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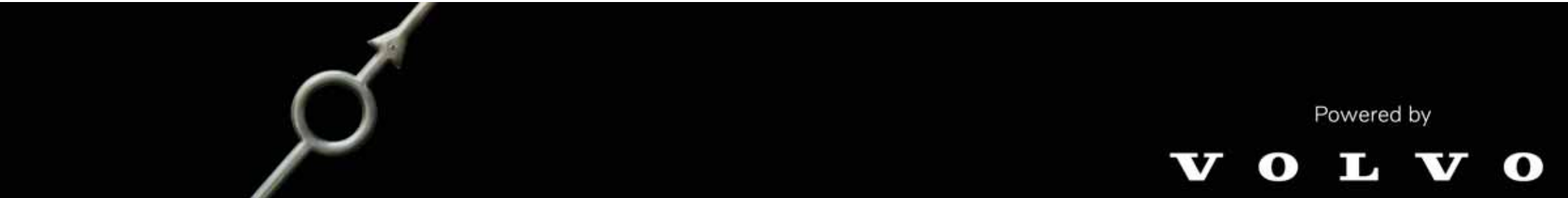
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Trump decorates Amir with rare and prestigious honor

Deputy Amir congratulates Amir, thanks US president for award



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump honors HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, which was accepted on the Amir's behalf by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at a private ceremony in the Oval Office on Friday. — KUNA (See Page 3)

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has been handed a rare prestigious decoration by US President Donald Trump for his leading regional and global diplomatic efforts, an Amiri Diwan official said on Friday. The Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander was accepted, on behalf of HH the Amir, at a private ceremony in the Oval Office by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, according to Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

The honor comes in recognition of HH the Amir's tireless efforts and significant leadership role in the region and the world, and as a culmination of the historic and distinguished partnership between Kuwait and the US spanning decades. The award also coincides with the upcoming 60th anniversary of the establishment of

relations between both nations.

"A leader in the Middle East for decades, (HH) the Amir has been a truly unwavering friend and partner to the United States," the White House said in a statement. It added that HH the Amir "provided indispensable support to the United States throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Defeat-ISIS campaign".

Operation Iraqi Freedom refers to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq to oust former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein; Operation Enduring Freedom to the 2001 US-led military operation that drove the Taliban from power in Afghanistan; and the Defeat-ISIS campaign to the coalition effort to end the Islamic State militant group's control of territory in Syria and Iraq.

"The Amir is also an unparalleled

diplomat, having served as his nation's Foreign Minister for 40 years. His tireless mediation of disputes in the Middle East has bridged divides under the most challenging circumstances," the White House statement noted, affirming that Trump "is very pleased to award this honor to his dear friend, the Amir". According to the White House, "the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, is a rarely-awarded, prestigious decoration that can only be bestowed by the president, typically to chiefs of state or heads of government of other countries. The honor was last awarded in 1991."

Sheikh Nasser said upon directions from HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he received the award from Trump on behalf of HH the Amir.

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5,000 take part in Kuwait's biggest cleanup campaign

KUWAIT: Coinciding with World Cleanup Day, the biggest cleanup drive in Kuwait took place yesterday at Khuwaisat Beach near the Jahra desert. Around 5,000 people of various nationalities participated in the campaign, according to Al-Nowair, a private nonprofit organization that organized the event.

Head of Al-Nowair Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Sabah expressed her pride and happiness at the launch of the campaign titled "Kuwait is Clean", pointing out that Kuwait is participating in this historic event for the first time, which will strengthen its international position in the field of environmental preservation.

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Waleed Al-Jassem thanked Al-Nowair, stressing the Municipality constantly supports such volunteer campaigns aiming to create a safe and healthy envi-

ronment for all. Director General of the Environment Public Authority Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah confirmed the importance of such an initiative, which will help in extending the public's environmental awareness.

Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Organizations Nasser Abdullah Al-Hain said the ministry is keen to participate in this event due to the importance of the issue locally and internationally. He praised the distinguished efforts by Sheikh Intisar over the years to preserve the environment. Deputy Chief of Staff of the Supply Authority at the Defense Ministry Maj Gen Ali Abdul Hadi Al-Shanfa said the ministry's higher leadership is keen to participate in this campaign.

US Ambassador Alina Romanowski said that the embassy was eager to join the international community in its responsibility to preserve a clean environment, indicating that participation in yesterday's event was part of global efforts in this regard. Canadian Ambassador Wes Pierre Edmond indicated that both countries are interested in addressing climate change and environment preservation, praising at the same time government bodies and

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KUWAIT: Participants clean trash at Khuwaisat Beach near Jahra yesterday to coincide with World Cleanup Day. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 4)

China hits back after US curbs TikTok, WeChat

SHANGHAI: China yesterday launched a mechanism that would allow it to sanction foreign companies, upping the ante in a tech war with the United States a day after Washington moved to curb popular Chinese apps TikTok and WeChat. China's long-expected "unreliable entities list" is seen as a weapon for Beijing to retaliate against the United States, which has used its own "entity list" to shut Chinese telecom giant Huawei out of the US market, while also moving against TikTok and WeChat.

Its implementation comes just a day after the US Commerce Department stepped up the pressure by ordering a ban on downloads of video app TikTok and effectively blocking use of WeChat, the Chinese super-app. An announcement by China's Ministry of Commerce did not mention any specific foreign entities that could be targeted.

But it said the new system would consider sanctions on entities whose activities "harm China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests" or violate "internationally accepted economic and trade rules". That language closely tracks wording that Beijing has

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Grade 12 results: Some students score full 100%

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The education ministry yesterday announced the results of grade 12 students of public and private Arabic schools in the science, arts and religion streams for the 2019-2020 academic year. The success (passing) rate was 99.7 percent in the science field, 97.89 percent in arts and 96 percent in religious education. Some students even attained a full 100 percent result, which was never possible in previous years. The 2019-2020 academic year took place in exceptional and unprecedented circumstances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fierce battle looms after Ginsburg dies

WASHINGTON: A fierce political battle was shaping up yesterday over the selection of a successor to trailblazing liberal US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with top Democrats opposing

any move by President Donald Trump to nominate her replacement before the Nov 3 presidential election.

Ginsburg, the senior liberal justice, died on Friday night at age 87 of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer after 27 years on the court. Her death gives Trump, who is seeking re-election on Nov 3, a chance to expand the court's conservative majority to 6-3 at a time of a gaping political divide in America.

Even as large crowds of mourners gathered outside the Supreme Court building

well into the night to pay tribute to the iconic liberal jurist, battle lines were forming. Supreme Court appointments require Senate confirmation, and Trump's fellow Republicans control the chamber, holding 53 seats of the 100 seats. Democrats lack the votes to block any Trump nominee unless some Republican senators join them.

With the assistance of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has made confirmation of Trump's federal judicial nominees a top priority, the president

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KUWAIT: Grade 12 students Maya, Jana, Raghad, Yara and Fatima celebrate their graduation on their own at Shaheed Park on Friday, as the usually grand graduation celebrations have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Local

Nazaha received 300+ corruption reports, referred 40 to prosecution

Watchdog maintains cooperation with NGOs to detect corruption

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: During the past few years, corruption has become one of the most discussed topics in Kuwait. Due to the increasing number of graft cases, the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) was established four years ago according to law no. 2/2016.

“Over 300 reports of corruption have been made to Nazaha since 2016, and 40 were referred to the public prosecution. Out of these, seven final verdicts have been issued, while the rest are still in court. The final verdicts stipulated financial penalties, in addition to forcing those convicted to return double the amount of funds misappropriated,” Dr Mohammed Buzubar, Assistant Secretary General for Detection and Investigation at Nazaha, told Kuwait Times.

“Nazaha only accepts reports of corruption by employees in the public sector in positions starting from manager till the prime minister, according to article 2 of law no. 2/2016. These include around 40,000 positions. Exceptions can be made if misappropriated amounts are very large, but usually the public prosecution deals directly with those in lower positions. Article 22 of the same law also mentions the crimes to which it applies,” he added.

“Nazaha was founded based on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which today has 187 members. Becoming a member in this convention resulted in making a commitment to establish relationships with all international organizations including UN



KUWAIT: Mohammed Buzubar, Assistant Secretary General for Detection and Investigation at Nazaha, speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

and European organizations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and others. Nazaha is in regular contact with



Protection for whistleblowers

them in order to combat corruption crimes,” Buzubar pointed out.

Nazaha has close relations with these organizations. “We are cooperating with them in various issues. UNCAC sets a

review every five years of the commitments of each member. We also have very close relations with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We exchange information with other members, which helps us when searching for information outside our borders. We have many examples of such cooperation,” stated Buzubar.

Community role

Nazaha also plays an awareness role in the community. “According to the convention, it is part of our duty to have channels of communication with non-governmental organizations, as these institutions usually are the ones to detect corruption. So

Nazaha cooperates with NGOs and supports them,” he said.

“We also hold symposiums and workshops with them to spread awareness on the dangers of corruption. On Monday (Sept 21), we are holding a workshop titled ‘Democratic Labor Governance’. Participation in this workshop is open to the public,” Buzubar told Kuwait Times. “Furthermore, we have various memorandums of understanding with different public institutions including the ministry of awqaf, ministry of youth, ministry of education, ministry of commerce and others.”

Financial disclosures were mandated by the anti-corruption law, according to which a person discloses all their real and movable property within the legal period, whether they are working in a public position or have left this position. The disclosure includes their bank accounts, real estate, movable property, debts and others. “This disclosure helps us in controlling the performance of the public employee, so he cannot illegally benefit or profit from his public position. We are able to control his illegally inflated bank accounts. If an accusation is proven, we will refer him to the prosecution,” stressed Buzubar.

“The national strategy for combating corruption is our long-term project. This strategy is a roadmap for the cooperation of the community with Nazaha in combating corruption. Nazaha leads this effort and the community supports it. This strategy was set for the period from 2019 to 2024, and it includes priorities and activities addressed to all public institutions, which have to respond to us,” he noted.

“The duties of the institutions may include addressing any missing legislation at an institution, so it has to issue a decree. If the institution is holding training courses for employees, it has to inform us. Also, all public institutions should have codes of conduct and codes of ethics,” Buzubar said.

Whistleblower protection

Nazaha provides protection to whistleblowers. “There are three types of protection - personal, administrative and legal. Currently, we are providing administrative and legal protection, which guarantees the whistleblower anonymity and their personal data are confidential during investigations at Nazaha and outside it (at the prosecution), in case the whistleblower faces problems or abuse at their workplace related to reporting corruption,” highlighted Buzubar.

A whistleblower has to submit proof. “He should have some documents proving his statement, or at least he should inform us where we can find such documents. We have the legal authority to get any document we need from any public institution to use for our investigations at Nazaha,” he told Kuwait Times.

The law sets sanctions for malicious reports, but they haven’t been activated till now. “Sanctions for false or malicious reports are mentioned in the corruption law, but until today, Nazaha hasn’t imposed any sanction as we assume the goodwill of the whistleblowers. But sanctions are included in the law to protect persons accused of corruption if they are innocent,” concluded Buzubar.

Trump decorates Amir with rare...

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He said that during the event, he voiced much thanks and appreciation to the US president for this good gesture, which showed that HH the Amir and the State of Kuwait are held in high esteem by the US administration.

It also reflected recognition of the great role and unremitting efforts of HH the Amir for building and promoting strategic cooperation relations with the US, based on the bonds of partnership and friendship between both countries and peoples over several decades.

HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf on Friday sent a cable to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah to congratulate him. In his cable, HH the Deputy Amir expressed his, the Kuwaiti government’s and people’s sincere congratulations to HH the Amir on this well-deserved honoring. He noted that this decoration comes in recognition of HH the Amir’s leading role to bolster regional and international peace and security.

“This notable honoring of Your Highness shows how the international community places Your

Highness and Kuwait high, thanks to your wise policy and your sincere efforts to promote dialogue for resolving disputes and conflicts as well as to your internationally-respected diplomacy and humanitarian role,” the Deputy Amir stated. He underlined the Amir’s humanitarian march, which is full of generous initiatives to aid people affected by natural or manmade disasters in every part of the globe, will remain a source of inspiration to the whole world. He also wished HH the Amir speedy recovery and everlasting wellbeing.

HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also sent a cable on Friday to Trump expressing his appreciation and thanks on behalf of the Kuwaiti people and government for awarding HH the Amir the highest military honor given to a non-American commander in recognition of his relentless efforts and distinguished achievements. In his cable, Sheikh Nawaf said he “highly appreciates such tremendous honor in recognition of His Highness the Amir’s contributions and efforts to promote regional and international peace, including supporting development as well as His Highness’ well-known humanitarian initiatives around the world”.

HH the Deputy Amir also affirmed that this honor has become a source of pride and praise for the entire Kuwaiti people, as it is a living symbol and an embodiment of the deep historical and solid ties between the two nations. — Agencies

unclear, the sweeping ban raises concerns about the US government’s ability to regulate free expression. “It’s a mistake to think of this as (only) a sanction on TikTok and WeChat. It’s a serious restriction on the First Amendment rights of US citizens and residents,” said Jameel Jaffer, director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University.

Some analysts say Trump’s moves are motivated more by reasons for business competition than security concerns. The moves would effectively disable US use of WeChat - a so-called super-app used for messaging, shopping, payments and other services - and TikTok from the online marketplaces operated by Apple and Google.

After today, services on WeChat will be “degraded”, said a senior US Commerce Department official, who added that existing users may retain some capability. WeChat is widely used among Chinese expats to keep in touch with people back home. A court challenge to the ban by US-based WeChat users is pending. The US ban on WeChat does not affect its service in China where the app is much more widely used.

Existing TikTok users will be able to continue using the app until Nov 12 - when it would also face a full ban on its US operations if no deal is reached, according to officials. TikTok’s brand of brief, quirky phone videos has become hugely popular, especially among young people, with 100 million users in the US alone.

The move ramps up pressure on ByteDance to conclude a deal to sell all or part of TikTok to ally US security concerns. A potential deal would allow Silicon Valley giant Oracle to become the tech partner for TikTok, but some US lawmakers have objected to allowing ByteDance to keep a stake. Trump said Friday a deal could happen quickly.

“For ByteDance, their back is against the wall to accept the terms of the deals outlined over the past few days,” Daniel Ives at Wedbush Securities said in a research note. “We still believe a deal can be reached and this shutdown averted although it’s a critical 48 hours ahead for deal negotiations between all parties involved.” — Reuters

Moroccans protest ‘Arab normalization’ with Israel

RABAT: Hundreds of Moroccans demonstrated Friday against the “Arab normalization” of ties with Israel, following US-backed agreements week between the Jewish state, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Demonstrators in the North African nation’s capital Rabat waved Palestinian flags, criticizing the “treacherous countries” and “their American and Zionist allies”.

The UAE and Bahrain on Tuesday signed deals with Israel at the White House, breaking decades of Arab consensus that there would be no relations with the Jewish state until it had made peace with the Palestinians. Before the deals, the only Arab countries to establish relations with Israel were Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

“We demand the criminalization of any normalization” with Israel, demonstrators shouted. “We are here to remind people that the Palestinian cause is also ours,” said Taib Madmad, a member of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights. Morocco does not have formal relations with Israel,



RABAT: Moroccans wave Palestinian flags during a demonstration in the capital on Friday to denounce the Israeli normalization deals with the UAE and Bahrain. — AFP

but has unofficial links, especially due to Jewish communities of Moroccan origin. Israeli media recently cited Morocco as one of the Arab countries that could also potentially normalize ties. A Moroccan official told AFP such reports were “completely unfounded”. — AFP

China hits back after US curbs...

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used to repeatedly denounce US actions against Chinese companies.

Punitive measures may include fines against the foreign entity, banning it from conducting trade and investment in China, and restrictions on the entry of personnel or equipment into the country. It covers “foreign enterprises, other organizations and individuals”, the ministry said.

Under Friday’s US order against the Chinese apps, Tencent-owned WeChat would lose functionality in the United States from today. TikTok users will be banned from installing updates but could keep accessing the service through Nov 12. That timeframe potentially allows for a tie-up between TikTok, owned by China’s ByteDance, and a US company to safeguard data for the wildly popular app to ally Washington’s security concerns.

With President Donald Trump facing a tough re-election campaign, US officials have described the measures as essential to safeguard national security from potential Chinese espionage through the platforms. But in a response to the US steps, China’s Commerce Ministry yesterday condemned what it called US “bullying”, saying it violated international trade norms and that there was no evidence of any security threat.

“If the US insists on going its own way, China will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies,” it said, without specifying the potential measures. A short time after that statement, the ministry announced the new sanctions regime. TikTok vowed to fight the Trump crackdown in court, saying it impedes a tool “for entertainment, self-expression and connection”.

Critics said that while the security risks were

Fierce battle looms after...

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potentially could announce a nominee and move rapidly through the confirmation process, which usually takes at least two months. Even before Ginsburg’s death, Trump had made public a list of potential nominees.

Trump’s Democratic opponent in the presidential race, Joe Biden, on Friday night said the winner of the election should be the one to make the selection and that Trump should not move forward with a nominee. Chuck Schumer, the Senate’s top Democrat, agreed. McConnell pledged that the Senate would vote on any Trump nominee. If he wins, Biden would be sworn in to replace Trump on Jan 20. Trump focused his initial remarks on praising Ginsburg, who he previously had derided, without specifying his next steps.

For liberals who considered her a heroine, the grief they have expressed over her death was tinged with fear over what happens next. Conservative activists for years have sought to get enough votes on the Supreme Court to overturn the 1973 Roe v Wade ruling that legalized abortion nationwide. During the 2016 campaign, Trump promised to appoint justices who would overturn that landmark decision. But the court in July, even with its conservative majority, struck down a restrictive Louisiana abortion law on a 5-4 vote.

The two justices who Trump already has appoint-

5,000 take part in Kuwait’s biggest...

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the private sector for their contributions to this global event. UN Secretary General’s

Representative and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Tareq Al-Sheikh, UN Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Tieu Dunn, and member of the Municipal Council Maha Al-Baghli expressed appreciation and pride to participate in such an international event. World Cleanup Day is an annual global social action program aimed at combating the global solid waste problem, including the problem of marine debris. It is coordinated by the Estonian organization Let’s Do It! World. — KUNA

Local

US award recognition of Amir's role to enhance int'l peace, help the vulnerable

Kuwait expresses pride in Amir's balanced policies, humanitarian initiatives, wise vision

KUWAIT: His Highness Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a congratulatory cable from chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah on the occasion of US President Donald Trump's awarding of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the prestigious US Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander. In the cable, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali expressed the KNG commanders and forces' greetings to His Highness the Amir on receiving the award. It is one of the most prestigious medals granted to the senior leaders all over the world, he said. He added that this American decoration is a recognition of His Highness the Amir's remarkable efforts. He wished good health, well-being and a safe return to His Highness the Amir as well as further prosperity and progress to Kuwait.

Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a similar cable to His Highness the Deputy Amir, in which he expressed greetings and congratulations of all commanders and personnel of the KNG on the occasion. "We congratulate ourselves and the Kuwait people on this honoring," Sheikh Meshaal said. "We are proud of His Highness the Amir, his efforts and great role in the region and the whole world, especially to buttress relations with friendly and sisterly countries, in particular the historic strategic partnership between Kuwait and the US," Sheikh Meshaal said. He wished good health, well-being and a safe return to His Highness the Amir, and further prosperity and progress to Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir supported by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince. In return, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent cables of thanks to His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Sheikh Meshaal Al-Sabah for their and KNG staff's sincere congratulations and sentiments.

His Highness the Deputy Amir also received a congratulatory letter from Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who conveyed congratula-

tions of all lawmakers to His Highness the Amir, expressing their pride and admiration for such recognition to His Highness' efforts. In turn, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent a letter thanking the Speaker and all lawmakers for their kind and sincere sentiments. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received similar letters from His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well.

Pioneering role

Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir received a congratulatory cable from His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who expressed his pleasure to convey sincere greetings and congratulations to His Highness the Amir. This honoring shows His Highness the Amir's efforts and pioneering role on both regional and international levels, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said. The US decoration reflects His Highness the Amir's prominent political and diplo-

matic role in enhancing stability, and international peace and security, as well as efforts to help vulnerable people all over the world, he noted.

