chilled Pyongyang ties

SEOUL: South Korea's unification minister sought to re-open dialogue with the North yesterday, with relations in the deep freeze just days before the second anniversary of a wide-ranging co-operation agreement.

Very few of the pledges signed by the North's leader Kim Jong Un and the South's president Moon Jae-in at their 2018 Pyongyang summit — among them joint sports teams and an Olympic bid, work

How Belgrade's sewers taint Europe's river

BELGRADE: Just down the road from Belgrade's historic city centre, gates open for trucks to pass to the banks of the Danube, where they dump raw sewage into Europe's venerated river.

It's not a secret operation, but rather a business nobody likes to mention in the Serbian capital — the only one in Europe to spew all of its unfiltered wastewater into the continent's second-longest river. A heavy odour rises as the brown stream of faeces flows into the waterway, a far cry from the colours that inspired Johann Strauss to write his famous waltz "On the Beautiful Blue Danube".

For fishermen who live off the fruits of the Danube and the Sava rivers that join in a beautiful, broad confluence around Belgrade's old fortress, this daily practice is "disastrous". "I want to cry, and nobody cares," Dragoljub Ristic, a 59-year-old fisherman told AFP.

Around a third of Belgrade, a city of 1.6 million, has no connection to drainage systems and instead relies on the septic tanks that the trucks empty straight into the rivers. The rest shunt their unprocessed waste into the river through around 100 sewage drains.

Roughly 190 million cubic meters of wastewater — or 60,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools — are poured into the rivers annually, according to estimates made by infrastructure minister Zorana Mihajlovic.

"No big city in Europe commits such a crime towards its rivers," claims Belgrade Deputy Mayor Goran Vesic, who has called for a proper wastewater treatment system. The Danube begins in Germany and snakes through nine other countries over 2,850 kilometres (1,770 miles) before draining into the Black Sea.

A group of Austrian scientists in 2019 noted a "critical" presence of E. coli bacteria in Serbia's strip of the river, which local experts say is a sign of the high levels of organic pollution. If consumed, the bacteria can cause infections, said Igor Jezdimirovic, from the local NGO Environment Engineering.

Riverbed build-up

Thanks to its sheer size and power, the Danube mostly manages to "cleanse itself", said Bozo Dalmacija, a chemistry professor leading a water quality research team in Serbia. For most of the year bacterial particles stay below 500 micrograms per millilitre, the level at which they pose a health hazard, he told AFP. Those who spend their lives on the river say they have already seen it change, with a build up of waste shallowing out the riverbed.

While scientific studies are hard to come by, fishermen say the sewage has altered the variety of fish that end up in their nets. Whitefish are harder to find whereas bottom feeders like catfish, which eat the waste, are more abundant.

"We have killed all our rivers, we will kill this one too," lamented Mladen Jovic, a 59-year-old fisherman. "The Danube is a very strong and powerful river that manages (the pollution), but it can't do it forever," he added. Serbia is an EU candidate country which hopes to join the bloc by 2025. Its environmental record is a major obstacle, with the country needing a five billion euro investment to build the necessary eco-friendly infrastructure.

The country has already stated it will not be able to meet the demands, proposing an 11-year transition period after it joins the bloc. "It can't be done in five years. We are already late," Dalmacija told AFP. —AFP

International

Trump says coronavirus vaccine could be ready in a month

Minorities made up 78% of US COVID-19 pediatric deaths

PHILADELPHIA: US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a coronavirus vaccine may be available within a month — an acceleration of even his own optimistic predictions — but added that the pandemic could go away by itself.

"We're very close to having a vaccine," he told a town hall question-and-answer session with voters in Pennsylvania aired on ABC News. "We're within weeks of getting it you know — could be three weeks, four weeks," he said.

Only hours earlier, speaking to Fox News, Trump had said a vaccine could come in "four weeks, it could be eight weeks." Democrats have expressed concern that Trump is putting political pressure on government health regulators and scientists to approve a rushed vaccine in time to help turn around his uphill bid for reelection against challenger Joe Biden on November 3.

Experts including top US government infectious diseases doctor Anthony Fauci say vaccine approval is more likely toward the end of the year. At the ABC town hall Trump was asked why he'd downplayed the gravity of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has now killed close to 200,000 people in the US.

Trump replied by saying: "I didn't downplay it. I actually, in many ways, I up-played it in terms of action." But Trump himself told journalist Bob Woodward during taped interviews for the new book "Rage" — published Tuesday — that he had deliberately decided to "play it down" to avoid alarming Americans.

'Herd mentality'

Returning to one of his most controversial views on the virus, that has ravaged the economy and which government scientists say will remain a danger for some time, Trump insisted "it is going to disappear." "It would go away without the vaccine but

it's going to go away a lot faster with it," he said. Challenged about how the virus would go away by itself, he said "you'll develop like a herd mentality," apparently meaning the concept of herd immunity, when enough people have developed resistance to the disease to effectively stop transmission.

"It's going to be herd developed and that's going to happen. That will all happen but with a vaccine, I think it will go away very quickly. But I really believe we're rounding the corner," he said.

The president, who is rarely seen wearing a mask in public and long refused to push Americans to adopt the habit, said "a lot of people don't want to wear masks and people don't think masks are good." Asked what people he meant, Trump answered: "Waiters." "They come over and they serve you and they have a mask," he said. "I saw it the other day when they were serving me and they're playing with the mask. I'm not blaming them. I'm just saying what happens: They're playing with the mask. So the mask is over, and they're touching it, and then they're touching the plate, and that can't be good."

Polls show that a majority of Americans disapprove of Trump's handling of the health crisis. The latest NBC News/SurveyMonkey Weekly Tracking poll Tuesday found that 52 percent of adults do not trust Trump's statements about an upcoming coronavirus vaccine, compared to 26 percent who do.

Racial minorities accounted for 78 percent of Covid-19 deaths under the age of 21 in the United States between February and July, a government report said Tuesday.

Out of 121 deaths among under-21s, 45 percent were among Hispanics, 29 percent among blacks and four percent among American Indians or Alaskan Natives, according to the study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Together, these groups represent 41 percent of



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany walk toward members of the press prior to Trump's departure from the White House on September 15, 2020 in Washington. President Trump was traveling to Philadelphia to participate in an ABC News town hall event. — AFP

the US population under 21. Overall, mortality among children and youths is far lower than adults: the CDC identified 392,000 cases in the time period, which was eight percent of the total figure, and only 0.08 percent of all deaths.

Under-21s make up 26 percent of the US population. But the study does offer further proof that children and adolescents are not immune to the virus and a post-viral condition called multisystem

inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), which was also included in the research. As other investigations have previously established, boys and men are at greater risk and accounted for 63 percent of deaths in the current study. Three-quarters of the deaths involved people with at least one underlying condition including chronic lung disease, asthma, obesity, neurologic and developmental conditions, and cardiovascular conditions. — AFP

Hurricane Sally gains strength as it nears southern US

NEW ORLEANS: Hurricane Sally picked up strength as it edged towards the US Gulf Coast early yesterday, with forecasts of drenching rains that could provoke "historic" and potentially deadly flash floods.

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) said coastal areas in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida were in the sights of the storm, that was packing maximum sustained winds of around 105 miles (165 kilometers) per hour by midnight local time (0500 GMT). The storm — previously downgraded to Category 1 — had strengthened again to Category 2, it said.

"Historic life-threatening flooding likely along portions of the northern Gulf coast," the Miami-based center had warned late Tuesday, adding the hurricane could dump up to 20 inches (50 centimeters) of rain in some areas.

About 75,000 homes in Alabama and Florida were already without power Tuesday evening, according to the Weather Channel, and video posted to social media appeared to show some areas had started to flood.

At 0500 GMT, Sally was about 65 miles south of Mobile, Alabama and heading north at a crawling pace of two miles per hour in the Gulf of Mexico, though the storm was expected to pick up speed through today.

Sally is one of five tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Ocean — a phenomenon only recorded once before, in September 1971, according to meteorologists. Alabama governor Kay Ivey told a press conference: "We are looking at record flooding, perhaps breaking historic levels. And with rising water comes a greater risk for loss of property and life."

"I urge you in the strongest way possible to evacuate if conditions permit and seek shelter elsewhere as possible today," Ivey had declared a state of emergency Monday ahead of Sally's arrival. President Donald Trump, speaking on "Fox & Friends," compared Sally to Hurricane Laura, which battered Texas and Louisiana, as well as the Caribbean, just a few weeks ago.

Record year

"This one is smaller but it's a little bit more direct, but we have it under control," he said. "We have it under watch very strongly." Earlier, he tweeted: "We are fully engaged with State & Local Leaders to assist the great people of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi."

He urged people in the storm's path to "listen to State and Local Leaders." Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves had also declared a state of emergency ahead of the approaching storm.

He said the storm surge projections were "worrying with anywhere from five to eight feet of coastal surge." Governor John Bel Edwards of Louisiana, which is still recovering after Hurricane Laura made landfall in the state as a Category 4 storm, told residents Monday to be prepared.

"Be smart and be safe," he tweeted. At a hurricane refuge in Pascagoula, a coastal town in eastern Mississippi, 50-year-old evacuee Cliton Shepherd was hoping the area could avoid the worst. "I don't think the wind is going to hurt anything, hopefully." — AFP

Germany to take in 1,500 refugees from Greek islands

LESBOS: Germany said Tuesday it will take in more than 1,500 refugees from Greece on top of the 150 unaccompanied minors whose camp burned down on the island of Lesbos as Berlin tried to rally a fresh EU response to a years-long migrant crisis that flared anew.

EU countries have been forced to tackle the issue as thousands of former occupants of Moria camp on Lesbos have been sleeping rough in abandoned buildings, on roadsides and rooftops, after their shelters were destroyed by the blaze on the night of September 8.

German Vice-Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Chancellor Angela Merkel's left-right coalition had agreed to take in 1,553 refugees from Greece, on top of the 150 unaccompanied minors from the burned out camp.

Germany will now also welcome families with children who have already secured refugee status in Greece but may not be from Moria.

France has agreed to take in 150 minors from the camp while other EU nations are admitting a total of 100 other youngsters from Moria. Merkel bemoaned the lack of a concerted European response Tuesday in comments attributed to her.

"This is not a sign of Europe's values and capaci-

Moussa Traore, who led Mali for 22 years, dies aged 83

BAMAKO: Moussa Traore, who led Mali for 1968 until he was ousted in a coup in 1991, died at his home aged 83 in the capital Bamako on Tuesday, his family said. As a young lieutenant in 1968, Traore was the main instigator of a coup that overthrew Modibo Keita, the country's first post-independence president. He became president the following year and ruled with an iron fist.

His 22 years at the helm of the West African country were marked by the arrests of opponents, quashed demonstrations, suspicious deaths such as that of former president Keita in detention, and accusations he embezzled international aid money.

But he was also known for his diplomatic skills. As chair of the then Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union), he played a key role in the 1989 Senegal-Mauritania crisis and the Chadian-Libyan conflict, as well as Liberia's first civil war.

Traore reached a peace agreement in 1990 with Mali's Tuareg armed rebel groups after making significant concessions. But in 1991, the soldiers he had sent to quell pro-democracy demonstrators turned against him and overthrew him in a bloody insurrection, which officially resulted in more than 200 dead and 1,000 wounded.

He was sentenced to death for "political crimes" in 1993 and, along with his wife, for economic crimes in 1999. The sentences were commuted to life in jail, and Traore was pardoned in 2002. "When you embark on a military career, you prepare yourself for the idea of not dying in your bed," he said upon hearing his first verdict in 1993.

'Patriots among us'

In recent years, Traore was increasingly seen as an elder statesman, with politicians soliciting his advice. Former prime minister Soumeylou Maiga

ty for action," she told a meeting of her parliamentary group in Berlin, according to participants. Meanwhile Greek officials said six suspects, including "young foreign nationals," have been arrested in Lesbos in connection with the fire.

Greek officials have said several times that the fire was started by migrants who faced isolation after testing positive for coronavirus. Another fire broke out late Tuesday near a camp on the island of Samos where over 4,700 migrants live.

"There is a forest fire near the camp, but it looks manageable," a fire department source told AFP.

Need 'strong' EU response

European Council chief Charles Michel, flying to Lesbos after talks with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Athens, urged the 27-nation bloc to "take more responsibilities." "We want to support the efforts made by the Greek authorities," Michel said. "We need to make more progress to improve our border controls...we need to have more partnerships with third countries, we cannot solve everything alone," he said on a hill overlooking a new tent camp hastily put together by Greek authorities.

EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson said between "8-9,000 will be able to find immediate temporary shelter" there. Five years after the arrival in Europe of over a million asylum seekers, many fleeing wars in Iraq and Syria, the question over how the bloc should share out its refugee responsibilities remains sensitive.

Opposition from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia over taking in refugees has



BAMAKO: In this file photo taken on December 31, 1985 Malian president Moussa Traore delivers his New Year wishes speech in Bamako. Moussa Traore, who led Mali from 1968 until he was ousted in a coup in 1991, died at his home aged 83 in the capital Bamako. — AFP

expressed on Twitter his "great dismay" over Traore's death, in a tribute in which he referenced the "friendship and respect that we have developed over the past several years".

Traore's death comes just four weeks after another putsch — Mali's fourth since independence from France in 1960 — after rebel army officers overthrew president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on August 18. Twice-elected Keita still had three years left in his second five-year term in office. He had been facing mounting protests over his failure to curb a bloody eight-year-old jihadist insurgency, cure Mali's sickly economy and root out corruption.

Traore had recently met with the country's military rulers. "These young colonels are children... I tell them the mistakes made and what to avoid and I hope, I hope they understood," he said. Asked about the state of the country, often described as close to collapse, he replied: "I have never despaired of my country, (there is) such a mess but there are still patriots among us." Talks were taking place in Ghana on Tuesday between the junta leader, Colonel Assimi Goita, and the 15-nation West African bloc ECOWAS on determining a timetable for restoring civilian rule. — AFP

been a major stumbling block in the EU's attempt to reform its migration and asylum policies. Even in Germany, politicians are wary of seeing the same scenes of huge migrant arrivals as in 2015, which the far-right capitalised on to gain a foothold in parliament. This time round, Merkel's government has repeatedly insisted it is key to find a European solution to the issue. A "just, strong and efficient response" to the problem is needed, Michel said in Athens.

