



**8** Trump touts 'fantastic' TikTok deal with Walmart and Oracle



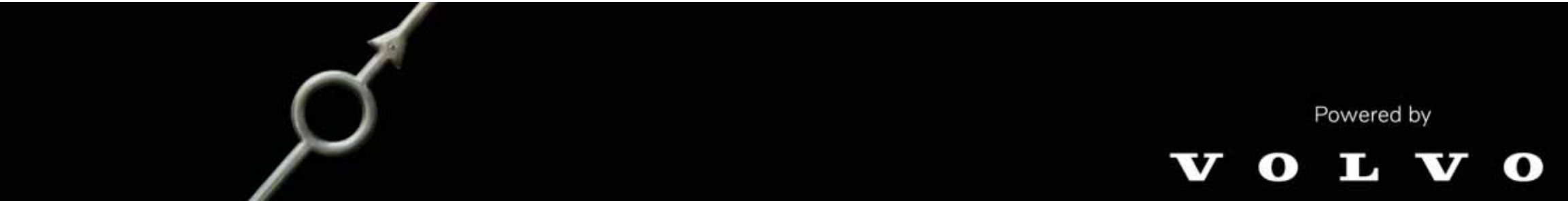
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# Government proposes hefty rise in traffic fines, penalties

## MPs question Trump's statement on normalizing ties with Israel

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The government has sent amendments to the traffic law to the National Assembly proposing massive increases to penalties and fines in a bid to curb traffic offenses that have been on the rise in recent years. The new law, which has to be reviewed and approved by the Assembly, proposes a three-month jail term and a fine of between KD 200 and 500 for a variety of offenses that include running the red light, reckless driving, racing, speeding, driving against traffic and using a mobile while driving.

The same applies to ferrying passengers in a private vehicle and driving a vehicle without a number plate. Fines in the existing law for most of these crimes do not exceed KD 50, and the fine for some violations is just KD 10.

The draft law also proposes a two-month jail term and a fine of between KD 100 and 200 for allowing a child under 10 years to sit in the front seat, driving with defective brakes, allowing people with no driving license to drive one's vehicle, causing damage during a traffic accident and not staying in lanes. It also proposes a one-month jail term and a fine of between KD 50 and KD 100 for using high-beam lights, stopping vehicles on highways, driving or parking on pavements, using loudspeakers and others.

The law will be reviewed by the next Assembly following general elections in late November, as the current term is expected to close this week. The Assembly is scheduled to hold its final sessions tomorrow and Wednesday to debate two grillings against the prime minister and discuss a number of legislations.

Meanwhile, a number of lawmakers called on the foreign ministry to issue a statement denying remarks made by US President Donald Trump claiming that Kuwait was likely to normalize ties with Israel soon. The remarks were made at the White House on Friday following a ceremony in which Trump awarded HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the prestigious Legion of Merit, a top US honor. The honor was received by Sheikh Nasser, the Amir's eldest son, as HH the Amir is receiving medical treatment in the United States.

In a question to Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, MP Mohammad Al-Dallal inquired about Trump's remarks, which contradict Kuwait's official position and parliamentary and popular positions, which reject the Israeli occupation and establishing ties with Israel. He also asked

if the government contacted the US administration to see why Trump made such remarks and if the Kuwaiti government has denied the country's intention to normalize ties with Israel.

Dallal also asked if the Kuwaiti delegation which received the award discussed the issue of normalization with US officials and why the foreign ministry has not issued any statement regarding Trump's remarks, which apparently aim at involving Kuwait in the normalization issue.

Also yesterday, MP Osama Al-Shaheen said he and MP Dallal submitted a proposal calling to expand voting timing beyond the normal 12 hours because of the coronavirus crisis. Ballots in Kuwait open at 8 am and close at 8 pm. The proposal also calls for allocating four schools in each committee instead of two, and also to allow candidates to explain their election programs on state TV.

### News in brief

#### India infections surge

**MUMBAI:** India's coronavirus case tally surged to 5.4 million as it added 92,605 new infections in the last 24 hours, data from the federal health ministry showed yesterday. The country has posted the highest single-day caseload in the world since early August, and lags behind only the US, which has 6.7 million cases in terms of total infections. A total of 1,113 people died of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said, taking mortalities to 86,752. — Reuters

#### Houthi attack wounds 5

**RIYADH:** A projectile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels hit a village in Saudi Arabia's southern Jizan province, wounding five civilians, state media reported. The civilians were rushed to hospital after suffering "minor injuries" from flying shrapnel, the official Saudi Press Agency reported late Saturday. Three cars were also damaged in the border village, it said, without naming the village. — AFP



A handout picture shows one of 14 2,500-year-old coffins discovered in a burial shaft. — AFP

#### Egypt discovers 14 tombs

**CAIRO:** Egypt's antiquities ministry announced yesterday the discovery of 14 coffins in the Saqqara area that had lain buried for two and a half thousand years. The tombs were found two days ago during an archaeological dig, and follow 13 wooden sarcophagus discovered in the same burial spot last week, the ministry said in a statement. — AFP

#### Trump to name woman

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he would nominate a woman to succeed late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. "I think it's going to move quickly actually," Trump told reporters outside the White House Saturday, adding that he thought his choice would be made "next week". — AFP

## US defies world to say Iran UN sanctions back

**TEHRAN:** Iran said yesterday its arch-foe the United States is facing "maximum isolation" after major powers dismissed a unilateral US declaration that UN sanctions on Tehran were back in force. The Trump administration said the sanctions had been re-activated under the "snapback" mechanism in a landmark 2015 nuclear treaty - despite Washington having withdrawn from the deal.

As other signatories cast doubt on the move having any legal effect, Washington threatened to "impose consequences" on states failing to comply. But Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said a concerted campaign by Washington to pressure Tehran had backfired. "We can say that America's 'maximum pressure' against Iran, in its political and legal aspect, has turned into America's maximum isolation," he said in a televised cabinet meeting.

He also praised the UN Security Council's approach to the issue as "very valuable" as it

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TEHRAN: A woman walks past a mural painted on the walls of the former US embassy in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

## Mask, visor rules make Philippine commuters sweat

**MANILA:** In the sweltering heat and humidity, 31-year-old Caitlyn Tojanos grumbles about having to wear a face shield over her mask as she waits in line for her bus in the Philippine capital Manila. "It's

uncomfortable. Combined with the long queues it means we get to work already tired and bathed in sweat," said Tojanos, whose commute involves three buses and takes several hours.

But she is resigned to the new normal in the Philippines, where it is now compulsory to wear both masks and plastic shields in indoor public spaces and on public transport to curb the spread of the coronavirus. "With COVID, it's up to the people to maintain discipline," said Tojanos, who works as a store manager in the sprawling capital of 12 million where most of the country's infections have been recorded.

"People should not put the entire burden on the government. We must practice self-discipline."

Some measures have been eased to help kick-start the devastated economy. "It's a big adjustment having to wear a mask and a face shield and having to wash your hands with alcohol each time you touch something," said Jeff Langurayan, 31, his voice slightly muffled by the layers of material and plastic over his face. But he accepts the need for precautions. "A lot of people have died and you do not know what will hit you and what effect it would have on your body." — AFP

## How Tehran transformed post-war Iraq

**BAGHDAD:** In the four decades since Iran and Iraq went to war, Tehran has turned enmity into influence, seeing its allies installed in Baghdad's halls of power and becoming its top trading partner. It's a turn of events Aziz Jaber, a political science professor at Baghdad's Mustansariyah University and a survivor of the conflict, never thought possible. "It would have been hard to imagine at the time that this would happen - that the parties linked to Iran would now hold the reins," Jaber told AFP.

Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Iran on Sept 22, 1980, fearing the threat to his rule if Tehran's new clerical rulers tried to replicate their 1979 Islamic Revolution in neighboring Iraq. Throughout the war, Iran offered safe haven to a range of anti-Saddam groups, from Kurdish figures to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and its military wing, the Badr Corps - both founded in Iran in 1982.

It nurtured those contacts up to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 - meaning it had closer, older ties than Washington did to Saddam's successors. In the 17 years since, Iran's ancient allies have cycled through Iraq's corridors of power. Of Iraq's six post-invasion prime ministers, three spent much of the 1980s in Tehran, including

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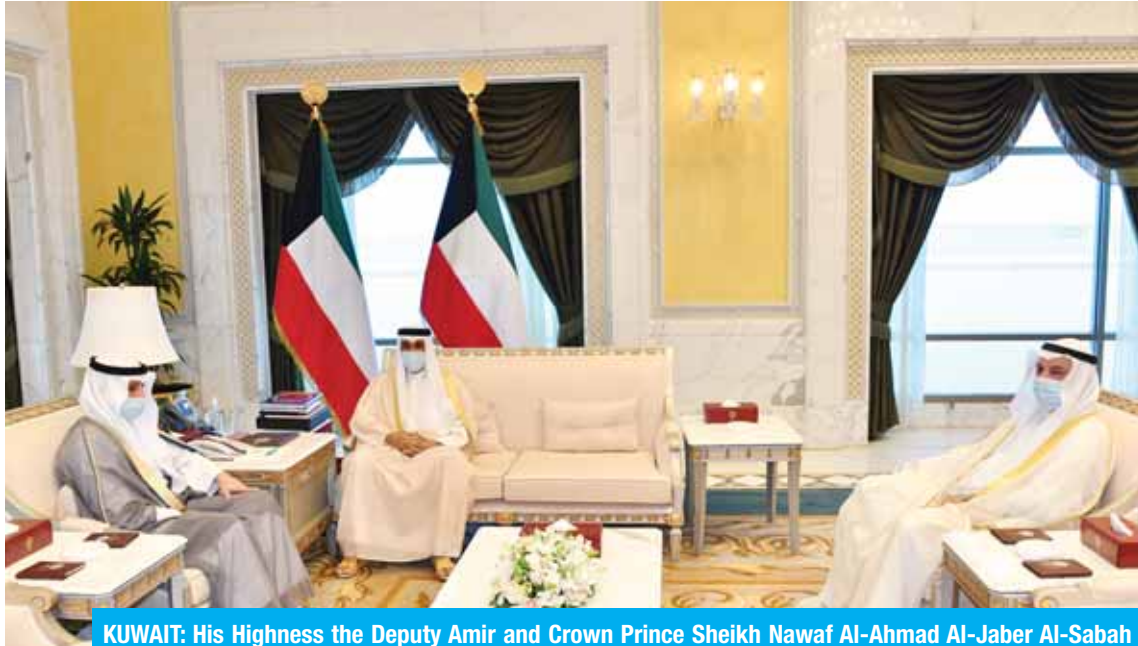
AHVAZ, Iran: In this file photo taken on Jan 22, 1987, an Iranian soldier guards Iraqi prisoners of war who were captured in the two-week-old Karbala-5 offensive. — AFP