He voiced his pride for the balanced policies, humanitarian initiatives and wise vision of His Highness the Amir as well as his achievements in serving the country, defending Muslim and Arab issues, and disseminating peace across the globe. Under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, unprecedented accomplishments have been made, the premier pointed out. He wished good health, well-being, a speedy recovery and a safe return to His Highness the Amir as well as further prosperity and progress to Kuwait. In return, His Highness the Deputy Amir sent a cable of thanks to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled for his sincere congratulations and sentiments to His Highness the Amir.

Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah also sent cables to His Highness the Amir Sheikh



WASHINGTON: This photo released by the Amiri Diwan Friday shows US President Donald Trump, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and other Kuwaiti and US officials attending a private ceremony in the Oval Office to award His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the US Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander.

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to His Highness Deputy Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to congratulate them on the US honoring of His Highness the Amir. In his cables, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser expressed pleasure for the award, and also expressed, on behalf of the entire foreign ministry's staff best wishes and a speedy recovery to His Highness the Amir. He noted that such recognition was a testament to the Amir's relentless efforts and work throughout the years. In turn, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf sent a letter thanking the foreign minister for his sincere sentiments.

Unforgettable feats

Furthermore, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Jabri said that His Highness the Amir's different unforgettable feats had earned him numerous international decorations. The US President's honoring of His Highness the Amir adds a fresh award to a set of his humanitarian, diplomatic and political decorations and promotes Kuwait's international status, the minister said on Twitter. He added that His Highness the

Amir has worked hard over decades to establish the name of Kuwait internationally through immortal works that have been translated by global organizations into international decorations.

Moreover, Minister of Social Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel congratulated His Highness the Amir, saying that he deserved this fresh honoring just as he was awarded the UN title of a Humanitarian Leader years ago thanks to his great humanitarian and altruistic efforts and role regionally and globally. Aqeel, who doubles as Minister of State for Economic Affairs, wished His Highness the Amir swift recovery and return to his nation.

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi said meanwhile that the honoring of His Highness the Amir was reflective of his great status, adding that the award also displayed His Highness' crucial role on the regional and international arenas. The minister congratulated His Highness the Amir on this achievement, expressing hopes for prosperous health and a swift return for His Highness from his medical checkup trip abroad. —KUNA

KRCS establishes second shelter camp for affected Sudanese

KHARTOUM: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) founded a second shelter camp for the Sudanese people affected by the floods in southeastern Khartoum. In a press statement on Thursday, head of the society's mission Abdulrahman Al-Oun said they, in cooperation with Sudanese Red Crescent Society, started distributing food and shelter aid in Singa, the capital of Sennar State, to about 100 families. He added that Singa is one of the most areas affected by the downpours, noting that they used boats to distribute aid. Authorities in Sennar State expressed their

appreciations to Kuwait's support including shelter materials, hygiene supplies, food aid, kitchen tools and others, he noted. The society will head to River Nile State, north of Sudan, to offer further assistance to people there, he said.

Earlier, Kuwait sent humanitarian aid via an air bridge to Khartoum, and the KRCS established a camp to host the affected people in northern Khartoum, as part of a plan to establish five camps to accommodate 500 families affected by the floods in Sudan. Sudan's authorities cautioned of the consequences of the floods and declared a state of emergency throughout the country for a period of more than three months. They also considered Sudan a natural disaster area following increased rains and water levels in the River Nile. According to Sudan's official figures, more than 557,000 people in 17 states out of 18 were affected by the downpours that killed 100 people and injured dozens others as well as destroyed more than 111,000 houses. —KUNA



Kuwait pledges \$20 million in aid to war-torn Yemen

KUWAIT: Kuwait said it would provide \$20 million in emergency aid to Yemen, amid its "great concern" over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the war-torn nation. Given the "extremely alarming" conditions in Yemen, Kuwait remains committed to political dialogue as the only way out of the country's war of attrition, Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah told a ministerial-level conference via videoconference on Thursday. Collectively hosted by the foreign ministers of Kuwait, the United Kingdom, Germany and Sweden, on the sidelines of the 75th annual UN General Assembly, the talks aimed to push for political progress in Yemen, amid ongoing friction between the country's warring parties.

Reiterating his country's unflinching support for Yemen, Kuwait's foreign minister said it was incumbent upon the international community to "lift the Yemeni people out of misery," subsequently restoring peace and stability there. In the midst of the world's "worst humanitarian crisis," exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, he said high-level international talks held regularly over the years encapsulated global support for Yemen. The minister acknowledged Saudi Arabia's "admirable efforts," to end the crisis, saying Riyadh, which has seen the conflict spill across its border, was Yemen's "largest benefactor." He went on to equally thank UN bodies for their role to help end the conflict as well, urging for "unimpeded access" to all people in dire need of humanitarian aid across a country battered by years of war and months of a raging pandemic. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah attends the videoconference. —KUNA

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Expats can use mobile ID app to enter Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) informed local authorities that expat passengers can use the Kuwait Mobile ID application as proof of having residency permit while traveling. Official letters were sent to the foreign ministry to inform embassies abroad and foreign embassies in Kuwait, the interior ministry to inform border outlets and the airport, and to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to inform airlines, travel agencies and international airports' authorities to allow expats to enter Kuwait using the smartphone app. Any person who has a digital civil ID can use the application to prove his residency and enter Kuwait, in addition to using it for all transactions, PACI said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Kuwait on Thursday expanded its COVID-19 ban on incoming commercial flights from "high-risk" nations to include Argentina, France and Yemen, but has removed Singapore from the list. This decision comes in accordance with the instructions of health authorities, DGCA said in a press statement. The list now includes a total 34 countries. The remaining countries are Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Hong Kong, Hungary, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Syria. — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: High school students throw their caps in the air while they celebrate their graduation on their own at the Shaheed Park in Kuwait City on September 18, 2020, as the usually grand graduation celebrations have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Indian ambassador looks to build on 'excellent' relations

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Newly-appointed Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George met members of the local press on Thursday and thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait for the warm welcome accorded to him. George arrived in Kuwait in the first week of August and presented his credentials to His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sept 8, 2020.

He said one of his main objectives in his tenure as ambassador of India to Kuwait is to build on already-excellent bilateral relations. "We have excellent multifaceted cooperation covering various sectors including high-level political engagement and people-to-people exchanges," George said.

"This is my first meeting with the press - I am



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

very happy to be here and delighted to serve our people. I am thankful that today I am here to serve our Indian diaspora in Kuwait and to further strengthen our bilateral ties. I am thankful to the leadership of His Highness the Amir, the government and the people of Kuwait, especially for welcoming our people in this country in this time of difficulties when people are working together in the fight against COVID-19. The Indian Embassy is working with everyone in this fight - we will fight and we will win," the ambassador affirmed.

Kuwait COVID cases rise to 99,049

KUWAIT: Kuwait's confirmed novel coronavirus cases increased by 521 to 99,049 with one person having succumbed to the disease, raising the death toll to 581 in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said yesterday. The figures include people, who have come into contact with infected individuals, and others whose source of infection is currently being investigated, read a ministry statement. In terms of health zones, 131 cases were reported in Hawally, 114 in Farwaniya, 111 in the Capital, 96 in Al-Ahmadi and 69 in Jahra, the ministry added. There are 96 people currently receiving intensive care for the virus out of a total 8,970 patients being hospitalized. Some 3,545 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 705,029 so far, the added ministry in a statement. Earlier, the ministry said 722 people have recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 89,498. — KUNA

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KUWAIT: People participate in a major cleaning campaign carried out in Kuwait yesterday, to coincide with the World Cleanup Day. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

US mourns ‘titan of the law’ Ginsburg

Trump pays tribute to ‘amazing life’ of the 87-year-old justice



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on October 08, 2018 (From L) White House Counsel Don McGahn, Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court John Roberts, Associate Justices Clarence Thomas, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito and Sonia Sotomayor listen to Brett Kavanaugh (R) during his swearing-in ceremony as Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court at the White House in Washington. — AFP

Erdogan willing to meet Greek PM over east Med tensions

ISTANBUL: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said Turkey was ready to meet Greece's leader to resolve the standoff over energy exploration in contested waters in the eastern Mediterranean.

The search for gas and oil in the region has sparked a row that has seen the two NATO neighbours stage rival air and navy drills in strategic waters between Cyprus and the Greek island of Crete.

"Could there be a meeting with Greek Prime Minister (Kyriakos) Mitsotakis? What's essential is what we discuss and in what framework," Erdogan

told reporters in Istanbul after Friday prayers.

"We can meet if there is goodwill. We can talk via videoconference or meet in a third country," Erdogan said, adding that Turkey would not be the party fleeing the table.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu later on Friday said the Greek ambassador Michael-Christos Diamessi was summoned to the foreign ministry in Ankara over an item in Dimokratia newspaper, seen atop its website.

"A Greek newspaper had a vile front page," Cavusoglu said in Ankara. "We summoned the Greek ambassador to the ministry," he added, quoted by state news agency Anadolu. In Athens, the Greek foreign ministry said: "Freedom of expression and freedom of the Press are fully protected in Greece. - 'Refrain from insulting' leader

"This fact does not negate the obligation to refrain from insulting the personality of any individual, particularly a foreign leader," the Greek ministry added.

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Friday hailed the late US Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a "titan of the law" whose legal expertise and historic decisions inspired generations of Americans.

"Today, our nation mourns the loss of a titan of the law" who was "renowned for her brilliant mind and her powerful dissents at the Supreme Court," Trump said in a statement.

"Her opinions, including well-known decisions regarding the legal equality of women and the disabled, have inspired all Americans, and generations of great legal minds," he added.

"May her memory be a great and magnificent blessing to the world."

Earlier in the evening, in learning of the liberal icon's death while he was on the campaign trail, Trump paid tribute to the "amazing life" of the 87-year-old justice. Trump was on stage at a rally in Minnesota when news broke of the death of the justice known in popular culture as "the Notorious RGB," and was informed of her passing by reporters after his speech.

"She just died?" he told reporters. "I didn't know that." "Whether you agreed or not, she was an amaz-

ing woman who led an amazing life," he added. "I'm actually saddened to hear that."

US flags at the White House were lowered to half staff Friday "in honor of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a trailblazer for women," press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said on Twitter. Flags were also lowered at the US Capitol at the direction of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the top Democrat and Trump's chief nemesis in Washington.

"Justice Ginsburg embodied justice, brilliance and goodness, and her passing is an incalculable loss for our democracy and for all who sacrifice and strive to build a better future for our children," Pelosi said in a statement.

While Trump offered warm words for Ginsburg, he has made no secret of his interest in further shaping the court's ideological leanings. As he battles for reelection, Trump has told supporters he will pack the court with conservative-leaning justices for a generation to come if he defeats his Democratic rival Joe Biden in November. In August Trump told conservative radio talk show host Hugh Hewitt that he "absolutely" would fill a high court vacancy should an opportunity present itself before his first term expired. — AFP

be violated. Of course in this area nobody should try to prevail by force."

He added Greece was "always open to a dialogue with Turkey as regards coastal waters in the exclusive economic zone, provided that Turkey stops its provocative acts in the area."

Turkey's Yavuz drillship, meanwhile, will continue its search for oil and gas off Cyprus until October 12 despite international calls to withdraw.

Ankara's dispute with Athens has sparked a crisis that has drawn in some EU member states, particularly France which sent navy vessels and fighter jets to the region in support of Greece. EU leaders are due to discuss possible sanctions against Ankara at their meeting on September 24-25. "We would like our partners and friends in the EU to draft a list of sanctions which should not be imposed on Turkey immediately but rather serve as an example of sanctions that could be imposed on Turkey if it doesn't stop its unlawful acts," Dendias said. — AFP

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International

Thousands rally in Thai capital against government

Calls for reform of monarchy repeated by protesters

BANGKOK: Thousands of protesters in Thailand's capital demonstrated against the government of former coup leader and Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha yesterday, with many also demanding reforms to the powerful monarchy.

"Down with feudalism, long live the people," was one of the chants.

Protests have been building since mid-July to call for the removal of the government, a new constitution and elections. They have also broken a long-standing taboo by criticising the monarchy of King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

Police said at least 5,000 people had gathered at the campus of Thammasat University, long seen as a hotbed of opposition to the military and royalist establishment, and scene of a massacre of protesters in 1976. Under light rain, protesters spilled onto Sanam Luang, a public space opposite the Grand Palace where state ceremonies are traditionally held.

"Today the people will demand back their power," Arnon Nampa, a human rights lawyer who has emerged as a leading figure in the protest movement, said on Twitter.

Sept. 19 is the anniversary of the coup against the populist then-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2006. Among the protesters were many of his red shirt followers, veterans of clashes a decade ago with pro-establishment yellow shirts.

"I'm here to fight for the future of my children

and grandchildren. I hope that by the time I die, they will become free," said 68-year-old Tasawan Suebthai, a redshirt with amulets round her neck to ward off bullets.

So far the protests have been peaceful. The biggest to date drew more than 10,000 people last month, but organisers expect more this time.

Establishment under fire

Thai politics has for years been marked by challenges to the royalist and military establishment by politicians backed by poor urban and rural voters, and more recently by the student protesters.

The military, which proclaims itself the defender of the country's core institutions, in particular the monarchy, has stepped in to overthrow civilian governments numerous times, most recently in 2014, citing the need to maintain stability.

Prayuth has said the government would allow protests as a form of free speech but that demands for reform of the monarchy were not acceptable.

"We are fighting to put the monarchy in the right place, not to abolish it," one protest leader, Panupong "Mike" Jadnok, told the crowd.

A 20-year-old student, who gave her name only as Waa for fear of reprisals, said it was time to reform the monarchy. "It's a problem that's been swept under the rug for so long. This must end right here."

Biggest protest



BANGKOK: Pro-democracy protesters shout slogans during an anti-government rally in Bangkok yesterday. A youth-led pro-democracy movement made a stand in Bangkok yesterday, with protesters calling for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha to step down and demanding reforms to the monarchy. —AFP

Protesters demand the scrapping of a lese majeste law against criticism of the monarchy. They also seek to reduce the king's constitutional powers and his control over the palace fortune and units of the army.

On Thursday, Prayuth warned the protesters against raising the risks of spreading the novel

coronavirus and urged them to put the health crisis before politics.

Protesters jeered when a police officer told a group of them that they could only stay for an hour because of the risk of transmitting the virus. Police said they were deploying 10,000 officers on Saturday. —Reuters

Iran sanctions: US versus the world over 'snapback' option

WASHINGTON: The United States will unilaterally declare this weekend that UN sanctions against Iran are once again in force, a move that risks increasing Washington's diplomatic isolation while also stoking international tensions.

"Virtually all UN sanctions on Iran will come back into place this weekend at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time (midnight GMT) today the 19th," said Elliott Abrams, the Trump administration's special representative for Iran.

But on this point, Washington is almost alone in the world: all the other great powers — China, Russia and also the US' own European allies — have challenged the claim. How did the UN arrive at this spectacular stand-off between the leading superpower and the rest of the planet? To answer that, one has to go back at least one month.

In mid-August, President Donald Trump's administration suffered a resounding defeat at the UN Security Council when it tried to extend the embargo on conventional weapons being sent to Tehran, which was due to expire in October.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made an unusually vehement attack on allies France, Britain

and Germany, accusing them of "siding with Iran's Ayatollahs," and on August 20 announced a controversial move known as the "snapback," which aims to re-establish all sanctions against Tehran a month later. The sanctions were lifted in 2015 when Iran signed on to an international agreement not to seek to build nuclear weapons.

A legal pirouette

But Trump said that the landmark accord, negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama, was insufficient and withdrew the US from the agreement in 2018, then renewed and even strengthened Washington's bilateral sanctions.

At the moment, the United States is insisting it is still a participant in the agreement that it stormed out of, but only so that it can activate the "snapback" option.

Virtually every other member of the Security Council disputes Washington's ability to execute this legal pirouette, and the council has not taken the measure any further.

But this dialogue of the deaf has gone on unabated: the Trump administration acts as if the international sanctions were coming back, while the rest of the international community continues to act as if nothing has changed.

So is this a symbolic gesture designed to recall Washington's hard line against Tehran, or are there more concrete measures in the offing?

The Americans will "pretend that they have activated the snapback and that therefore the sanc-

sovereignty and seriously damaged the status quo of peace and stability in the strait and the region," it said.

Krach attended the memorial service for Lee, sitting next to former Japanese prime minister Yoshiro Mori, before he is due to leave Taiwan later Saturday after a three-day visit.

Krach did not make any remarks at the service while in a pre-recorded video the Dalai Lama praised Lee's commitment to democracy.

"I admire his commitment to democracy and freedom ... as his close friend I always remember him and as a Buddhist I always pray," he said.

Like Lee, the Dalai Lama is also branded a "split-tist" by Beijing which accuses him of seeking Tibet's independence from China.

Lee, who died in July aged 97, was a towering figure in Taiwan's history, helping the once authoritarian island transition to a vibrant democracy and later angering China by pushing for it to be recognised as a sovereign country.

China considers self-ruled Taiwan part of its territory, to be absorbed into the mainland — by force if necessary.

Beijing has ramped up diplomatic, economic and military pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects its view that the island is part of "one China".

Washington's increased outreach to Taiwan under President Donald Trump has become yet another flashpoint with China as the countries clash over a range of issues of trade and security issues, as well as the coronavirus pandemic.

On Friday, Krach held closed-door meetings with

the country's main counter-terrorism arm said in a statement.

Those arrested "were motivated to undertake attacks at multiple places" including the capital region.

Six of the militants were arrested in the eastern state of West Bengal and while three in the southern state of Kerala, the NIA said, adding the individuals were "associated with Pakistan sponsored module of al Qaeda".

A spokesman for Pakistan's foreign office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

tions are back up and running," said one European diplomat. But "this action will have no legal foundation" and therefore "cannot have legal consequences." "I don't see anything happening," said another UN diplomat. "It would be just a statement. It's like pulling a trigger and no bullet coming out."

Trump 'shock'?

Another diplomat deplored the "unilateral" US act, saying that "Russia and China are sitting, happy, eating popcorn, watching" the "huge destabilizing fallout" between Washington and its European partners. The US is, however, demanding that the arms embargo be prolonged "indefinitely," and that numerous other activities linked to Iran's nuclear and ballistic programs be subject to international sanctions. Pompeo said this week the US will "do all the things we need to do to make sure that those sanctions are enforced."

"We are going to act in a way — and we have acted in a way — that will prevent Iran from being able to purchase Chinese tanks and Russian air defense systems," he said.

"We expect every nation to comply with UN Security Council resolutions — period, full stop," he added. That is where the issue risks stoking up international tensions. Trump could announce secondary sanctions to punish any country or entity that violates UN sanctions, blocking their access to US markets and financial systems, even though the US is one of the only countries to believe that the sanctions are actually in force. —AFP



TAIPEI: This handout picture taken on September 18, 2020 and released by Taiwan's Presidential Office shows Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen (C) interacting with Keith Krach (L), US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, and Morris Chang (R), founder of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), at the president residency in Taipei. —AFP

Taiwan's premier and other top officials before joining President Tsai for dinner at her official residence. "I'm sure the productive discussions we had today will bring Taiwan & the US even closer together & open the door to further collaboration," Tsai tweeted.

Trump has embraced Taiwan more closely as a way to hit back at Beijing, especially as he seeks re-election in November. He has also approved some major arms sales, something his recent predecessors were more reluctant to do. —AFP

Pakistan has often denied giving material support to militants. India has stepped up an offensive against militants in the Muslim-majority region of Kashmir and elsewhere.

Last year, Indian forces killed the leader of an al Qaeda-affiliated militant group in Kashmir, triggering protests in parts of the disputed region.

In the latest raids, the NIA seized sharp weapons, domestically made firearms and locally fabricated body armour. The nine militants will be produced in court for police custody and further investigation, the agency said. —Reuters

The art of non-deal? Scepticism over Trump's Balkan pact

BELGRADE: 'Truly historic', 'a real breakthrough' and 'very big' — US President Donald Trump let the superlatives flow when he announced a deal between Serbia and Kosovo, earning himself a second Nobel Peace Prize nomination this year.

But those familiar with decades-old Balkan conflicts have a different take on the agreements, which they say are thin on substance, non-binding and already showing signs of unravelling.

"I don't see how it's going to help either Serbs or Kosovars," Olivera Radovanovic, a 88-year-old pensioner from Belgrade, told AFP, capturing the collective shrug among many ordinary people in the region.

"It looks political to me. Trump does not inspire peace, I don't see why he should get (the prize)," she added. More than 20 years since they fought a war, the neighbours' relationship is tense and complicated — particularly because Serbia refuses to accept the 2008 declaration of independence by Kosovo, a former province home mainly to ethnic Albanians.