1,000 migrants in new camp

Many migrants have refused to enter the new camp of white tents near the eastern port village of Panagouada, fearing they will be unable to leave once inside. Others, though, have reluctantly made their way to the site in the searing heat.

On Tuesday, the Greek migration ministry said roughly 1,000 of the 12,000 Moria migrants had been housed at the site. Among them, 21 have tested positive for coronavirus. "There's nothing in the camp, no shower, no mattresses," Malik, an Algerian migrant, told AFP by phone from inside the camp where he now lives with his wife and five children.

"There is only one meal per day, and they give us a carton with six bottles of water," said the French language teacher. Many migrants also fear the animosity of Lesbos residents. There have been frequent incidents between the asylum seekers and locals, including those from the far-right, since last year. Kostas Mountzouris, governor of the North Aegean region covering Lesbos and one of the most ardent opponents of the new camp, has called on local businesses to protest on Tuesday and seek "the removal of migrants from the island". — AFP

More French schools closed after virus cases detected

PARIS: More French schools have closed after multiple students tested positive for Covid-19 while a further 2,100 individual classes have also been called off. Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said Wednesday.

Early last week, just 28 schools were closed shortly after the school year resumed but that number has climbed to 81 over the past week.

"We have around 1,200 new Covid cases among students compared with last week," Blanquer told LCI television. "We shut down a class as soon as there are three cases."

He noted that the closures represent just a small fraction of the 60,000 schools across France, calling the beginning of the new school year "the best possible given the health crisis."

French officials have warned nonetheless that new restrictions might be required to stem a worrying increase in coronavirus cases since August.

Late Tuesday, the University of Montpellier in southern France said it had suspended classes at its medical school after some 60 students tested positive after a party.

The University of Rennes in western France also suspended classes for second- and third-year medical students this week after 83 tested positive.

The Sante Public France health agency reported nearly 8,000 new cases in the previous 24 hours on Wednesday, a small decline from the more than 10,000 cases reported Saturday, a record since wide-spread testing began.

But it also noted a jump in the number of hospitalisations over the past week, to 2,713 cases, of which 479 needed to be placed in intensive care — and nearly half of those new cases came on Monday and Tuesday alone. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Perpetual US recession or recovery in a year?

Economists deeply divided on US future amid uncertain outlook

WASHINGTON: A year from now the United States may have emerged from the economic hole dug during the pandemic with growth smartly above its previous trend and output largely recovered. Or it may be struggling to patch a remaining \$2 trillion gash to gross domestic product, with growth stuck in low gear, an ongoing health crisis, and chronic joblessness.

The guessing game that US economic forecasting has become has produced a massive split in predictions as economists from the Federal Reserve to the top Wall Street firms take a stab at unknowns like the path of the pandemic and the ability of a fractured Congress to compromise on spending. It has given policymakers little solid to plan around and left the Fed reluctant to announce new steps to support the economy until it's clearer what's needed and for how long.

When Fed officials meet this week, they are not expected to take policy steps in part because of "a very uncertain outlook," Cornerstone Macro analysts wrote this week. "Calibrating ... in these conditions is very challenging."

Adding to the challenge: Any rebound in GDP - the broadest gauge of economic activity - may well not be matched in the job market, leaving millions of unemployed Americans with no sense of recovery at all even if growth outperforms. Indeed, since the 1990s jobs have rebounded far more slowly from recessions than GDP as firms retool to use fewer workers and wait for demand to fully recover before hiring. Between the millions now out of work in vulnerable industries like travel and hospitality and changes in how commerce will be organized after the virus, it could take even longer this time for

sidelined workers to find a new foothold.

The economy is currently about 11 million jobs below February's level. It took more than four years, until mid-2014, to recover the 8 million jobs lost in the 2007-2009 recession. This recovery is clearly different. The economy's addition of more than 10 million jobs over the past four months surprised many policymakers. The 8.4 percent unemployment



11m jobs lost since February

rate as of August is already below the 9.3 percent median year-end expectation among Fed officials.

Central bankers this week must now judge whether or not that pace of improvement will continue, a discussion framed by new economic forecasts they will release on Wednesday afternoon. When their last projections were issued in June there was a veritable chasm dividing them. Individual forecasts for 2020 saw GDP falling as much as 10 percent or as little as 4.2 percent. The gap was 10 times as wide as in December 2019, when year-end predictions between the most optimistic and most pessimistic officials were separated by only half a percentage point.



NEW YORK: People enjoy outdoor dining amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Manhattan, New York City. — Reuters

Year-end estimates of the unemployment rate as of June ranged from 7 percent to 14 percent, also several times wider than those common during the last recession and its immediate aftermath.

Record growth, then what?

Economists do agree that when the federal government next month releases its first estimate of GDP for the July through September period, it will likely break records for growth just as the April to June period saw a record decline. But from there

they diverge not based on their models or their math, but on how they read the political winds and their best guess on the success of a coronavirus vaccine.

Assume Congress approves another \$1 trillion stimulus, businesses rebuild inventories, and a vaccine comes on line early next year, and you get Goldman Sachs' league-leading call of 35 percent annualized growth from July to September, steady growth from there, and a quick climb to pre-pandemic levels of output. — Reuters

Oracle 'very close' to deal on TikTok: Trump

WASHINGTON: Silicon Valley tech giant Oracle is "very close" to sealing a deal to become the US partner to Chinese-owned video app TikTok to avert a ban in the United States, President Donald Trump said Tuesday. Trump's comments came a day after US officials confirmed that Oracle was set to make a deal with TikTok parent ByteDance ahead of a deadline set by the US president, who has called the app a national security threat.

"I heard they're very close to a deal," Trump told reporters, adding that "we're going to make a decision pretty soon" on whether to approve the tie-up, which would make Oracle a "trusted technology provider" for TikTok. Details of the deal remained unclear. But the Financial Times reported that ByteDance was to place TikTok's global business in a new US-headquartered company with Oracle investing as a minority shareholder along with other US investors.

CNBC reported the Trump administration could approve the deal later Tuesday. The TikTok saga has seen several twists, with Microsoft seen initially as the suitor before its bid was rejected. Chinese authorities have said they would not allow ByteDance to sell the algorithms used by TikTok which are believed to hold much of the value for the popular social platform.

Still under review

TikTok said in a statement that "we've submitted a proposal to the Treasury Department which we believe would resolve the Administration's security concerns" and allow the company to continue to be used by 100 million people in the US. Daniel Ives of Wedbush Securities said the deal could be "a huge strategic win" for TikTok which would avoid a shutdown.

"While the US/China tensions continue across all aspects of the technology food chain, resolving this TikTok and ByteDance standoff and complex Rubik's Cube political backdrop is a relief for tech investors with Oracle in the winners' circle," Ives said in a research note.

If the transaction happens, it would avoid an outright sale of TikTok while giving a stake in the popular app to Oracle, whose founder Larry Ellison is a prominent Trump supporter.

Trump told reporters Tuesday he had "high respect for Larry Ellison." A national security panel was expected to be meeting Tuesday to review the plan. Conservative Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri urged the panel to reject the deal unless it makes a "clean break" from China.

"China's repressive intelligence laws, which allow the seizure of data from Chinese companies like ByteDance if the Chinese Communist Party comes knocking, still remain in force," Hawley said in a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. "And that is why any corporate shell game that leaves TikTok in the hands of ByteDance will simply perpetuate the original problem, leaving US national interests and everyday users at serious risk." — AFP

Unfriended abroad, China's tech giants seek home comfort

BEIJING: China's tech titans can rely on their massive home market to ride out a Donald Trump-led campaign against them overseas, and in the long-term their global prospects remain strong, analysts say.

Tech firms from China have stormed to success in the global market with everything from video-sharing apps and mobile games to smartphones and sophisticated telecom infrastructure. But the United States, Australia, Britain and India are among the huge markets where they have taken a hit because of espionage concerns or diplomatic feuds, tethering their international ambitions-for now.

"Technology is increasingly becoming a geopolitical issue" and "a strategic priority" for a growing number of countries, Dexter Thillien, an analyst at Fitch Solutions, said.

However, Chinese firms have a massive market at home to focus on even if they are unable to pursue international goals-some 900 million users are up for grabs, more than the United States and Europe combined. While the Chinese internet is tightly controlled with the "Great Firewall", the ecosystem provides companies the opportunity to roll out China-specific apps for potentially huge customer bases. TikTok, for example, is one of the most popular Chinese-made apps in the world but is not available in the country.

Instead, its parent ByteDance offers a similar app called Douyin, which Bloomberg News said surpassed 600 million daily active users in August and yielded \$6.1 billion in revenue over a 12-month period. And ByteDance China's CEO said it aimed to double that over the next year.

Global recession not as deep as expected: OECD

PARIS: The global recession this year will not be as deep as expected as a result of countries' efforts to counter the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, the OECD said yesterday.

But the recovery next year will also be more modest than anticipated, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development said, projecting a contraction of 4.5 percent in global economic output this year and a return to growth of roughly 5.0 percent in 2021. In its previous set of forecasts in June, the Paris-based OECD had been expecting the global economy to shrink by 6.0 percent in 2020 and return to growth of 5.2 percent next year.

"After the initial bounce-back in many activities following the easing of confinement measures, there are some signs from high-frequency indicators and business surveys that the pace of the global recovery has lost momentum since June, particularly in many advanced economies," the OECD said. It pointed out, however, that "the economic outlook remains exceptionally uncertain, with the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to exert a substantial toll on economies and societies".

In the second quarter of 2020, global output



'Techno-nationalism'

The Trump administration has claimed that the wildly popular short video-sharing app TikTok could be used by China to track users and conduct espionage, effectively forcing the sale of its US unit.

Washington has demanded that the next owner of TikTok's US operations satisfy security requirements. Countries "see innovation and technology as having a direct impact on national security, the economy and social stability", said Alex Capri, a researcher for the Hinrich Foundation, an independent organization that monitors world trade developments. He described the phenomenon as "techno-nationalism". Trump has also targeted Huawei with sanctions and asked allies to shun the firm's 5G equipment, alleging it could be used as a spying tool by the Chinese government.

The campaign has had an impact, with Huawei frozen out of lucrative 5G rollouts in big markets like Britain. Separate tensions between New Delhi and Beijing have also led to a ban on TikTok and other Chinese apps in India, a massive market with hundreds of millions of potential customers.

Huawei, TikTok and the Chinese government have all denied the allegations.

But while Chinese app makers and tech firms have complained about being unfairly targeted, they remain huge players on the global tech scene. Despite the security allegations, TikTok was the most downloaded app in the world outside of video

games last month, according to SensorTower, a research firm.

Huawei remains one of the biggest makers of smartphones in the world, and is one of the top manufacturers of sophisticated 5G equipment needed to build next-generation high-speed communication networks.

'Harsh reality'

And like ByteDance and Huawei, other tech giants in China are eyeing growth areas within the world's second-largest economy, including autonomous vehicles, quantum computing and biotechnology. ByteDance competitor Tencent, meanwhile, has been looking to create a game streaming service similar to the Amazon-owned Twitch, with potentially 300 million users in China, Bloomberg reported last month.

Tencent-whose WeChat messaging app has been targeted by the US-said Tuesday it was opening a new Singapore office to serve as a regional hub "to support our growing business in Southeast Asia and beyond". International punishments and suspicion still hurt, however, with the large size of the Chinese market not enough to offset the damage.

The Trump administration has blacklisted Huawei, for example, from sourcing US technology, dealing a potential body blow to its supply chain, including for its smartphones. China does not make its own microchips-the key component of all electronics-and Washington wants to choke off supply as it tries to kneecap the country's tech sector. "The harsh reality is that these US measures have teeth and Huawei is having to fundamentally rewire its business to deal with them," said Trivium China, a Beijing-based research firm, in a recent note.

Further, loose intellectual property protection and corruption in China "hardly nurture the innovative energy necessary for cutting-edge success", said Larry Ong, senior analyst with risk consultancy SinoInsider. — AFP



PARIS: The global recession this year will not be as deep as expected as a result of countries' efforts to counter the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, the OECD said yesterday. — AFP

more than 10 percent lower than at the end of 2019, "an unprecedented sudden shock in modern times", the OECD said. The extent and timing of the pandemic shock differed across the major economies, but all experienced a sharp contraction in activity as necessary containment measures were implemented.

Prompt and effective action

Global trade collapsed, declining by over 15 percent in the first half of 2020, and labor markets were severely disrupted by reductions in working hours, job losses and the enforced shutdown of businesses. "Without the prompt and effective policy support introduced in all economies to cushion the impact of the shock on household incomes and companies, the contraction in output and employment would have

been substantially larger," it said. Looking at individual economies, China was expected to be the only one to expand in 2020, with projected growth of 1.8 percent.

India, on the other hand, would see its economy shrink by 10.2 percent.

The United States, the world's biggest economy, would fare better than the global average, with a projected contraction of 3.8 percent this year. Germany would perform better than the eurozone as a whole, with its economy set to shrink by 5.4 percent, compared with a contraction of 7.9 percent for the single currency area. The French economy was set to shrink by 9.5 percent, Italy's by 10.5 percent and Britain's by 10.1 percent, the OECD predicted. — AFP

Business

WTO finds Washington broke trade rules by putting tariffs on China

US Trade Representative calls WTO 'completely inadequate'

GENEVA/BRUSSELS: The World Trade Organization found on Tuesday that the United States breached global trading rules by imposing multibillion-dollar tariffs in President Donald Trump's trade war with China, a ruling that drew anger from Washington. The Trump administration says its tariffs imposed two years ago on more than \$200 billion in Chinese goods were justified because China was stealing intellectual property and forcing US companies to transfer technology for access to China's markets.

But the WTO's three-member panel said the US duties broke trading rules because they applied only to China and were above maximum rates agreed to by the United States. Washington had not then adequately explained why its measures were a justified exception, the panel concluded.

"This panel report confirms what the Trump administration has been saying for four years: the WTO is completely inadequate to stop China's harmful technology practices," US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in response. China's Commerce Ministry said Beijing supported the multilateral trading system and respected WTO rules and rulings, and hoped Washington would do the same.

The decision will have little immediate effect on the US tariffs and is just the start of a legal process that could take years to play out, ultimately leading to the WTO approving retaliatory measures if it is upheld - moves that China has already taken on its own. The United States is likely to appeal Tuesday's ruling. That would put the case into a legal void, however, because Washington has already blocked the appointment of judges to the WTO's appellate body, preventing it from convening the minimum number required to hear cases.