## Local

# US honoring source of pride for honorable Kuwaiti people: Amir

## Sheikh Sabah thanks Sheikh Nawaf for warm sentiments



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and State Audit Bureau President Faisal Al-Shaya. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of gratitude on Saturday in response to His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In the cable, His Highness the Amir said he had received “with appreciation” the congratulations, extended by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince, on the occasion of him being awarded the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander by US President Donald Trump. His Highness the Amir went on to express his “deep gratitude” for the warm sentiments and sincere

wishes. This high-level honor is a “source of pride for us and the honorable Kuwaiti people,” he added. “It represents the depth of historical ties and the strategic partnership that binds the State of Kuwait and the friendly nation of the United States of America,” read the message, expressing His Highness the Amir’s appreciation for this “distinguished decoration.”

In other news, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness also

received State Audit Bureau President Faisal Al-Shaya. Furthermore, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In addition, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. Also yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister received the State Audit Bureau chief at Seif Palace. — KUNA



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with State Audit Bureau President Faisal Al-Shaya.

## Zain takes part in biggest national cleanup campaign



KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan speaks with Head of Al-Nowair Initiative Sheikhha Intisar Al-Sabah and US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, recently took part in Al-Nowair’s ‘Let’s Do it Kuwait’ campaign, which coincided with World Cleanup Day on September 19, 2020 with the participation of nearly 5,000 volunteers. The event, considered the biggest national cleanup campaign in the history of Kuwait, witnessed the presence of Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, along with many public and private sector officials, diplomats, and representatives of global organizations. The event also featured the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Health, Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs, and the Environment Public Authority.

Zain’s participation in this national campaign, considered the biggest of its kind, came as part of its

extended partnership with Al-Nowair, the non-profit initiative that aims at bringing positive, social behavioral change in Kuwait. The partnership falls under Zain’s Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, through which the company is keen on supporting such innovative initiatives that contribute to reflecting a positive image of the Kuwaiti society.

‘Let’s Do it Kuwait,’ organized by Al-Nowair in line with World Cleanup Day, mainly aimed at promoting and enriching the importance of preserving the environment and keeping Kuwait clean. The campaign featured the participation of nearly 5000 volunteers, including many ministers, undersecretaries, public and private sector leaders, representatives of global



Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan with Kuwait Army officials during the campaign.

organizations, ambassadors, and more. The event also featured the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Health, Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs, and the Environment Public Authority. The campaign covered a large and diverse geographic area, including Al-Khowaisat beach at Al-Jahra, and witnessed high levels of commitment and implementation of official health guidelines to protect participants from COVID-19.

Zain’s extended partnership with Al-Nowair, a non-profit initiative that aims at bringing positive, social behavioral change in Kuwait all year round, comes to affirm the company’s extreme keenness in supporting such national efforts that aim at promoting positive change and spreading values within members of the society.

Al-Nowair is an initiative driven to spread positive attitudes and happiness within all age groups and all sectors of the community through the organization of events, activities, and campaigns all year round. Al-Nowair’s efforts are centered around encouraging a more positive lifestyle and creating positive environments that drive positive change, ultimately imprinting a positive impact within participants.

Zain believes in the development of the communities in which it operates, and it is a very important part of its overall success. The company considers the preservation of the environment a core element in its commitment towards the nation, and will continue to support this cause to contribute to the further progress of the country.

## US defies world to say Iran UN...

Continued from Page 1

ignored “America’s request (and) held no session to consider their request”. The Security Council was what “the Americans always thought of as their point of strength,” he said.

The sanctions in question had been lifted when Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Britain, China, France, Russia and the US) and Germany signed the 2015 treaty on Iran’s nuclear program, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

But US President Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, saying the deal - negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama - was insufficient. He also renewed and even strengthened Washington’s own sanctions as part of a “maximum pressure” campaign against the Islamic republic.

The US insists it is still a participant in the agreement that it stormed out of - but only so it can activate the snapback option, which it announced on Aug 20. Virtually every other Security Council member disputes Washington’s ability to execute this legal ploy, and the UN body has not taken the measure any further.

Yesterday, France, Germany and Britain issued a joint statement saying Washington’s “purported notification” was “incapable of having any legal effect”. Russia also said the US lacked legal authority and that its “illegitimate initiative and actions” could not have “international legal consequences” for others.

Rouhani thanked UNSC members who had “stood against America’s illegal request” and said that if remaining signatories let Iran access the deal’s economic benefits, Iran would reinstate nuclear commitments it had dropped in response to the US withdrawal. Iran’s foreign ministry brushed off the move and called on the rest of the world to unite against what it called the US’s “reckless actions”. “I imagine these are the most bitter days and hours for” the United States, said spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh. — AFP

## How Tehran transformed...

Continued from Page 1

Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Nuri Al-Maliki and Adel Abdel Mahdi, who resigned last year.

Badr Corps officials still hold top positions in the security forces. Masrour and Nechirvan Barzani, whose families sought refuge from Saddam in Iran, are now respectively the prime minister and president of Iraq’s Kurdish region. “Iran has cunning politicians,” Jaber said. “It did not develop proxies solely for the purpose of war - it has benefitted from them since they came to power until today.”

In Iran, too, the war remains a powerful symbol: medics battling the novel coronavirus this year are likened to “martyrs” who lost their lives fighting Saddam’s forces. The annual parade honoring the war’s victims is often used to showcase new weapons includ-

ing ballistic missiles, while veterans now occupy top military posts in Tehran.

The relationship goes far beyond politics. While there was no bilateral trade under Saddam, Iranian goods were smuggled into Iraq through the porous 1,600-km border during the 1990s, when Baghdad faced crippling sanctions. Following Saddam’s toppling, normal trade could begin, said Eslamdar Batmanghelidj of Bourse & Bazaar, a news and analysis website supporting business diplomacy with Iran. “It’s the natural order of affairs for two countries that border one another to engage in commerce. You can make a similar argument about Poland and Germany after the horrors of World War II,” he told AFP.

As Iraq sought to rebuild following the US-led invasion, cheap construction materials from Iran were an appealing choice. That trade expanded to include food, cars, medicine and now, even electricity imports. From apricots to painkillers, Iranian goods are sold across Iraq, at lower prices than domestic products. Iraq is the top destination for Iran’s non-hydrocarbon goods, worth \$9 billion between March 2019 and March 2020, according to Iran’s chamber of commerce. — AFP



## Local

# Boursa Kuwait partners with Dive Team to preserve Kuwait Bay

## Boursa Boat exclusive boat for all Kuwait Dive Team operations in Kuwait Bay

**KUWAIT:** Reinforcing its commitment to creating a meaningful impact on the environment and the communities it serves, Boursa Kuwait has entered into a strategic partnership with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team and its efforts to clean up the Kuwait Bay, considered one of the richest, most diverse marine ecosystems in the world.

The Kuwait Bay is an important source of nutrients and sediment to the upper part of the Arabian Gulf and supports a thriving fishing industry with more than 500 metric tons of sea bream production each year from more than 80 net-pen cages. The Bay is also one of the main contributors to the Kuwaiti economy and one of the world's biggest fish habitats.

As part of its corporate social responsibility and overarching corporate sustainability (CS) strategy, Boursa Kuwait is proud to partner with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team in reviving one of the world's most diverse marine environments.

Boursa Kuwait was on hand to support the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team on World Cleanup Day, a UN sponsored initiative to clean up the world's seas and surrounding beaches, with over 180 countries and over 21 million volunteers participating in 2019. The initiative was celebrated this year on September 19 and is one of several initiatives to draw attention to litter solutions, partnering with multiple organizations worldwide. The event also marked the maiden voyage of the Boursa Boat, which was dedicated to the Kuwait Dive Team to help preserve Kuwait's marine life and environment.



### Protecting the marine environment

The Boursa Boat will be the exclusive boat for all operations of Kuwait Dive Team in the Kuwait Bay area and is equipped with special equipment to remove wrecked sea vessels, abandoned fishing nets and other marine debris; install and maintain environmentally friendly anchors; monitor coral reefs; clean shores, islands and beaches; as well as document marine life.

#### Valuable resource

Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi, Marketing and Communication Director at Boursa Kuwait, said: "Boursa Kuwait is proud to join the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team in their many initiatives and activities to clean up and preserve the marine environment of Kuwait Bay, which is one of the main drivers of the national economy and a valuable resource to Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf."