While long-running EU-led negotiations have tried to untangle their many political feuds, Trump claimed that his administration's economic-focused deal led to "a major breakthrough — something that nobody thought was going to be possible."

It later became clear that the documents signed by Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic were separate "letters of intent". Trump, meanwhile, inked a cover letter "acknowledging that the two sides are going to work together", his advisor said. That effectively leaves the agreements without any enforcement mechanism, former Serbian ambassador to the United Nations Pavle Jevremovic told AFP.

"It can't be seen as an internationally legally binding document", Jevremovic added, even though Washington's involvement lends it political weight as long as Trump is in office.

Middle East twist

The contents of the 16-point letters have also raised eyebrows. While the agreement was billed as an economic normalisation pact that would create jobs and make the region "safer", its most eye-catching part turned out to be about the Middle East.

In a surprise twist, Kosovo agreed to mutually recognise Israel, while Serbia was to follow Washington's controversial lead and move its embassy to Jerusalem. Trump, who has recently touted new accords between Israel and its Arab neighbours, hailed "another great day for peace with Middle East", sparking cheeky reactions online about whether the president had his geography straight.

Fron Nahzi, senior director at McCain Institute for International Leadership, said it was clear the president was focused on his re-election campaign. "The intended audience is a sub-section of voters in swing states: namely, Jewish communities in Florida and Pennsylvania and ethnic Albanians who live in Michigan", Nahzi wrote in an opinion piece for the local outlet Balkan Insight.

Analysts have also noted that many of the points that do relate to Kosovo and Serbia's relationship are hardly new. Some were repeats of previous US-brokered agreements — such as deals to increase air and rail links — while others were promises and projects from the EU-led talks. "The truth is that the agreement is very thin in terms of details and has no clear enforcement mechanisms in place," Pristina-based political commentator Blerim Vela told AFP. —AFP

Senior US diplomat wraps up Taiwan visit as China flexes muscle

TAIPEI: A top US diplomat attended the funeral for former Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui yesterday which featured a eulogy by Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama before wrapping up a visit overshadowed by Chinese military exercises.

Keith Krach, undersecretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment, was the highest-ranking State Department official to visit Taiwan since 1979 when Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing.

The trip, the second high-ranking US visit in as many months, sparked an immediate rebuke from China, which balks at any recognition of Taiwan and has mounted a decades-long policy of marginalising the democratic island.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused China of "military blustering" as Beijing conducted military exercises on Friday near the Taiwan Strait during Krach's visit.

Chinese fighters and bombers crossed the so-called median line dividing the Strait and entered Taiwan's southwest air defence identification zone (ADIZ) for a second straight day on Saturday, Taiwan's defence ministry said as it scrambled fighters in response.

China's "provocative actions have violated our

India arrests nine Al-Qaeda militants

NEW DELHI: India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) said yesterday it has arrested nine al Qaeda militants who were planning attacks in several locations including the capital New Delhi.

"The group was planning to undertake terrorist attacks at vital installations in India with an aim to kill innocent people and strike terror in their minds,"

International

The UN marks 75th anniversary facing world split by COVID-19

Anniversary will kick off global body's annual General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations will mark its 75th anniversary tomorrow, celebrating the mantra that "multilateralism is not an option but a necessity," even as the coronavirus underscores the fragility of international cooperation.

The anniversary will kick off the global body's annual General Assembly, when normally the leaders and representatives of nearly 200 countries gather en masse to sound off about the world's problems and offer myriad solutions.

But this year, a part of Manhattan will not be sealed off for the "UNGA"; there will be no endless limousine convoys, and no busy beehive of diplomats, journalists and translators in the halls of the UN. Instead, with Covid-19 still limiting global movement, just one representative from each of the 193 UN members will be allowed, and only someone already in the United States.

Everyone else will have to appear by videoconference, including some 160-170 heads of state and government planning addresses.

Appearing by video on Tuesday will be Russia's Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping, who in the past have let their top diplomats speak for them; and US leader Donald Trump.

On Wednesday, Venezuela's president Nicolas Maduro, who much of the world sees as illegitimate, will address the assembly by video. Missing as speakers are the leaders of Syria and North Korea.

"Diplomacy, to be effective, requires personal contacts, and I am very sorry that we are not going to have the opportunity to bring together leaders of countries," said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Even so, he said, there would be "many virtual meetings" on the sidelines of the assembly, convening by teleconference on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity and the conflicts in Libya and Lebanon.

Missed opportunity

The event kicks off with a joint declaration full of good intentions and a call to combat unilateralism.

But that belies the reality of what has happened since Covid-19 erupted early this year, with borders closed, cooperation limited and countries forced to go it alone.

Bertrand Badie, professor at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, said the great powers missed a chance with the coronavirus to strengthen global cooperation. Instead, cooperation broke apart amid allegations that China and the World Health Organization moved slowly on the initial outbreak, and the US declared it would act alone and pulled out of the WHO.

The superpowers' behavior has "caused the failure, even the collapse, of the UN Security Council," which was set up to lead on such world-shaking challenges as a pandemic, Badie said.

The powers have clung to a "very conservative vision of security, that humanity is only threatened by rivalries between countries," Badie told AFP, calling it "a very bad sign for the future."

'Moments of disappointment'

The declaration admits that, over seven and a half decades, the UN "has had its moments of disappointment."

"Our world is not yet the world our founders envisaged 75 years ago," it says, citing growing inequality and the persistence of poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism and climate change.

However, the declaration also notes the United Nations has helped bring about decolonization, promote freedom, set standards for development and eradicate disease.

"The United Nations has helped mitigate dozens of conflicts, saved hundreds of thousands of lives



GENEVA: Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya is seen speaking via video message before a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council on allegations of torture and other serious violations in her country in Geneva. — AFP

through humanitarian action and provided millions of children with the education that every child deserves," the declaration says.

In the wake of coronavirus, it says, "we have a historic opportunity to build back better and greener." Yet the coronavirus has placed a spotlight on the paralyzing rivalry of the superpowers, especially between the United States and China, rapidly eroding Washington's global leadership.

"Everyone has been too focused on the domestic impact of the pandemic to really look at the global picture," said Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group. "I am frankly deeply pessimistic about the chances for real UN reform or innovations in global governance. I cannot see China and the US agreeing on big reforms now," Gowan said. Badie said the organization was immobilized by a power rivalry that dates back to the UN's creation. — AFP

Trump, Biden make dueling trips to Minnesota

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden made dueling trips to the battleground state of Minnesota on Friday, rapidly upping the tempo — and harsh tone — ahead of their first debate.

With the two candidates also fresh from holding televised town hall sessions, the 2020 contest is finally starting to look more like a traditional battle for the White House, six weeks before voting day November 3.

Biden has spent much of the year locked down, along with the rest of the country, to avoid exposure to Covid-19. But with a CNN town hall in Pennsylvania on Thursday and a visit to a trade union facility in Duluth, Minnesota on Friday, he is now hitting the campaign trail in earnest. Trump, who appeared on an ABC town hall Tuesday, arrived in Minnesota shortly after Biden to speak to supporters in the small northern town of Bemidji.

The state's Democratic governor, Tim Walz, urged both teams to respect the measures in effect throughout Minnesota to slow the spread of Covid-19. Although Trump has campaigned far more intensely than Biden, he is also ramping up the pace and scale of his trademark rallies after being forced mostly to shelve them during the worst months of the pandemic.

The former vice president slammed Trump's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic during his speech in Duluth, speaking directly to the miners in the region who voted for the Republican billionaire in 2016 after decades of Democratic victories. "How many people across the Iron Range, how many empty chairs around those dinner tables, because of his negligence and his selfishness?" Biden asked.

"Times are hard. Unemployment is way up," he added. The day before, Biden had called on Trump to resign over his management of the global health crisis, which has killed nearly 200,000 people in the US and torpedoed the world's leading economy.

Biden also on Friday took a new line of attack against his opponent, highlighting his own modest origins compared to Trump, who was the heir to a fortune. "I don't respect people based on how big the house they live in is," Biden said. "I don't look down my nose at people busting their necks for just making a living." Minnesota is a historically Democratic state. However, Trump only narrowly lost there by less than two percentage points in 2016 against Hillary Clinton.

Despite polls showing Biden ahead now — the latest Morning Consult poll had Biden at 48 percent support and Trump at 44 percent — the real estate mogul thinks he can flip it this time.

"Sleepy Joe doesn't have a clue" how to handle a pandemic, Trump tweeted before taking off for Minnesota. Biden's trip reflects that the Democrats are taking that threat seriously, with Trump likely to push his twin messages of protecting blue collar jobs and clamping down after a summer of sometimes violent street protests nationwide against police brutality and racism.

Heavily criticized by voters for his handling of the Covid-19 crisis, Trump has seized on stoking fears of leftwing violence as a way to refocus his campaign in the final weeks. — AFP

Maduro has to leave: Pompeo

BOA VISTA: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used a South American tour Friday to tell Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro he "has to leave," drawing a furious accusation of "war-mongering" from the leftist leader.

Touring a refugee center in the town of Boa Vista, on the border with Venezuela, Pompeo emphasized the plight of the nearly five million Venezuelans who have fled the country's economic meltdown under Maduro.

"Those people I talked to today are desperate to return home," he said of the refugees being processed at the center — among the estimated 260,000 Venezuelans who have fled to Brazil.

"They want what all human beings want — dignity, they want a democratic, peaceful, sovereign Venezuela to call home, one where they and their children can find jobs."

He called Maduro "a leader who's destroyed his own country, a man-made disaster of massive proportions," as well as "a drug trafficker" — referring to charges the US Justice Department filed against Maduro and his inner circle earlier this year.

"We know that the Maduro regime has decimated the people of Venezuela, and that Maduro himself is an indicted narcotics trafficker. That means he has to leave," Pompeo said earlier in Guyana during a joint press conference with President Irfaan Ali.



BOA VISTA: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) talks with Chancellor Ernesto Araujo (L) and Governor of Roraima, Antonio Denarium (C) as he arrives at Brazilian Air Base in Boa Vista Air Base, Roraima state, Brazil, on September 18, 2020. — AFP

Maduro responded with an angry salvo of his own. "Mike Pompeo is on a war-mongering tour against Venezuela, but it has backfired on him... and he has failed in all his attempts to get the governments of the continent to organize themselves in a war against Venezuela," he said on state TV.

Venezuela, home to the world's biggest oil reserves, has seen its economy shrink by more than half under Maduro, the political heir to late leftist firebrand Hugo Chavez after his death in 2013.

But Maduro has so far survived attempts to oust him, including when National Assembly speaker Juan Guaido declared himself acting president in January 2019, claiming Maduro had stolen the 2018 election. In Brazil, Pompeo also toured a processing

center for refugees and a US-funded soup kitchen run by a local Catholic church for hungry and homeless Venezuelans living on the streets of Boa Vista. He announced another \$348 million to help Venezuelan refugees and the countries hosting them, bringing total US contribution to more than \$1.2 billion.

He later met with far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's foreign minister, Ernesto Araujo.

The two reiterated their support for Guaido, who is recognized as president by around 50 countries, led by the United States. Backing Guaido as president "doesn't just mean supporting a courageous young leader, it means supporting the Venezuelan constitution and its legitimate authorities," said Araujo at a joint news conference.

The US Justice Department has put a \$15-million bounty on Maduro's head, accusing him of overseeing massive drug trafficking into the United States.

However, Maduro has steadfastly refused to back down and retains the support of the armed forces, as well as key allies in Russia and Iran.

Iran has clashed with the United States over its attempts to ship gasoline to Venezuela, whose own refining capacity has collapsed so badly it now needs to import gasoline.

Last month, the United States confirmed it had seized the cargo of four Venezuela-bound tankers sent by Iran.

Responding to reports that three more tankers of Iranian fuel are now en route, Pompeo did not say whether the United States would attempt to seize them. "But, as I think the world has seen, we've stopped previous shipments from coming to Venezuela," he said. — AFP

Peru President Vizcarra survives impeachment vote

LIMA: Peru's President Martin Vizcarra survived an impeachment vote in Congress on Friday as his opponents failed to win the votes necessary to remove him from power. Congress had voted last week to open impeachment proceedings against the 57-year-old president for "moral incapacity" over accusations he incited aides to lie to anti-graft investigators.

After a 10-hour debate, only 32 legislators voted for his dismissal, while 78 voted against and 15 abstained. The opposition needed 87 votes of 130 to dismiss the popular leader.

"Peru's great challenges require us to act sensibly and responsibly," Vizcarra tweeted after the vote. "Let us all continue working together for what really matters to Peruvians."

During a statement at the start of the Congressional debate, he had remained defiant. "I'm not running. I didn't do it before and I'm not going to do it now," he said before leaving his defense to his lawyer Roberto Pereira.

The heated session was opened by Marino, who would have replaced Vizcarra as Peru's leader had the impeachment carried. He began by calling on members present in the chamber to avoid any intolerant gestures towards the head of state, although most of the 130 lawmakers joined the debate by video link due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has taken a heavy toll in the South American country.

Vizcarra had accused Marino of "conspiracy" by trying to secure mili-

tary assurances for a bid to succeed him. Vizcarra's cabinet petitioned the Constitutional Court this week on the grounds the legislature had exceeded its powers and was not competent in seeking to rule on the president's moral capacity.

But the Court ruled by five votes to two to allow the vote. Vizcarra, in power since 2018, came under fire after audio recordings were leaked, in which he is heard telling aides to hide details from congressional investigators of his office's controversial hiring of a popular singer as a paid cultural advisor.

Public support for the president and his anti-corruption campaign has been evident in opinion polls, with eight out of 10 Peruvians wanting him to continue until the end of his mandate in July 2021.

Peruvians also made their support clear on social networks and in pot-banging street protests. The president's main rival, Keiko Fujimori, has publicly acknowledged that "there are not enough elements" to remove him from power.

"The speed at which this process has been played out reflects a crisis in the institutions," said political analyst Augusto Alvarez Rodrich. "No one wins here, the executive loses as does Congress, because people see there are two branches of government locked in a political battle while a pandemic is killing Peruvians and creating a shocking level of unemployment that will take five years to recover from." — AFP

A Kuwaiti family in Kuwait City is looking for suitable candidate for the below positions:

HOUSE BOY

Requirements:

- Minimum 2 years experience working in a Kuwaiti House or in hospitality industry or as a waiter in a reputed hotel.
- Should be a married man within the age group 28 - 35 years.
- Should be smart and presentable.
- Should be good in multitasking and able to handle pressure.
- Fluency in English is a must.
- Free Food, Accommodation & Air ticket every 2 years.

HOME NURSE

Requirements:

- Only Female Candidates.
- Minimum 2 years experience as Home Care Nurse.
- Pleasant personality, fluency in English - Written & Spoken.
- Preferably upto the age of 35 years.
- Diploma or certification course in nursing.
- Should be able to look after an elderly wheelchair bound lady.
- Competent in IV cannulation & IV Fluid Administration, Medication, administration, proper handling of high alert medications, wound dressing, obtaining ECGs, blood glucose, First Aid.
- A caring and compassionate nature and the ability to deal with pressurized situations.
- Free Food, Accommodation & Air ticket every 2 years.

Interested candidates, meeting the above requirements, may call 9710 2121, or send their CV with complete details to per.dept@al-zayani.com

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

Business

US TikTok users prepare for a platform shift

Most American users of TikTok react with a collective shrug

NEW YORK: American TikTok users reacted with a collective shrug Friday to the US move to ban new downloads of the video-sharing app-but many are already planning an exit to other platforms should the clampdown lead to an outright ban.

"Oh my God! Ok! It's happening! Everybody stay calm!" TikTokker Nick Foster told his 577,000 followers, dubbing a video of himself with audio of actor Steve Carell's character on the series "The Office" panicking during a fire alarm. Although young users on the platform, who make up its primary base, don't seem to have paid much attention to the government's announcement, the older ones have reacted. "Thank you for the fun times," posted The Buyin King, a 22-year-old investor with 438,000 followers. Some users were pragmatic, pointing out that for those who already had the app little would change between Sunday, when the government ban on downloads will go into effect, and November 12, the cutoff date set by President Donald Trump's administration.

The administration has targeted TikTok, owned by Chinese tech giant ByteDance, over national security, escalating a fight with Beijing over the digital technology. The November 12 deadline potentially allows for a tie-up between TikTok and a US company to safeguard data to allay Washington's security concerns. "This is posturing," said Jeff Couret, a consultant with 376,000 TikTok followers. "For Trump it's a way of showing TikTok that he means business but without hurting them too much." However, most of those who have built a following on TikTok are getting ready to pack their bags, regardless of the ultimate outcome. For people who make a living off of their presence on the

social network-such as star Addison Rae, who boasts 60.9 million followers and earned \$5 million between June 2019 and June 2020, according to Forbes magazine-the financial stakes are high.

For weeks now, many TikTok users have been sharing their Instagram and YouTube accounts on their profiles, preparing their fans for a jump to greener pastures.

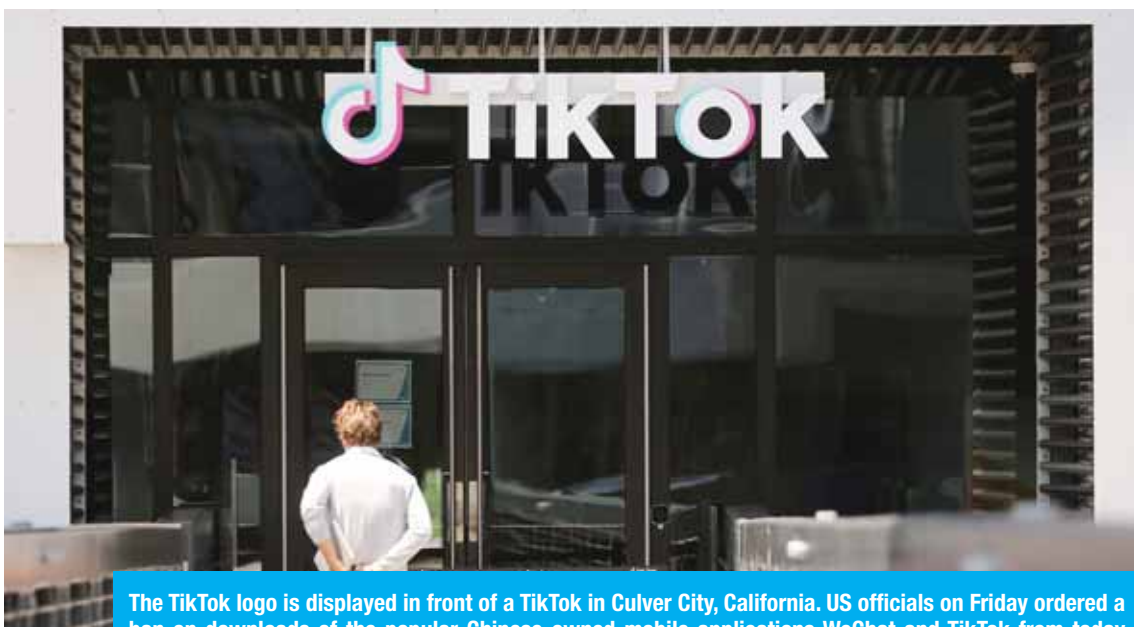


Competitors lying in wait

Competitors

Even TikTok's gold standard, Charli D'Amelio, who, with 87.5 million followers at just 16 years old, is the platform's most popular creator-announced Tuesday a non-exclusive partnership with Triller, a similar platform, where she already has 1.1 million subscribers. Bryce Hall, Nessa Barrett and Chase Hudson-largely unknown among the over-20-year-olds but with more than 10 million TikTok followers each-have also started Triller accounts.

In a sign of the times, Trump himself, who never dipped his toe into TikTok's waters, has made his debut on Triller, where he already has 953,000 followers. In August, Triller announced it had been



The TikTok logo is displayed in front of a TikTok in Culver City, California. US officials on Friday ordered a ban on downloads of the popular Chinese-owned mobile applications WeChat and TikTok from today saying they threaten national security. — AFP

downloaded 250 million times since it was created, a figure that was disputed by analytics firm Apptopia, which put the number of downloads closer to 52 million.