The WTO panel was aware it was stepping into hot water. It noted that it had looked only into the US measures and not China's retaliation, which Washington has not challenged at the WTO. "The panel is very much aware of the wider context in which the WTO system currently operates, which is one reflecting a range of unprecedented global trade tensions," the 66-page report concluded.

Take stock

The panel recommended the United States bring its measures "into conformity with its obligations".



Ruling involves over \$200bn in tariffs

but also encouraged the two sides to work to resolve the overall dispute. "Time is available for the parties to take stock as proceedings evolve and further consider opportunities for mutually agreed and satisfactory solutions," it said.

During a two-year trade war with Beijing, Trump threatened tariffs on nearly all Chinese imports - more than \$500 billion - before the two countries signed a "Phase 1" trade deal in January. Extra tariffs are still in place on some \$370 billion worth of Chinese goods, and \$62.16 billion in duties have been

to come to help nurse the world's biggest economy back to health after a record contraction," said Joe Manimbo, senior market analyst at Western Union Business Solutions, referring to the second quarter when the business shutdowns caused GDP to collapse by a record 31.7 percent annualized.

As the meeting got underway on Tuesday, Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the Democrat-led House of Representatives, announced a new attempt to break weeks of deadlock with the White House and Republican-controlled Senate on passing a new spending bill.

"We are committed to staying here until we have an agreement," she said on CNBC, adding that she was "optimistic that the White House, at least, will understand that we have to do some things."

Layoffs still high

When unemployment is low, FOMC meetings can be suspenseful affairs as committee members mull over whether or not to shift their benchmark rate. But no longer. The Fed last month rolled out a new average inflation targeting policy that will keep rates lower for longer in a bid to maximize employment for the benefit of poor workers.

"There is little that is expected to come out of the meeting. Indeed, barring a major rebound in the virus, little is expected for the next couple of years," economist Joel Naroff said. "The members could keep phoning, or should I say videoing, it in. It would save time and money." The unemployment rate spiked to 14.7 percent in April as the business shutdowns to stop Covid-19 exacted their toll, but

H&M cuts ties with Chinese supplier

STOCKHOLM: Swedish clothing giant H&M said Tuesday it was ending its relationship with a Chinese yarn producer over accusations of "forced labor" involving ethnic and religious minorities from China's Xinjiang province. The fashion retailer specified that it didn't work with any garment factories in the region and that it would no longer source cotton from Xinjiang, which is China's largest cotton growing area.

A report by think tank the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), published in March, pointed to H&M as one of the beneficiaries of a forced labor transfer program through their relationship with the dyed yarn producer Huafu's factory in Anhui.

However, H&M said in a statement that it had never had a relationship with the factory in Anhui, nor Huafu's operations in Xinjiang. H&M did concede that it has an "indirect business relationship with one mill" in Shangyu in Zhejiang province,



GENEVA/BRUSSELS: The World Trade Organization found on Tuesday that the United States breached global trading rules by imposing multibillion-dollar tariffs in President Donald Trump's trade war with China, a ruling that drew anger from Washington. — AFP

collected since July 2018, US Customs data show.

Trump has described the WTO as "horrible" and biased towards China, often threatening to quit. However, during an ABC News town hall on Tuesday, Trump continued to back a trade deal signed with China in January, and suggested Beijing was now buying record amounts of US corn, soybeans and beef because Chinese leaders knew he was "very, very unhappy" about their handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

As he left the White House for that event, Trump

said he would "have to do something about the WTO because they've let China get away with murder." He said he needed to take a closer look at the ruling, but added: "I'm not a big fan of the WTO - that I can tell you right now. Maybe they did us a big favor."

The decision could help fuel a Trump decision to leave the WTO or underpin US arguments for reforming the 25-year-old trade body, said Margaret Cekuta, a former USTR official who helped write a crucial report on China's intellectual property abuses that preceded Trump's tariffs. — Reuters

Fed seeks to offer reassurance amid push for stimulus

WASHINGTON: Armed with a new interest rate strategy, the Federal Reserve was expected to reassure the US economy rattled by the coronavirus downturn as it wraps up its policy meeting.

The two-day event concludes amid a renewed push by a top lawmaker in Washington to agree on an additional spending bill to prop up the economy following a historic collapse in GDP in the second quarter and data showing a worryingly high rate of new layoffs.

The United States is home to the world's worst coronavirus outbreak with more than 194,000 deaths, and in the pandemic's opening days the Fed slashed its benchmark lending rate to near-zero and rolled out trillions of dollars in liquidity lines to keep markets functioning. But the continued fiscal support that Fed officials-including Chair Jerome Powell-say the world's largest economy needs to weather the downturn has yet to be approved, and with nowhere to go on interest rates, economists predict the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will rather attempt show they are doing their part. "America's central bank is likely to emphasize a decidedly low rate outlook for years



WASHINGTON, DC: The Fed is loath to intervene directly in politics but Powell and other officials have repeatedly said the US economy needs more spending to make it through the downturn. — Reuters

has since declined to 8.4 percent in August as states loosened lockdown restrictions, while key sectors of the economy like housing and retail sales have posted rapid recoveries.

But Labor Department data shows elevated levels of people filing new unemployment benefit claims each week, with 884,000 filed in the week ended September 5. The meeting will see participants give economic projections and forecasts for as far ahead as 2023, which Steve Englander, managing director at Standard Chartered Bank, expects will predict "slow recovery, slow pickup in inflation." — AFP

belonging to Huafu Fashion.

"While there are no indications for forced labor in the Shangyu mill, we have decided to, until we get more clarity around allegations of forced labor, phase out our indirect business relationship with Huafu Fashion Co, regardless of unit and province, within the next 12 months."

The company also said it had conducted "an inquiry at all the garment manufacturing factories we work with in China aiming to ensure that they are not employing workers... through what is reported on as labor transfer programs or employment schemes where forced labor is an increased risk."

International pressure is building on China's ruling Communist Party over its actions in the resource-rich Xinjiang region, and on Monday the European Union pressed China to let its independent observers into Xinjiang, binding human rights to future trade and investment deals with Beijing.

Rights groups say over a million Uighurs languish in political reeducation camps, which Beijing describes as vocational training centers where education is given to lift the population out of poverty and to chisel away at Islamic radicalism. China says criticism of its handling of Xinjiang is politically motivated, and based on lies about what happens in the vast facilities it has built. — AFP

Energy transitions, job losses and political reactions

LONDON: Like other technology shifts, energy transitions provoke strong responses because they involve changes in lives and livelihoods, that go far beyond narrow technical questions about the source and delivery of energy. Transitions disrupt employment and incomes, imposing substantial and concentrated costs on particular households, industries and communities. They create big losers as well as winners.

And because energy supply is among the largest employers and most basic of all industries, providing input for every other sector of the economy, transitions are among the most disruptive of all technology changes. Even if a transition is a Pareto improvement from the perspective of society as a whole, where the winners could theoretically compensate the losers, significant compensating transfers rarely happen in practice.

More often, the losers from a change in energy system or other technology are expected to find new employment, changing industry and sometimes location, with limited financial assistance.

So transitions are usually discussed in fairly technical terms: comparative costs, reliability, supply security, visual impact, air pollution and carbon emissions. But they arouse strong political, emotional and moral passions because behind every technical discussion lies a deeper, often hidden, debate about reallocation of incomes and opportunities. Transitions are never just about cost, convenience and security; they are always about individual lives and communities too. They are inherently political as well as technical.

Working lifetimes

Most energy and technology transitions play out slowly, over periods ranging from a couple of decades to half a century. But that is still relatively fast compared with an average working lifetime.

In the advanced economies, the average working lifetime is a little over 40 years for both men and women ("Ageing and employment policies", Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020). In the United States, someone who started working in a world dominated by horse-drawn transport and railroads in the 1890s would have retired in a world dominated by automobiles and trucks in the 1930s.

Someone who started working in the 1890s without electricity at home, telephone service, water and sewerage, radio and refrigeration would have retired when these things were common, at least in urban areas. In Britain, someone who started working in a world dominated by coal in the 1940s would have retired in a world dominated by oil in the 1980s.

In China, the economic transformation over the 40 years from the early 1980s to the early 2020s has been even more profound in every dimension.

Looking forward, someone who started work in the 2010s in a world dominated by oil, coal and gas could retire in a world dominated by renewables in the 2050s. — Reuters

Copper giant Peru's economy shrinks 11.7%

LIMA: Peru's economy shrank 11.71 percent in July versus the same month a year earlier, the Andean country's government said on Tuesday, the fifth straight month of contraction due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, though shallower than previous months.

July's drop was slightly better than a 12.2 percent contraction forecast by analysts and improved from an 18 percent fall in June, a 32.7 percent drop in May and a historic decline of 40.5 percent in April, when mining activity stalled for the world's No 2 copper producer. The INEI statistics bureau said the mining and hydrocarbons sector contracted 6.22 percent in July, better than the 14.44 percent drop in June, amid lower production of gold, silver, lead, iron and copper. Mining represents 60 percent of Peru's total exports.

The bureau also said the unemployment rate in Lima, an important indicator, increased in the rolling June-August three-month period to 15.6 percent of the working age population, almost triple the level a year earlier. Peru imposed a quarantine in mid-March to curb the pandemic. But since May it has started to lift restrictions to reactivate the economy, which the central bank estimates will contract 12.5 percent in 2020, the biggest drop in 30 years.

The country has 733,860 confirmed COVID-19 cases, the fifth-highest in the world, with 30,812 fatalities. It has the worst per capita fatality rate in the world, a Reuters tally shows. — Reuters

Business

Apple bundles TV, music, news and more in new services push

Services cater to customers working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple Inc rolled out a new virtual fitness service and a bundle of all its subscriptions, Apple One, focusing a holiday-season product launch on services that are the backbone of Apple's growth strategy and that cater to customers working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Apple also introduced a new Apple Watch Series 6 that monitors blood oxygen and will cost \$399 and a more basic Apple Watch SE for \$279.

But the bevy of incremental updates to existing hardware and subscription price tinkering disappointed investors, with Apple shares closing up 0.2 percent. The Apple One bundle will cost \$15 per month for an individual plan or \$20 per month for a family plan and include television, music and games. Apple is also offering a bundle for \$30 per month that adds news, the fitness service and more storage.

"It's a lot more aggressive pricing than I thought," said Ben Bajarin, principal analyst for consumer market intelligence at research firm Creative Strategies, adding that Apple customers already paying \$15 a month for family plans to some of the company's content servers would likely find the largest bundle a "no-brainer."

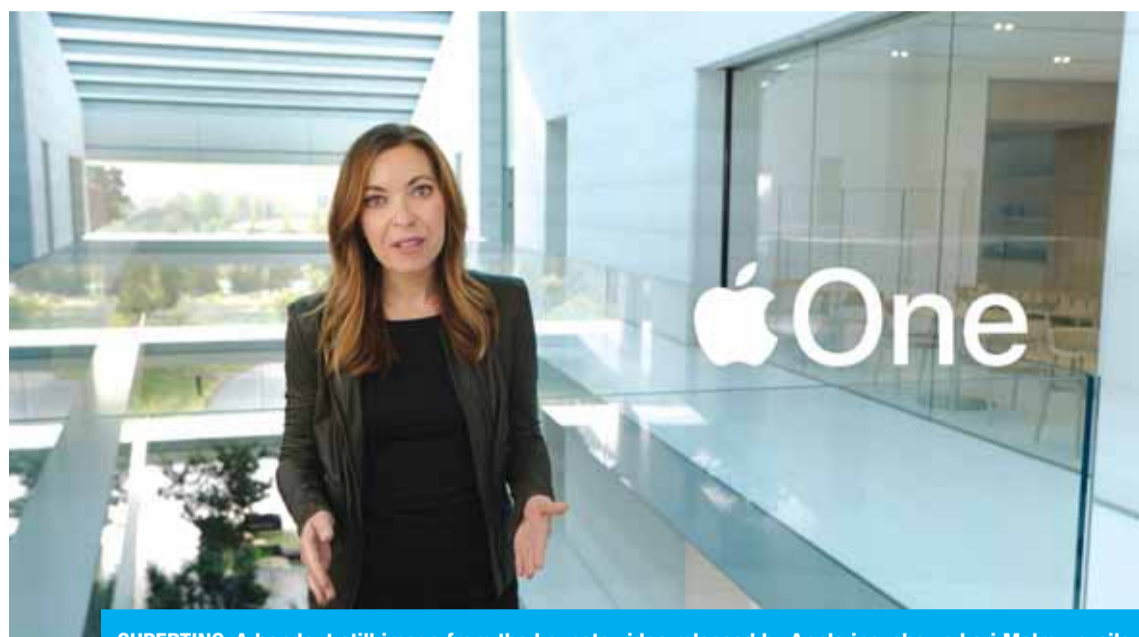
Apple's top streaming music rival Spotify Technology criticized the bundle, saying Apple was abusing its dominant market position to favor Apple Music. Spotify, which is pursuing an antitrust case against Apple in the European Union and has spoken with US authorities probing the iPhone maker, charges \$10 a month for its streaming service that competes with Apple but will not be eligible for Apple's bundle. In a statement responding to Spotify's criticism, Apple said the bundle was aimed at existing users of its services and that "customers can discover and enjoy alter-

natives to every one of Apple's services." Apple said both new watches and a new eighth-generation iPad can be pre-ordered starting Tuesday and will be available on Friday. Apple also introduced the Apple Fitness+ service, powered by its watches, that will deliver virtual workouts for \$10 per month or \$80 per year and be available before the end of the year.

Apple's fitness service puts it closer to competition with Peloton Interactive Inc, which makes connected exercise gear and sells subscriptions to online fitness classes. Apple said that most of its workouts were designed to be conducted with either no equipment or minimal gear such as a set of dumbbells. Peloton's workouts typically require either a bike or a treadmill. Shares of Peloton closed up 4 percent.

The ability of the Apple Watch to monitor blood oxygen seeks to beat a similar feature already available on watches from rival Fitbit Inc, which Alphabet Inc's Google is buying for \$2.1 billion. Apple said its watch will be able to take absolute blood oxygen measurements on-demand while the user is still, while Fitbit's devices currently show either variations in blood oxygen levels or a set of measurements taken while the user is sleeping. Apple also for the first time offered a way to use an Apple Watch without pairing it one-to-one with an iPhone, offering what it calls "Family Setup."