Sanousi added, "Boursa Kuwait is committed to promoting the adoption of socially impactful and accountable practices in surrounding communities, and this initiative is in line with our directive to raise awareness in Kuwait and the surrounding communities on the best practices to raise awareness to issues of financial literacy and social responsibility as well as adopting effective practices to increase awareness, reduce harm and preserve the environment."

"The Kuwait Bay is one of the richest, most diverse ecosystems in the Gulf. The Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team is committed to the preservation of the Bay and the marine creatures living in its coasts and waters. Since 1986, the Kuwait Dive Team has been participating in the



protection and rehabilitation of Kuwait's aquatic world through a host of activities including the documentation and protection of coral reefs, beach clean ups, establishing colonies of fish, as well as underwater ship retrieval. We thank Boursa Kuwait for their partnership in support of our many activities to make sure that the Bay and surrounding islands are kept clean and able to sustain such diverse marine life," said Waleed Abdulrahman Al-Shatti, Vice President, Kuwait Dive Team.

With a view to creating long-term value for the company's stakeholders in the economic, social and environmental dimensions and ensuring that all cor-

porate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are aligned with its sustainability objectives, Boursa Kuwait has put in place a three-phased strategy to align, create and integrate.

This strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact.

## Kuwait reports 385 COVID-19 cases, 3 deaths

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's confirmed novel coronavirus cases increased by 385 to 99,434, with three people having succumbed to the disease in the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 584, 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, 105 cases were reported in Hawally, 95 in Al-Ahmadi, 70 in Jahra, 64 in the Capital and 51 in Farwaniya, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad added. There are 98 people currently receiving intensive care for the virus out of a total 8,682 patients being hospitalized. Some 2,263 swab tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 707,292 so far, added the spokesman. Earlier, the ministry said 670 people have recovered from the virus, upping the total number of those to have overcome the disease to 90,168. — KUNA

## 2,000 American workers stuck in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Two thousand Americans are stuck in Kuwait since March after arriving on tourist visas to work for a trial period at US military bases, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported. They were to be transferred to work contracts after a 90-day probation period. Informed sources said the coronavirus pandemic made them unable to leave Kuwait and return on business or work visas because all types of visas in Kuwait remain suspended. Sources said the mechanism of the arrival of such workers was through tourist visas, which is easier for them to work under probation, and if they are approved, they leave for Bahrain or Dubai to return with transferable visas to work.

They said companies responsible for employing them wrote to the US Embassy in Kuwait and the US State Department in Washington to explain the problem, because this group of people must leave by November and will not be able to return under the health procedures related to fighting the spread of COVID-19. The correspondence sent to the American side called for negotiations with officials in Kuwait to obtain an exemption with regards to transferring them to the workforce instead of letting them go while they are needed for current projects. As for those who had commercial visas, they were being processed last week to get approvals to transfer to work visas and start working at the bases.

## COVID-19 hampers bills' collection

**KUWAIT:** The coronavirus crisis had an effect on the collections of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, as the total amount collected since January until September is KD 96 million, compared to over KD 300 million last year, despite an increase in consumption by 25 percent this year, because most citizens and expats remained in the country this summer. There are many reasons behind the drop in collections, including leniency by the ministry in collecting its dues regularly, especially from those with large bills after the ministry stopped the cutting of water supplies on the instructions of acting electricity and water minister Khaled Al-Fadhel, Al-Rai reported yesterday, quoting sources.

## Several injured in massive Mubarak Hospital brawl

**KUWAIT:** A huge fight broke out at Mubarak Hospital where 26 young men including Kuwaitis, Jordanians and Syrians fought using knives and surgical scissors. Many of them sustained medium and serious injuries before security forces and medical staff controlled the fight. Police arrested 21 of those involved, while a search is on for five others. Case papers indicate that the fight started between two groups in a Hawally governorate area, where two Kuwaitis, a Jordanian and three Syrians were injured and taken to hospital by friends. However, 20 opponents attacked them, starting a fierce fight. The sources added that some of the attackers had knives they used in stabbing their rivals, while others grabbed scissors from the nursing room before a Kuwaiti collapsed in a pool of blood. On arriving at the scene, policemen immediately arrested 15 of the attacker's friends, while five, including the attacker, managed to flee the scene. A case was filed and a search is on for the suspects.

#### Meth 'factory'

An Egyptian chemist and an Indian cook were arrested for manufacturing and trading in methamphetamine, said security sources. Case papers indicate that narcotics detectives were tipped off concerning the Egyptian's activity of selling large quantities of meth to specific customers. On raiding his flat in Salmiya, detectives found a 'factory' equipped with high-tech tools to manufacture meth, the female Indian technician and the imported material they used in manufacturing the drug. The sources added that this was the largest drug lab ever busted in Kuwait.

#### Fatal crash

Two men died of severe burns in a mini-truck accident that happened when the driver lost control and it collided into a lamppost along King Fahd highway. The truck immediately burst into flames.

Meanwhile, a Gulf national was killed and a Kuwaiti was injured in a collision along Salmi highway, said security sources, noting that on arriving at the crash scene, paramedics found the dead body of the Gulf national trapped in the wreckage. The Kuwaiti had sustained various injuries and was rushed to hospital for treatment. Separately, a construction worker was instantly killed after he fell from an under-construction commercial complex in Jahra.

#### Three accidents

Three simultaneous car accidents created considerable congestions along the fifth and sixth ring roads and Ghazali expressway, said security sources. The sources explained that a person was slightly injured in a collision along the fifth ring road, a vehicle turned over along the sixth ring road and a truck broke down on Ghazali highway. The three accidents created considerable traffic congestions before traffic police managed to clear the situations.

#### Policemen hurt

Police arrested a Kuwaiti man, who was acting strangely, after he attacked a police captain and corporal and injured them both, said security sources. Case papers indicate that the owner of a car rental firm in Ardiya called the police requesting help in dealing with a customer. On arriving at the scene, the suspect refused boarding the police patrol car and resisted arrest. He then assaulted the policemen before he was eventually controlled and arrested. Separately, an employee working for Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality filed a complaint against a Kuwaiti man, accusing him of insulting a public servant while on duty when he refused to let him file a citation to a Bangladeshi man helping him run a cabriolet that provided children with rented tours in a residential area.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

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## Local

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## Azeri ambassador congratulates Amir

**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait Elkhan Gahraman congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on being awarded the US Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander by US President Donald Trump. "It is an honor for me to sincerely congratulate His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on being awarded the prestigious decoration 'Legion of Merit' of the United States for his leading regional and global diplomatic efforts," Ambassador Gahraman said in a statement. "Taking this noble opportunity, I wish him speedy recovery and return to his homeland."



Elkhan Gahraman

"His Highness the Amir has a great contribution to the development of relations between our countries, and therefore he was awarded in 2009 the highest state award of the Republic of Azerbaijan 'the Heydar Aliyev Order,'" the envoy added. "I wish that the threat of COVID-19 disappears soon from the whole world, borders are opened and the relations of friendship and cooperation between Azerbaijan and Kuwait are further advanced for the benefit of our peoples."

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** A fisherman cleans the water from trash and dead fish at the Shamlian Harbor in Sharq yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Gulf Bank employees participate in Kuwait's largest cleanup campaign

**KUWAIT:** In celebration of World Cleanup Day yesterday, Gulf Bank employees participated in the largest campaign in Kuwait to clean public places, as part of the bank's various efforts throughout the year to preserve environmental sustainability. A group of Gulf Bank employees took part in the cleanup, as part of the collaborators group from multiple public and private sector institutions in the country.

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

Commenting on the initiative, Gulf Bank's

General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "This campaign was an excellent opportunity to collectively engage in positive social behavior towards the environment. It was a call to action and a much-needed clean up initiative which, we as a bank, were happy to take part in and make a difference."

Hajjaj added, "I would like to thank all the Gulf Bank employees who volunteered their time and efforts to take part in World Cleanup Day, and I encourage all our colleagues to maintain these efforts so we can continue to preserve Kuwait's environment."

Al-Nowair is a non-profit initiative founded in 2013 by Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, and is the first initiative of its kind in the region. Dedicated to promoting a positive attitude in Kuwait, Al-Nowair was



Salma Al-Hajjaj



born out of scientific research and the founder's personal experience that a positive attitude is the most important contributor to a community's overall wellbeing and happiness. Al-Nowair's work is rooted in research in positive psychology and aims to bring about positive social behavioral change in Kuwait, and has also been recognized by the United Nations Development Program.

## Foreign Minister meets Ghana envoy

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah commended yesterday Ambassador of Ghana to Kuwait Alhaji Ahmad Rufai Yahaya Iddi for his contributions to promoting bilateral relations. Sheikh Dr Ahmad made the remarks during a meeting with Iddi to mark the end of his tenure in Kuwait, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's office Saleh Al-Loughani. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Ghana to Kuwait Alhaji Ahmad Rufai Yahaya Iddi. —KUNA

## AOU partners with Huawei to provide ICT training courses

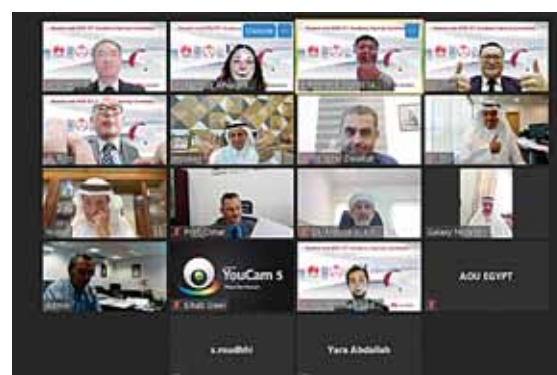
**KUWAIT:** Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Arab Open University to deliver training and certification programs to the university's students via Huawei Authorized Information and Network Academy program (HAINA).