The app is not the only one positioning itself to rise from the ashes of titan TikTok, which has been downloaded two billion times worldwide and has 100 million users in the US alone. Also lying in wait are Byte (no relation to TikTok's parent company ByteDance), which was launched in January, as well

as Likee-which Apptopia says was downloaded 7.2 million times in the US between February and August-and Dubsmash. Not to mention Instagram and YouTube, which have extended their tentacles with Reels and YouTube Shorts, respectively, the test versions of which launched opportunely in the past few months. The winner "will be the one that the loyal TikTok users perceive as being the 'cool' place to be," said James Mourey, a marketing professor at DePaul University. — AFP

WeChat, TikTok ban is test for open internet

WASHINGTON: The US ban on Chinese-owned apps WeChat and TikTok sets up a pivotal legal challenge on digital free expression with important ramifications for the global internet ecosystem. President Donald Trump's administration cited national security concerns, claiming the popular applications could be "subject to mandatory cooperation with the intelligence services" of Beijing.

Critics said that while the security risks were unclear, the sweeping ban of popular online platforms raises concerns about the government's ability to regulate free expression under the US constitution's First Amendment.

"It's a mistake to think of this as (only) a sanction on TikTok and WeChat. It's a serious restriction on the First Amendment rights of US citizens and residents," said Jameel Jaffer, director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University. Hina Shamsi of the American Civil Liberties Union agreed that the order poses constitutional questions and called it an "abuse of emergency powers" by Trump that creates more security issues than it solves by blocking app fixes and updates.

Limited functionality

The ban set to take effect Sunday prohibits downloads of TikTok, a popular video-sharing app with some 100 million US users, and WeChat, a Chinese super-app used for messaging, shopping, payments and other services, with some 19 million users in the United States. Officials said WeChat's functionality would be affected immediately after the ban takes effect, even though some services might still work.

TikTok is expected to function through November 12, the deadline set under an executive order by Trump, but users would not be able to download updates to the video app. The move ratchets up the pressure on TikTok parent firm ByteDance to strike a deal with a US partner that would allay Washington's data security concerns, with Silicon Valley tech giant Oracle in talks to be part of a group that would put TikTok in American control.

The latest ban, critics say, could create more cracks in a fragmenting global internet system by allowing governments freer rein in blocking services. "Trump's decision is likely further to splinter the internet," said Darrell West, director of the center for technology innovation at the Brookings Institution.

"It will encourage other countries to retaliate against American companies and raise their own security concerns against foreign firms. The result could be several different internets based on the country of origin." Facebook-owned Instagram chief Adam Mosseri voiced similar concerns, tweeting that "a US TikTok ban would be quite bad for Instagram, Facebook, and the internet more broadly."

Mosseri added that "most of the people who use Instagram are outside the US, as is most of our potential growth. — AFP

Singapore metals exchange touts gold to masses

SINGAPORE: Fancy owning your own gold bars that you can admire and take selfies with? With the coronavirus fuelling demand for safe-haven assets for investors to park their cash, a Singapore exchange is offering mom-and-pop investors what it says is an easier way to get their hands on the precious metal. The Singapore Precious Metals Exchange is seeking to do away with the notion trading in bullion is only for professional investors or the super-rich, by offering small amounts for reasonable prices that can be bought using a phone app.

"When we first started our business a decade ago, obviously we attracted the elite group, people who had money," chief executive Victor Foo said. "But it's our aspiration to be able to reach the mass market." The price of an ounce of gold topped US\$2,000 for the first time last month-fuelled by worries about the economic impact of the virus as well as future inflation-and Foo says sales have risen.

But 80 percent of his customers are still high-net-worth individuals and the exchange's most pop-

ular offering is a one kilogram (2.2 pound) gold bar-setting them back more than US\$60,000. Foo is, however, keen to stress you can start much smaller. For around US\$70 you can buy one gram-a wafer the size of an SD memory card-while mini-bars weighing five, ten, 50 and 100 grams are also available. SGPMX says it is the world's first precious metals exchange entirely backed by physical bullion, and investors can turn up whenever they like to admire their trove.

While virus-related travel curbs have halted most visits from overseas for now, there is a steady stream in usual times-with Japanese particularly keen to check out their investments.

"They visit us once a year, they see their thing, take pictures, 'wefie', then they go," Foo said. The bullion is stored at Le Freeport, a fortified, Fort Knox-like vault near the city-state's main airport set up to house treasures from around the world and private art collections. Security is tight-the gold is kept inside vaults protected by massive metal doors and thick walls that block mobile phone signals.

Most investors are from Europe and the United States, but Foo predicts the number from Asia will increase in the coming years. It may be hard to change age-old habits however. While gold is popular among many Asian communities, it is typically bought in the form of jewelry to give as gifts at special occasions, rather than in bars and coins. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Victor Foo, chief executive of the Singapore Precious Metals Exchange (SGPMX), holding 1kg gold bars during a media tour at his office in Le Freeport, a private, maximum-security vault in Singapore. — AFP

Fiscal fizzle saps US economic recovery

WASHINGTON: This week's economic data offers fresh hints that the US recovery will slow without new federal aid, a possible blow to President Donald Trump's reelection bid, especially since any new spending before the Nov 3 presidential election seems unlikely. A slowdown in US consumer spending in August provided the clearest evidence this week that as millions of Americans lost the extra unemployment benefits that had sustained their finances in the early months of the COVID-19 recession, they have begun to cut back.

In an economy where consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the total output, less shopping means less overall growth. The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment dropped less than expected, and applications for the week before were revised up, suggesting the labor market recovery has plateaued.

Meanwhile, a Fed survey released Friday showed that American households were better off financially in July than they were in the first months of the crisis, in large part because of their access to government aid. Other data this week indicate the recovery is ongoing in some parts of the economy.

US factory production increased for a fourth straight month in August, and confidence rose to a record among single-family homebuilders, who saw a boost to demand from low interest rates and pandemic-fueled demand for homes suited to remote work. Broad consumer sentiment also picked up in September, a report showed Friday. Democrats grew more upbeat about the economy's outlook while Republicans' enthusiasm dipped, but overall consumer optimism is still down compared with before the crisis.

Stimulus is coming, eventually

Next week Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell

is scheduled to address lawmakers at three separate hearings, where he will undoubtedly make the same observation he has repeatedly made for months, including after this week's policymaking meeting: more stimulus "is likely to be needed" for the recovery to continue.

The House, controlled by Democrats, and the Senate, controlled by Republicans, are deadlocked on any stimulus bill, and there's little chance of it passing before the election. Eventually, Congress will pass some pandemic relief, no matter who wins the presidential contest. But it's likely to be less under Trump, a Republican, than under Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

"If Trump wins and (Republicans) retain control of the Senate and the president says he wants more stimulus, Republicans will find a way to go along with that," said Eric Winograd, senior economist at AllianceBernstein. "If Biden wins, you would get bigger stimulus." Goldman Sachs economists said

they would likely boost their fourth-quarter GDP forecast if Biden wins and Democrats retake the US Senate, because Democrats would approve a spending package larger than the \$1 trillion Goldman has penciled in.

Voters focused on virus

Despite overall concerns about the strength of the recovery, and millions out of work since the pandemic hit, a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 45 percent of US adults think Trump is the better candidate for rebuilding the economy. That's compared with 36 percent who say Biden would be better. But the same poll showed that likely voters were much more concerned about a candidate's ability to fight the coronavirus and restore trust in government, both issues on which voters gave Biden a lead. COVID-19 has killed more than 197,000 in the United States since the pandemic began. New daily cases are now averaging about 40,000, about 60 percent of the July peak. — Reuters



A slowdown in US consumer spending in August provided the clearest evidence this week that as millions of Americans lost the extra unemployment benefits that had sustained their finances in the early months of the COVID-19 recession, they have begun to cut back. — Reuters

Business

US Fed official warns against ‘ghost stories’ about inflation

Only 30% of laid off workers have returned to work: Survey

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve has been too cautious in its recent policy shift allowing higher prices to boost employment, one US central banker said Friday, warning against heeding “ghost stories” about inflation.

As the United States faces the world’s worst COVID-19 outbreak and is approaching 200,000 deaths, tens of millions of workers still have not returned to their jobs and the unemployment rate, though down from its peak, is at 8.4 percent, more than double the pre-pandemic level.

The Fed on Friday released a survey showing only 30 percent of workers who were laid off early in the crisis have returned to work, while 22 percent do not expect to return to their jobs. Neel Kashkari, president of the Fed’s Minneapolis branch, dissented from the Fed’s decision Wednesday, which pledged to allow inflation to rise above 2 percent “for some time” to achieve the central bank’s goal of maximum employment.

The statement reflects the policy shift first announced by Fed Chair Jerome Powell in August, but Kashkari said the Fed should have made a “stronger commitment to not raising rates until we were certain to have achieved” the full employment objective. He stressed that economists and central bankers have long been proven wrong in their concerns about the threat of low joblessness sparking higher prices. And if the new policy had been in place in 2012, the Fed would have delayed increasing the benchmark lending rate by at least a year and allowed even greater employment gains, he said.

Official payroll data show only half of the more than 22 million workers who lost jobs in March and April have returned to work. The Fed’s household

survey released Friday showed the greatest share of layoffs during the pandemic hit families earning less than \$40,000 a year, at 28 percent, while half of all people laid off were either Black or Hispanic.

But the data also showed that families felt better about their economic situation due to government support programs, and 70 percent would be able to face a \$400 emergency expense, an improvement from October.

US inflation ghost

During the recovery from the global financial crisis over the past decade, US inflation rarely hit 2



Fed makes cautious policy shift

percent and then only briefly as unemployment continued to fall, reaching a historically low 3.5 percent prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fed’s preferred inflation index, personal consumption expenditures, was up 1.0 percent for the year ended in July.

While central banks generally worry about uncontrolled price increases, low inflation is a concern as well since it can cause a downward cycle

price was one of several elements LSE had taken into consideration.

Boujnah said Euronext had always considered Borsa “a natural fit” and contacts had accelerated since July after years of informal discussions with all relevant stakeholders.

“It’s a natural enlargement of Euronext within a framework that already existed, clearly with an unprecedented size. It’s the first time we’re welcoming within Euronext a G7 economy, the third economy of the European continent with everything that is related to that,” Boujnah added. Euronext had moved to win round both the LSE and Rome by teaming up with Italy’s state investor Cassa di Risparmio di Roma and Italian bank Intesa Sanpaolo in order to gain Italy’s buy-in.

Both CDP and Intesa will become shareholders in the French exchange operator, if the bid for Borsa succeeds, by subscribing to a proposed capital increase.

‘Italian ecosystem’

Under the proposed deal, CDP would have a seat on Euronext’s supervisory board, with a second Italian candidate proposed as an independent board member who would become chairman, in a nod to how Milan would be the largest contributor to Euronext revenue at roughly 35 percent of a combined group. Borsa would join exchanges under the Euronext banner that span Dublin and Oslo to Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris, and add significant bond trading, clearing and settlement capacity.



NEW YORK: In this file photo, FOX Business Network’s Maria Bartiromo (left) interviews Minneapolis Federal Reserve president Neel Kashkari at FOX Studios in New York City. Kashkari said on Friday, the Federal Reserve has been too cautious in its recent policy shift allowing higher prices to boost employment, and warned against heeding “ghost stories” about inflation. — AFP

that is hard to counteract. Many central bankers believed that “once inflation started climbing, it might accelerate, requiring a very strong policy response to control it,” Kashkari said. He referred to such theories as “ghost stories, because there was no evidence they were true but they also couldn’t be ruled out.”

The Fed has tools to address rising inflation, but little in its arsenal to counteract the current cycle of low inflation, he said. “Persistent low inflation is pos-

ing challenges to advanced economies around the world,” and if the new policy helps to generate higher inflation that led to a rate hike “I think we would consider that a high-class problem,” Kashkari said.

Kashkari was one of two members of the Fed’s policy committee to dissent from the vote Wednesday. The other, Dallas Federal Reserve Bank President Robert Kaplan, has not issued a statement explaining his decision, but indicated he wanted greater “flexibility” in the policy. — AFP

LSE picks Euronext as favored bidder for Borsa Italiana

LONDON/MILAN/PARIS: London Stock Exchange entered exclusive talks to sell Borsa Italiana to Euronext on Friday, with the French operator seeing off Deutsche Boerse and Switzerland’s SIX as it bids to add another bourse to its pan-European network.

Dubbed “Project Botticelli”, the LSE’s sale of the Milan exchange is sensitive in Rome due to concerns about who takes control of its bond platform, which handles trading of Italy’s 2.6 trillion euros (\$3.1 trillion) of government debt. The LSE is selling Borsa as part of regulatory remedies to see through its \$27 billion purchase of data provider Refinitiv, which is 45 percent owned by Thomson Reuters, parent company of Reuters News.

It was not immediately clear what Euronext had offered to gain exclusive talks, but investors welcomed the move and its shares were up 5 percent at 0946 GMT. LSE stock was up 0.7 percent.

Offers for Borsa valued it at up to 4 billion euros, sources said before the LSE board reviewed the bids on Thursday. Chief Executive Stephane Boujnah declined to comment on the value of Euronext’s bid, but told Reuters that



LONDON: Commuters walk past the London Stock Exchange in the City of London. The London Stock Exchange Group said on Friday that it has entered “exclusive” talks to sell Milan’s Borsa Italiana to pan-European stock market operator Euronext. — AFP

“Key businesses and central functions of the new group would be based in Milan and Rome,” Euronext said. The deal would give Euronext much-needed scale, ownership of a clearing house with critical mass, and scope to scale the business internationally, analysts at Jefferies said.

It would also bring Milan under euro zone ownership after Britain left the EU, a move likely to please Brussels policymakers who want to buttress the bloc’s capital market. — Reuters

Indonesia and US ink infrastructure finance agreement

JAKARTA: Indonesia has signed an agreement with the United States to strengthen infrastructure financing through private sector investment, Indonesia’s Finance Ministry and the US Treasury Department said on Friday. US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin signed the agreement with Indonesia’s Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati remotely on Friday, according to a statement posted on the US Treasury Department’s website.

Rahayu Puspasari, spokeswoman for Indonesia’s Finance Ministry, said in a separate statement that the agreement would bolster the development of capital markets and financial instruments to “facilitate and reduce the barriers to private sector investment in infrastructure.” Puspasari added that the agreement would help improve asset recycling capacity, impact assessment for the financing already given, and credit enhancement.

“The engagement supports the broader US Government Indo-Pacific Strategy by complementing ongoing efforts under the Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (Asia EDGE) and the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN),” said the US Treasury Department. — Reuters

\$65bn cash mystery puzzles Britain’s audit office



The notes are not being used for transactions or identified as savings

LONDON: As cash declines in day-to-day transactions, Britain’s National Audit Office has uncovered a mystery: the number of pound notes in circulation has soared, so who is holding around 50 billion pounds (\$65 billion) in cash?

In July 2020, the number of notes in circulation reached a record high of 4.4 billion, with a monetary value of 76.5 billion pounds, up from 24 billion pounds in 2000. But the National Audit Office said the Bank of England in 2018 estimated only about 20 percent-24 percent of the value of notes in circulation were being used or held for cash transactions, with UK households holding a further 5 percent as savings.

“Little is known about the remainder, worth approximately 50 billion pounds,” The National Audit Office, Britain’s independent public spending watchdog, said in a report. “Possible explanations include holdings overseas for transactions or savings and possibly holdings in the UK of unreported domestic savings or for use in the shadow economy.”

The Audit Office said the Bank of England and other institutions should improve their understanding of why demand for cash has increased. The Bank of England declined to comment. — Reuters

Tech savvy, flexible workers boost Nordic economies

STOCKHOLM: Helen Balfors, a project leader at Norwegian conglomerate Orkla, has been working from home for longer than most of her colleagues after returning from a skiing trip to Italy in February as the new coronavirus took hold in Europe.

The mother of three said that while the company had always encouraged a good work-life balance, some managers had required their employees to be in the office before the pandemic hit. “But now they realize it works just as well to be at home,” she said. “I just needed an extra screen and an extra keyboard from the office, which I got in a couple of days.” Well-developed digital infrastructure has helped the Nordic economies weather the pandemic better than most of Europe.

Britain’s economy contracted by around a fifth in the second quarter, Spain registered an 18.5 percent drop, while the euro zone economy as a whole shrank 11.8 percent.

In contrast, Finland’s GDP fell just 4.5 per-

cent although Sweden and Norway saw larger hits of 8.3 percent and 6.3 percent respectively. “Better digital infrastructure means we were quicker at being able to work from home. The infrastructure is there and we are used to using it,” said Robert Bergqvist, chief economist at Swedish bank SEB. “That has helped hold up production and consumption.”

Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands had the most advanced digital economies in the EU in 2018, a research paper from the European Commission showed, based on connectivity, human capital, internet use and extent of e-commerce.

Flexibility

The Nordics - home to telecoms infrastructure firms Ericsson and Nokia - topped the EU table for home-working even before the pandemic. Sweden, in first place, had just under a third of workers working from home, at least occasionally, in 2019, according to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), an EU agency. The EU average was around 10 percent.

Long-term flexible employment practices, such as allowing parents to stay home with sick children and an emphasis on a healthy work-life balance have encouraged remote working. — Reuters



HELSINKI: Well-developed digital infrastructure has helped the Nordic economies weather the pandemic better than most of Europe.

EU looks to fast 5G, supercomputers to boost economy

BRUSSELS: The European Commission on Friday urged the 27-country bloc to work together to speed up the rollout of fiber and 5G networks to boost the region’s virus-hit economy and secure its technology autonomy. EU countries should develop a best practices toolbox by March 30 with the aim of cutting cost and red tape, provide timely access to 5G radio spectrum and allow for more cross-border coordination for radio spectrum for 5G services, the EU executive said.

The coronavirus outbreak showed how important internet services and 5G are, European digital chief Margrethe Vestager said. “We have seen the current crisis highlight the importance of access to very high-speed internet for businesses, public services and citizens, but also to accelerate the pace towards 5G,” she said in a statement. “We must therefore work together towards fast network rollout without any further delays.”

The Commission also proposed a recommendation to boost research and activities to develop new supercomputing technologies. “Keeping up in the international technological race is a priority, and Europe has both the know-how and the political will to play a leading role,” Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton said in a statement.

The Commission is investing 8 billion euros (\$9.46 billion) in the next generation of supercomputers. — Reuters

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait partners with Nutanix to launch VDI-as-a-Service for businesses

SMBs in Kuwait to get fully supported solution for desktop virtualization

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, has signed a partnership with Nutanix, Inc (NASDAQ: NTNX), a leader in enterprise cloud computing, to offer Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)-as-a-Service to businesses in Kuwait. The telecom service provider has implemented Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform combined with Citrix Virtual Desktops software in its data center with a view to provide a fully supported solution for desktop virtualization to small and medium businesses (SMBs) and enterprise customers.

Speaking about the launch of the new solution, Bilal Agha, at Ooredoo Kuwait says, "Our Company is at the forefront of technology innovation and we are proud to be the first telecom service provider in Kuwait to introduce VDI-as-a-Service, in response to the needs of our business customers. We have partnered with two



Bilal Agha



Aaron White

world leading vendors - Nutanix, that delivers a web-scale, hyper converged solution purpose-built for virtualization and cloud environments and Citrix, a leader in virtual desktop infrastructure. We believe that this solution will find great uptake

by both public and private organizations in the country as they realize that technology workers are going to increasingly demand workplace flexibility in future."

Aaron White, Regional Sales Director, Middle East, at Nutanix says, "COVID-19 has made Work from Home a necessity over the last couple of months and even post-pandemic, this remote working trend will most likely continue and gain momentum. Most organizations in Kuwait are faced with the challenging task of setting up their employees to work remotely, while still maintaining access to the same tools and applications they require to be productive. Many of these companies are just not fully equipped with the technology, tools and processes to make this a reality."

"We are pleased to partner with Ooredoo to help organizations speed up their digitization efforts through the VDI-as-a-Service offering.

Companies will now be able to spin up and provision desktops in record time without having to provide new hardware to users spread across the country."

Ooredoo will offer VDI-as-a-Service on a subscription basis out of its state-of-the-art data center facilities that offer integrated networking, security, service SLAs and a host of other solutions to business in Kuwait. Physical desktops and laptops are becoming a poor fit for today's dynamic, digital workplace. Intelligent digital workspaces, delivered by VDI, enable users to access applications and information from anywhere while data remains secure, making them ideal for end-user computing needs. The advantages of VDI-as-a-Service are around flexibility, scalability, security and cost savings with the OPEX model being highly favored by businesses looking to save on high up-front infrastructure costs.