Apple added a faster chip to its base model iPad, which it priced at \$329 for consumers and \$299 for education customers. Apple's new iPad Air will cost \$599 and look more like its iPad Pro models and a new A14 processor chip that Apple says will be the first to use a 5-nanometer chip manufacturing process. An update of Apple's biggest seller - the



CUPERTINO: A handout still image from the keynote video released by Apple inc. shows Lori Malm unveils Apple One. during a special event at Apple Park in Cupertino, California, on Tuesday. — AFP

iPhone - is expected to be announced next month after executives have said its launch will be delayed by several weeks because of pandemic-related disruptions. Apple said flu investigators in Washington state will study heart rate and blood oxygen data from Apple Watch for potential early signs of respiratory conditions like influenza and COVID-19.

Doctors in India and other countries have used pulse oximeters to remotely check on COVID-19 patients and ensure their oxygen saturation level

does not fall too low. Apple shares have soared this year even as the virus has crippled economies around the world, thanks in large part to booming sales of work-from-home items. Apple shares gave up gains to trade flat on Tuesday after climbing more than 50 percent for the year, well ahead of the 23 percent gain for the Nasdaq. Even though Apple stock has fallen from a record high earlier this month, it remains near a \$2-trillion stock market valuation. — Reuters

Gulf Bank winner Rasheed Salem claims cash prize worth 12 times his salary

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the winner of its eighth monthly Kuwaiti Salary Account draw of the year. This month's lucky winner, Rasheed Salem Rasheed Salem, will take home a cash prize worth 12 times his salary. The Kuwaiti Salary Account draw took place at Gulf Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

With the 2020 Kuwaiti Salary Offer, new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary. Customers are also enrolled in a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize, a cash prize of up to 100 times the winner's salary.

Gulf Bank's Salary Account also gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank, or an interest-free loan of up to KD 15,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank.

Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year. They can also apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000 with a repayment period of 15 years, or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

Samsung Galaxy Z Fold2 5G is now available: stc

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that the all-new Samsung Galaxy Z Fold2 5G is now available for pre-order for stc new and existing customers across Kuwait until 21 September 2020.

Every customer who places their pre-order for the latest next-generation device will also receive the recently released Galaxy Buds Live, as well as Samsung Care+ for one year, to further enhance their Galaxy experience and provide peace of mind in the event of an accident.

"At Samsung, we always value and appreciate the contributions of operators across the countries in which we operate. Their continuous support, particularly during the pre-launch and rollout phases of our latest flagships, is a fundamental element of the success we have become accustomed to over the years," said Osman Alborja, Senior Director - Mobile Division, Samsung Gulf Electronics. "We are delighted that consumers finally have the opportunity to place their pre-orders for the Galaxy Z Fold2 5G. The device certainly emphasizes why our status as an innovation and technology leader continues to endure. Through the winning combination of advanced features and powerful design, people's horizons and experiences are sure to be elevated to newfound heights and we are excited about the coming months as we witness the impact that the device has on the lives of consumers across the country."

Commenting on the pre-order launch, engineer Nasser Al-Saadoun, Chief Consumer Officer at stc, said, "stc highly values the user experience of its



Nasser Al-Saadoun

valued customers, which is why we dedicate our resources and invest in building a solid infrastructure to streamline high-speed connectivity to meet the diverse needs of our growing customer base in Kuwait. We are pleased to partner with leading suppliers such as Samsung, who offer the latest smartphone technology and revolutionary

devices that follow our strategic approach to enabling digital transformation."

Al-Saadoun added, "To keep pace with the rapidly evolving digital world, stc strives to provide its customers with access to the latest smartphones and devices available in the market, especially those compatible with 5G technology. Following our commitment and our role as a digital pioneer, stc is proud to offer this unique device to its customers in Kuwait." Samsung has once again reaffirmed its commitment to pioneer an entirely new category of mobile devices with the introduction of the Galaxy Z Fold2 5G, which represents the next generation of foldable devices. The brand prides itself on using customer feedback to provide the ultimately products that meet and exceed expectations, introducing the most requested upgrades and new features to bring new meaning to Galaxy interactions. With the Galaxy Z Fold2 5G, Samsung has done exactly that. Besides enhanced refinements and unique foldable experiences, the device combines the portability and flexibility of a smartphone with the screen size of a tablet for ultimate productivity.

Unrivaled viewing experiences

Galaxy Z Fold2 5G pairs bold design with advanced engineering so users can feel confident with the smartphone as an everyday companion. Larger than its predecessors to provide enhanced immersion on every occasion, the 6.2-inch Cover



Screen featuring Infinity-O Display and 7.6-inch Main Screen have been designed to bring new meaning to viewing experiences. Paring with Infinity Flex Display and an in-display cutout for the front-facing camera, Galaxy Z Fold2 5G delivers the ultimate cinematic smartphone journey, allowing consumers to enjoy their favorite content with minimal distractions. What's more, the Main Screen also features a 120Hz default refresh rate for smoother scrolling, while adaptive refresh rates from 11 to 120Hz allow the device to adjust its refresh rate accordingly to maximize performance and ensure the battery is saved whenever possible when using apps.

Sophisticated design

Constructed throughout the design process with the aim to provide a device that perfectly complements the dynamic lifestyles of modern day consumers, Galaxy Z Fold2 5G boasts a sleek, unified design that delivers a classic, high-end look and feel. As a foldable smartphone that epitomizes sophistication, the design harmoniously ties together its individual components to provide a sense of unity when holding the device. Its meticulous construction and two beautiful color options, Mystic Black and Mystic Bronze, also demand attention and make it an instant topic for conversation.

stc customers pre-ordering the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold2 5G will receive the recently released Galaxy Buds Live, and a one year Samsung Care+ subscription covering hardware repairs, battery replacement, screen damage and more.

How boardroom diversity data eludes advocates

BOSTON/NEW YORK: Last month C1W Investment Group urged Fresenius Medical Care AG to add diverse directors to its board. The group determined the German company lacked diversity by studying photos of directors and reviewing their backgrounds online to determine their race.

"It's a very crude way," Dieter Waizenegger, executive director of labor-affiliated C1W, acknowledged in an interview with Reuters. He added that without formal declarations by the directors themselves, outsiders could not be certain of their race. Fresenius said its six-member board includes directors of five different nationalities and two women. But a spokesman noted that the company does "not ask our board members, nor our employees, to make statements on their ethnic or racial origins."

Racial diversity in the boardroom has come under new scrutiny after the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, in police custody in May triggered global protests about racism in Western societies. But as investors, executives and politicians demand greater racial and ethnic diversity in Western corporate boardrooms, they say they are running into a thorny problem: how to tell the ethnicity of directors in the absence of much self-reporting and disclosure.

The lack of data, they said, is slowing progress on efforts to improve diversity in the top echelons of global corporations. Their attempts to increase disclosure so far have run into hurdles, such as con-

cerns the practice is divisive or that some directors don't want to list their family backgrounds.

"We would like to see the makeup of all directors," said Benjamin Colton, co-head of stewardship efforts at State Street Corp, which has \$3.1 trillion under management. "We understand there may be directors who don't want to self-identify, and in those cases we might engage on that a little more."

Sandy Boss, stewardship chief at BlackRock Inc, said the world's largest asset manager is reviewing its current policy on diversity for its portfolio companies. The policy currently says companies should have at least two women directors but does not give specific guidance on racial representation. She acknowledged the lack of disclosure of executives' ethnicity could make it hard to push for change. "Data is quite important here," Boss said.

Low representation

The lack of boardroom diversity is stark. Among the top 200 companies in the S&P 500, African-Americans hold only about 10 percent of board seats and Hispanic or Latino people hold only 4 percent of board seats, according to executive search firm Spencer Stuart. That representation falls below their shares of the US population of 13 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Factors including insular social and professional networks have kept boardrooms largely white for years. Some business leaders also blame a relative lack of minority CEOs, a traditional resume item for directors, leading to calls for companies to recruit candidates with other backgrounds.

Women are also underrepresented on boards, but they have made faster gains in recent years. Analysts say one reason is that top investors, including BlackRock and State Street, have prioritized gender diversity, which is easier to determine by name. The concern about underrepresentation of

minority groups is leading to new data-gathering efforts and legislation. A number of US companies have started to include racial identification tables in their annual proxy statements in recent years, for example. Some states, such as Illinois and California, are also mandating steps to improve corporate diversity.

In addition researchers Institutional Shareholder Services and Equilar have each launched new efforts to gather more diversity data, both drawing on information from groups including the Latino Corporate Directors Association. Esther Aguilera, the president of the association, said her group has been calling and emailing current and potential directors to ask if they would like to be included in its database. "If the individuals were to self-identify in a table somewhere, then we wouldn't have to go through this song and dance," Aguilera said.

These efforts, however, are fledgling and the data are patchy. Researcher Just Capital says 21 percent of 931 companies in the Russell 1000 index now offer at least some information about their boards' racial diversity. But often it is not very specific, and the range of disclosures is wide.

Some give only a general percentage. Medical device maker Boston Scientific Corp, for example, said in its proxy this year that its 10-member board is 70 percent white and 30 percent "ethnically diverse." Boston Scientific General Counsel Desiree Ralls-Morrison said in an e-mail that as investors grew more interested in boardroom diversity, the company started making the disclosure in 2018 "as part of a broader effort to make key governance insights more accessible." Others go further and specify the race and gender of each director. Utility holding company Edison International, for example, has a table in its latest proxy filing that shows one director as African-American and two others are Hispanic. — Reuters

US factory output rises in August

WASHINGTON: US factory production increased for a fourth straight month in August, but the recovery is showing signs of strain, suggesting business investment in equipment could remain depressed through the end of the year as the COVID-19 pandemic drags on. The report from the Federal Reserve on Tuesday added to data on the labor market that has indicated a stall in overall economic activity because of the coronavirus' persistence and fading fiscal stimulus. The ebbing economic recovery, accompanied by warming inflation, is likely to dominate the US central bank's two-day policy meeting, which started on Tuesday.

"It is looking increasingly like the recovery in factory production will stall in coming months if no one from Washington is going to ride to the rescue with another pandemic stimulus package," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York. "The coronavirus has made the public cautious and this uncertainty is keeping factories from opening back up completely."

Manufacturing production rose 1.0 percent last month after advancing 3.9 percent in July. The Fed noted that "the gains for most manufacturing industries have gradually slowed since June." Factory output remains 6.7 percent below its February level. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast manufacturing output would rise 1.2 percent in August.

Government financial aid to businesses and the unemployed has virtually dried up, and talks on another package are at an impasse. At least 29.6 million people were on unemployment benefits in August. — Reuters

Classifieds

Thursday, September 17, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 08 - 35 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Rather hot and Fair and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate southerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 06 - 32 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some

WEATHER WARNING			Drop in Visibility	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 16/09/2020 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	32 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	43 °C	28 °C		
ABDALY	45 °C	26 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	29 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	- °C	- °C		
NUWASIB	44 °C	28 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	26 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	09/17	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	43 °C	24 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	09/18	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	44 °C	25 °C	VRB-S	06 - 28 km/h
Saturday	09/19	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	25 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 35 km/h
Sunday	09/20	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	28 °C	N-NW	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:13
Sunrise	05:33
Zuhr	11:43
Asr	15:13
Sunset	17:53
Isha	19:10

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	43 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	12 %
MAX. Wind	S 28 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

Passport no: J7412646 issued in Kuwait, Old name: Gopal, Father name: Ramesh Nai, Village: Panuwa; New name: Gopal, Father name: Raman Lal Nai, Village: Padva. (C 5801) 17-9-2020

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

EMERGENCY 112

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

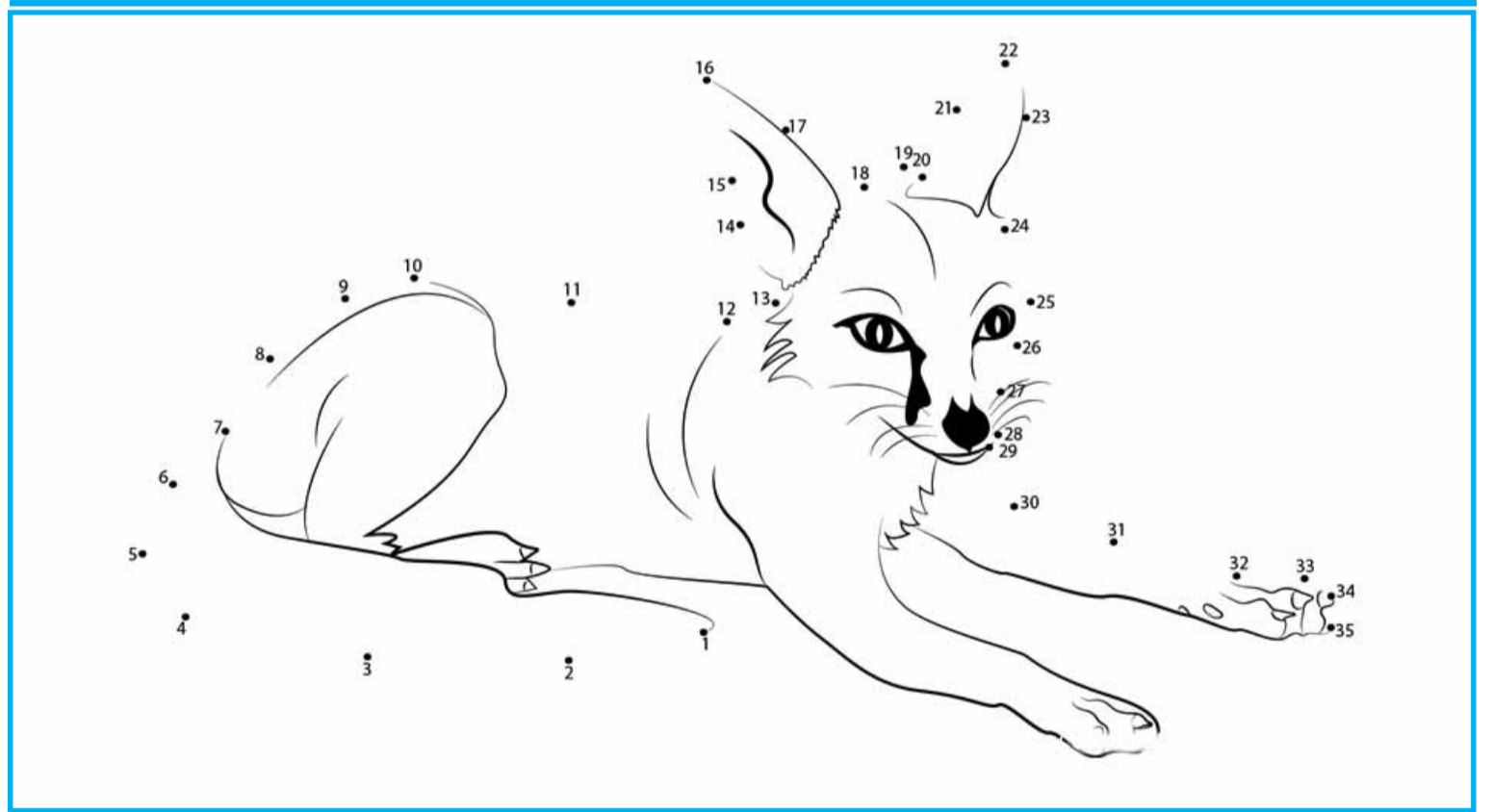
Word Search

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	MEDIAEVAL	WINGS
DRAGON	MONSTER	WRINKLED



Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

<p>Aries (March 21-April 19) You could feel like a millionaire today, Aries. Money matters seem to surpass your expectations. You might want to spend time fixing up your home or perhaps shopping for yourself. Do you have plans to video chat tonight? A sexy new item might make your friend's eyes pop! Increased self-confidence adds even more juice to an already enhanced appearance. Dress in your favorite colors and have fun.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) Romance and creativity are the driving forces in your life today, Cancer. You might find that feelings for a special person provide lots of inspiration for creative projects. Your creative energy makes you that much more attractive to the one you love most. This could prove to be an emotionally and aesthetically satisfying day. Make the most of it!</p>	<p>Libra (September 23-October 22) Have you been thinking about changing careers, Libra? You might hear of some opportunities today, possibly through a colleague. This could be the right time to make a change. Positive professional developments are indicated for you. List your options and then do some research on each one. You might be headed toward some exciting possibilities.</p>	<p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) You might find yourself reeling from shock when an old friend suddenly seems to show romantic interest in you. Conflicting emotions could come up, but don't write it off if you're available. There could be potential for a good relationship with this person. Don't feel that you have to either jump right in or forget the whole thing. You can test the waters for a while!</p>
<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) Someone you've never met before who you find exceedingly attractive could pass you today. You might decide to go say hello and discover not only a physical attraction but an intellectual compatibility as well. Your feelings are probably reciprocated! If you're single, this attraction might be worth pursuing. If you're involved, at least you might make a new friend.</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22) You tend to be down to Earth and practical, Leo, but now you feel like indulging in some flights of fancy. Romance or fantasy novels could be especially appealing right now. You might even toy with the idea of writing one of your own. If you're currently romantically involved, your sweetheart might want to do something special with you tonight. Enjoy your day.</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) You may feel especially warm and loving, Scorpio, and romance could be on your mind. Time spent with a love partner from another state or country might seem especially appealing. This is a great day to schedule an intimate evening alone with your friend and see where it takes you. All signs indicate that your friend returns your feelings, and you might end up just where you want!</p>	<p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Today you may be asked to speak to a virtual gathering or lead an online discussion group, Aquarius. You tend to be shy, but today you'll be all for it and enjoy being in the limelight, albeit temporarily. You'll certainly shine, and others may pay you sincere compliments. After the event, enjoy the rest of your day. You earned it.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) Career and money matters continue to go well for you, Gemini, and probably romance, too. Your life may be the envy of others, but you probably feel there's still something missing. This is a good day to explore metaphysical and spiritual studies. It's a time of transition, and this sort of interest can make things easier for you, especially if those close to you share your interest.</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) An affectionate letter, phone call, or email could come to you from an old friend, Virgo, expressing gratitude for past favors. This is going to make you feel warm and loving toward this person, and you'll want to reciprocate in kind. Invite him or her for coffee and have a long conversation. The bond between you is strong. This isn't a friendship you'll want to let go.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Erotic dreams could wake you up in a strange mood, Sagittarius. You could long for a romantic encounter, but the impact is likely to be stronger than that. These intense dreams might stimulate your creative juices. If you aren't currently working on a project, ideas could flood your imagination. Let them stew for a while. There's no rush to pick one. Enjoy your day.</p>	<p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) Romance continues to soar today, Pisces. You should feel especially sexy. You're likely to attract admiring glances from those around you, including strangers. If you're single, you might even attract an exciting new love partner. If you're already involved, your beloved could fall in love with you all over again. Schedule an intimate evening together, if possible, and make the most of it!</p>

Lifestyle | Features

Cardi B files for divorce from rapper Offset

After three tumultuous years of marriage, superstar rapper Cardi B filed for divorce Tuesday from her husband, rapper Offset, according to court records. The couple, who married secretly in September 2017, had already been through a well-publicized rough patch that resulted in her announcing their break-up almost two years ago. "We got a lot of love for each other but things just haven't been working out between us for a long time," she said in a December 2018 video on Instagram, where she has some 75.5 million followers.

"It's just like, I guess we just grew

out of love, but we're not together anymore." But by about a year later the pair had reconciled and Cardi B, whose real name is Belcalis Marlenis Almanzar, told Vogue at the time that the split was over her husband's infidelity. "We have come to a clear understanding. For me, monogamy is the only way," she said. Cardi B is seeking custody of 2-year-old daughter Kulture and child support from Offset, whose real name is Kiari Cephus. A hearing is set for November 4, according to the Fulton County court in Georgia, which is Offset's home state. Despite the turmoil in her personal life, Cardi B has

rocketed to success from her humble origins in New York's Bronx. Her 2017 hit "Bodak Yellow" brought her fame, and 2020 chart topper "WAP" brought her controversy. The song is an unadulterated celebration of female desire brimming with graphic sexual metaphors that left American conservatives hot and bothered. — AFP

In this file photo US rapper Cardi B and US rapper Offset arrive at the 2018 American Music Awards in Los Angeles, California. — AFP



In this file photo Madonna poses in the press room at the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. — AFP

MADONNA
TO DIRECT
OWN BIOPIIC

Madonna has revealed that her next project will be the movie of her life—and the final product should meet with her approval as she is bringing it to the screen herself. The 62-year-old Material Girl, whose four-decade career as a singer, actress and cultural touchstone has taken in sex, religion and other traditional taboos, will direct the biopic, according to a statement from movie studio Universal. Madonna will also co-write, with Diablo Cody who won an Oscar for the screenplay of coming-of-age dramedy "Juno" (2007). "I want to convey the incredible journey that life has taken me on as an artist, a musician, a dancer—a human being," Madonna said in a statement posted to her website. "The focus of this film will always be music," she added. "Music has kept me going and art has kept me alive."

The entertainer enthused about "so many untold and inspiring stories" from her "roller coaster" life and asked, "who better to tell it than me?" Universal's Donna Langley described the Michigan native—real name Madonna Louise Ciccone—as "the ultimate icon." "With her singular gift of creating art that is as accessible as it is boundary-pushing, she has shaped our culture in a way very few others have," Langley said. Madonna, responsible for hits such as "Like a Prayer," "Material Girl" and "Like a Virgin," is one of the most prolific artists of her time, having sold 335 million albums. She made her film debut in 1985's "Desperately Seeking Susan" and won the Best Actress Golden Globe for 1996's "Evita" before directing and co-writing "W.E." in 2011. — AFP

Kim Kardashian joins celebrities in social media 'freeze' against hate

Celebrities including Kim Kardashian won't post on Instagram or Facebook for 24 hours from yesterday as part of a protest to pressure the world's biggest social media firm to fight hate and disinformation. Stars like Leonardo DiCaprio, Sacha Baron Cohen, Katy Perry and Michael B. Jordan have all expressed support for the freeze organized by "Stop Hate for Profit", a coalition calling on Facebook, which owns Instagram, to change. "I can't sit by and stay silent while these platforms continue to allow the spreading of hate, propaganda and misinformation—created by groups to sow division and split America apart", posted Kardashian, who has 188 million followers on Instagram.

Actress Kerry Washington, known

for her role on drama series "Scandal" posted: "It's up to Facebook and other social platforms to stop the amplification of hate and the undermining of democracy." Facebook has come under heavy pressure from activists, governments and companies that advertise on its platforms for tougher action on promoting discrimination, hatred or violence. The company has pointed to its efforts to take down accounts associated with extremist groups and its moves to fight misinformation ahead of the November 3 US presidential election. Facebook was sharply criticized for its handling of the 2016 presidential election, when it failed to restrict disinformation from Russian operatives that spread conspiracy theories and discouraged voting in some cases.

The Stop Hate for Profit collective organizing yesterday's freeze, which includes the Anti-Defamation League and the NAACP, was behind a push for advertisers to boycott the platform. By July nearly 1,000 advertisers had joined, including VW and Adidas. Facebook still reported a \$5.2 billion quarterly profit at the end of July, despite the protest. Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg met with coalition organizers in July, but they vowed to continue pushing the ad boycott saying the social media giant had failed to tackle hateful content.

In a statement on yesterday's freeze, the Anti-Defamation League said "members of the public, corporations, nonprofits and social influencers are expected to join in the effort." The collective, made up of nine associations,



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

has demanded that Facebook increase the resources it puts into fighting online hatred and disinformation.— AFP

CINEMA IS NOT 'COMFORT FOOD,'
SCORSESE WARNS COVID-HIT FESTIVAL

Martin Scorsese warned that cinema is becoming "marginalized and devalued" as a "form of comfort food" during the coronavirus pandemic, as he addressed the Toronto film festival Tuesday. Scorsese, no stranger to controversy after last year slamming popular superhero blockbusters as "not cinema", spoke as movie theaters remain closed in major US cities including Los Angeles and New York. Toronto, North America's largest film festival, is taking place mainly online this year, along with a handful of drive-in and limited capacity indoor screenings. In a short video introducing the event's annual career achievement gala, Scorsese praised the festival for going ahead at all.

"The fact that film festivals are continuing to happen—improvising, adapting, making it all work somehow—is very moving to me," said the Oscar-winning "Goodfellas" director. "Because in the press and the popular culture, what's happening... it's becoming sadly common to see cinema marginalized and devalued, and in this situation categorized sort of as a form of comfort food." Millions around the world have spent the past few months locked at home due to the pandemic, with many binge-watching television and films from their living rooms.

In a blistering New York Times op-ed last November, Scorsese said movie theaters are the place "where the film-



Martin Scorsese

maker intended her or his picture to be seen," and warned superhero movies were crowding auteurs off the big screen. "To celebrate its very existence is all the more important and necessary... this remarkable art form has always been and always will be much more than a diversion," added Scorsese in the video aired Tuesday. "Cinema, film, movies, at its best, is a source of wonder and inspiration."

'Terrified'

British acting royalty Anthony Hopkins and Kate Winslet received career awards Tuesday at the virtual gala from Toronto, where both are promoting acclaimed new films that could land them their second Oscars. From her home in England, Winslet said making 19th-century lesbian romance "Ammonite" was "a gift," with her role as a pioneering paleontologist a



Welsh actor Anthony Hopkins

test of her acting chops. "I love playing parts that make me feel terrified and parts that make me feel incredible joy," said Winslet, who won the best actress Oscar for 2008's "The Reader" and has six other nods including for global phenomenon "Titanic."

Her latest, "quiet, intimate" film, sees Winslet's fossil-hunting heroine bond with a grieving mother played by Saoirse Ronan. Hopkins, 82, whose heartbreaking dementia drama got a second airing in Toronto after rave reviews at January's Sundance festival, joked: "I'm astonished that I'm still in work—still working at my age." He described "The Father," which sees French playwright Florian Zeller make a directorial film debut adapting his own award-winning 2012 play, "deeply intense and deeply disturbing." The film charts Hopkins' character's battle with paranoia, memory



Kate Winslet

loss and contradictory realities, with the Welsh luminary bringing humor and pathos to a performance alongside Olivia Colman as his long-suffering daughter.

Hopkins won best actor at the 1992 Oscars for his unforgettable turn as serial killer Hannibal Lecter in "Silence of the Lambs," and has since been nominated four more times. Both Winslet and Hopkins devoted much of their acceptance speeches, projected into an empty Toronto movie theater, to thanking emergency workers. Chloe Zhao, the director of early Oscar contender "Nomadland," which won the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival last weekend, was also recognized for her work. The Toronto International Film Festival runs until Sunday.— AFP



In this file photo people visit Downtown Disney in Anaheim, California the first day the outdoor shopping and dining complex has been open to the public since it closed in mid-March amid the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP

Disneyland and California
theme parks push for reopening

Disneyland, Universal Studios and other theme parks have called on California officials to set out the health criteria required for them to reopen, warning that tens of thousands of jobs are at stake. Six months after some 30 amusement parks closed "voluntarily in response to COVID," the California Parks and Attractions Association said it had created robust measures to protect visitors and staff, but guidance from the state "has not been forthcoming." "California's amusement parks urge the Governor to issue

amusement park guidelines expeditiously so these vital community attractions can reopen their doors," said executive director Erin Guerrero in a statement to AFP on Tuesday.

Guerrero warned that "hundreds of millions of tax revenue" have been lost and many nearby local businesses had closed permanently. Disneyland in Anaheim, south of Los Angeles, had planned to reopen July 17, but aborted after failing to get the green light from local officials. — AFP

Notorious B.I.G crown fetches
\$600,000 at Sotheby's first hip-hop auction

The plastic gold colored crown that American rapper Notorious B.I.G. wore on the last photo shoot before his death fetched \$600,000 at the first-ever hip hop auction held by an international house, Sotheby's said yesterday. The auction was a celebration of the history and cultural impact hip-hop has had on art and culture from the late 1970s through mid-1990s, and up to the present, Sotheby's said. After highlighting sneakers and handbags in recent years, Sotheby's in New York dedicated its September auction

to hip-hop culture, featuring some 120 lots that included boomboxes, photos of Snoop Dogg and Louis Vuitton luggage. The auction house has said it was the first auction staged by an international house anywhere devoted entirely to hip-hop. The signed crown, which was just a plastic prop from a party shop, worn by the rapper in the 1997 "King of New York" photograph was offered on sale for the first time, and was expected to fetch \$200,000 - \$300,000 at the Sept. 15 auction, Sotheby's had said earlier.