Present at the signing of the MoU was Zhaoliang (Liam), President of Huawei Gulf North Region and Rico Lin, Huawei Kuwait CEO, and on behalf of Arab Open University, Prof Mohammad Al-Zakari, President of Arab Open University, and Dr Yousef Al-Ebraheem, advisor of Economic Affairs at the Amiri Diwan, AOU Board of Trustees Member.

Through this partnership, Arab Open University and Huawei will cooperatively work together to offer students Huawei ICT Academy training and certification programs through the HAINA initiative that meet the local students' requirements and further help to build the ICT capacity and talent in Kuwait by upskilling local talent. Additionally, Huawei will provide Huawei Certification Academy Instructor (HCAI) training for the university's professional instructors for each course direction.

The University will provide classroom and other teaching facilities to accommodate Huawei ICT equipment for the program, and will also embed the HAINA certification courses in its curriculum, liaise with local networking industry to deliver the training programs across a wider outreach of population in the ICT industry within Kuwait. Both parties will monitor the HAINA program and offer suggestions for continuous improvement, explore opportunities for alliances, and seek to address the ICT skills requirements within the Qatar ICT landscape.

Zhaoliang (Liam), President of Huawei Gulf North Region, said: "Huawei is committed to building local talents, the future leaders of Kuwait, which will help to



strengthen the country's ICT ecosystem, in turn contributing towards the country's ambitions to build its digital economy and drive national digitization. The Huawei ICT Academy is a successful format that is deployed around the world, providing world-class education in the most relevant ICT fields. We are very pleased to work with Arab Open University to offer our training programs in Kuwait."

Prof Mohammad Al-Zakari, President of Arab Open University, said: "The Arab Open University was founded on the idea that every talent being in the Arab world has the right and capability to contribute to the national development in their country. The ICT sector is now more important than ever before to develop the smart evolution of countries and contribute to the growth of their economies. Working with Huawei to provide essential training in this field will enable our students to learn critical skills that will enable them to contribute towards digitization initiatives throughout the region."

Arab Open University and Huawei will work cooperatively to monitor the HAINA program and offer suggestions for continuous improvement. They will also continue to explore other opportunities for alliances between the two organizations in order to address the ICT skills requirements within Kuwait and further have positive impact in shaping the future of Kuwait Leaders. Both parties will monitor the HAINA program and offer suggestions for continuous improvement, explore opportunities for alliances, and seek to address the ICT skills requirements within the Qatar ICT landscape.

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Thailand protesters challenge monarchy as protests escalate

## Impunity robs Romania trafficking victims of justice



ANKARA: People wear their protective face masks while walking along a street in Ankara, as Turkey reported 1,648 new confirmed cases of the new coronavirus the highest daily jump in more than a month. — AFP

# COVID cases pit doctors against politicians

## Turkey experiencing surge in new COVID-19 cases

ISTANBUL: Resurgent coronavirus cases in Turkey are fuelling tensions between doctors who say the official figures underplay the scale of the outbreak and politicians who accuse the country's medical association of undermining efforts to contain it. More than 1,600 new cases and 60 deaths from COVID-19 are now reported daily, well off peak levels in April but rising steadily, with average numbers of deaths now three times the rates recorded between June and August.

Doctors across Turkey wore black ribbons this week to commemorate colleagues who have died, part of protests which also included a social media campaign with a message for the government: "You can't manage it; we are exhausted". Many doctors question the official COVID-19 numbers, saying that although they don't have their own independent nationwide data, the scale of cases they see at a local level does not tally with the big-

ger picture presented by the government.

"The numbers of just one city, or the numbers unveiled by just one or two medical chambers are



**Erdogan's ally accuses association of treason**

almost equal to the (official) numbers for the whole country," doctor Halis Yerlikaya told Reuters at a hospital in the southeastern province

of Diyarbakir. "This process is not handled transparently," said Yerlikaya, who is a member of the medics association's central committee. Wearing a black ribbon on his white medical coat, he said doctors wanted to highlight the challenges and risks they faced. "We have tried to convey the voice of our colleagues who caught COVID-19, who are fighting for their lives in hospitals... Therefore we kicked off these protests."

### Rebuke

The doctors' campaign prompted a blunt rebuke from President Tayyip Erdogan's parliamentary ally, who accused them of treachery and called for the medics association to be shut down. "The Turkish Medics Association is as dangerous as coronavirus and is disseminating threats," tweeted Devlet Bahçeli of the Nationalist Movement Party, whose alliance with Erdogan's

AK Party sustains the president's parliamentary majority. "The Medics Association which carries the word 'Turkish' in its name should immediately and without delay be shut down."

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca has dismissed the association's criticism of COVID-19 data, saying he has repeatedly highlighted the threat posed by the growing numbers and has not played down the challenges facing hospitals. "I say the situation is troublesome. I say the number of critical cases rose 100% compared to last month," he told journalists on Wednesday. "I unveiled the number of deaths which is 4.5 times more than last month. "But there is absolutely no mistake in the chart that we have released ... in terms of the burden on healthcare." The country of around 83 million people has so far reported about 300,000 cases of COVID-19, with nearly 7,400 deaths. — Reuters

## \$13,000 fine for breaking COVID rules in England

LONDON: People in England who refuse to self-isolate to stop the spread of coronavirus could face fines of up to £10,000 (\$13,000, 11,000 euros) under tough new regulations announced Saturday to tackle a surge in cases. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said this week that Britain was seeing a second wave of Covid-19, and introduced new restrictions for millions of people across northwest, northern and central England.

In a further measure announced late Saturday, he said that from September 28 people will be legally obliged to self-isolate if they test positive or are told to by the National Health Service (NHS) tracing program. "The best way we can fight this virus is by everyone following the rules and self-isolating if they're at risk of passing on coronavirus," Johnson said in a statement. "And so nobody underestimates just how important this is, new regulations will mean you are legally obliged to do so if you have the virus or have been asked to do so by NHS Test and Trace."

Currently people who have symptoms or test positive are asked to self-isolate for 10 days. Those who live with someone who either has symptoms or tests positive must self-isolate for 14 days. The new fines will start at £1,000 - in line with breaking quarantine after international travel - and rise to £10,000 for repeat offences and the worst breaches, including businesses that threaten self-isolating staff with redundancy, officials said. In an



LONDON: Demonstrators at an anti-vax rally protest against vaccination and government restrictions designed to control or mitigate the spread of coronavirus, including the wearing of masks and lockdowns, clash with police officers on September 19, 2020. — AFP

incentive to get people to comply, those on low incomes will be able to claim an extra lump sum of £500 if they are unable to work from home during their isolation.

"While most people are doing their absolute level best to comply with the rules, I don't want to see a situation where people don't feel they are financially able to self-isolate," Johnson said. Almost 42,000 people who have tested positive for Covid-19 have died in Britain, the worst death toll from the pandemic in Europe. After a summer lull, cases are rising rapidly again and Johnson warned on Friday of a second wave. "We are seeing it in France, in

Spain, across Europe - it has been absolutely, I'm afraid, inevitable we were going to see it in this country," he said.

New rules limiting social gatherings to six people from different households came into effect this week, and local measures have been introduced across the country. But Johnson has expressed his reluctance to introduce another nationwide lockdown and some of his Conservative lawmakers are increasingly vocal in condemning current restrictions. In London on Saturday, anti-vaccine and anti-lockdown protesters clashed with police in Trafalgar Square. Police said 32 people were arrested. — AFP

## Destructive storm hits central Greece

ATHENS: Two people have died as a hurricane-like storm pounded central Greece, flooding streets and homes, the authorities said. Cyclone Ianos, known as a medicane (Mediterranean hurricane), uprooted trees and caused power cuts on the Ionian islands and the western Peloponnese. It swept through central Greece, hitting areas in and around the cities of Karditsa and Farsala.

The body of an elderly woman was found in a flooded house in a village near Farsala, while a 63-year-old man was found dead in Karditsa, fire brigade officials said. The search is continuing for two other people who have been reported missing, the officials added. "We're dealing with a total catastrophe," Nikolaos Gousios, a resident at Farsala, told state TV.

The heavy rainfall turned Karditsa, in one of Greece's biggest plains, into a lake. Video footage showed flooded highways and agricultural land turned into mud lakes and farmers carrying their sheep to rescue. Reuters images captured an overflowing river flooding its banks and damaging roads. A medical centre in the town of Mouzaki partially collapsed. Train connections between Athens and the northern city of Thessaloniki were suspended.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said the government will provide economic relief to the affected areas. "Saving human lives is our priority," he said. The fire brigade said it had received more than 2,450 calls for assistance to rescue trapped people, cut down trees, and pump out water from homes and stores. On Saturday, the storm reached the greater Athens region, Attica. There were no reports of damage. Cyclones were first recorded in Greece in 1995 and have become more frequent in recent years. Flash floods in 2017 killed 25 people and left hundreds homeless. —Reuters



KARDITSA: Residents clear mud from a road after the floods caused by the Mediterranean hurricane (Medicane) Ianos in Karditsa, central Greece. — AFP



## International

# ‘We got this’: American left galvanized by death of RBG

## Thousands gather outside Supreme Court to honor late justice

**WASHINGTON:** The death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg sounded a warning for American progressives, thousands of whom-wracked with ever-deepening concern for the future-gathered Saturday outside the Supreme Court in Washington to honor the late justice. As evening fell with a sudden September chill, a constant stream of families and young people gathered for a second night-just 45 days from the US presidential election-to pay homage to the progressive icon, affectionately referred to as “RBG.”