ABK launches self pin generation through ATMs

KUWAIT: In line with its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), announced the launch of its new digital service - 'Self Pin Generation through ABK Branch ATMs'. The distinctive feature enables customers to generate new PIN numbers for their recently issued cards within seconds of inserting the cards into an ABK ATM.

ABK's card Self PIN Generation service is a three-step process. On insertion, the machine recognizes the card as new and instantly sends a one-time authentication code to the customer's registered contact number. Customers then enter the authentication code into the ATM and complete the PIN selection process, registering it across the Bank's records and making it effective for use across all banking transactions immediately.

ABK is constantly upgrading its digital services including cardless withdrawal transactions, a service that allows clients to withdraw cash without the need of their debit cards, ITM's in key locations to avoid having to visit a branch and a number of other digital products & services, which can be seen on the Bank's website, eahli.com. Customers are also encouraged to update their civil ID information through the Bank's ATMs.

Apple to open its first India online store

MUMBAI: Apple will launch its first online store in India next week, the Silicon Valley giant said Friday, hoping to cash in on the country's festive season and grow its tiny share of the booming market.

The company is a small player in India, where sales of its smartphones lag those of South Korean rival Samsung, with the iPhone maker pricing itself exclusively at the luxury end of the market.

Its renewed push into India comes as Asia's third-largest economy has hit a record slump due to a months-long coronavirus lockdown. India's busiest shopping season usually kicks off in October, with stores offering steep discounts and freebies to customers looking to splurge on big-ticket items as they celebrate popular Hindu festivals including Dussehra and Diwali.

Apple's online store, which will open for business on September 23, will offer "a range of affordability options" including discounts on Macs, iPads and tech accessories for students, the company said in a press release. Shoppers will be able to get their AirPods, iPads and Apple Pencils engraved in English, Hindi and a range of other Indian languages.

Apple currently sells through third-party retailers in India including Amazon, and the country is seen as a huge potential market for the firm due to its giant 1.3-billion population and relatively low number of smartphone owners. The company has only a two-percent share of the Indian market, according to industry estimates. An application to open Apple Stores in India in 2016 was reportedly rebuffed because of a rule that states foreign retailers must source 30 percent of their products locally.

New Delhi has since relaxed the rules, giving companies up to eight years to meet the sourcing requirements, as part of a push to attract foreign investment and create jobs.

Some of its smartphones, including the iPhone 11, are assembled at facilities operated by Taiwanese manufacturers Foxconn and Wistron in the southern Indian cities of Chennai and Bangalore. — AFP



Eicher, Kaico Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar receives best dealer award

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar, the exclusive distributors of Eicher trucks and busses in Kuwait, received the award for "Best uptime initiative" for the year 2019-2020 during the Annual dealers conference held on August 2020 in the category of best exclusive international distributor as a result of its services during the year 2019 in the Kuwaiti market.

In their statement, Kaico expressed great pleasure in winning this award which is a new achievement added to their collection of excellence trophies. Additionally, Kaico emphasized that this award shows its continued growth and interest in providing the highest standards in exceptional & innovative services that meet the aspirations of its customers and shows endeavors and efforts pursued by the management to add value to its shareholders and owners in all its activities.

Obtaining these awards year after year is the natural outcome of the continuous efforts to reaching perfection through exceptional aftersales services & supporting project owners to create successful investment.

Ashish Tandon, General Manager of Kaico, stated "this award is the result of our work during 2019 to enhance our services in all fields, including the exceptional Aftersales services and enhancements applied to our service facilities and the development of our online platforms, we witnessed an unprecedented rise in our customer base.

"We believe that this success was achieved through the efforts and initiatives of the Service Consultants and Aftersales teams throughout the year. The achievement of this award is the best definition of our motto that the customer comes first and customer satisfaction is our primary goal," added Mohammad Abou El-Aoun, Senior Executive Manager-Aftersales.

Incorporated in 1982, Eicher Motors Limited is the flagship company of the Eicher Group in India and a leading player of the Indian automobile industry. In addition to motorcycles, Eicher has a joint venture with Sweden's AB Volvo - Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles Limited (VECV) - which is driving modernization in India's commer-



Ashish Tandon - KAICO, Kuwait - Best Dealer for Uptime Initiatives in Middle East Region - FY 2020



cial vehicle space, and in other developing countries. VECV has a complete range of trucks and buses from 5-55 tons, and its integrated manufacturing plant in Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh is the global hub for medium duty five- and eight-liter engines for Volvo Group.

Lagarde: Business needs more women leaders

FRANKFURT: European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde said Friday that there are still too few women in top jobs, and that the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the problem. "There are still too few women in management worldwide, particularly in the economic and financial spheres, including central banks," she said in an interview with French economics weekly Challenges.



Christine Lagarde

Lagarde, the first female chief in the ECB's history, lamented that the 19 eurozone central banks are all run by men, and that she and her German colleague Isabel Schnabel were the only women on the ECB's 25-member governing council. "That's not how it should be!" she said.

Arguing for changes in the workplace, Lagarde said men should be encouraged to take paternity leave, and it should be granted to them for "longer periods than their current entitlement of a few days or weeks." Noting that the gender wage gap was still 13 percent among the wealthy OECD countries, Lagarde also pointed out that "gender inequality still exists in terms of access to the job market". And the coronavirus has worsened inequality, she said.

"During lockdown, (women) have been active on all fronts, forced to work while caring for their children, not to mention coping with the threat of domestic violence. As in every economic crisis, they are at greater risk of losing their jobs or of having their wages cut." Although Lagarde said men were more accepting than before of women in senior positions, the real change in mentality will come "when nobody, male or female, questions the legitimacy of a woman holding a position of power".

On Twitter, Schnabel praised Lagarde for raising her voice. "It is hard to overstate how hugely important it is to have leaders like Christine Lagarde who openly speak out on these issues in spite of all the dreadful, misogynist comments that will certainly follow. #EmpowerWomen," she wrote. —AFP

Equities sink on virus angst, Fed aftermath

NEW YORK: Global equity markets slid on Friday as investors sought direction after this week's US Federal Reserve meeting and a jump in coronavirus cases in Europe rattled sentiment, while gold rose and safe-haven buying lifted the Japanese yen. The dollar posted its fifth straight day of declines against the yen as Japan's monetary policy of yield curve control pushes up real interest rates.

US technology-related stocks reversed early gains on Wall Street to extend their losses to a third day, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq posted a third straight week of declines. The big tech names that have fueled the US rally from a pandemic-induced slump in March - Apple Inc, Microsoft Corp, Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc - led equities lower.

Rising coronavirus cases and a dim economic outlook weighed on sentiment. The biggest threat to the euro zone economy is a resurgent pandemic, according to a Reuters poll of economists, who say growth and inflation are more likely to cause negative surprises in the coming year than positive ones. European countries from Denmark to Greece announced new restrictions on Friday to curb surging coronavirus infections in some of their largest cities, while Britain was reported to be considering a new national lockdown.

"The COVID-19 infection rate in Europe has gotten pretty bad," said Tom Martin, senior portfolio manager at Globalt Investments in Atlanta. "The implications are that it's difficult to curtail the virus." MSCI's benchmark for global equity markets fell 0.62 percent to 566.62, while in Europe, the broad FTSEurofirst 300 index closed down 0.62 percent at 1,429.67. On Wall Street, the S&P 500 lost 37.55 points, or 1.12 percent, to 3,319.46 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 117.00 points, or 1.07 percent, to 10,793.28. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 244.56 points, or 0.88 percent, to 27,657.42. For the week, the S&P 500 fell 0.65 percent, the Dow slipped 0.03 percent and the Nasdaq declined 0.56 percent.

A big rotation into value stocks from growth and momentum has yet to materialize, said Youssef Abbasi, global market strategist at StoneX. "There really isn't a value sector that's positioned to take the reins and lead," Abbasi said. "There's a lack of a catalyst to force people to look more seriously at value as leadership."

Investors ignored a report that showed US consumer sentiment increased in early September, with Democrats more upbeat about the economy's outlook compared with Republicans ahead of the Nov. 3 presidential election. A decision by Republican President Donald Trump's administration to ban WeChat and video-sharing app TikTok from US app stores starting Sunday night raised concerns about a new front in continuing China-US political tensions. "The diplomatic tug of war is not being resolved," said Boris Schlossberg, managing director of FX strategy at BK Asset Management. "The tensions are heightening rather than easing. That's not something the market likes to see."

The Japanese yen strengthened 0.12 percent versus the greenback at 104.60 per dollar, after earlier gaining to 104.270 - its strongest level against the US currency since July 31. The dollar index rose 0.058 percent, with the euro unchanged at \$1.1847. US Treasury yields edged higher but remained within recent trading ranges as government-bond investors took their cue from equity markets. The benchmark 10-year US Treasury note rose 1.3 basis points to 0.6953 percent. Eurozone government bond yields traded little changed on expectations of more central bank policy easing. Safe-haven German 10-year bond yields were up 0.1 basis points at -0.482 percent. Investors piled into emerging markets assets, giving developing country debt funds their 11th straight week of inflows.

Copper touched its highest in more than two years as speculators extended their buying spree on the economic recovery in top metals consumer China while the dollar weakened.

China has been a major beneficiary of investment flows as the country is the most attractive market for asset managers with cash to allocate, according to fund flow tracker EPFR. Stocks overnight in China made their strongest gains in three weeks, with the CSI300 index adding 2.2 percent, led by financial companies. Gold prices gained, buoyed by a weaker dollar and concerns over the economic recovery.

Spot gold prices rose 0.39 percent to \$1,950.08 an ounce, and US gold futures settled up 0.6 percent at \$1,962.10. Oil prices settled little changed after a Libyan commander said a blockade of Libya's oil exports would be lifted for a month, while the decline in US equities weighed on futures.

Still, both the US and Brent crude benchmarks were set for weekly gains after Saudi Arabia pressed allies to stick to output quotas, Hurricane Sally cut US production, and banks including Goldman Sachs predicted a supply deficit. Brent crude futures slid 15 cents to settle at \$43.15 a barrel. US crude futures rose 14 cents to settle at \$41.11 a barrel. — Reuters

Classifieds

Sunday, September 20, 2020



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to northerly wind with speed of 10 - 32 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Rather hot to fair with light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 15 - 35 km/h .

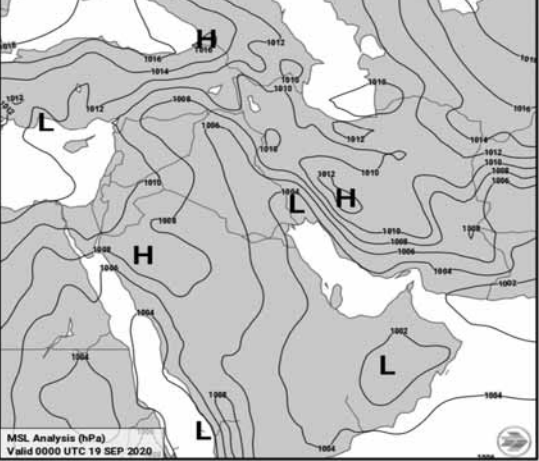
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	42 °C	32 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	24 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	47 °C	30 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWASIB	44 °C	27 °C
WAFRA	47 °C	28 °C
SALMY	45 °C	28 °C

SFC. CHART

19/09/2020 0000 UTC



MSL Analysis (hPa)
Valid 0000 UTC 19 SEP 2020.

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	09/20	Hot causing rising dust	44 °C	26 °C	NW-N	15 - 50 km/h
Monday	09/21	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas at night with a chance for rising dust over	43 °C	28 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 50 km/h
Tuesday	09/22	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	24 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	09/23	Hot	45 °C	26 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:15
Sunrise	05:34
Zuhr	11:42
Asr	15:11
Sunset	17:49
Isha	19:06

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	58 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	S 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. U.P.O

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Masood S/o. Abdul Ameen (Old name), hereby Shaik Masood Ameen S/o. Abdul Ameen (New name), my Passport no: Z3200563. (C 5758) 18-9-2020
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

EMERGENCY



112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



Government of Canada



Gouvernement du Canada

The Embassy of Canada in Kuwait seeks a full time Security Officer

The ideal applicant must have experience in the field of security/ crisis management, speak English and Arabic and be legally residing in Kuwait.

To apply, please follow the link www.kuwait.gc.ca complete the online application form and upload a CV and a covering letter by the Closing date: 23 / 09 / 2020

Please note that only those chosen for further consideration will be contacted.

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

Airlines	
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578

Word Search



Dog Breed Word Search

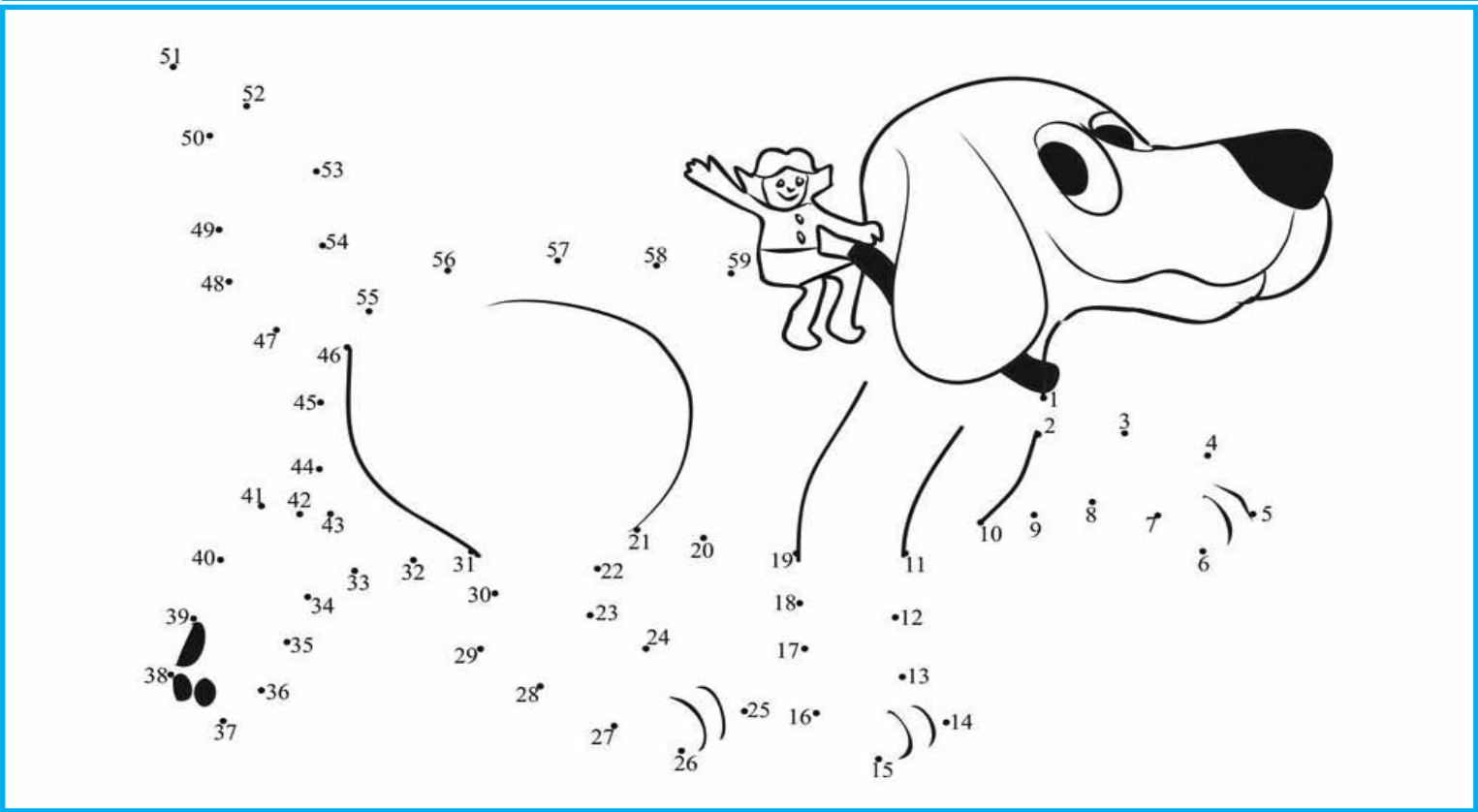


Word search grid containing dog breed names.



- AIREDALE
- AKITA
- BASSET HOUND
- BEAGLE
- BOXER
- BULLDOG
- CHIHUAHUA
- CHOW CHOW
- COLLIE
- DACHSHUND
- DALMATIAN
- GERMAN SHEPHERD
- GREAT DANE
- LHASA APISO
- MALAMUTE
- MALTESE
- MASTIFF
- PEKINGESE
- POMERANIAN
- POODLE
- PUG
- ROTTWEILER
- SAINT BERNARD
- SAMOYED
- SCHIPPERKE
- SHAR-PEI
- SHIH-TZU
- WEIMARANER

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Does your house look like a cyclone hit it? Your tidy nature should drive you to clean it up. In the course of wading through the mess, don't be surprised if you discover some objects you thought you'd lost forever. Once you finish, you'll probably find that the place looks beautiful, better than it did before it was messed up. Something good can indeed come out of chaos.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Communication involving romance could come unexpectedly today, Cancer. You may get a loving message from a romantic partner, or you could hear of a wedding to take place in the future amongst your circle of friends. You could also read a love poem or romance novel or write something along the same lines yourself! Someone might also express affection to you. Don't be surprised. You deserve it!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Inspiration could hit today, Libra. It's a beautiful feeling, but you might not be sure how to channel it. It could represent a spiritual breakthrough, artistic inspiration, increased understanding of others, or all of the above. What's almost certain is that you'll want to spend time alone to take it all in and figure out how to use it. Don't dismiss any possibility, however outrageous it may seem.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A passionate encounter with a love partner might cement the bond between you so thoroughly that you start talking about commitment or even a wedding. A romantic haze may permeate your interactions. Still, exercise some restraint in expressing your feelings. Hitting your friend with too much at once could have the opposite effect from the one you're hoping for. Be patient!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

An exciting phone call or email could come from a friend who has some great news for you, Taurus. Love, romance, and success in the arts are all highlighted now, and this communication could bring it to your attention. Conversations could bring inspiration your way, and your mind is apt to be going a thousand miles an hour for most of the day. Make the most of it!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Love and romance aren't just part of your life today, Leo, they're your whole life. If you're single, an exciting potential partner could have you reeling. If you're currently involved, recent events may have created such a powerful bond between you and your beloved that you think it will never end. Consider what led to this feeling and find a way to repeat it. This can only benefit you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You might have the chance to speak with new people in interesting fields, perhaps from foreign lands, Scorpio. Your conversational abilities are at an all-time high, so you'll not only enjoy talking with everyone, but they'll enjoy talking with you, too. Intriguing ideas and useful information could have your mind buzzing all night. Try to take a walk in the evening to clear your head.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Have you been feeling less than your normal self, Aquarius? If so, today you may suddenly regain your strength and be raring to go. You might even be tempted to start a rigorous exercise program. Go ahead and start, but pace yourself and try not to make up for lost time all at once. You need to ease into these things. Maybe start with walking and yoga.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

An online group could form today, Gemini, perhaps friends who are involved in the arts or meditation or spiritual studies. This group is likely to be close, probably through mutual interests, so communicating with them this evening should be both intellectually stimulating and emotionally gratifying. What takes place today could also bring healing of some kind, either for you or for someone else.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Have you been feeling stagnant lately, Virgo, as if your life is going nowhere? What happens today could change that. An unusual group event could put you in touch with people who open new intellectual, career, or spiritual doors for you. Stimulating conversations could turn your head toward opportunities that you were never aware of before. Onward and upward!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Information gleaned from surprising sources could lead to sudden, fortunate career breaks, Sagittarius. You might explore totally new fields, although this could be temporary. Your efforts should attract the attention of those who matter and eventually lead to advancement or a raise. Don't be afraid to continue to explore these sources. Keep up the good work!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Love and romance aren't just part of your life today, Pisces, they're your whole life. If you're single, an exciting potential partner could have you reeling. If you're currently involved, recent events may have created such a powerful bond between you and your beloved that you think it will never end. Consider what led to this feeling and find a way to repeat it. This can only benefit you.



A van from JFK Transportation equipped as a mobile Wifi Hotspot is used in Santa Ana to help some students access internet to remotely attend their classes. — AFP photos



A van from JFK Transportation equipped as a mobile Wifi Hotspot is used in Santa Ana.



Angel, 13, stands outside of his home trying to connect his computer to the Wifi Hotspot provided by a parked van from JFK Transportation in order to follow his online classes.