The New York rapper, also known as Biggie Smalls, was shot dead in Los Angeles at the age of 24 three days after the photo shoot as part of a feud between east and west coast rappers that also took the life of Tupac Shakur, 25, in 1996. Both crimes remain unsolved. In the auction, a series of 22 love letters written by a 16-year-old Shakur to his high school sweetheart Kathy Loy between 1987-1988, were sold for \$75,600. — Reuters



The crown worn by Notorious B.I.G. when photographed by Barron Claiborne as the King of New York is displayed during a preview at Sotheby's for their Inaugural HIP HOP Auction in New York City. — AFP photos



Lifestyle | Features



This picture shows Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor inspecting a glass bottle at his bottle museum in Penarik village in the Setiu district of the eastern Malaysian state of Terengganu. — AFP photos



Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor keeping a glass bottle he found on the beach in his backpack during sunrise at a beach in Mangkuk village.



Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor decorating pieces of broken glass he found along the shore of beaches in his bottle museum in Penarik village.



Picture shows Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor posing for pictures with a bottle containing a message inside, which he found on the shore of a beach, at his bottle museum.



Picture shows one of Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor's favourite glass bottles, found on the shore of a beach, displayed in his bottle museum.

OLD MAN AND THE SEA: MALAYSIAN'S MISSION TO RID BEACHES OF GLASS



Picture shows Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor walking outside his bottle museum after collecting bottles from a beach in Penarik village.

A 74-year-old Malaysian man's quest to rid the country's beaches of washed-up glass led to a collection of thousands of bottles, now displayed in a colorful seaside museum. For the past 15 years, Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor has made it his mission to gather bottles washed ashore on Malaysia's rugged South China Sea coast. He has picked up around 9,000 of them, which he now displays in a traditional wooden house that he has turned into a museum. They come in various shapes and sizes, from all over the world, stacked across shelves and on the floor with an igloo-shaped mound of bottles outside.

He even found messages in two of the bottles, one with a picture of a heart and some faded Chinese characters, and a second that has been torn apart and is no

longer legible. "I did this at first to keep the sea clean," he told AFP from his village of Penarik, where the wooden museum sits next to his home. "I want to save people from being hurt by broken glass and to save the world from being littered with glass." On a recent morning beach patrol, the spry grandfather of 20 said a Muslim prayer as he stooped to pick up an empty, white-capped bottle. The ex-soldier wiped it down before slipping it into his backpack-another one for his collection. Tengku Ali's obsession began in 2005, when he saw children blowing up empty bottles with fireworks.

Worried the shattered glass could hurt people, he said he would pay them for any bottles they found and they returned with over 500. He then began collecting bottles off beaches. Only later, as his collec-

tion grew, did he decide to open a museum. The site attracts a regular stream of visitors who have read about it on his Facebook page. During a coronavirus lockdown earlier this year, he kept busy glueing glass shards together to make bottle shapes in a style similar to Japanese "kintsugi", where broken pottery is repaired with lacquer mixed with powdered gold. Tengku Ali vows to continue his quest as long as he lives. "People think I'm crazy, but I don't care," he said. "Allah knows what I am doing. I do this because I love this world." — AFP



Picture shows Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor cleaning a glass bottle he found on a beach.



Pictures show glass bottles, found by Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor along the shores of beaches, displayed in his bottle museum.



Picture shows Tengku Mohamad Ali Mansor posing for pictures outside his bottle museum.

Scientists find world's oldest sperm in Myanmar amber

A team of palaeontologists have discovered what they believe is the world's oldest animal sperm, frozen 100 million years ago inside a tiny crustacean in tree resin in Myanmar. The oldest known examples of fossilized animal sperm were previously a mere 17 million years old, according to the team of experts led by Wang He of the Chinese Academy of Science in Nanjing. The sperm was found inside an ostracod—a type of crustacean that has existed for 500 million years and can be found in many oceans today, they said in a paper published yesterday in the Royal Society's Proceedings journal.

They were found in the body of a female specimen, indicating that she must have been fertilized shortly before being trapped in amber, the experts said. The individual sperms were

described as "giants", measuring up to 4.6 times the size of the body of the male. "This is equivalent to about 7.30 meters in a 1.70-metre human, so it requires a lot of energy to produce them," Renate Matzke-Karasz of the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, co-author of the study, told AFP. The ostracod was also a new species that the scientists have named "Myanmarocypris hui".

'Eureka moment'

Fossilized shells of ostracods are common but finding a specimen with "soft parts" is rare, the experts said. During the Cretaceous period around 145 to 66 million years ago, the ostracods in question probably lived in the coastal waters of present-day Myanmar where they became trapped in a blob of

tree resin. The tiny creatures are less than a millimeter long but the scientists made 3-D reconstructions of them to observe them more closely, leading to what Wang described as "one of those special Eureka moments in a researcher's life".

As well as the sperm, the reconstructions also showed the distinctive muscular sperm pumps and penises (two of each) that male ostracods use to inseminate the females. Most males in the animal world including humans produce tens of millions of tiny sperm cells, but ostracods are different for them, it's all about quality over quantity. There are several conflicting theories about the evolutionary value of such giant sperms. "For example, experiments have shown that in one group, a high degree of competition between males can lead to a longer sperm life, while in another group, a low degree of competition also led to a longer sperm life," said Matzke-Karasz.

"To show that using giant sperms in reproduction is not an extinction-doomed extravagance of evolution, but a serious long-term advantage for the survival of a species, we need to know when they first appeared." Scientists have been researching the amber of Myanmar for decades, finding all kinds of frozen treasures including frogs, snakes and a feathered dinosaur tail. — AFP



The ostracod was found frozen in a blob of tree resin or amber. — AFP

T-rex skeleton could fetch record price at New York auction

The skeleton of a 40-foot (12-meter) dinosaur nicknamed "Stan", one of the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex specimens ever found, will be auctioned in New York next month and could set a record for a sale of its kind. Discovered in 1987 near Buffalo, South Dakota, the 188-bone skeleton took more than three years to excavate and reconstruct by paleontologists from the state's Black Hills Geological Research Institute, where it has been exhibited since. Stan, who researchers estimate died around 60 million years ago aged about 20, has since been used to make replicas for dozens of museums eager to acquire their own T-rex model.

Only about 50 skeletons of one of the largest carnivores to roam Earth have been discovered since the first in 1902. James Hyslop, of auctioneer Christie's,

said: "There aren't very many very good complete skeletons in there. "It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to acquire a T-Rex as complete as this." The sale will be held in New York on October 6, with bids expected from \$6 million to \$8 million-putting it within reach of the \$8.4 million paid for a T-rex named Sue in October 1997. "Any natural history museum would consider him the crown of their collection," Hyslop said. Stan-named after the amateur paleontologist responsible for his initial discovery-will be on display in a window at Christie's headquarters in New York City from Wednesday until October 21. Its head is so heavy that a replica sits atop the skeleton, with the real one presented alongside. — AFP



The remains of a Tyrannosaurus rex named Stan will go on sale in New York Angela Weiss. — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Alexander Albon driving the Aston Martin Red Bull Racing RB16 on track for the F1 Grand Prix of Italy. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Smelly diapers help McIlroy forget about stinky results

NEW YORK Playing his first major as a dad, Rory McIlroy brings a new perspective with him to this week's US Open, the Northern Irishman saying on Tuesday that smelly diapers now require more immediate attention than stinky results. "I actually changed the first two diapers, so I'm very proud of that," said McIlroy, sounding as if he had just aced the par three seventh at Winged Foot Golf Club, the site of this year's US Open. "I've got my hands dirty; put it that way."

Diaper duty is just one of the new skills McIlroy has had to work on since the August arrival of his daughter Poppy, who has brought perspective to someone once consumed with winning trophies. A four-time major winner, McIlroy has not won one of golf's big prizes since the 2014 PGA Championship and is without a tournament win of any sort since the World Golf Championship HSBC Champions last November.

Even though McIlroy is a former US Open winner, that victory was in 2011 and in the last four years he has missed the cut three times. It was those disappointing performances that McIlroy carried around with him long after the tournament was over but now, coming home to a daughter's smile, he is learning there is more to life than birdies and bogeys. "I think it just puts things in perspective a little bit," said McIlroy, about having a child. "It makes the hard days a little easier to get over, right."

"And I'm not saying that I want to have hard days to get over, but you're a little more relaxed. "When I say it's not the be-all and end-all, it's a major championship and I've grown up my whole life dreaming of winning these tournaments, and that's not going to change. "But if it doesn't quite happen, I can live with that and go home and be very happy and leave what's happened at the golf course at the golf course. "I think maybe something that I haven't done so well in the past is I haven't left my job at the office basically, I've brought it home with me, and I've let it affect my mood and how I am." —Reuters

Dodgers halt Padres' 8-game win streak

Brewers blast Cardinals with seven-run fourth inning

LOS ANGELES Tony Gonsolin allowed a run on four hits over a career-high seven innings and Justin Turner had three hits, an RBI and a run in his return from the injured list Tuesday night as the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers scored a 3-1 win over San Diego to end the Padres' eight-game winning streak. Edwin Rios also hit a solo homer for the Dodgers, who regained a 2 1/2-game lead over the Padres in the race for the National League West title. Gonsolin (1-1) didn't issue a walk while striking out two. He retired the last eight Padres he faced and 14 of the final 15. Kenley Jansen struck out Wil Myers and Jake Cronenworth with the bases loaded in the ninth to record his 11th save after loading the bases with one out on two singles and a walk. Zach Davies (7-3) allowed three runs on eight hits and a walk with five strikeouts in six innings as his personal five-start winning streak ended.

White Sox 6, Twins 2

Rookie Dane Dunning (2-0) pitched seven strong innings and Tim Anderson and James McCann both hit home runs as host Chicago defeated Minnesota to extend its lead in the American League Central. Anderson and Jose Abreu both had three hits apiece for Chicago, which has won 22 of 27 to surge to the best record in the AL (32-16). The White Sox have won five straight and now sit three games up on the Twins in the AL Central. Minnesota has lost the first two games of the four-game set after coming to Chicago with victories in 10 of its last 12. The Twins were limited to four hits. The first five batters in the lineup—Max Kepler, Josh Donaldson, Jorge Polanco, Nelson Cruz and Eddie Rosario—were a combined 1-for-16 with six strikeouts.

Rays 6, Nationals 1

Ryan Yarbrough worked in relief for his first victory this year and Tampa Bay secured its third straight winning season with a win over Washington in St Petersburg, Fla. The American League East-leading Rays moved to 31-17, guaranteeing a winning record in the 60-game season. The last time Tampa Bay didn't post a winning record was in 2017, when it finished 80-82. In his second appearance since returning from the injured list, Yarbrough (1-3) tossed 5 2/3 innings and allowed one run on five hits with five strikeouts. The lefty worked out of a no-out, first-and-second jam in the fifth before yielding a run in the sixth. Nate Lowe homered for the third time in four games and went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, a walk and his first career stolen base.

Yankees 20, Blue Jays 6

Luke Voit homered twice, including a three-run blast in a seven-run second inning, and host New York cruised to a rout of Toronto to move into second place in the American League East. The Yankees won their sixth straight game and posted their most lopsided win of the season. Voit recorded his third multi-homer game of the

season and second in the last four games. The first baseman moved into the major league lead with his 17th and 18th homers—the latter a solo blast in the sixth—and is two ahead of Nelson Cruz and Mike Trout in the AL. Voit also hit an RBI single. Gary Sanchez, Aaron Hicks, DJ LeMahieu and Clint Frazier also homered for the Yankees. The Blue Jays got home runs from Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Lourdes Gurriel Jr.

Red Sox 2, Marlins 0

Tanner Houck, making his major league debut, pitched five scoreless innings and left fielder Yairo Munoz made a pair of stellar defensive plays as visiting Boston held on to defeat Miami. In the first inning, Munoz threw out Corey Dickerson trying to stretch a leadoff single into a double. In the eighth, he robbed speedy rookie Jazz Chisholm of what might have been a leadoff extra-base hit, crashing into the left field wall to make the catch. A sixth-inning double by Jackie Bradley Jr. snapped a scoreless tie and eventually made Houck (1-0) the winning pitcher in his debut. Bradley has at least one hit in 23 of his past 27 games. Marlins starter Sandy Alcantara (2-2) allowed five hits, two walks and one run in six innings while striking out five.

Rockies 3, A's 1

Elias Diaz homered to back the first career complete game by Antonio Senzatela, and Colorado beat Oakland in Denver. Senzatela (4-2) allowed one run on six hits and needed a season-high 109 pitches to go the distance. Josh Fuentes had two hits and an RBI for the Rockies, who defeated Oakland for the third time in three meetings this season. The final game of the year between the teams is Wednesday afternoon. Ramon Laureano had two hits and Jake Lamb doubled, walked and scored a run for the A's.

Astros 4, Rangers 1

Alex Bregman delivered a bloop two-run single with the bases loaded in the seventh inning and Houston squeezed past visiting Texas. Bregman plated George Springer and Jose Altuve with a flare that dropped in fair territory down the third-base line. It marked the first hit for the Astros with runners in scoring position following an 0-for-6 start. Springer and Altuve worked walks against Rangers reliever Nick Goody (0-1) before Bregman delivered the key hit against Jonathan Hernandez. The Astros improved to 13-2 over their past 15 home games and climbed back to .500 in the chase for second place in the AL West. Houston is 12-1 at home against Texas since the start of 2019. Texas fell to 4-18 on the road, the fewest road wins in the majors.

Reds 4, Pirates 1

Tucker Barnhart homered and Freddy Galvis added an RBI single Tuesday as Cincinnati continued to feast on visiting Pittsburgh with a 4-1 win. The Reds, who have

won four straight games, have scored 16 runs and their pitchers have notched 24 strikeouts through the first three games—totaling 23 innings—of the four-game series. Michael Lorenzen (2-1), making his first start since 2018, gave up one run and four hits with six strikeouts and no walks over five innings. The Pirates have lost seven in a row overall and dropped their seventh in a row on the road. Starter Joe Musgrove (0-5) took the loss after giving up four runs and six hits over five innings with eight strikeouts.

Brewers 18, Cardinals 3

Keston Hiura's three-run homer highlighted a seven-run fourth inning and slumping Christian Yelich also went deep for one of his three hits during Milwaukee's rout of visiting St. Louis. Daniel Vogelbach homered and drove in four runs. Ryan Braun also went deep, and Brett Anderson (3-3) allowed two runs over six innings. The Brewers have won two of the first three in the five-game set against the second-place Cardinals. Milwaukee, which also scored six times in the fifth, totaled just seven runs while losing three of its previous five following a 19-0 win at Detroit on Sept. 9. St. Louis' Jack Flaherty (3-2) was charged with a career-high nine earned runs on eight hits over three innings. The right-hander yielded nine runs in his previous six starts combined prior to Tuesday. The Cardinals lost for the fifth time in seven games.