“Ruth, I didn’t know you, but you affected my life in many ways,” says one of many letters placed at the foot of the court building, among flowers, rainbow flags and Ginsburg bobblehead figurines. A choir gave a concert, singing John Lennon’s “Imagine” among other songs, as mourners lit candles and organizations representing liberal causes such as Black Lives Matter, gun reform and pro-choice groups handed out shirts, signs and stickers.

“This marks a seismic shift in the course for justice for our generation and will have a permanent effect on the history of what Generation Z does,” gun reform activist David Hogg, who survived the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in 2018 said. Earlier, among the anonymous mourners,

Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris wended her way discreetly to the front of the crowd. “RBG was one of my pioneers, an icon, a fighter. She was a woman in every way,” she told AFP, shielding herself from the crisp September day with a black hooded sweatshirt.

Harris’s running mate and President Donald Trump’s opponent, Joe Biden, has failed to drum up great enthusiasm among progressive voters, due to his centrist views and advanced age – 77.

“

This fight has just begun

”

But Ginsburg’s death, in an America already on edge, could well galvanize them to his side. Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren addressed mourners from a podium, telling them: “This fight has just begun.” Wearing a rainbow headband, J Ford Huffman, a gay man in his 70s, urged Democratic voters to “use the mourning period to energize

ourselves” and make sure everyone votes on November 3.

The challenge will be to prevent the doyenne of the Supreme Court from being replaced with her ideological opposite, since Trump has pre-selected very conservative candidates. Ginsburg made her name in the 1970s by bringing down a series of laws that discriminated against women. Nominated to the country’s highest court in 1993, she spent her 27-year tenure there defending the rights of the LGBT community and immigrants, establishing herself unequivocally as a champion of the American left.

### ‘Vulnerable’

“Thank you for teaching us how to fight,” Gina Eppolito wrote in chalk on the pavement outside the imposing white marble building in the US capital, a city known for its progressivism. The mother of two 11-year-olds, Eppolito said it was a “very big concern” of hers that rights acquired during her generation-particularly the right to abortion-might not be passed on to her children. With Ginsburg’s death at age 87, the US Supreme Court could fall into the conservative camp for a long time.

“We are in an extremely vulnerable position,” Eppolito said. Pam Crescenzo, 60, couldn’t hold back tears as she spoke: “If the courts continue to tilt to the right,



**WASHINGTON:** People hold signs as they pay their respects to Ruth Bader Ginsburg near the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC yesterday. — AFP

it’s really going to be a difficult time to be a woman in America.” Crescenzo, who came with her wife, said it was thanks to RBG that they had been able to get married. To her right, a group of people read out a Hebrew prayer. Ginsburg was born to a Jewish family in New York and died on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, one of the most holy days in Judaism.

In a sign of the deep divisions in the United States, a man wearing a black

suit came to the court-to praise Trump. He was roundly booed away by the crowd. Many of the young people there also wanted to thank Ginsburg and to promise they would take up her fight. “We have a lot of work to do and a lot of fighting to do in the next 45 days,” said Kiley Boland, 25, who clutched a book on Constitutional law under one arm. “It’s on us now. She can rest; we got this.” — AFP

## Impunity, corruption rob trafficking victims of justice in Romania

**BUCHAREST:** “I want him to pay for everything I’ve suffered,” says a short, frail 24-year-old Romanian who was forced into prostitution by a man who duped her. The man with whom she fell in love trafficked her in Romania and then to Austria before she managed to escape. “Once he hit me with a chair and almost killed me”, another 31-year-old victim tells AFP, adding that the experience pushed her “to the brink of suicide”. Both women are housed in a shelter for trafficking victims in northeastern Romania and are awaiting the start of proceedings against the men who passed them around.

But their wait may be in vain, given the impunity that many perpetrators seem to enjoy in Romania. On a national level, the number of alleged traffickers sent to court dropped from 400 in 2018 to 347 last year. AFP gained access to hundreds of pages of judicial documents and interviewed victims, prosecutors and lawyers in different regions. The drawbacks were apparent even in the high-profile “Tandarei” case, which spanned the UK and Romania.

In one of the largest child trafficking rings uncovered in Europe, more than 100 people were

convicted in the UK over an operation in which dozens of minors were forced to beg and steal. But in Romania all those charged were acquitted last year after an almost decade-long trial. The Romanian judges complained about the investigation led by the anti-mafia prosecutors’ department (DIICOT), saying a lot of it was “accusations based on hearsay”, while leads on alleged bribes paid to local police were not followed up.

### ‘Untouchable’ suspects

In its latest report about trafficking in Romania, the US State Department said “widespread complicity and the failure to incriminate officials hampered effective law enforcement”. “Trafficking networks have vast sums of money which often allows them to buy impunity,” Silvia Tabusca, director of the Center for Human Rights and Migration, told AFP. DIICOT prosecutors say that in some cases “officials from banks or town halls as well as police officers have offered protection” to trafficking rings.

Tabusca says there are sometimes also “suspicions of corruption” within the judicial system. In a rare interview to AFP, 70-year-old Constantin Dragusin – one of the accused ringleaders of the Tandarei gang – admitted that “if we could have offered money (to judges) to be acquitted we would have done it, even though we’re not guilty”. He says he decided against offering cash as he was convinced the judges in his case would act fairly. “I am no mobster. I have neither stolen nor recruited any children,” he said.

He says he repeatedly asked prosecutors to



**IASI, Romania:** Two women are pictured on the courtyard of a center for the women victims of domestic violence and trafficking in the northern Romania region of Iasi county. — AFP

facilitate a meeting with the parents of the alleged victims, but this was turned down. The deputy director of the local child protection agency, Neculai Badea, told AFP he also asked for access to the alleged victims in the Tandarei case – but was likewise turned down. According to Tabusca, the upshot of the Tandarei acquittals is that “the influence of the suspects within the local community has increased. “They’re are now perceived as untouchable,” she says. — AFP

## UK’s Labor begins virtual bid to regain support

**LONDON:** Britain’s main opposition Labour party goes online to try to reinvigorate grassroots support after years of bitter ideological infighting and stinging electoral failure. The three-day “Labour Connected” event, which replaces the annual conference cancelled because of coronavirus, is the first major gathering of members under new leader Keir Starmer. The former chief state prosecutor is trying to turn Labor around after its worst election showing since the 1930s in December.

His predecessor Jeremy Corbyn quit after his hard-left policies and lack of clarity over Brexit proved a turn-off for voters and sparked fierce internal feuding. Starmer has vowed to reunite the party to recapture the successes of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, who led Labor governments from 1997 to 2010. Since taking the helm in April, he has won plaudits for trying to win back Jewish members who left in droves because of anti-Semitism that Corbyn was accused of failing to tackle.

He has also seen a surge in popularity for his efforts to hold Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson to account for the government’s response to the coronavirus outbreak. Yesterday, he promised to provide “new leadership for our party and for our country”. He admitted there was “a mountain to climb” to win the next election scheduled for 2024 but “we have demonstrated our determination to listen, to change and to rebuild people’s trust”.

### ‘Government incompetence’

Starmer again attacked Johnson over coronavirus, which has officially killed nearly 42,000 people in Britain – the worst toll in Europe. He said the priority beyond protecting key workers must be keeping schools open, as cases surge once again and officials are mired in criticism for a lack of virus testing. “This government’s incompetence is holding Britain back,” he said. Professor Simon



**LONDON:** Opposition Labour party leader Keir Starmer (2nd right) and his wife Victoria (left) arrive wearing protective face coverings, to attend a service marking the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain at Westminster Abbey in central London yesterday. — AFP

Usherwood at the University of Surrey said Starmer’s forensic attacks on the government had so far helped unite his party and win over non-Labor voters.

“He’s not particularly charismatic. His authority comes from looking like a competent person,” he told AFP. But Professor Steven Fielding of the University of Nottingham warned many Corbyn supporters were still uneasy. “He’s managed to unify the party only because he hasn’t tackled any of the big issues in the party,” he told AFP. As well as quelling dissent in its own ranks, Labor needs to tackle the skepticism of voters in its former “Red Wall” heartland in northern England, who backed the Conservatives over Brexit.

Their support helped give Johnson an 80-strong majority in the House of Commons and allowed him to break years of parliamentary deadlock to take Britain out of the European Union in January. Starmer opposed Brexit but has not focused on the issue, except again on the issue of competence, mocking Johnson for his vows to “get Brexit done” and to have an “oven-ready” divorce deal. Trade talks with the EU are moving painfully slowly towards a mid-October deadline, while the government has sparked outrage in Brussels by trying to unpick part of the Brexit agreement. — AFP

## Polio vaccine in the crossfire of misinformation

**LIBREVILLE:** As scientists around the world rush to find a vaccine to stem the spread of Covid-19, another deadly disease, polio, has become the latest target of misinformation campaigns online. The World Health Organization (WHO) celebrated the announcement on August 25 that Africa had eradicated the wild poliovirus-a landmark in a decades-long fight against the crippling disease.

However, there still exists a version of the illness known as vaccine-derived polio, which occurs in rare incidents when the weakened virus in the vaccine mutates. It particularly affects countries with low immunization rates and poor sanitation, health experts say. Two days after the WHO’s announcement, the UN confirmed that more than a dozen cases of vaccine-derived polio had sprung up in nine states across Sudan. The outbreak added further fuel to the already prolific spread of conspiracy theories pushing false claims about vaccination on social media.

### ‘Gates-funded vaccine’

Conspiracy theory groups promptly reported the outbreak in articles decrying “one of the biggest public health scandals of the decade”, singling out the WHO and billionaire Microsoft founder Bill Gates in their attacks. A misleading article blaming a “Gates-funded vaccine” for “causing” the outbreak has been shared more than 8,000 times in Facebook groups from the US and Canada to Colombia.