IN CALIFORNIA, WI-FI MINIVANS HELP DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

A minivan with a Wi-fi router attached to the dashboard and a satellite antenna on the roof is helping 200 disadvantaged students in Santa Ana, close to Los Angeles, cope with the rigors of distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic. "When the school district launched the new school year last month, some of the parents had challenges," said Roman Reyna, who is overseeing the "Wi-fi on wheels" project launched by JFK Transportation, which organizes school runs in the district. "A lot of our students don't have access to Wi-fi. So it's difficult for them to hear some of the messages or learning lessons behind the comput-

er," Reyna said.

As many schools began the year with teaching online, the head of the company, Kevin Watson, came up with the idea of equipping some of his vans with internet relays and parking them at strategic points in the city where students with no Internet at home can stay on top of their school work. "We park the van, and we're here about eight hours to ensure that the students are connected during the day," Watson said. "The Wi-fi signal will reach approximately three and a half football fields, that's about 350 yards."

The connection is secured via a password and accessible only to students, he added. "The Wi-fi routers are 5G, it's one

of the best and very quick," said Watson, who is African-American and grew up in neighborhoods of Santa Ana where many immigrant families live and often struggle to make ends meet. Each van is able to connect some 200 students, and seven have already been deployed as part of the project. Watson said financial negotiations are ongoing with the school district and the hope is to have a fleet of about 50 of the vehicles.

'Up to speed on homework'

The project has highlighted inequalities in a state that boasts the fifth-largest economy in the world and is home to Silicon Valley and some of the biggest

tech companies. A recent report estimated that 25 percent of students in the state - about 1.5 million - did not have adequate internet access or computing devices needed for distance learning.

The same applies in other US states, in part because of high internet costs - which average about 60 dollars a month - and poor infrastructure. In the southern state of Mississippi, for example, half of students do not have access to Wi-fi or laptops, according to a study by the NGO Common Sense Media and the Boston Consulting Group. The study said it would take between \$6 billion and \$11 billion to eradicate this digital divide across the country, the equivalent of one

to two percent of the defense budget.

In Santa Ana, it is estimated that some 10,000 students do not have access to Wi-fi, said local councilman Vincent Sarmiento. He said the city had been trying to create as many hotspots as possible, and initiatives such as Watson's had helped relieve the pressure. For the students, the relay vans offer a chance to keep up with school work. "I had Wi-fi trouble ... and sometimes I would go to my friend's house and they let me work there," said 13-year-old Angel, who now has a "Wi-fi on wheels" parked near his home. "Now, it's working good and I've returned all my assignments." — AFP



Fireworks explode around the London Eye during New Year's celebrations in central London just after midnight. — AFP

Pandemic puts out London's New Year fireworks show

London's New Year's Eve fireworks display, which annually attracts tens of thousands of spectators, will not go ahead on December 31 due to the coronavirus pandemic, mayor Sadiq Khan said on Friday. "There will not be fireworks on New Year's Eve this year like in previous years," he told LBC radio. "We simply can't afford to have the numbers of people who congregate on New Year's Eve congregating." Khan added his administration was working on creating a celebratory event that people could "enjoy in the comfort and

safety of their living rooms on TV".

Britain has been the worst-hit country in Europe by the coronavirus pandemic, with nearly 42,000 deaths from Covid-19. The government has warned it could re-impose a national lockdown across England if new social curbs in the worst-affected areas fail to stem a resurgence in cases. Midnight on December 31 also marks the moment when the UK regains full sovereignty, at the expiry of a transition period following its Brexit divorce from the European Union in January.

Khan, from the main opposition

Labor party, strongly opposed Brexit but it was championed by his predecessor as mayor, Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The decision to cancel the London fireworks was up to the mayor, Johnson's spokesman told reporters. Asked if Downing Street planned to mark the Brexit landmark with its own celebration, pyrotechnic or otherwise, he said any plans would be announced nearer the time, "but I'm not aware of any for now". — AFP

French butcher seeks to carve out Unesco distinction

Victor Dumas is convinced that his fellow French butchers wield their knives unlike any others, and is hoping the UN will agree they deserve pride of place at the global culinary table. Dumas, 21, has been touring France for the past year in a campaign to win recognition of his skills from the Unesco cultural agency, which curates a list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

"There's a really distinct way of carving in France," he told AFP this week in Paris, where he met with chefs as well as fellow butchers known for their dedication to using everything from "nose to tail". Travelling to Belfast for the World Butchers' Challenge in 2018, where he took third prize in the apprentice category, made him realise the French had elevated the age-old craft of carving up animals to an art. "In a beef carcass, we're going to come up with 40 different cuts... whereas others aren't going to make the most of the meat" and settle for just five or six pieces, Dumas said.

He wants French butchering to be honored alongside Chinese calligraphy, Tinian marble-carving and Kazakh yurt construction on the Unesco list. The distinction would bring a welcome boost as the number of French artisan butchers has been dwindling, in part reflecting a social shift towards eating less meat. But Dumas does not think his profession is in danger. "People will always need to eat, and more and more are seeking out quality-we saw this during the virus lockdown," when getting dinner on the table every night suddenly became a preoccupation for millions.

'Incredibly festive'

Dumas says he knew his destiny when he was just five, recalling the "human

contact and sharing" when neighbors would join his family-butchered animals at their farm in the rolling hills east of Lyon in southeast France. His job was to crank the hand grinder for making sausages. "When we would kill a pig, it was our annual party," he said. "It was incredibly festive, and in one day we would fill the entire larder."



This file photo shows meat during the best apprentice butcher contest. — AFP

He began his studies at 15 and is now apprenticing to learn the secrets of charcuterie and other pork delicacies in Aix-les-Bains in the French Alps. These days, wearing his crisp white jacket embroidered with "Victor a l'Unesco", he can carve and mount a rack of lamb, the quintessential centrepiece of a fancy Sunday lunch, in under 10 minutes. He is already preparing to compete in the world championships in California next year, when he also aims to officially submit his Unesco application.

"Victor represents all the butchers who adapt according to tastes and seasons," said Mathieu Pecqueur, head of the Culture Viande industry body. "The French art of preparing meat is recognized in countries worldwide," added Dominique Langlois, president of the Interbev meat and livestock association. "In China, where French beef has just entered the market, we're being asked to help train people," he said, referring to Beijing's recent lifting of a longstanding ban in the wake of the "mad cow" disease scare. He hailed Dumas's campaign, vowing to support the Unesco bid "for the next several years if we have to." — AFP

Montaigne tomb: Mystery endures

Human remains found in a tomb where Michel de Montaigne is said to have been buried may indeed belong to the 16th-century French philosopher but more work is needed to solve the mystery, experts said on Friday. The Musee d'Aquitaine in the southwestern city of Bordeaux had in November launched work to examine the remains in the tomb a basement of the museum, which occupies the premises of a convent where Montaigne, famed for his lofty but highly readable "Essays", was buried.

The bones found are those of a "single individual. It is an adult and it is probably a man," Helene Reveillas, an archaeo-anthropologist for the Bordeaux region, told reporters. "We have elements which do not go against the idea that this is de Montaigne. But we also have nothing which allows us affirm it with certainty", she added. "The mystery remains," she said. Montaigne was one of the city's most famous sons, and served as its mayor from 1581 to 1585. Speculation that his remains are housed already within a museum in Bordeaux had caused huge excitement last year.

The opening of the tomb last year

revealed a wooden coffin with the word "Montaigne" written in large brown letters. The lead coffin was opened this week, revealing "a well-preserved skeleton" and a skull "with almost all of its teeth" as well as the remains of tissue, pollens and insects, according to the archaeologist.

Laboratory research, including using carbon 14 dating, will now be carried out by about twenty scientists. They will particularly be on the lookout for evidence of the kidney stones from which the writer was known to have suffered.

Reveillas added: "We know that his

heart was removed after his death" at the request of his widow, noting that "operation leaves its traces". Other techniques set to be used in the follow-up include "facial reconstruction" and genealogical research on possible descendants, Reveillas said. Results are expected next

year. There has long been confusion over the location of the remains of de Montaigne, after the body was shifted between numerous sites after his death in 1592 at the age of 59. — AFP



The cenotaph of late French writer Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) is displayed following restoration works at the Musee d'Aquitaine in Bordeaux. — AFP photos



Photo shows the cenotaph of late French writer Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592).

Lifestyle | Features

Five things to watch for on Emmys night

Hollywood will honor the best in television at the Emmys on Sunday, but the awards show-like most things in the pandemic-era world-will look totally different. And maybe that's a good thing. Here are five things to watch for on Sunday night:

How will it all work?

Late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel will take the stage at a nearly empty venue in Los Angeles to host the Emmys, as the stars will be... elsewhere. Producers have sent camera equipment to about 130 A-list nominees in multiple countries around the world-and the winners will accept their awards live. Technical difficulties, F-bombs dropped on air, wardrobe malfunctions: the set-up seems tailor-made for at least a few hiccups, but experts say that could be a boost overall.

"I think it's got the potential to actually be a breakthrough for award shows, and actually shake up the whole format, make it interesting," said Deadline awards columnist Pete Hammond. Kimmel is the host who had to handle the notorious best picture Oscar bungle in 2017, so industry observers say if anyone is prepared to deal with the unknown, he's the man. "I really think he's going to be able to roll with the punches better than maybe anyone else who could be in that position," IndieWire TV awards editor Libby Hill told AFP.

What about the fashion?

There is no red carpet, of course, so how the stars will appear on camera is anyone's guess. Organizers have encouraged participants to embrace comfort over couture. "Our informal theme for the night is 'Come as you are, but make an effort!'" said a letter sent to nominees by organizers in July, according to Variety. "If you want to be in formal wear, we'd love that, but equally if you're in the UK and it's 3 am, perhaps you want to be in designer pajamas and record from your bed!" So will stars don glamorous gowns anyway, hoping for a winning fashion moment, or instead go for the tie-dye loungewear that has become the ubiquitous version of lockdown chic? Stay tuned.

Can Netflix win a major award?

Since entering the fray with its flagship original dramas like "House of Cards" and "Orange Is the New Black," streaming giant Netflix has scooped up a ton of Emmys-but never one for best drama, best comedy or best limited series. Is this the year? Dark crime series "Ozark" is leading the nominations in the drama categories with 18, but it is tied with HBO's family business hit show "Succession."

And while Netflix prevailed in terms of total nominations with 160 to HBO's 107, it has yet to pull in a major prize. HBO meanwhile has done it many times before with "The Sopranos," "Game of Thrones," "Sex and the City" and "Veep." This year, beyond "Succession," it also has "Watchmen," the overall top Emmy nomination getter with 26, and a major contender this year for best limited series and beyond. "What Netflix has going for it is it has just the bulk amount of nominations," Hill said. "And sometimes it's not quantity-it's quality of nominations. And I think that's where HBO is at right now."

Emmy newcomers

The absolute glut of original content now available to television viewers is astounding. From traditional broadcast and cable networks, to new streamers like Disney+ and Apple TV+, to short-form video platform Quibi, there is something for everyone. Who will break through this year? So far, in the Emmys handed out before the main ceremony in technical categories, Disney+ and Quibi are going strong.

Disney has snared five statuettes so far for its "Star Wars" original series "The Mandalorian." Could Apple TV+ be shut out despite the high-wattage cast of "The Morning Show" starring nominees Jennifer Aniston, Steve Carell, Billy Crudup and Mark Duplass? Apple TV+ "wanted to be this place for prestige television but I think behind the scenes, it didn't necessarily have people knowledgeable in television making the decisions," Hill said. "It can take streamers a while to break through. But that Disney+ did it with such relative ease is really salt in the wound."

The category to watch

Of course, the Emmy nominee list reads like a who's who in Hollywood, but one category stands out for its competitiveness-best actress in a limited series or TV movie. Three Oscar winners-Regina King ("Watchmen"), Cate Blanchett ("Mrs. America") and Octavia Spencer ("Self Made") will battle for the title. Their competition? A major debut from Shira Haas in the critically acclaimed "Unorthodox" and Kerry Washington's tour de force in "Little Fires Everywhere." King is the favorite for her starring role in "Watchmen"-HBO's comic book adaptation that takes on US racism and police violence-but anything can happen on Emmys night. — AFP



The LA Live Xbox Plaza usually crowded during the Emmys time is closed to the public amid the coronavirus pandemic in Los Angeles California. — AFP photos



Tables are set up outside the Staples center, at LA Live, where part of the Emmy was set in Los Angeles California.

The show must go on: Virus-era Emmys are virtual - and live

No red carpet, no star-studded audience and no "Game of Thrones"-this year's Emmys honoring the best in television promise to be radically different as producers scramble to create Hollywood's first major pandemic-era awards show. The coronavirus has turned Tinseltown upside down, bringing productions to a halt even as stay-at-home orders around the world send binge-watching through the roof. Now late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel will host the 72nd Emmys live today from an empty theater in Los Angeles-which remains under strict lockdown-with winners beaming in from the safety of their homes due to Covid-19.

Adding to the unpredictability on a night of firsts, 130-odd nominees who were sent cameras to hook up in their own living rooms have been encouraged to get creative with their speeches (and comfortable-A-listers are invited to trade gowns and tuxedos for pajamas). "Ratings have been flagging for award shows for years... This is, if nothing else, an opportunity to mix things up, to do an award ceremony in a way unlike any other that's been done," said IndieWire TV awards editor Libby Hill. "Even if Sunday night is a complete disaster, it's at least going to be an interesting disaster. And

that's really all you ask for in 2020."

Capturing this year's somewhat anarchic zeitgeist, "Watchmen" leads the charge with a whopping 26 nominations, primarily in the limited series categories. The eerily prescient comic book adaptation that debuted last October confronts historic US racism, police violence and even mask-wearing. It also wowed critics and audiences alike. "'Watchmen' speaks so specifically in so many unprecedented ways to the moment in which we're living right now," said Hill. "I think people will probably get pretty tired of hearing Watchmen's name getting called... it's as much of a lock as we have right now."

'Last chance'

With HBO's record-breaking Emmys juggernaut "Game of Thrones" having finally mounted a dragon and soared off to Westeros, the awards in the drama series categories promise to be more fiercely contested this year. "It's a relief for HBO that they have 'Succession' hitting at the right time," said Deadline awards columnist Pete Hammond. The critically adored show about a powerful family's backstabbing battle for control of a dynastic media empire won a writing Emmy in its first season, and has

amassed 18 nominations this time.

But it is tied with "Ozark," a dark money-laundering tale set in the American heartland from Netflix, which despite landing a record 160 nominations this year is still desperate to win its first major series Emmy. Lurking in the background are British royals saga "The Crown" and Star Wars tale "The Mandalorian," which boasts lavish Thrones-esque production values and has already scooped five Emmys in technical categories this week for newcomer Disney+.

Comedy this year appears to be a toss-up between previous serial winner "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"-Amazon's quirky tale of a 1950s housewife who becomes a standup comic-and "Schitt's Creek." The latter, a Canadian comedy about a privileged family forced to live in a rundown motel, failed to earn a single nomination in its first four years, but became a sleeper hit after airing on Netflix and signed off with a heartwarming final season. Emmy voters "know it's the show's last chance... that's the one that's got big momentum," said Hammond.

'Crashshoot'

Of the more than 100 acting nominations in the drama, comedy, limited

series and television movie categories this year, more than a third of them went to black actors-a new record. Aside from the awards themselves, the night will honor the career achievement of Tyler Perry. The African-American entertainment mogul has championed greater diversity in Hollywood, and this year paid funeral costs for black victims of police violence including George Floyd.

The theme of tackling racism is expected to feature prominently throughout the night, while many stars in famously liberal Hollywood are likely to have a wary eye on President Donald Trump's re-election bid. And then of course there's the pandemic itself to address. With nominees given "unprecedented freedom" as they broadcast from locations of their choosing, winners' speeches on a night billed by Kimmel as "the Emmys meet Big Brother" are likely to have surprises in store. "It's a crapshoot," said Hammond. "That's the one thing you can't predict." — AFP

Could PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X be swan song for consoles?

The upcoming release of a ninth generation of games consoles by Sony and Microsoft is set to be a sales slam dunk with consumers seeking entertainment during pandemic confinement, but could it also be their swan song as the habits of gamers change? Both companies have been dripping out information for months about the PlayStation 5 (PS5) and the Xbox Series X to build excitement, and now have announced the consoles will hit shelves-and living rooms-in mid-November.



The Sony Playstation logo is seen during the Tokyo Game Show in Makuhari, Chiba Prefecture. Sony's eagerly awaited PlayStation 5 will be launched in November 2020, taking on a new offering by console rival Xbox as video game play booms during the pandemic. — AFP

Pre-orders for the PS5 quickly maxed out at several retailers, showing many gamers are indeed raring to upgrade and setting up a sales battle just in time for the holiday season. And it will be a major upgrade in terms of hardware as the current generation of machines were released all the way back in 2013. Both new consoles will offer much more powerful central and graphics processors, support 4K televisions, as well as offer ray tracing, which allows for better rendition of how light behaves. All of this will all make for more fluid and vivid play.

"When one looks at the technical specifications of the new consoles, there 10 times above the current generation. We're going to have games that are more beautiful, more realistic, more immersive. People are going to be blown away," said Charles-Louis Planade, a video game expert with Midcap Partners.

Dark cloud in the sky?

Sony has the 110 million PS4 consoles it has sold over the past seven years as a gauge of success, more than double the

amount of its competitor the Xbox One. "For Microsoft, the challenge is to not to let Sony get too far ahead, maybe even the game with it," Planade said. Taking into account the growing number of players, the analyst believes it possible they could match their previous success. Others aren't so sure given the changes in the industry, which is already beginning to move away from big expensive machines to cloud gaming, where the play is happening online.

"This generation could be the last physical consoles. It'll be the last time we'll here talk of teraflops," said Audrey Leprince, co-founder of the independent game studio The Game Bakers. A teraflop refers to the capacity of a processor to calculate a trillion operations, and both Sony and Microsoft have been vaunting the speed and power of their new consoles. Leprince said there haven't been any major innovations with game interfaces or with the games themselves.

But "the stone in the pond... is the shift to the subscription model" which means the console makers are becoming a "Netflix of video games", she said. The subscriptions-Game Pass for Microsoft and PlayStation Plus for Sony "are going to completely revolutionize the industry as was the case for films and music," said Leprince.

The Game Pass already operates much like a Netflix for video games by offering access to a catalogue of titles, while PlayStation Plus offers other services that are attractive to gamers such as playing online with friends. "The challenge for the console manufacturers is to hold onto their subscribers so as not to give an opening to challengers" such as Google or Amazon, said Planade.

Cloud gaming

The two web giants are betting on cloud gaming which allows them to dispense with consoles. Games can run on a variety of devices such as smartphones and tablets. As it is the servers in the cloud that do the heavy lifting in terms of processing, there is no need for powerful and costly consoles.

But both firms have also take a step towards cloud gaming by offering lower priced versions of their new consoles without drives. Games have to be downloaded from the web or streamed, and have dedicated xCloud and PlayStation Now services. —AFP



A Steinway grand piano owned by the late Jewish-Polish composer Wladyslaw Szpilman, is displayed in Warsaw.

Real-life 'Pianist' possessions up for auction in Poland

A fountain pen, silver pocket watch and other prized possessions of the late Jewish-Polish composer Wladyslaw Szpilman, the real-life hero of the Oscar-winning film "The Pianist," go under the hammer in Warsaw next week. "This watch and pen that he bought on a trip to Paris in 1937 survived his whole stay in the Jewish ghetto, then kept him company in the ruins of Warsaw," said Szpilman's son Andrzej, who is organizing the auction with his brother Krzysztof.

The renowned musician, who died in 2000, came to the world's attention in Roman Polanski's film based on Szpilman's autobiography-available in some 40 languages. The black Montblanc Meisterstück pen, the pocket watch and a tie that is now part of the collection at the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews are the only Szpilman possessions to have survived the war.

Sole survivor

Like every Jewish resident of the Polish capital, the pianist and his family were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto established by the Nazis in 1940. He made ends meet by playing the piano at whatever cafes remained open. In 1942, his relatives were sent to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination camp, but Szpilman was spared after a Jewish police officer recognized him from a concert and pulled him from the trans-

port line at the last minute.