Diamondbacks 9, Angels 8

Kole Calhoun hit two home runs against his former team, and David Peralta added a game-winning blast in the eighth inning and Arizona opened a big early lead before squeaking out a victory over host Los Angeles. David Fletcher and Jared Walsh each had three hits at the top of the Angels' order, with Walsh hitting his fifth home run in his past six games. Arizona starter Madison Bumgarner went 5 1/3 innings in one of his worst outings ever, giving up a career-high-tying eight earned runs and a career-high 13 hits. With the score 8-8 in the eighth inning after the Angels overcame a seven-run deficit, Peralta hit a home run off Angels right-hander Matt Andriese (2-3). It was Peralta's fourth of the season. Arizona's Keury Mella (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh inning to earn his first career victory, and Stefan Crichton tossed a 1-2-3 ninth for his second save.

Phillies 4, Mets 1

Didi Gregorius homered, singled and drove in two runs to lift host Philadelphia past New York as Adam Haseley added two RBIs for the Phillies, who snapped a three-game losing streak and moved back above .500 at 24-23. Phillies starter Jake Arrieta tossed 5 1/3 innings and allowed eight hits and one run. Arrieta (4-4) was lifted after 97 pitches when he appeared to grab his right hamstring after hitting Andres Gimenez. Brandon Nimmo homered and singled while Jeff McNeil contributed three

hits for the Mets, who dropped their third in a row. JD Davis added two hits. The Mets managed 11 hits but went 0-for-6 with runners in scoring position. Mets starter Rick Porcello gave up six hits and four runs in six innings. Porcello (1-5) struck out five and walked two.

Tigers 6, Royals 0

Miguel Cabrera and Willi Castro homered, and four Detroit pitchers combined on a shutout as the host Tigers snapped Kansas City's six-game winning streak. Cabrera reached base five times for Detroit and Castro had three hits and scored two runs. Jeimer Candelario also supplied three hits and scored twice, while Jorge Bonifacio drove in two runs. Niko Goodrum chipped in two hits while scoring and knocking in a run. Matthew Boyd (2-6) pitched 5 2/3 scoreless innings, giving up two hits and walking four while striking out five. Kansas City's scheduled starter, Danny Duffy, was benched after missing the team flight. Replacement Jakob Junis (0-2) allowed five runs on seven hits in 2 1/3 innings.

Braves 5, Orioles 1

Adam Duvall blasted his team-leading 15th home run, tying a team record in the process and helping Atlanta win over host Baltimore. Duvall's homer was his 10th in 15 games this month, matching Dale Murphy (1985) and Chipper Jones (1999) for the most by a player in Atlanta Braves history in September. Freddie Freeman had three hits, with RBI doubles in the third and ninth innings for the Braves, and reliever Darren O'Day (4-0) earned the win. The Orioles had just four hits and didn't score until the bottom of the ninth. Starter Thomas Eshelman (3-1) got the loss after giving up two runs on six hits in 3 1/3 innings.

Cubs 6, Indians 5

Pinch hitter Cameron Maybin was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth, bringing home the winning run and giving Chicago a win over visiting Cleveland. Maybin was the second consecutive Cubs batter to be drilled by Indians reliever Nick Wittgren, who also plunked Willson Contreras to load the bases. Kris Bryant trotted home for the game-winning run after Maybin was hit. Chicago has won three in a row and reliever Jeremy Jeffress (4-1) got the win despite giving up a two-run lead in the top of the ninth.

Cleveland lost its seventh in a row, and reliever Oliver Perez (1-1) took defeat loss after giving up the winning run after getting just one out in the ninth. Francisco Lindor had three hits, four RBIs and tied it 5-5 in the ninth with a two-run homer. Giants-Mariners, ppd. San Francisco's two-game series at Seattle, scheduled to start Tuesday, was postponed due to poor air quality in the Pacific Northwest. The teams will make up the games Wednesday and Thursday in the Bay Area. —Reuters

GAZOO Racing achieves podium place and Power Stage win at Rally Estonia

KUWAIT: The GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team (WRT) enjoyed a fantastic final day at the recent Rally Estonia, during the World Rally Championship (WRC) organized by the International Automobile Federation (FIA), ending the three-day event with a podium finish for Sebastien Ogier in the No 17 Toyota Yaris WRC. The result saw Ogier increase his lead at the top of the drivers' championship and ensure that Toyota maintains its lead in the manufacturers' standings.

Ogier and his co-driver Julien Ingrassia scored two stage wins on the final day in the No 17 Toyota Yaris WRC to secure third overall, finishing just 4.7 seconds from second place. Ogier is now nine points in front of his teammate Elfyn Evans, who won the third day's opening stage in the No 33 Toyota Yaris WRC and went on to claim second place in the Power Stage. Meanwhile, Rovaniemi and co-driver Jonne Halttunen won five stages in total on the second and third day of the race in the No 69 Toyota Yaris WRC. "Congratulations to the entire team and especially to Ogier and his co-driver Ingrassia for a well-deserved podium finish in this challenging event, which has helped us to secure more points and further extend our lead in the manufacturers' championship," commented Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation.

"Everything we learn through our participation in racing events inspires us in our journey to develop 'ever-better' cars and enrich our customers' driving experience. I would like to

extend my gratitude to our fans for their unwavering support, which is a source of constant motivation in our quest to create vehicles that bring satisfaction and put a smile on our customers' faces, and we look forward to giving them more to cheer about later this month in Turkey."

Tommi Makinen, Team Principal at GAZOO Racing, commented: "The result at the end of Rally Estonia is very good for the whole team and keeps us at the top of both the drivers' and manufacturers' championships. Today, when we had faster conditions, we saw that all of our drivers could set the quickest times. Kalle's speed is especially impressive for such a young driver. He seems to find his best performance when under pressure, like he did here in the Power Stage."

Sebastien Ogier, Driver of the No 17 Toyota Yaris WRC, said: "It's a positive result for us. To finish on the podium is good for the championship. I would have liked to get more from the Power Stage, but it was the roughest one of the last two days and when I feel it's too risky to go for it, I prefer to secure the podium. It's nice to score some good points in a difficult stage."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand.



Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.



The next event of the season is Rally Turkey, which takes place on September 18-20 and will run for the third time since it returned to the WRC in 2018 in a new location around Marmaris on the Mediterranean coast. Rocky gravel roads and high temperatures are sure to make this a grueling event as Toyota seeks to further extend its lead in the manufacturers' championship.

Sports

Wawrinka crashes out of Rome to Italian teenager

Kerber ousted as Shapovalov, Rublev advance in Rome

ROME: Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka crashed out of the Italian Open in the first round on Tuesday after a humiliating defeat to 18-year-old Italian Lorenzo Musetti. The three-time Grand Slam winner, the 10th seed in Rome, lost 6-0, 7-6 (7/2) against a player ranked 249th in the world. Wawrinka, at 35 the oldest player in the tournament, fought back after trailing 2-0 in the second set, but it was already too late to regain control.

Musetti had only played one tour-level match before facing the former world number three in Rome, ousting Wawrinka after one hour and 24 minutes. "I have seen him play on television and I know he is a very tough player," said Musetti, who will next meet Kei Nishikori in the second round. "I'm going to enjoy the victory before I start thinking about my match against Nishikori." Musetti, the youngest player in the table, was born in 2002, the year Wawrinka took his first steps on the professional circuit.

His coach, Simone Tartarini said before the match it was an "impossible mission" for his young protegee. "But Lorenzo likes this kind of situation, so he's very motivated," he said. Like Rafael Nadal, Wawrinka has given up on the American hard court tour at Cincinnati and the US Open. His only competition

since resuming after a six-month hiatus linked to the coronavirus pandemic was a Challenger tournament on clay in Prague.

The Rome tournament is a tune-up for the French Open in Roland Garros from September 27. Favorites Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic and top women's seed Simona Halep began their campaigns yesterday. Nadal, after six months without official matches, will take on compatriot Pablo Carreno, a recent semi-finalist of the US Open. Djokovic takes on 87th-ranked Italian Salvatore Caruso and Halep playing Italian Jasmine Paolini, ranked 99th.

Elsewhere US Open quarter-finalist Andrey Rublev, eased past Argentine qualifier Facundo Bagnis 6-4, 6-4 and next meets Poland's Hubert Hurkacz. Rublev hit 25 winners for his 20th match win of the season, winning two ATP Tour titles this year in Qatar and Adelaide before the season was suspended. Canadians Milos Raonic and Denis Shapovalov both advanced. Shapovalov, the 12th seed, beat Argentine Guido Pella 6-2, 6-3 with 13th-seed Raonic ousting France's Adrian Mannarino, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2. Italy's Marco Cecchinato, a semi-finalist in Roland Garros two years ago, battled past Britain's Kyle Edmund 3-6, 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 and next meets Serb

Filip Krajinovic.

Muguruza advances, Kerber out

In the women's tournament Spaniard Garbine Muguruza dispatched American Sloane Stephens in straight sets with Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova battling through for her first win since the tennis restart. Muguruza, the 2016 French Open champion and seeded ninth in Rome, eased through 6-3, 6-3 behind closed doors on the red clay at the Foro Italico. It was a tricky opener for Muguruza against former US Open winner Stephens who also has a pedigree on clay, reaching the final in Roland Garros two years ago.

Muguruza hit 22 winners and broke Stephens four times, despite an hour-long rain delay. She next meets 16-year-old American Coco Gauff, who got her first career main draw win on clay against Ons Jabeur of Tunisia 6-4, 6-3. "I knew I had a tough match against Sloane," said Muguruza. "I'm just happy with my performance since is just the third match I am able to play in a long time." Gauff, ranked 53, struggled with her serve with seven double faults but battled back from a 4-2 deficit in the first set against her Tunisian rival who hit 29 unforced errors.



ROME: Denis Shapovalov of Canada plays a forehand to Guido Pella of Argentina on day two of the Internazionali BNL d'Italia ATP tour at Foro Italico on September 15, 2020 in Rome. — AFP

Former French Open winner Kuznetsova had a tougher battle with American Bernarda Pera before pulling through 3-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. The two-time Grand Slam champion came from a set and a break down and a 3-0 deficit in the tiebreak to set up a meeting with Estonian 14th seed Anett

Kontaveit. The switch from hard court at the US Open to clay proved tricky for former world number one Angelique Kerber, who reached the fourth round at Flushing Meadows. Kerber, the 15th seed, fell 6-3, 6-1 to Czech Katerina Siniakova who next plays Daria Kasatkina of Russia. — AFP

Qatar's Duhail win as Al Sadd hold Al Ain in thriller

DOHA: Qatar's leading clubs stole the limelight from their UAE rivals on Tuesday on a dramatic day in the Asian Champions League. Recently-crowned Qatar Stars League champions Al Duhail edged past Sharjah 2-1 and league runners Al Sadd twice rallying from a goal down to hold Al Ain 3-3. While for Al Duhail it was their second victory in three matches, Al Sadd had to be satisfied with their second draw as an own goal by Boualem Khoukhi prevented them from gaining full points. Al Duhail were clearly the better team in Group C with Almoez Ali and Ramin Rezaeian finding the target either side of half time at the brand new Education City Stadium, one of the venues for the 2022 World Cup.

Ali, the tournament golden boot as Qatar won the Asian Cup winning side early last year, opened the scoring or Al Duhail with a clinical low finish after receiving a long pass from Luiz Junior in the 41st minute. Sharjah conceded their second goal just six minutes into the second half with Iranian Ramin Rezaeian curling in a free-kick from just outside the penalty area. Although Brazilian Igor Coronado replied in the 58th minute from the penalty spot after he was brought down, Al Duhail held on to deny Sharjah their first victory in the tournament since 2004.

Xavi's Al Sadd had to contend with a determined Al Ain side keen to record their first victory in Group D following their opening two losses. The



AR RAYYAN: Sharjah's goalkeeper Adel Al-Hosani (right) concedes a goal during the AFC Champions League group C match between Qatar's Al-Duhail and UAE's Sharjah on September 15, 2020. — AFP

UAE side, who won the inaugural Champions League title in 2003 and have been runners-up twice, took an early lead with Togolese forward Kodjo Laba scoring off a pass from Wilson Eduardo in the fifth minute. Al Sadd, the 2011 champions, equalized through 2019 AFC Footballer of the Year Akram Afif in the 35th minute, the striker firing in from close range following a pass from South Korean Nam Tae-Hee.

The Qatar giants' joy lasted only three minutes, however, as Kazakh international Bauyrzhan Islamkhan again put visitors Al Ain ahead with a fine shot from outside the that slipped under the crossbar despite goalkeeper Saad al-Sheeb's attempt to

stop it. Al Sadd responded with a purple patch as Santi Cazorla scored off an Afif pass in the 55th minute and Baghdad Bounedjah made good of an assist from Nam five minutes later to put their team ahead for the first time.

But the home team, who earlier in the day announced that young winger Saoud al-Nassr had tested positive for Covid-19, failed to hold on to their lead when Khoukhi's attempt to clear the ball resulted in an own goal. Al Sadd captain Hassan al-Haydos was left ruing the missed opportunity to take three points. "We didn't perform as well we should have. Now we will have to work hard to win the next game," he said. "We are capable of doing much better." — AFP

Depay scores in Montpellier defeat amid Barca rumors

LYON: Memphis Depay scored what might be his farewell goal for Lyon on Tuesday in a 2-1 Ligue 1 defeat at Montpellier which could be his final match before a rumored move to Barcelona. Netherlands attacker Depay smashed home a penalty with eight minutes left as 10-man Lyon failed to claw back a two-goal deficit created by a Teji Savanier brace scored either side of half-time. Rudi Garcia's side were already a goal down to Savanier's 38th-minute penalty, which was won by the Frenchman, when Houssein Aouar was sent off for a high challenge on Arnaud Souquet just before the break in his first league start since shaking off the coronavirus.

Savanier doubled his hosts' lead with a sharp low finish in the 59th minute, and they held out against late pressure following Depay's spot-kick, which came after Hilton was sent off for a late tackle on Rayan Cherki. Dutch daily De Telegraaf reported earlier on Tuesday that Netherlands forward Depay was set to join compatriots Frenkie de Jong and Ronald Koeman at Barca this week in a transfer worth 25 million euros (\$29.6 million).

However Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas later said that his Barcelona counterpart Josep Maria Bartomeu told him the Catalan giants could not afford

Depay. "The president of Barcelona told me on Sunday that Barca are really suffering from the COVID crisis and were not able to make an offer," Aulas said on Twitter. Paris Saint-Germain will try to get over their dreadful start to the season when they host Metz at the Parc des Princes.



MONTPELLIER: Lyon's Dutch forward Memphis Depay (left) vies with Montpellier's French defender Arnaud Souquet (right) and Montpellier's French midfielder Jordan Ferri (center) during the French L1 football match between Montpellier Hérault SC and Olympique Lyonnais on September 15, 2020. — AFP

Champions PSG lost both their opening two fixtures and had been hit with a wave of coronavirus cases that affected seven of their star players. Thomas Tuchel's side are also awaiting the result of disciplinary commission, which is set to reveal its punishments following the mass brawl involving Neymar that marred the end of their 1-0 defeat to Marseille at the weekend. Marseille meanwhile will host Saint-Etienne on Friday in what was supposed to be the curtain raiser to the 2020-21 season. — AFP

PAOK dump Benfica out of Champions League qualifying

SALONIKA: Former European Cup winners Benfica crashed out of the Champions League third qualifying round after a shock 2-1 defeat at PAOK Salonika on Tuesday as Serbia winger Andrija Zivkovic scored against his former club a week after leaving them. Dynamo Kiev also advanced to the playoff round with a 2-0 home win over Dutch side AZ Alkmaar, as did Belgians Gent after they beat visitors Rapid Vienna 2-1.

PAOK'S reward is a two-legged playoff against Russians Krasnodar, while Dynamo face Gent for berths in the money-spinning group stage featuring 32 teams. Benfica, who won Europe's premier club competition in 1961 and 1962, saw last season's woes spill over into this term as Zivkovic, who endured four difficult seasons in Portugal, rubbed salt into their wounds. Having seen the domestic league and cup double go to Porto last term, Benfica missed a string of chances against PAOK in a one-sided first half as they enjoyed 72% of possession.

They were punished after the break as Dimitrios Giannoulis poked in the opener from close range in the 63rd minute after a one-two with Chuba Akpom and substitute Zivkovic made it 2-0 in the 75th with a sweet shot inside the near post. Rafa Silva pulled one back with a stoppage time header but it came too late to avoid an embarrassing defeat which will pile pressure on manager Jorge Jesus, who returned to Benfica during the close season for a second spell in charge. Having been in charge from 2009 to 2015, Jesus went on to win the elusive double of the Brazilian league title and Copa Libertadores with Flamengo in 2019 but now faces a mammoth task to get Benfica back to winning ways. Dynamo soaked up pressure on home soil against Alkmaar in the first half before Luxembourg forward Gerson Rodrigues fired them ahead just after the break with a neat finish into the roof of the net thanks to good work by Vitaliy Buyalskiy. — Reuters

News in brief

Bernal quits Tour de France

GRENOBLE: Last year's winner Egan Bernal withdrew from the Tour de France yesterday with the defense of his title already in tatters. The 23-year-old Colombian's team Ineos announced he was dropping out ahead of the key 17th stage. Bernal came into the Tour with a back injury and missing key allies and two of his team then suffered injuries before Bernal himself suffered a meltdown on a tough ascent on Sunday that effectively ended his 2020 campaign as he fell eight minutes behind the pace. "This is obviously not how I wanted my Tour de France to end, but I agree that it is the right decision for me in the circumstances," Bernal said in a statement from Ineos. — AFP

Brazilian govt backs Neymar

SAO PAULO: Brazil's government sent its support to Neymar Tuesday after he was red-carded for a fight in a Ligue 1 match in France, condemning the "racism" that triggered the brawl. The Paris Saint-Germain star is facing punishment by the French league's disciplinary commission after slapping defender Alvaro Gonzalez near the end of PSG's 1-0 loss to Marseille Sunday, accusing the Spaniard of calling him a "monkey." Gonzalez denies the accusation. But in Neymar's native Brazil, the ministry responsible for human rights issues said it stood behind the world's most expensive footballer. "In the face of yet another case of racism that has come to the surface in sport, the ministry of women, the family and human rights publicly voices its solidarity with the player Neymar Jr," the ministry said in a statement. — AFP

Mooy makes instant impact

SHANGHAI: Aaron Mooy said that he hadn't even expected to get on the pitch after the former Premier League midfielder scored just 25 minutes into his debut in China. The Australian international celebrated his 30th birthday with the winner in Shanghai SIPG's 2-1 victory over Wuhan Zall in the Chinese Super League. "I've only been here a few days with the team so I didn't expect to play," said Mooy, who joined the Brazilians Oscar and Hulk at SIPG after moving from Brighton and Hove Albion. "But I was ready in case the coach asked me to come on so I'm just happy I could come on and help the team." Mooy, also formerly of Huddersfield Town and Manchester City - where he failed to make an appearance - came on as a substitute for the second half on Tuesday. — AFP

Lazio sign Kosovo striker Muriqi

MILAN: Lazio have signed Kosovo international striker Vedat Muriqi from Turkish club Fenerbahce, the Serie A side confirmed on Tuesday. "Lazio announces the definitive purchase of the player Vedat Muriqi from Fenerbahce," the Roman club said in a brief statement. The 26-year-old Muriqi will support Serie A top scorer Ciro Immobile as Lazio return to Champions League football this season. Simone Inzaghi's side are reported to have spent 20 million euros (\$23 million) for the services of the forward on a five-year deal. The Italian top flight kicks off this weekend but Lazio's opener against Atalanta has been pushed back until September 30 because of the Bergamo club's Champions League 'Final Eight' campaign last month. Lazio finished fourth last season and play their first Serie A match at Cagliari on September 26. — AFP

14 Dodgers halt Padres' 8-game win streak; Brewers blast Cardinals



15 Duhail win as Al Sadd hold Al Ain in thriller



15 Wawrinka crashes out of Rome to Italian teenager



FLORIDA: Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets shoots the ball against Patrick Beverley #21 of the LA Clippers and Kawhi Leonard #2 of the LA Clippers during the fourth quarter in Game Seven of the Western Conference Second Round on September 15, 2020. —AFP

Underdog Nuggets stun Clippers

Heat edge Celtics in thrilling series opener

LOS ANGELES: Jamal Murray scored a game high 40 points and Nikola Jokic had a triple double as the Denver Nuggets stunned the Los Angeles Clippers 104-89 in game seven to reach their first Western Conference finals in 11 years. The underdog Nuggets became the first team in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit twice in the same postseason.

Jokic completed his triple double by the third quarter of Tuesday night's contest in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Florida, finishing with 16 points, 13 assists and 22 rebounds. His rebound count is the most by a Nuggets player in an NBA playoff game, breaking his old record of 19. Denver's dynamic duo combined for 56 points. "We are just improving. We have talks, we have fights, everything. We are like a couple," Jokic said of playing with Murray.

An odd couple for sure. A Serbian and a Canadian pair that has engineered the biggest upsets of the 2020 postseason so far. Denver will once again be the underdogs when they face LeBron James and the Los

Angeles Lakers in the conference finals beginning Friday. "Nobody wants us here," insisted Jokic. But Murray issued a warning for people who think the Lakers' juggernaut is going to steamroller them. "They got to worry about us too," Murray said.

The Nuggets found themselves down by 12 in the first half. They also trailed 61-54 with 10:50 left in the third when they stepped it up and went on a 35-13 run to compile a 15-point lead in the fourth. "Next is Lakers, another tough opponent," Jokic said. "But we are going to be out there having fun. It is simple for us, effort and energy." Kawhi Leonard managed just 14 points and Paul George finished with 10. Leonard shot six of 22 while George was four of 16 from the floor. "Internally we've always felt this is not a championship or bust year for us... We just didn't have enough time together," said George.

Adebayo blocks Boston

In the Eastern Conference finals, Bam Adebayo made a clutch block

with 2.5 seconds left in overtime as the Miami Heat beat the Boston Celtics 117-114 in the opening game of the series. Adebayo leapt high to take what appeared to be an easy dunk away from Celtics star Jayson Tatum to preserve the Heat's slim lead, 116-114. Adebayo then capped the scoring by sinking a free throw at the other end.

"He is the heart and soul of our team on the defensive end," Jimmy Butler said of Adebayo. "We love and appreciate him. I know I sure do." Tatum, who finished with a game high 30 points, missed a desperation 29-foot three-pointer at the buzzer. "He made a great play," Tatum said of Adebayo's block. "That's all it is. He made a good play, can't do anything about it." Game two is Thursday night in Orlando. Goran Dragic scored 29 points, Jae Crowder had 22 and Butler finished with 20 for the Heat, who eliminated the Celtics from the playoffs in 2011 and 2012.

Butler gave the Heat the lead for good, 115-114, with just 12 seconds left in overtime when he willed in a shot in

that was delivered while he was falling backwards and guarded closely at the side of the basket. "My job is to help our team win in the fourth and overtime. I try to pull through as much as I can," said Butler, of the game-winning basket. Miami are seeking to get back to the NBA finals for the first time since a four-year run of consecutive appearances during the James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh era ended in 2014.

"It was a great win. We're up 1-0, but we got three more to get," Adebayo said. Tatum also had 14 rebounds and five assists. Marcus Smart tallied 26 points and Jaylen Brown delivered 17 for the Celtics who are playing for an NBA finals spot for the third time in four years. "Gotta tip your hat off to those guys," Smart said. "They executed very well down the stretch, we didn't." The Heat trailed by as much as 13 in the first quarter before outscoring the Celtics 37-29 in the second. Miami shot 68.1 percent in the second period, including six of eight from beyond the arc. —AFP

Haller lifts West Ham gloom, Palace crash out of League Cup



LONDON: West Ham United's French striker Sebastien Haller (left) jumps to head home their second goal during the English League Cup second round football match between West Ham United and Charlton Athletic on September 15, 2020. —AFP

LONDON: Sebastien Haller eased West Ham's woes with a double in their 3-0 victory over Charlton in the League Cup second round, while Crystal Palace were knocked out by Bournemouth after a marathon penalty shoot-out on Tuesday. French striker Haller scored twice in four minutes midway through the first half and Felipe Anderson added a late third for David Moyes' troubled side.

It was a much-needed result for the Hammers, who face Leeds or Hull in the third round, after they started the Premier League season with a dismal 2-0 home defeat against Newcastle on Saturday. That limp surrender came after fan protests against co-owners David Gold and David Sullivan, while West Ham captain Mark Noble criticized the club's lack of ambition following the sale of promising midfielder Grady Diangana to West Bromwich Albion. With Arsenal, Wolves, Leicester, Tottenham, Manchester City and Liverpool on West Ham's immediate fixture schedule, it was vital to avoid an embarrassing exit against third-tier Charlton at the London Stadium. "Probably the only disappointment is we should have won more comfortably," Moyes said. "But Seb getting a couple of goals will be good for his confidence. We had Michail Antonio scoring for us at the end of last season and now we hope Seb gets on a run of scoring goals."

Jack Wilshere was absent from the West Ham squad despite 10 changes made by Moyes, with the club reportedly wanting to sell the injury-prone midfielder. Bournemouth goalkeeper Asmir Begovic missed a spot-kick but still finished as the hero in the Championship club's 11-10 penalty shoot-out win over Premier League side Crystal Palace. After a goalless 90 minutes at the Vitality Stadium, Begovic saw his penalty saved by Wayne Hennessey. It was the first miss out of 21 penalties but, after Hennessey blazed over the crossbar, Begovic saved from Palace captain Luka Milivojevic to give Bournemouth a trip to holders Manchester City. Jack Grealish celebrated his new Aston Villa contract by scoring in their 3-1 win at League One side Burton Albion. Villa's club-record signing Ollie Watkins equalised for the Premier League team late in the first half to cancel out Colin Daniel's opener after only 68 seconds. Grealish, who signed the new five-year deal earlier on Tuesday, struck a sweet volley from the edge of the area in the 88th minute. —AFP

Isles beat Tampa in double OT to keep Stanley hopes alive

LOS ANGELES: Jordan Eberle scored the game winner in double overtime, finishing off a two-on-one break with Anders Lee as the New York Islanders staved off playoff elimination by beating the Tampa Bay Lightning 2-1 on Tuesday. Eberle buried a one-timer at 12:30 of the second extra session to cut the Lightning's lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference final series to 3-2.

The play started with Lee chipping the puck off the boards and out of his own zone then racing up the ice and waiting for the perfect moment to slip it over to Eberle who fired a shot past a sliding Tampa goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy. Islanders coach Barry Trotz said he knew his players wouldn't go down without a fight. "Our guys didn't waver, they just kept grinding," Trotz said. "We didn't give up and that's a great sign for moving forward." Game 6 will be Thursday in Edmonton with a berth in the Stanley Cup finals against the Dallas Stars up for grabs.

Game seven, if necessary, is scheduled for Saturday. New York goaltender Semyon Varlamov made 36 saves in a brilliant performance, especially

in overtime. The Lightning, who won the Stanley Cup in 2004, are missing their two top players, Brayden Point and Steven Stamkos. Point was injured in game two and missed game three. He returned for game four but didn't play late in the third period after going hard into the boards with New York's Adam Pelech. Point leads the Lightning with nine goals and is tied for the league lead with 25 points.

Stamkos hasn't played since undergoing core muscle surgery on March 2. The task was simple for the Islanders on Tuesday: win or go home. The Islanders opened the scoring when Ryan Pulock scored with the man advantage. Pulock unloaded a bullet from the left point for his team's second power-play goal of the series at the 15:41 mark of the opening period. Victor Hedman, of Sweden, replied four minutes into the second period to tie the score 1-1. Hedman glided into a slap shot from the high slot and beat Varlamov on the short side.

Hedman joins American Brian Leetch as the first defenceman to score eight goals in a single playoff. Leetch had 11 in 1994. "It came down to one play. It's tough for us obviously, but this is hockey," Hedman said. "It's how you respond to this that's going to define you as a team. I'm not worried about how our group's going to respond to this." The Islanders had to kill off a four-minute penalty to Anthony Beauvillier for high sticking that was called with just 83 seconds left in the third period and stretched into the first overtime. —AFP



EDMONTON: Scott Mayfield #24 of the New York Islanders trips up Cedric Paquette #13 of the Tampa Bay Lightning in Game Five of the Eastern Conference Final during the 2020 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs on September 15, 2020. —AFP