The claims have also been circulating in Europe, with a French version of the article shared in various groups in France and Belgium. But the article fails to mention that the cases involved people who had not been immunized themselves. Gates, whose eponymous foundation has ploughed billions of dollars into making vaccines against diseases like polio, malaria and HIV, is a regular target for fringe groups accusing him of benefiting from vaccination or even using them for harm. — AFP

## Italy defies COVID-19 virus vote as far-right plots seismic change

**ROME:** Italians headed to the polls yesterday – to the alarm of coronavirus experts – for a referendum and regional elections that could weaken the government and radically reshape the political landscape. Just a week after a Herculean effort by schools to reopen in line with last-minute Covid-19 rules, classrooms across the country will be shut to pupils and transformed into ballot stations for the two-day vote.

A triumph for the far-right in this fiercely fought campaign would sound alarm bells in Brussels. It will be the first test for Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte’s centre-left coalition government since it imposed an economically crippling nationwide lockdown to fight the virus, which has killed almost 36,000 people.

The referendum, on slashing the number of members of parliament – from 630 to 400 in the lower house, and 315 to 200 in the upper house – is expected to pass, though there has been a late uptick in the number of prominent ‘no’ declarations. The cost-cutting reform is the brainchild of the co-governing Five Star Movement (M5S), but while its centre-left coalition Democratic Party (PD) partner and parties on the right are theoretically in favour, their support has been lacklustre at best.

### Uncertain future

The regional battle is for governance of Campania, Liguria, Marche, Puglia, Tuscany, Valle d’Aosta and Veneto. The right-wing coalition is set to easily retake Veneto and Liguria, and it could also snatch Marche and Puglia from the left. But all eyes will be on Tuscany, a historic left-wing stronghold that might fall to Matteo Salvini’s far-right League.

“If the left performs particularly poorly... Brussels will grow concerned,” Berenberg economist Florian Hense told AFP. It will worry whether the national recovery plan Italy has to present to obtain grants or loans to aid its ailing economy after the coronavirus lockdown “will be ambitious enough, given the limited political capital of the coalition in Rome,” he said. “And whether, whatever plan Italy comes up with, it will actually implement it given the uncertain future of the current coalition”.

### Concern over virus

The poll is going ahead despite warnings against opening polling stations while Covid-19 case numbers are on the rise. While Italy currently has fewer new cases than Britain, France or Spain, it is still recording more than 1,500 daily. “The country is in a state of emergency; it is utterly contradictory to be massing people together at polling stations, particularly in light of the trend in Europe,” Professor Massimo Galli, infectious diseases chief at Milan’s Sacco hospital, told AFP. He said previously that holding the elections now would be “madness”. Some precautions have been taken however, with elderly and pregnant voters getting fast-track lanes to vote. With older people potentially put off voting by the health risks, the left has been organizing special transport. One in three of voters for the PD and League are over 65-years old, according to Italy’s Corriere della Sera daily. Nearly 2,000 voters in isolation due to the coronavirus have also registered to have their votes collected, including former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. — AFP



## International

# Thailand protesters challenge monarchy as protests escalate

## Protesters install symbolic plaque near Grand Palace

**BANGKOK:** Openly challenging the monarchy of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn, thousands of protesters marched in Bangkok yesterday to present demands that include a call for reforms to curb his powers. Protesters have grown ever bolder during two months of demonstrations against Thailand's palace and military-dominated establishment, breaking a longstanding taboo on criticising the monarchy - which is illegal under lese majeste laws.

The Royal Palace was not immediately available for comment. The king, who spends much of his time in Europe, is not in Thailand now. The marchers were blocked by hundreds of unarmed police manning crowd control barriers. Protest leaders declared victory after handing police a letter detailing their demands. Phakphong Phongphetra, head of the Metropolitan Police Bureau, said on a video broadcast from the scene that the letter would be handed to police headquarters to decide how to proceed.

"Our greatest victory in the two days is showing that ordinary people like us can send a letter to royals," Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak, told the crowd before it dispersed. At the biggest demonstration in years, tens of thousands of protesters on Saturday cheered calls for reform of the monarchy as well as for the removal of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, and a new constitution and elections.



### Symbolic plaque

Shortly after sunrise yesterday, protesters

cemented a plaque near the Grand Palace in Bangkok in the area known as Sanam Luang, or Royal Field. It reads, "At this place the people have expressed their will: that this country belongs to the people and is not the property of the monarch as they have deceived us."

Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said police would not use violence against protesters and it was up to the police to determine and prosecute any illegal speech. Bangkok authorities would need to determine whether the plaque is illegal and if it is it would need to be removed.

### Thousands march to hand over demands

Bangkok's deputy police chief Piya Tawichai told reporters. Far from all Thais support the new plaque, which resembles one that had commemorated the end of absolute monarchy in 1932 and which was removed from outside a royal palace in 2017, after Vajiralongkorn took the throne.

Prominent right-wing politician Warong Dechgitvigrom said the actions of the protesters were inappropriate and that the king was above politics. "It didn't achieve anything," he told Reuters. "These actions are symbolically against the king, but the king is not an opponent." Thai authorities have said criticizing the monarchy is unacceptable in a country where the king is constitutionally "enthroned in a position of revered worship".

Protests that began on university campuses have drawn increasing numbers of older people. That includes red shirt followers of ousted populist prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra who had clashed for



**BANGKOK:** Anti-government protesters take part in a pro-democracy rally in Bangkok yesterday. —AFP

years with pro-establishment yellow shirts before Prayuth seized power in 2014. "The new generation is achieving what their parents and grandparents didn't dare. I'm very proud of that," said Somporn Outsa, 50, a red shirt veteran. "We still respect the monarchy, but it should be under the constitution."

Protesters say the constitution gives the king too much power and that it was engineered to allow

Prayuth to keep power after elections last year. He says that vote was fair. The next protest is scheduled for Thursday. Protest leaders called on Thais to take Oct 14 off work to show their support for change. "Radical change is hard in Thailand, but the movement has at least kept the momentum going," said Titipol Phakdeewanich, dean of political science at Ubon Ratchathani University. —Reuters

## Iran victims of Iraq gas attack say horrors are a warning

**SARDASHT:** Thirty-three years have passed, but the survivors of an Iraqi poison gas attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht still suffer - and fight for international recognition of the horrific massacre. "If someone lost a leg or an arm in the war, you can put a prosthesis on him," said Saleh Azizpour, who heads an association for victims of the attack. "But when our lungs are burned, who will breathe for us?" he asked.

Tehran on Monday commemorates 40 years since Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein attacked Iran, launching a war that raged for eight years. Iraq's June 28, 1987, gas attack on Sardasht, a Kurdish town in northwestern Iran, is considered to be the first time chemical weapons deliberately targeted civilians in an urban area. "The dead and wounded range from a three-month-old to a 70-year-old man," Azizpour said. "All were civilians."

The official toll is 119 dead and 1,518 wounded. But, according to Azizpour, who was 25 in 1987, many more were affected. Some 8,000 people were exposed to what experts say was mustard gas and many who survived are struggling with long-term health complications. "Even today, there is sometimes so much pressure on my lungs... that I really cannot sleep," said Mahmoud Assadpour, a 50-year-old teacher.

The impact of the novel coronavirus, which has hit Iran hard, is a threat to survivors, said Rojane Qaderi, a doctor who heads Sardasht's public health network. "As their immune system is weak... their chances of survival are low," Qaderi said. Survivors of the attack are asked to stay in their homes for protection against the virus.

### 'As if in a cage'

"We are at home, we do not go out, it is as if we are in a cage," said Mohammad Zamani, 59, who remembers hearing "muffled bangs" as the gas canisters dropped. His wife, Leila Marouf Zadeh, was a volunteer nurse. She recalls cries of the wounded at the field hospital begging

for help, many people that she knew. The skin of some victims turned red from burns from the incapacitating gas. "Some had crimson breasts, others, their whole bodies," she said. But after a few hours helping the survivors, she too felt the stinging impact. The gas had blinded her temporarily.

Rassoul Malahi, a retired farmer who uses an artificial respirator to breathe, tells a similar story. He was left "totally blind" for 18 days. "The consequences of mustard gas are permanent," said Qaderi. "It affects or destroys the lungs. You have to learn to live with it." The list of symptoms include sore and swollen eyes, red and itching skin, as well as a shortness of breath, difficulty in moving and exhaustion, she said. Now there is an extra problem. Since the United States reimposed crippling sanctions against Iran in 2018, it has been hard to find the drugs needed for survivors.

### International silence

Saddam Hussein began using chemical weapons against Iran as early as 1982. But it took the UN Security Council until 1986 to deplore the "use of chemical weapons" in the conflict. Even then, it avoided singling Iraq out specifically for blame. The same phrasing was used after the attack on Sardasht. Survivors say the feeble response from the international community was tantamount to complicity in the attack. The UN Security Council's five veto-wielding permanent members - Britain, China, France, the US and, in 1987, the Soviet Union - all supported Iraq.

Several Western companies and governments are accused of having contributed to Iraq's chemical weapons program in the 1980s. Today, the town of Sardasht has more than 46,000 inhabitants - compared to nearly 18,000 in 1987 - mainly Sunni Muslims from the Kurdish minority. The town, with modest flat-roofed homes built on the slopes of a hill, is surrounded by farmland. At first sight, there seem few signs of what happened. Only a commercial building, its upper floor gutted by bomb damage, offers a clue.