Szpilman managed to escape the ghetto the following year, just before the Germans liquidated and abolished the Jewish district. He survived the rest of the war, thanks to the help of friends, by going from hideout to hideout, until he ended up at an empty apartment, totally cut off from the outside world. "The watch, an Omega, held special significance for my father," Andrzej Szpilman told AFP. "My father wrote that he would wind it up to know what time it was, because he lived in total solitude and had lost all sense of time. "The watch helped him put up with the passing time," the son said, before winding the watch and holding it up to his ear to hear it tick. —AFP



Crockery of the late Jewish-Polish composer Wladyslaw Szpilman, are displayed in Warsaw. — AFP photos

Sports

Angels' Pujols passes Mays for 5th on the MLB all-time home run list

Athletics overpower Giants 6-0; Rays beat Orioles

LOS ANGELES: Albert Pujols hit two homers and moved into sole possession of fifth place on the major league career home run list, leading the Los Angeles Angels to a 6-2 win against the Texas Rangers in the opener of a four-game series on Friday night in Anaheim, Calif. Pujols hit a line drive over the left field fence in the fifth inning off Wes Benjamin (1-1) for the 661st home run of his career, moving him past Willie Mays on the all-time list. The 40-year-old designated hitter lifted another solo shot to left in the seventh for Los Angeles. Angels starter Jaime Barria allowed two runs and six hits and no walks in 6 1/3 innings while matching his career high with eight strikeouts. Barria (1-0) was 0-7 since his last major league win on July 24, 2019, against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Anderson Tejeda had two hits and Willie Calhoun drove in both runs for the Rangers.

Athletics 6, Giants 0

Oakland clinched its third consecutive trip to the postseason, riding Matt Olson's three-run homer and right-hander Chris Bassitt's strong pitching to blank visiting San Francisco in the opener of a three-game series. The win, coupled with third-place Seattle's loss to San Diego, assured the American League West-leading A's will finish no worse than second in the division. The A's, a wild-card team each of the last two seasons, also lowered their magic number to win their first division title since 2013 to three over Houston. Bassitt (5-2) took a shutout two outs into the seventh before exiting in favor of right-hander Yusmeiro Petit with two on and two out. Bassitt gave up three hits and three walks in his 6 2/3 innings. He struck out seven.

Reds 7, White Sox 1

Jesse Winker's three-run homer highlighted a five-run third inning, and the surging Cincinnati extended its season-high winning streak to six games with a win over visiting Chicago. Tucker Barnhart and Joey Votto also homered in the third, and Nick Castellanos delivered a solo shot in the first for Cincinnati. Sitting .500 for the first time since Aug. 3, the Reds have worked themselves into postseason position. Cincinnati's Tyler Mahle (2-2) allowed a run, four hits, struck out eight and walked one over 5 2/3 innings. The American League Central-leading White Sox, who clinched their first postseason berth since 2008 with Thursday's win over Minnesota, loaded the bases against Mahle with nobody out in the sixth, but managed only a run on Eloy Jimenez's RBI groundout.

Rays 2, Orioles 1

Nate Lowe and Brandon Lowe each contributed RBI singles, and Tampa Bay got strong pitching from starter Tyler Glasnow and four relievers to clip host Baltimore. The Lowes came up with their run-scoring hits early in the game, and Glasnow and the bullpen made it stand up. Glasnow (4-1) has pitched well against Baltimore—he entered 3-0 with a 2.12 ERA in five career starts against the Orioles. He gave up one run on four hits in five innings while striking out 10 and walking two. Collectively, the Rays' bullpen quartet gave up just one hit over four shutout innings, struck out four without a walk, and saw Ryan Sherriff work a perfect ninth for his first career save. Tampa Bay has won the first three games of this five-game series.

Phillies 7, Blue Jays 0 (Game 1)

Bryce Harper hit a two-run homer and Zach Eflin tossed a seven-inning complete game shutout to lead Philadelphia past Toronto in the first game of a doubleheader. Andrew Knapp added a two-run triple and Didi Gregorius had three hits for the Phillies, who were the road team for the first game of the doubleheader despite

playing at home. Phil Gosselin and Alex Bohm each added two hits, and Eflin (3-2) allowed just four hits and two walks against nine strikeouts in his third career shutout. Cavan Biggio had two hits for the Blue Jays, who dropped their fourth in a row. Robbie Ray (2-5) took the loss after giving up five hits and five runs in 4 1/3 innings.

Phillies 8, Blue Jays 7 (Game 2)

Rafael Marchan homered, singled and drove in three runs, Andrew McCutchen homered and host Philadelphia rallied past Toronto to sweep their doubleheader. The Phillies also won the first game 7-0 for their first twin bill sweep since Sept. 9, 2012, against the Colorado Rockies. Bryce Harper stayed hot with a pair of doubles, one single, one walk and two RBIs. Phillies starter David Hale was effective in a bullpen start as he threw 34 pitches in 3 1/3 innings. Hale allowed four hits and two runs. Connor Brogdon (1-0) earned his first major league win and Hector Neris earned his fifth save with a scoreless ninth despite walking two.

Cubs 1, Twins 0

Kyle Hendricks recorded a season-high 10 strikeouts in eight scoreless innings, and host Chicago held on to trim Minnesota. Chicago won its fifth game in a row, which is one shy of its best streak of the season. Minnesota lost for the fourth time in five games. The high-powered Twins lineup was shut out for only the second time this season. Cubs right-hander Jeremy Jeffress pitched a scoreless ninth to record his eighth save. Hendricks (6-4) held the Twins to three single and walked only one. The Cubs scored the game's only run in the bottom of the first, when Anthony Rizzo drew a lead-off walk, stole second, and scored two batters later on Willson Contreras' single to center.

Nationals 5, Marlins 0 (Game 1)

Erick Fedde pitched six scoreless innings, and Washington was able to figure out Miami starter Sixto Sanchez, in the opening game of a doubleheader. Fedde (2-2) picked up his first win since Aug. 14 after holding the Marlins to just one hit and striking out six. Will Harris pitched a scoreless seventh to close it out for the last-place Nationals. Miami, vying for a playoff spot for the first time since 2003, has lost three of its last four. Sanchez (3-2) had the worst game of his young career after giving up career highs of eight hits and five runs in a career-low four innings.

Marlins 14, Nationals 3 (Game 2)

Brian Anderson homered three times and drove in seven runs, and host Miami salvaged a doubleheader split by taking the second game from Washington. It was the first career three-homer game for Anderson, who hit a solo shot and a pair of three-run blasts. His third homer came off of infielder Brock Holt with Miami holding a big lead in the sixth inning. Reliever Yimi Garcia (3-0) got the final two outs in the fifth to pick up the win. Starter Wil Crowe (0-2) took the loss for the Nationals, allowing six runs in 2 1/3 innings. Juan Soto, Kurt Suzuki and Josh Harrison had RBIs for Washington.

Yankees 6, Red Sox 5 (12 innings)

DJ LeMahieu hit a tiebreaking double with two outs in the 12th inning, and New York outlasted host Boston to run its winning streak to a season-high nine games. The Yankees beat the Red Sox for the 11th straight time by chipping away at a four-run deficit. Gary Sanchez forged a 4-4 tie by hitting a solo homer with two outs in the ninth off Matt Barnes. Yankees reliever Jonathan Loaisiga (3-0) pitched a scoreless 12th to close out the 4-hour, 55-minute marathon. Red Sox starter Martin Perez pro-

duced his second scoreless start of the season and got a season-high seven strikeouts before Boston blew the lead. New York left-hander Jordan Montgomery allowed four runs on five hits in 4 2/3 innings, six relievers combined to allow one run the rest of the way.

Padres 6, Mariners 1

Manny Machado hit two home runs and Chris Paddack pitched six scoreless innings of one-hit ball as San Diego defeated Seattle. The Padres won for the ninth time in the past 11 games and they are on the verge of clinching a National League playoff berth. The Mariners took their fourth straight loss. Seattle left-hander Yusei Kikuchi (2-4) struggled with his control, allowing five runs on four hits with six walks and three strikeouts in four innings. He also threw three wild pitches.

Brewers 9, Royals 5

Jacob Nottingham smacked his first career grand slam and Orlando Arcia belted a three-run shot to power Milwaukee to a victory over visiting Kansas City. Christian Yelich hit his 150th career homer to help Milwaukee win for the fourth time in six games. Arcia had four RBIs while going 2-for-3 with a walk and scoring twice. Salvador Perez was 4-for-5 with a homer and four RBIs for the Royals, who had 11 hits while losing for just the second time in nine games. Perez's homer, his seventh of the season, was a solo shot in the ninth off left-hander Josh Hader.

Indians 1, Tigers 0

Zach Plesac tied a career high with 11 strikeouts, and Delino DeShields tripled and scored the game's only run as Cleveland edged host Detroit. Plesac (4-2) pitched 7 2/3 innings and gave up five hits and one walk for Cleveland. Brad Hand notched his 13th save despite allowing a one-out triple in the ninth. Detroit starter Michael Fulmer held the Indians to one hit in three innings while recording two strikeouts. The Tigers were shut out for the second time in three games and the fourth time in 10 games.

Cardinals 6, Pirates 5 (Game 1)

Kolten Wong and Tyler O'Neill hit home runs to help visiting St. Louis defeat Pittsburgh in the first game of a doubleheader. Paul Goldschmidt added an RBI double for St. Louis, which built a 6-2 lead and was forced to hang on from there. St. Louis starter Carlos Martinez pitched 3 2/3 innings, giving up five runs and three hits, with four walks and a strikeout. Pittsburgh's Trevor Williams (1-8) allowed six runs, five of them earned, and seven hits in 4 1/3 innings, with three strikeouts and no walks.

Cardinals 7, Pirates 2 (Game 2)

Dylan Carlson hit a three-run homer in a six-run sixth inning filled with Pittsburgh mistakes as St. Louis swept the doubleheader. Paul DeJong added an RBI single for St. Louis, which was playing its third doubleheader in five days. Cardinals starter Daniel Ponce de Leon, pitching on short rest, struck out nine in five innings. He allowed two runs and three hits, and walked two. Bryan Reynolds hit a two-run homer for the Pirates, who have lost nine of their past 10. Pittsburgh starter Chad Kuhl (1-3) pitched five-plus innings. He gave up four runs, with just one earned, struck out six and walked two.

Dodgers 15, Rockies 6

Cody Bellinger homered and had three hits, Mookie Betts also went deep and added a triple, and Los Angeles beat Colorado in Denver. Gavin Lux homered among his two hits and Chris Taylor, Corey Seager, Austin Barnes and Edwin Rios also had two hits for the Dodgers, who collected a season-high 17 hits. Mitch White (1-0), the



BALTIMORE: Andrew Velazquez #13 of the Baltimore Orioles forces out Michael Brosseau #43 of the Tampa Bay Rays at second base on in the third inning during a baseball game at Oriole Park on September 18, 2020. —AFP

last of seven Los Angeles pitchers on a bullpen night, got his first major league win after throwing two scoreless innings. Josh Fuentes homered and finished with three hits and Kevin Pillar had two hits for the fading Rockies, who have lost eight of their past 10.

Braves 15, Mets 2

Ozzie Albies hit two of Atlanta's six home runs and the Braves ripped host New York. Marcell Ozuna, Austin Riley, Travis d'Arnaud and Ronald Acuna Jr. also homers for the Braves, who began the day with a three-game lead over the Miami Marlins in the NL East. Max Fried (7-0), making his first start since Sept. 5, allowed one run on three hits and two walks while striking out three over five innings for Atlanta. Amed Rosario went 3-for-4 with an RBI infield single, and Jeff McNeil had an RBI double for the Mets. Steven Matz (0-5) allowed six runs on eight hits and three walks with five strikeouts over 2 2/3 innings while taking the loss.

Diamondbacks 6, Astros 3

Kole Calhoun recorded his second multi-homer game of the week to support a quality start from Zac Gallen as Arizona rallied past host Houston. Calhoun bashed a three-run homer into the upper deck in right field off right-hander Zack Greinke in the fourth inning to allow the Diamondbacks to erase a 2-0 deficit, then added a solo shot in the eighth. Gallen (2-2) gave up three runs, one earned, on six hits and one walk with six strikeouts over six innings. Greinke didn't factor in the decision after giving up three runs and six walks, with a season high nine strikeouts, over five innings. George Springer, Kyle Tucker and Michael Brantley each had two hits for the Astros.—Reuters



ZURICH: FIFA President Gianni Infantino delivers a speech during the 70th Congress of the World football governing body held online, on September 18, 2020 in Zurich. —AFP

pandemic. "We have the money (to help) because in the new FIFA, the money doesn't disappear," he said. "We will know exactly where (the money) goes, and why it goes there. It will be fully transparent." —AFP



CHAMPAGNOLE: Team Jumbo rider Slovenia's Primoz Roglic (center) wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey rides during the 19th stage of the 107th edition of the Tour de France cycling race on September 18, 2020. —AFP

the head of the main pack, Bennett won the dash for the intermediary sprint points taking 11, to Sagan's seven. Sagan made a bid for glory from 20km out, but Bennett was able to keep up. As an escape group formed, the peloton slowed to a snail's pace as many of the lesser riders realized their contribution to this Tour was essentially over due to the nature of the final two stages. —AFP

Tiger misses cut as Reed grabs US Open halfway lead

MAMARONECK: Former Masters champion Patrick Reed put his sterling short game on display to grab the US Open halfway lead on Friday while Tiger Woods finished well outside the cut in windy conditions that humbled many of the game's top golfers. Reed only hit five fairways on a tough scoring day at Winged Foot but made a slew of stunning recoveries and needed only 25 putts en route to an even-par 70 that left him at four under on the week and one shot clear of Bryson DeChambeau (68).

"I feel like the game is where it needs to be. I feel good," said world number 10 Reed. "I just need to tighten a few things up here or there, but the short game is sharp, and when I play around a place like this, that's what you need." Reed, who started the day one shot back of overnight leader Justin Thomas, grabbed the outright lead with a birdie on his final hole, the par-five ninth, where his shot from a greenside bunker settled five feet from the cup.

Unlike the first round when 21 players finished under par in soft conditions, Winged Foot proved a much sterner test on Friday as DeChambeau, Bubba Watson (69) and Hideki Matsuyama (69) were the only players from a 144-player field to break par. DeChambeau, who has turned heads this year with his new physique and prodigious length off the tee, went out in the morning wave and muscled his way around a scorecard-shredding Winged Foot course like few others can.

The world number nine finished his round with a monstrous eagle at the par-five ninth hole where, after a 380-yard drive, he stuffed a pitching wedge to six feet. "Confidence is at an all-time high right now, driving it well, iron play is fantastic, wedging is getting better each and every day, and I'm putting it like I know I can," said DeChambeau, whose best major finish was a share of fourth place at this year's PGA Championship. —Reuters

FIFA purged of 'toxic' corruption: Infantino

LAUSANNE: FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday defended his fight "against corruption" in football in spite of being under criminal investigation in Switzerland since the end of July. Infantino said Friday at the opening of the 70th FIFA Congress held by videoconference with delegates from 211 member federations that he believed he had restored the integrity of the body after a wave of scandals. "We will never again have corruption in football... We have excluded it and we will not let it come back," promised a bullish Infantino who also referenced his predecessor Sepp Blatter, ousted in 2015.

"FIFA became victim to corrupt officials — that's not what I say, that's what courts say all over the world, and FIFA is still suffering from that. "In 2015 FIFA was toxic, was pronounced dead. An organization that had served itself from football, had used football, instead of serving football."

Roglic retains Tour lead as Andersen wins stage 19

CHAMPAGNOLE: Primoz Roglic kept his lead in the Tour de France on Friday with just two stages remaining as Denmark's Soren Kragh Andersen burst clear to victory on stage 19. Sam Bennett inched further ahead in the struggle for the green jersey by beating rival Peter Sagan, who failed in two bids to shake off the Irishman. Sunweb rider Andersen also won the stage at Lyon last week in similar style, striking from 3km out, this time he attacked with 16km to go. "I have proved myself in the greatest race in the world," said Andersen. "I just thought 'holy shit' I've won two stages in the same Tour." "This is a result of all the work we have done at Sunweb over the past two or three years," he said.

In the race for overall Tour de France victory Jumbo's dominant leader Roglic retained a 57 second advantage over his Slovenian compatriot Tadej Pogacar. That duo face a much-awaited individual time trial, which features a Category 1 mountain where the

Infantino, in charge of world football's governing body since 2016, is the subject of an investigation over suspected collusion between him and Swiss attorney general Michael Lauber, who resigned in July over his handling of a corruption investigation targeting FIFA.

"So why was I meeting the Swiss attorney general? Because it was my duty as FIFA president because I wanted to liberate FIFA from those old, toxic values." "We will be able to convince the sceptics eventually. (The meetings with Lauber) were meant to define that the new FIFA was miles away from the old FIFA." Infantino also met on Wednesday in Washington with the US Minister of Justice, William Barr, while the United States is still investigating several South American football leaders and marketing officials for "racketeering" or corruption.

Infantino, a lawyer by training, claimed his reforms introduced since his first election in 2016, were the reason why FIFA has been able to release \$1.5 billion (1.3 billion euros) in grants and loans to help federations to face the consequences of the

21-year-old Pogacar has vowed to topple Roglic. The younger man did just that recently in the Slovenian national time-trials. "So far so good. Better even because I kept my energy for the big day," Roglic said. "I know how I'll handle tomorrow. I'm feeling okay health-wise and I'm quite excited about it."

Bad news

Jumbo's assistant manager Merijn Zeeman will not be there for Roglic. Zeeman was thrown off the Tour on Thursday for threats and insults to the control team checking Roglic's bike. "We are not happy with that, It's not good for us. "I wasn't there when all this happened, but it's not nice as he cannot be here anymore," Roglic said. After three days going up and down Alpine mountains, stage 19 had been described as an easy day for the overall contenders, and so it proved. This was not the case for Deceuninck-Quick Step sprinter Bennett however, who fended off the seven-time green jersey Sagan in their close-run contest for the remaining sprint points.

Bennett v Sagan

By the time the peloton reached the Jura vineyards of Chateau-Chalon for climb at halfway, Remi Cavagna was a minute ahead on a solo break rolling through what guides describe as one of France's prettiest villages. At

Sports

Lakers dominate Nuggets in NBA Western finals opener

Heat burn Celtics again for 2-0 NBA series lead

MIAMI: Anthony Davis scored 37 points and pulled down 10 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers dominated the Denver Nuggets 126-114 on Friday in game one of the NBA Western Conference finals. LeBron James added 15 points with 12 assists and six rebounds for the Lakers, who shot out of the gate after dropping their opener in each of their previous two playoff series in the NBA's coronavirus quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

After a close first quarter ended with the Nuggets up by two, the Lakers seized control in the second quarter, out-scoring Denver 34-21 to take a 70-59 lead into halftime. Lakers reserve Alex Caruso converted a three-point play to spark a 17-1 scoring run, the Nuggets going without a basket for more than five minutes to start the second quarter. "It took a quarter for us to kind of figure it out," James said. "I'm not saying we fully figured them out because it's too early in the series to say that."

"but we started to get a better feel, just started to get in a better rhythm defensively and we started to get some stops in that second quarter and we were able to build that lead up going into half-time." Well aware that the Nuggets had proved their resilience with some big second-half comebacks against the Los Angeles Clippers in the previous round, the Lakers kept the pressure on after the break. Denver trimmed the deficit to nine points midway through the third quarter.

But their efforts were hampered with star Nikola Jokic, Jamal Murray and Paul Millsap all in early foul trouble, and that was the closest they would get in the second half. Jokic and Murray both scored 21 points to pace the Nuggets. Michael Porter added 14 off the bench. But Denver coach Mike Malone said the Nuggets did not do enough on defense. "Even in that first quarter we didn't guard anybody," said Malone, whose team shot better than 63 percent from the field in an opening period punctuated by Murray's three-pointer as time expired. "Our offense was able to score the ball but there was little defense."

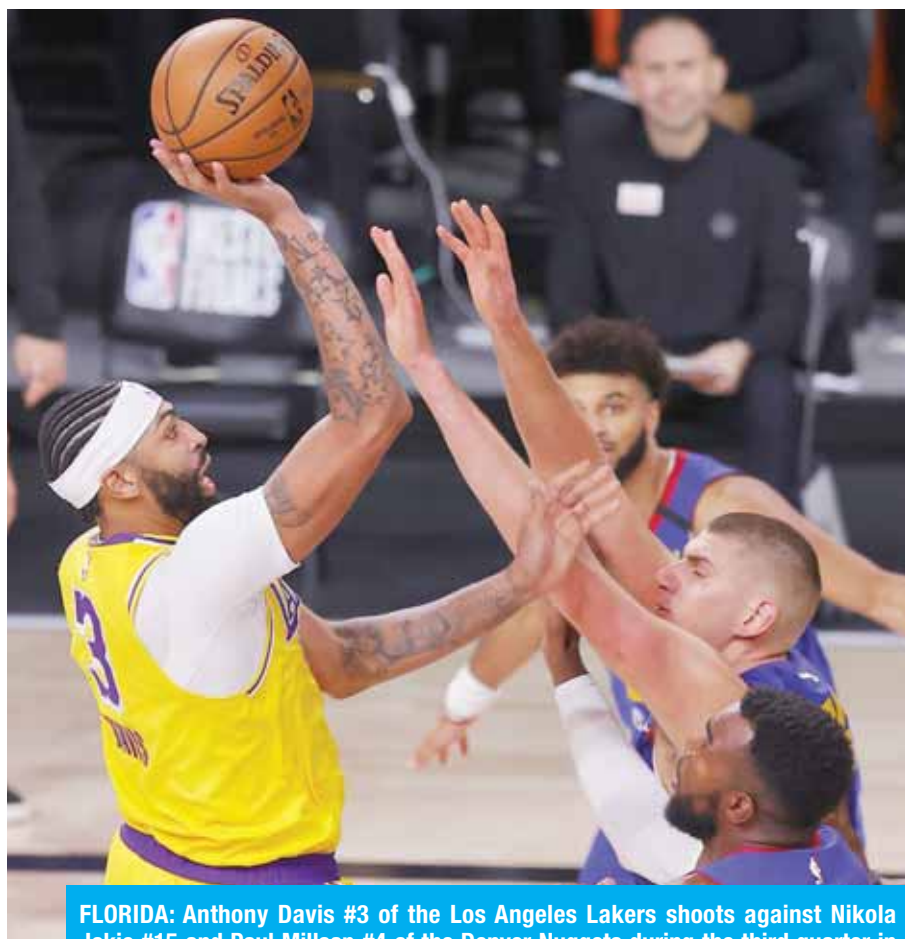
Heat burn Celtics

Meanwhile, the Miami Heat turned it up in the second half, rallying again for a 106-101 victory over the Boston Celtics and a 2-0 lead in the NBA Eastern Conference finals. Trailing by 17 in the second quarter and down 60-47 at half-time, Miami thrashed the Celtics 37-17 in the third quarter and held on for the victory. Bam Adebayo scored 15 of his 21 points in the Heat's blistering third quarter. The Celtics, who let a big lead slip in a 117-114 game one overtime defeat on Tuesday, regained the lead in the fourth quarter and were up 94-89 with 4:25 left to play.

But the Heat chipped away with a hook shot from Adebayo and a steal and dunk by Jimmy Butler. Goran Dragic fol-

lowed up two free throws with a three-pointer over Boston big man Daniel Theis that put the Heat ahead 100-95 with 1:42 remaining and Miami powered to the finish line. "We came here to these playoffs trying to win a championship," Adebayo said. "We keep stacking these wins and hopefully we get to that point. "Right now, 2-0, we've got to keep stacking those 'W's." Dragic finished with 25 points, and Duncan Robinson added 18, all on three-pointers.

Adebayo added 10 rebounds and four assists. Jimmy Butler had 14 points, four rebounds, three assists and four steals. "We like to make it hard for ourselves," Butler said of the Miami "comeback kids." In fact, the Heat got off to a brisk start making five of their first six three-point attempts. After a close first quarter the Celtics surged ahead in the second period, only for the Heat to make the needed adjustments at halftime. "You get to the conference finals, it's not all about you," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "Boston had a lot to say about how that first half was going. That was them putting us on our heels." Kemba Walker broke out of his scoring slump with 23 points for the Celtics. Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum scored 21 apiece. But Brown missed a three-pointer that would have tied it with 15 seconds to play and 20 Celtics turnovers led to 26 Miami points. "They out-played us," Walker said of the Heat's third-quarter surge. — Agencies



FLORIDA: Anthony Davis #3 of the Los Angeles Lakers shoots against Nikola Jokic #15 and Paul Millsap #4 of the Denver Nuggets during the third quarter in Game One of the Western Conference Finals on September 18, 2020. — AFP

Antetokounmpo named NBA MVP for 2nd straight year

LOS ANGELES: Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo said Friday he'll treasure his second straight NBA Most Valuable Player award and redouble his efforts to capture a league crown. The 25-year-old from Greece became just the third player in history to earn MVP and Defensive Player of the Year honors in the same season, after Michael Jordan in 1988 and Hakeem Olajuwon in 1994. "Michael Jordan, one of the best players who's ever done it, if not the best," Antetokounmpo said, speaking from a rooftop in Athens during the televised announcement of the award. "Hakeem, a guy that I look up to, he came from where I'm from, Nigeria, where I have roots. "Just being in the same sentence with them, that means a lot to me."

The player dubbed the "Greek Freak" became the 12th player to win back-to-back MVPs, joining Jordan, Stephen Curry, LeBron James, Steve Nash, Tim Duncan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Moses Malone, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell. But, once again, the MVP award carries a bittersweet tinge after the top-seeded Bucks fell in five games to the Miami Heat in the Eastern Conference semi-finals in the quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida.

Last year, Antetokounmpo won the MVP only for eventual champion Toronto to oust the Bucks in the Eastern Conference finals.

"Obviously I would love to be still in the bubble playing games, fighting," Antetokounmpo said. "But at the end of the day I won the award. I'm extremely blessed. "It's been a long journey," Antetokounmpo added. "The people that know me, the people that know my story, you can never take these moments for granted." Antetokounmpo won in a landslide, receiving 85 first-place votes from a global panel of sports reporters and broadcasters, the league announced on Friday. Los Angeles Lakers star James received 16 first-place votes and the third finalist, James Harden of the Houston Rockets, did not receive any first-place votes.

The voting was based on performance from the start of the season through March 11, when play was shut down in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. It did not included the "seeding games" played when teams in contention for playoff spots once play resumed in Orlando. Antetokounmpo averaged 29.5 points, 13.6 rebounds and 5.6 assists in leading the Bucks to the best regular-sea-



Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo

son record in the pandemic-disrupted season. But he had to watch from the sidelines as the Heat won game five of their semi-final series, nursing a sprained ankle suffered in game three and aggravated in game four.

'I want to be a champion'

"Obviously, I am disappointed to not be able to help our team go to the third round," he said. "That feeling cannot take away from this award. "I'm happy for this award, but I want more," he said. "I want to be a champion." As a veteran entering his eighth season, Antetokounmpo will be eligible to receive a supermax contract

extension from the Bucks.

The Bucks reportedly plan to extend that offer as soon as they can after the 2019-20 season officially ends. There has been widespread speculation as to whether a player of Antetokounmpo's stature will be happy to remain in the small market of Milwaukee. He met with Bucks owners including Marc Lasry before heading to Greece and has indicated he'd be open to staying. Providing he's convinced the team is determined to invest the resources to pursue a title, Antetokounmpo said Friday, "I don't see why not to be in Milwaukee for the next 15 years." — AFP

Black gymnast says career derailed by racism in Brazil

SAO PAULO: Brazilian gymnast Angelo Assumpcao still wonders how far he could have gone if not for the decision he says derailed his career: speaking out against the racism he was subjected to by his white teammates. Could he have made the Olympics? Won a medal? At 24 years old, he may never get the chance to find out. "Some people think racism doesn't exist. I wonder where my career would be without it," he said.

Assumpcao's career was as short as it was promising. A muscular dynamo with an exuberant afro, he grew up on the outskirts of Sao Paulo, Brazil's economic capital, where he developed a love for gymnastics that soon landed him at the revered Pinheiros Sporting Club. Located in the upscale neighborhood from which it takes its name, Pinheiros is a veritable institution in Brazilian sport. Founded in 1899 - just 10 years after Brazil became the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery - it has trained some of the country's best athletes, including 12 Olympic medalists. Assumpcao came of age in its elite training academy, a lone black boy learning backflips and dismounts surrounded by white gymnasts.

'New sensation'

He got his big break in 2015, when he took the place of injured teammate Arthur Nory on the vault at the Gymnastics World Cup stage event in his hometown, Sao Paulo. Assumpcao won gold, upsetting Brazil's leading gymnast at the time, veteran Diego Hypolito, who won bronze. Globo Sports, part of Brazil's biggest media house, proclaimed Assumpcao "the new sensation" of Brazilian gymnastics.



SAO PAULO: Brazilian gymnast Angelo Assumpcao trains at his home on the outskirts of Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

tics. Days later, though, his celebration was cut short.

Nory put a video on social media in which he and two other young white gymnasts cracked racist jokes with a visibly uncomfortable Assumpcao. "When your cell phone's working, the screen is white. When it breaks, what color is it?" a snickering Nory asks in the video. "Black!" comes the answer. "The plastic bags at the supermarket are white. What color are garbage bags?"

The video went viral online, triggering outrage in Brazil, a country of 212 million people where 54 percent of the population is black or mixed race. The Brazilian Gymnastics Federation suspended the three white gymnasts for a month. They later apologized. But Assumpcao says it was not an isolated incident. He was regularly mocked for his skin color, hair and Afro-Brazilian heritage, he says. He pinpoints his decision to speak out against such behavior as the moment his career started to unravel. He was not selected for the 2016 Olympics, held in Brazil's second city, Rio de Janeiro. Hypolito and Nory were, taking home medals - silver and bronze, respectively, in the floor competition. — AFP

Djokovic, Nadal into last 8; Italian Open prepares for fans

ROME: World number one Novak Djokovic and defending champion Rafael Nadal welcomed the decision to allow a limited number of fans to watch the Italian Open as the top men's seeds advanced to the quarter-finals on Friday. Italy's government have said that 1,000 spectators can be present at the Foro Italico from Sunday's semi-finals, with matches so far being played in empty courts.

"If it's safe enough, fantastic," said Nadal after sweeping past Serb Dusan Lajovic 6-1, 6-3 in his third round match. Djokovic battled past fellow Serb Filip Krajnovic 7-6 (9/7), 6-3, to remain on a collision course for a final showdown with Nadal for a second consecutive year. "A thousand people is better than no people, for sure, because we all miss the fans," said Djokovic.

Men's fourth seed Matteo Berrettini, the only Italian remaining in the tournament, regretted he could not benefit from spectators for his quarter-final against Norway's Casper Rudd. "A thousand people isn't insignificant, it's a thousand motivations," said Berrettini. Nadal proved too strong for 25th-ranked Lajovic, who had valiantly but vainly launched a fightback after trailing 4-0 in the second set to the Spaniard. But Krajnovic made long-time friend Djokovic work hard to reach the quarter-finals for the 14th time, just one fewer than Nadal.

Djokovic double faulted on the first of his three set points in the first-set tiebreak but a quick break in the second put him through in a tournament he has won four times. "Never easy, I think, emotionally to play against someone that is one of my best friends for many years," said Djokovic. — AFP

News in brief

Toothless Lyon held by Nimes

PARIS: Lyon's slow start to the Ligue 1 season continued when they were held to a 0-0 draw at home by Nimes on Friday. Memphis Depay, who has been linked with a move to Barcelona, and Moussa Dembele were both in the Lyon starting line-up but neither figured strongly in a lackluster performance. "It was an awkward game," said midfielder Bruno Guimaraes. "We missed chances, some easy ones in particular. We need to work more because we can't lose points like that." The home side have not won since the opening round of games and looked a shadow of the side that reached the semi-finals of the Champions League and lost to Paris Saint-Germain in the French League Cup final in August. — AFP

Liverpool sign Thiago Alcantara

LONDON: Thiago Alcantara vowed to emulate his Bayern Munich success at Liverpool after the Spain midfielder joined the Premier League champions for a reported fee of £20 million (\$26 million) on Friday. The Spanish international agreed a "long-term contract" with Liverpool after deciding to end his seven-year stay with Bayern. The 29-year-old moves to Anfield after helping Bayern win the Bundesliga, the German Cup and Champions League last season. "I think it's an amazing feeling. I was waiting for this moment for a long time and I am very happy to be here," Thiago told Liverpool's website. — AFP

Green grabs share of lead

LOS ANGELES: Australia's Hannah Green launched her LPGA Portland Classic title defense with a six-under par 66, sharing the first-round lead with American Cydney Clanton. Green had seven birdies before her lone bogey of the day at the 18th, in fading light at Columbia Edgewater, where thunderstorms halted play for an hour and a half. The tournament has been reduced to 54 holes because of poor air quality due to wildfires. While Green was able to complete her round, more than a dozen other players were on the course when darkness fell, and will return to complete the first round on Saturday morning. "I missed quite a lot of greens compared to my score, so the only putt I really missed was the one on the last, so to say that is pretty good," Green said. "I'm super-happy that we finished and super-happy with my round." —AFP

Lebanese footballer dies

BEIRUT: A prominent Lebanese footballer has died of a bullet wound sustained last month during a funeral for one of the victims of the Beirut port blast, his club said Friday. Mohamed Atwi, 32, played as a midfielder for a number of Lebanese clubs and won the national league three times with Beirut's Ansar, his club for almost a decade. "A sad day for sport... a great loss for Lebanese football," Wael Chehayeb, an official with his latest club Al-Akhaa al-Ahly, posted on social media. Tributes poured in for the player, who was also capped three times for his country. Atwi was hit in the head by a bullet as he walked on a street in a Beirut neighborhood last month. Initial reports suggested he was struck by a falling bullet fired in the air from a nearby procession mourning one of the firefighters killed in the August 4 port explosion. — AFP

15 Black gymnast says 'career derailed' by racism in Brazil



15 Bucks' Antetokounmpo named NBA MVP for 2nd straight year



15 Heat burn Celtics again for 2-0 NBA series lead



Everton crush 10-man West Brom

Calvert-Lewin treble fires Everton; Leeds win thriller



LIVERPOOL: Everton's English striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin (center) heads the ball to score their fifth goal during the English Premier League football match between Everton and West Bromwich Albion at Goodison Park in Liverpool yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Dominic Calvert-Lewin hit a hat-trick as Everton crushed 10-man West Bromwich Albion 5-2, while Leeds earned their first Premier League win since 2004 with a 4-3 victory over Fulham yesterday. On the second weekend of the new campaign, Carlo Ancelotti's side fell behind to Grady Diangana's early goal at Goodison Park. But Calvert-Lewin equalised and James Rodriguez put Everton ahead with his first Premier League goal before Albion imploded.

Kieran Gibbs was dismissed for pushing James in the face in first half stoppage-time, a rash reaction that prompted him to issue a post-match apology taking "full responsibility" for his mistake. Then Albion boss Slaven Bilic was sent to the stands after storming onto the pitch for a furious rant at referee Mike Dean. Matheus Pereira equalised for Albion after the interval, but Michael Keane restored

Everton's lead and Calvert-Lewin sealed the points with his second and third goals.

At 23, Calvert-Lewin is the youngest Englishman to score a Premier League hat-trick for Everton. After a summer spending spree, Ancelotti is under pressure to deliver a big improvement on last season's 12th place finish and the early signs are promising. Having beaten Tottenham in their opening game last weekend, Everton have started a Premier League season with consecutive victories for the first time since 2012-13.

Calvert-Lewin already has four goals and Colombia midfielder James, making his first home appearance since his £12 million (\$15.5 million) from Real Madrid, looks a quality addition. "Of course today Dominic was the top scorer but also Richardson did really well, the combination in front was good," Ancelotti said. "They are supported by

James, who is doing really well. I'm satisfied in front, we have to do better at the back." If West Brom are to avoid an immediate return to the Championship, they will have to improve their defense rapidly after shipping eight goals in successive defeats.

Free-scoring Leeds

At Elland Road, promoted Leeds were involved in another eye-catching encounter in their first top-flight home match for 16 years. After losing 4-3 at champions Liverpool on the opening weekend, Helder Costa fired Marcelo Bielsa's free-scoring side ahead in the fifth minute, blasting home from a tight angle following Kalvin Phillips' corner.

Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic equalised from the penalty spot in the 35th minute after a foul on Joe Bryan. Bryan was penalized himself for his shove on Patrick Bamford and Mateusz Klich

restored Leeds' advantage with a 40th minute spot-kick. In the 51st minute, Klich's fine pass into the area carved Fulham's defense open and Patrick Bamford steered a right-footed finish into the bottom corner.

Leeds struck again six minutes later with a superb second goal for Costa, who slammed home following Bamford's superb run and cross. Fulham pulled one back in the 62nd minute through Bobby Decordova-Reid and Mitrovic's towering header four minutes later set up a tense finale, but the promoted Cottagers fell to a second successive defeat. Leeds' opening games have seen 14 goals, which is the most for a top-flight side's first two matches since Wolves in 1962-63. Later yesterday, Manchester United played their first game of the season against Crystal Palace before Arsenal hosted West Ham. — AFP

Bayern deliver message with 8-0 rout in opener

MUNICH: Bayern Munich delivered a message to the rest of the Bundesliga that the treble winners are in superb form, coach Hansi Flick said on Friday following an 8-0 demolition of Schalke 04 in their season opener. Bayern started their league campaign with a bang as they scored three times by the 31st minute to kill off the game with their stunning pace and deadly finishing. "It was superb from us. Before the game we wanted this to be a game that would define where we are at this stage and my players did it very well," Flick said. "We wanted to show that in this season again we are here."

The treble winners Bayern Munich crushed Schalke 04 with a hat-trick from Serge Gnabry and a superb debut from Leroy Sane on Friday as they made a sensational start to the new Bundesliga season and sent an ominous warning to potential

challengers. With the biggest opening win in Bundesliga history, Bayern showed they had lost none of sharpness that helped them to lift the Champions League trophy less than a month ago in dominant fashion.

Gnabry grabbed his first goal for the hosts with a fine turn and shot in the fourth minute in what turned out to be a one-sided affair that stretched Bayern's unbeaten run to 31 games this year, having now won the last 22 matches in a row. Schalke, without a league win in 17 consecutive matches since January, were helpless against Bayern's lightning-quick game and Leon Goretzka found plenty of space to drive a low shot past keeper Ralf Fachmann in the 19th minute. "You can see that the team was already strong last season," said Sane, who joined from Manchester City. "The team is still hungry despite winning the treble last season and to have such a start is outstanding."

Bayern finished their season in August when they added the Champions League to their Bundesliga and German Cup titles and then had only a short preparation for the new season. Last season's top scorer Robert Lewandowski found the net with a 31st-minute penalty to become the first player to score in 10 successive appearances against the same Bundesliga opponents. Gnabry then scored twice from Sane's assists in the 47th and 59th before Thomas Mueller made it half a dozen after Lewandowski set him up with an impressive rabona kick.

Sane then capped his superb Bayern debut with a fine finish from a counter attack in an empty Allianz Arena, after the city banned spectators due to rising coronavirus infection numbers in the region. A little later substitute Jamal Musiala drilled in goal number eight to become the youngest ever Bayern scorer in the league at 17 years old. The result piled more pressure on already-embattled Schalke coach David Wagner, who has been under intense scrutiny during their winless run this year. — Agencies

German team Ripdorf thrash opponents 37-0

BERLIN: German amateur side SG Ripdorf/Molzén II sacrificed a tight defense for social distancing as they fielded only seven players as a coronavirus precaution in a 37-0 loss to local rivals SV Holdstedt II. The preparations for the match in Lower Saxony's 3 Kreisklasse - the 11th tier of German football - were complicated when it emerged that Holdstedt players had been in contact with an opponent infected with COVID-19 in a previous match.

While all members of the Holdstedt squad later tested negative for the virus, Ripdorf, from Uelzen in Lower Saxony, did not feel the conditions were safe and were able to field only seven players - the minimum number required for a match. "We are thankful those seven players volunteered, otherwise the club would have faced a 200 euros (\$235.88) fine for abandoning the match," Ripdorf co-chair

Patrick Ristow told ESPN. "That's a lot of money for us, especially amid the pandemic." Holdstedt showed no mercy and scored a goal nearly every two minutes, while their opponents watched on from a safe distance.

"When the game kicked off, one of our players passed the ball to the opponent and our team walked to the sidelines," Ristow said. "The Holdstedt players did not understand. But we did not want to risk anything. For the rest of the match, our players returned to the field but they only stood on the pitch." The match result has since created a stir on social media but Ristow said Ripdorf only focused on what was best for the wellbeing of all the players on the pitch. "There is no perfect solution for it. And we went down this route," he added. "We wished Holdstedt no harm." — Reuters