### 'Rotten garlic'

At the time, Iraqi warplanes frequently dropped bombs on the town, a short distance across the border into Iran. People remember the deafening explosions they made. But that June afternoon, when gas canisters



**SARDASHT:** Photo shows a general view of the Hiroshima street, in Sardasht in Iran's West Azerbaijan Province. —AFP

were dropped on four different neighborhoods, they fell without making the usual terrifying bang. "I saw white dust that smelled like rotten garlic," Zamani said. He knew what it was, because he had seen it while a soldier at the front in 1984. "I was the first to say it was a chemical bomb, because I had experienced it before at the front," he said.

But others did not believe that poison gas could be used against civilians. So they did what they had been told to do to stay safe during conventional bombing raids, they took cover on the spot or in underground shelters. But the toxic gas swiftly penetrated them. Some realized what was happening and ran, like Ali Mohammadi, now 56, a street seller of cheese. When he returned a few hours later, he found a nightmarish scene. "In front of the Red Crescent building, the corpses were all piled up," he said, his voice choked up at the memory.

### 'A symbol'

When Saddam Hussein was captured in 2003, Assadpour said he was "happy". But he was "disappointed" to hear the deposed dictator was executed without being put on trial for his gas attack on Sardasht. In 2005, Marouf Zadeh provided moving testimony in a Dutch court during the trial of Frans van Anraat, a businessman found guilty of selling the chemicals that Iraq used in the deadly gas attacks. —AFP

## More than 30 Taliban killed

**KABUL:** The Afghan air force conducted multiple strikes on Taliban positions Saturday that killed more than 30 insurgent fighters, officials said, as President Ashraf Ghani once again called for a ceasefire. The Taliban claimed the strike had killed nearly two dozen civilians including women and children in the latest mass-casualty incident in Afghanistan that came even as peace talks were under way in Qatar.

"This morning, Taliban fighters attacked (Afghan army) positions in ... Khan Abad district in Kunduz province," the Defense Ministry said in a statement on Twitter. The military "intercepted the attack in accordance with 'active defense' procedures," the statement added, noting that more than 30 Taliban fighters including two commanders were killed. In a statement, the Taliban denied its fighters were hit and said 23 civilians had been killed. The defense ministry said it was aware of the claim and would investigate.

Local hospital director Mohammad Naem Mangal told AFP that three dead and three wounded civilians had been brought to the facility. The attack came shortly before Ghani once again called for a humanitarian ceasefire "to protect our people, prevent violence and terrorist incidents and to achieve a dignified and lasting peace." The insurgents have so far ignored such requests, though they have unilaterally called two short, separate truces this year in the run-up to peace talks, which opened a week ago in Doha. Talks have progressed slowly so far, with the two sides still undecided about an agenda. —AFP

## Lebanon Christian party offers idea to resolve dispute over cabinet

**BEIRUT:** A party founded by Lebanon's Christian president made a proposal to end a dispute that has blocked the formation of a new cabinet and threatened a French drive to lift the country out of its worst crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war. The proposal, put forward on Saturday, involved handing major ministries to smaller sectarian groups in a country where power is shared between Muslims and Christians. There was no immediate comment from officials in Shiite Muslim groups, who have insisted they choose who fills several posts. Lebanon's efforts to swiftly form a new government have run into the sand over how to pick ministers in a country where political loyalties mostly follow sectarian religious lines.

A Sept 15 deadline agreed with France to name a cabinet has passed. Paris, which is leading an international push to haul Lebanon back from economic collapse, has voiced exasperation and told Beirut to act "without delay". The leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, the party founded by President Michel Aoun and allied to Hezbollah, proposed "undertaking an experiment to distribute the so-called sovereign ministries to smaller sects, specifically to the Druze, Alawites, Armenians and Christian minorities".

The statement was issued after Gebran Bassil, the party leader and son-in-law of the president, chaired a meeting of the party's political leadership. Bassil is a Maronite, Lebanon's largest Christian community. Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adiv, a Sunni Muslim under Lebanon's sectarian system, wants to shake up the leadership of ministries, some of which have been controlled by the same factions for years. —Reuters

## What is Thailand's '112' royal defamation law?

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's monarchy is protected by one of the world's toughest royal defamation laws, making any criticism of the powerful King Maha Vajiralongkorn all but impossible inside the country. Some student leaders have called for the abolition of the laws as a pro-democracy movement gathers steam, with thousands expected to protest Saturday to demand reforms to the monarchy.

### What is the '112' law?

Under section 112 of Thailand's penal code, anyone convicted of defaming, insulting or threatening the king, queen, heir or regent faces between three and 15 years in prison on each count. But the law is routinely interpreted to include any criticism of any aspect of the monarchy - including content posted or shared on social media. The harshest punishment so far? A man was sentenced to 35 years in jail in 2017 for a series of Facebook posts and comments about the royal family.

### How is it enforced?

Anyone can make an accusation under the law and authorities are bound to investigate. There is no transparent disclosure of the official number of lese majeste complaints, arrests, charges or sentences - only an inconsistent trickle of information from authorities. But the use of 112 has risen dramatically since a 2014 coup by the arch-royalist military. According to legal aid groups, just six people were behind bars on lese

majeste convictions before 2014. That number skyrocketed in the following five years, with 169 convictions. Those charged are almost always convicted. But if they plead guilty, sentences are often halved.

### Why so many cases under the military?

Legal observers and rights campaigners say 112 and other laws like the Computer Crimes Act and sedition, have been used to target dissent in Thailand. The ultra-royalist military has long used its self-appointed role as the defender of the monarchy to justify coups and political interventions. But critics say it has used the cover of protecting the monarchy to stifle political opponents and tighten its hold on power.

UN special rapporteur David Kaye urged the regime in 2017 to stop 112 prosecutions, saying such laws "have no place in a democratic country". The use of 112 has slowed recently. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha — leader of the 2014 coup - said in June that the king had requested the government to "refrain" from using it. But it isn't just the military - self-appointed ultra-royalist civilian groups also monitor the web and report alleged 112 violations.

### What can be punished under 112?

Prosecutors have dramatically widened what counts as defamation of the royal family in recent decades to include social media and satire. An anti-junta activist was convicted in 2017 after posting a news story on Facebook, even though more than 2,000 others had shared the same article. His two-and-a-half-year sentence was cut short when the king pardoned him last year. One man was prosecuted in 2015 for satirical comments he made about the then king Bhumibol



**BANGKOK:** A masked figure, stained with fake blood, is left hanging from a tree in Bangkok yesterday, following an overnight pro-democracy rally in Sanam Luang. —AFP

Adulyadej's favorite dog. There is no comparative research that shows which countries use royal defamation laws the most, but historian David Streckfuss says Thailand has been "the leader" since 2006 when it comes to its prosecution rate.

### Can the media report on it?

Domestic and international media must routinely self-censor their reporting of lese majeste cases and the monarchy in general, or risk prosecution. Detailed reports on issues such as the list of recent demands from pro-democracy protesters could put reporters at risk. Readers who share the news could also face prosecution, and even repeating or summarizing the details of 112 charges could be interpreted as a violation. —AFP



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

## Business

## Zain Kuwait, OSN sign strategic partnership

## Zain's new 5G plans subscribers to enjoy OSN streaming content

- OSN and Zain Kuwait enter strategic partnership to offer OSN streaming app bundled with Zain's new 5G plans.

- Zain's new 5G plans subscribers will enjoy OSN streaming content as part of their plans, other customers will enjoy unique offers through Direct Carrier Billing.

KUWAIT: OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, and Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, have sealed a partnership to make the OSN streaming app available to Zain customers in Kuwait. Zain customers can now enjoy access to the OSN streaming app and the thousands of hours of premium exclusive content available on the platform. Postpaid customers will receive a complimentary one-year OSN subscription when they subscribe to any of Zain's new 5G plans starting from KD 15 monthly.

The strategic partnership gives Zain subscribers exclusive access to original content from Disney+, HBO, Universal, MGM, Paramount+ and many other major Hollywood studios in addition to premium Arabic and Turkish productions, all available on the OSN streaming app.

Zahra Zayat, Senior Vice President of Telco and OTT at OSN said, "We are very excited to have Zain as our Telco partner in Kuwait. With the revolutionary 5G rollout by Zain, video consumption on OSN Streaming service is expected to take a quantum leap, hence, our partnership came as a natural extension to the 5G offering and an essential opportunity to uplift lower tier internet users to higher value tiers." Zayat added: "Customers in Kuwait demand quality streaming content on their phones and our OSN

Streaming app addresses this need by bundling the huge library of premium English and Arabic content with the unbeatable experience of 5G. Those who subscribe to any of Zain's new 5G plans will enjoy unlimited OSN streaming content at no extra cost for a year. All other customers can subscribe through direct billing via their Zain lines and enjoy special offers."

Modhey Al-Sabah, Chief Government Affairs and Business Development Officer at Zain Kuwait, said: "We are thrilled to partner with OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, to offer our customers the best world-class content from the biggest names in the global entertainment industry. Zain proudly operates the largest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait, and with that comes a commitment to offer top-quality services to the largest family of subscribers in the country. For this, we were keen on offering all customers subscribing to our new 5G plans with a complimentary one-year subscription in OSN to allow them to enjoy the true power of this revolutionary technology."

Accessing world-class entertainment in the palm of their hand, Zain Kuwait customers can look forward to binge-watching their favorite shows including Game of Thrones, The Mandalorian, and Al-Tuffah Al-Haram on the go.

Customers will also have access to OSN's range of OSN Original productions including reality TV show 'Yalla Neta'asha' and 'A'adet Regala'. Relunched in April 2020, OSN's enviable streaming library also boasts thousands of hours of universally acclaimed blockbuster movies, trending series, boxsets, kids content, award-winning documentaries, and more.

Zain's new 5G plans include a wide range of revolutionary fixed and mobile Internet devices, including two that are exclusively available at Zain: the 5G Netgear M5 Hotspot with 1 TB of 5G Internet starting at KD 15 monthly, and the Zain 5G HUB; powered by HTC, with 1 TB of 5G Internet for KD 20 monthly only. In addition, the plans include the all-new Huawei 5G CPE PRO 2 with 1 TB of 5G Internet starting at KD 17 monthly, as well as many more devices that meet customers' various personal and professional needs.

## New offer

Zain is also introducing a new offer that allows postpaid customers to enjoy unlimited 5G Internet on two separate SIM cards with one subscription, starting at KD 20 monthly only. The offer includes one free Internet device, as well as the ability to add an additional device if needed. This offer also includes a free



one-year OSN subscription.

Customers can easily get any of these offers by visiting Zain's branches or through the Zain Online Store (kw.zain.com/5G) and enjoy FREE delivery to their doorstep, noting that Zain follows strict protocols that adhere to official health guidelines to ensure the safety of customers and staff.

The announcement comes to reinforce Zain's leadership in the Kuwaiti market by offering the largest and most

powerful 5G network in Kuwait. Since commercially launching fifth generation wireless technology (5G) back in June 2019, Zain was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. The company succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, ultimately transforming the telecom sector across the country and region.

## Trump touts 'fantastic' TikTok deal with Walmart and Oracle

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Saturday he had approved a deal allowing Silicon Valley giant Oracle to become the data partner for TikTok to avert a shutdown of the massively popular Chinese-owned video app that Washington has called a security risk.

The deal, announced by the companies, also includes Walmart as a commercial partner and would create a new US company named TikTok Global. "I think it's going to be a fantastic deal," Trump said. "I have given the deal my blessing. If they get it done that's great, if they don't that's okay too."

Shortly after, TikTok-owned by China's ByteDance-confirmed the agreement, which came with companies racing against a Sunday deadline set by Trump's administration after which new downloads of the app would be banned. Oracle could buy a 12.5 percent stake in TikTok before a future IPO, and Walmart a 7.5 percent stake.

According to a source close to the matter, ByteDance would keep the rest of the shares. But since the Chinese company is 40 percent owned by American investors, TikTok would

eventually be majority American-owned. "We are pleased that the proposal by TikTok, Oracle, and Walmart will resolve the security concerns of the US Administration and settle questions around TikTok's future in the US," a spokeswoman for TikTok told AFP. ByteDance also confirmed the deal on social media, saying the three companies would reach an agreement that was "in line with US and Chinese law" as soon as possible.

If it comes to fruition, the deal could mark the de-escalation of a technology battle between Washington and Beijing. It could also allow Americans to continue using the wildly popular app: the US Department of Commerce announced it was postponing the ban on TikTok downloads until September 27, citing "recent positive developments."

## Security concerns

Trump has claimed for weeks that TikTok is collecting user data for Beijing, without ever providing evidence for his allegations. In early August, he gave ByteDance until September 20 to hand over TikTok's US operations to an American company.

And on Friday, the Trump administration ordered a ban on downloads of the video-sharing app, as well as Chinese-owned messaging platform WeChat. TikTok's brand of short, quirky phone videos has become a global phenomenon, especially among young people, with 100 million users in the United States alone.

Trump said the "security will be 100 percent" and that the companies would use separate cloud servers. The deal will lead to the creation of a new company, headquartered in Texas, that will have "nothing to do with China" but will still be called TikTok, according to the president.

Oracle will be in charge of hosting all US user data and the security of the associated computer systems, while Walmart will supply its online sales, order management and payment services.

## 'Bullying'

In a joint statement, Oracle and Walmart said TikTok Global would "pay more than 5 billion in new tax dollars to the US Treasury," while they and the other companies involved in the deal would launch an initiative to develop online education. Trump, who previously said the federal government deserved a cut of the deal for authorizing it, had initially announced the companies would make a



The logo of Chinese video app TikTok is seen on the side of the company's new office space at the C3 campus in Culver City, in the westside of Los Angeles. — AFP

"contribution" towards education. Under Friday's US order against the Chinese apps, Tencent-owned WeChat would lose functionality in the United States from Sunday. Following the TikTok-Oracle-Walmart deal's announcement, TikTok users will be banned from installing updates starting September 27.

In response, China's Commerce Ministry on Saturday condemned what it called US "bullying," saying it violated international trade norms and that there was no evidence of any security threat, shortly before launching a mechanism that would allow it to sanction foreign companies. — AFP

## Oil recovery waits for international flying to return

LONDON: Jet fuel consumption remains the hardest hit section of the global oil market as passengers avoid air travel as a result of the pandemic and government travel restrictions. The specific problems of the jet market explain why refinery margins for closely related distillates such as diesel are currently being hit much harder than benchmark oil prices.

Jet's travails have helped push distillate margins to their lowest levels for more than a decade and are undercutting refinery demand for crude ("Bloated diesel stocks weigh down global oil market").

Sustained recovery in distillate margins and crude oil prices will therefore depend on a wider resumption of cross-border aviation. But an early resumption of long-haul flights is currently looking less likely than a

few months ago, given the resurgence of coronavirus cases in many parts of the world.

So an upturn in jet consumption and with it distillate margins and crude oil prices depends on one or more of three factors:

- (1) Early deployment of an effective COVID-19 vaccine;
- (2) Alternative methods of infection control (e.g. rapid testing or improved contact tracing and isolation); or
- (3) Lifting air travel restrictions with or without a vaccine.

## National borders

Quarantines and other infection controls have mostly been imposed on a national, or occasionally continental basis, and on potentially infective passengers rather than manufactured products. — Reuters

## Palantir listing may shine light on Big Data firm

WASHINGTON: Perhaps the most secretive firm to emerge from Silicon Valley, Palantir Technologies is set for a stock market debut this month that may shed light on the Big Data firm specializing in law enforcement and national security. Created after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks with initial funding from a CIA venture-capital unit, Palantir and its predictive analytics platform reportedly have helped the US military locate Osama bin Laden and track weapons movements in the Middle East.

Its platform has also been used in the controversial practice of "predictive policing" to help law enforcement, detect medical insurance fraud and fight the coronavirus pandemic.

While Palantir's data practices and algorithms are secret, the company claims it follows a roadmap which is, if anything, more ethical than its tech sector rivals.

It moved its headquarters to Denver this year, partly in an effort to set itself apart from

its Silicon Valley rivals. "Our company was founded in Silicon Valley. But we seem to share fewer and fewer of the technology sector's values and commitments," Palantir says in its prospectus. "From the start, we have repeatedly turned down opportunities to sell, collect or mine data," Palantir, whose name comes from the mystical, all-powerful seeing stone in "Lord of the Rings," is opting for a direct listing, expected on September 29. This will not raise capital but will allow shares to be traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Palantir's filing suggests a valuation of some \$10 billion, down from a private value as high as \$25 billion, according to Renaissance Capital.

The company posted a loss of \$580 million last year on revenue of \$743 million. But it sees prospects improving as it offers solutions to what it calls "fractured healthcare systems, erosions of data privacy, strained criminal justice systems and outmoded ways of fighting wars," its regulatory filing says. Palantir's biggest shareholder is Peter Thiel, an early Facebook investor and one of the rare tech executives who backed Donald Trump's campaign in 2016. "We are in a deadly race between politics and technology," Thiel wrote in a 2009 essay for the libertarian Cato Institute.

"The fate of our world may depend on the effort of a single person who builds or propa-



WASHINGTON: Peter Thiel, PayPal founder-turned-venture-capitalist, discusses his support for US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. — AFP

gates the machinery of freedom that makes the world safe for capitalism."

Activists argue that Palantir's technology—which scoops up financial records, social media posts, call records and internet records—enables unprecedented opportunities for mass surveillance with little oversight on privacy and fundamental rights. Human rights activists have staged protests against Palantir after US agencies used its technology to hunt down illegal immigrants in the United States. — AFP



## Business

# International lenders back \$9.5bn financing for Russia's Arctic LNG 2

## \$21bn project expected to be launched in 2023

**LONDON:** International lenders have lined up about \$9.5 billion in financial support for a Russian Arctic liquefied natural gas (LNG) project, a document seen by Reuters showed, even as such projects come under greater scrutiny over climate concerns.

The \$21 billion project, which received final investment approval a year ago, is expected to be launched in 2023 and to reach its full capacity of almost 20 million tons per year in 2026. While the energy industry touts natural gas as a cleaner alternative to coal or crude, it is a source of carbon emissions and critics say LNG projects are hard to reconcile with the transition to a low-carbon economy envisaged in the Paris climate agreement and the European Union's Green Deal economic plan.

The interest of international institutions, however, gives a boost for the Arctic LNG 2 development, led by Russian non-state company Novatek as Moscow's plans to raise its share in the global LNG market.

Among them is French state investment bank and credit agency Bpifrance, with a recommended offer of \$700 million in credit finance, the China Development Bank, expected to offer a facility worth \$5 billion and Germany's Euler Hermes, with a covered facility of \$300 million, the document said. However, in a statement issued after the Reuters' story, Bpifrance said "the decision to grant a public guarantee within the framework of the Arctic LNG 2 project has not been taken".

According to the document, a number of other state-backed institutions are also expected to help fund the project including the China Development Bank, which is expected to offer a facility equivalent

to \$5 billion. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation is also seen providing a facility of \$2.5 billion; an unidentified Russian bank \$1.5 billion and Italy's SACE a covered facility of \$1 billion.

Russia's top lender Sberbank has already said it is ready to provide more than 2.7 billion euros in financing for the project, which aims to process gas from the Gydan Peninsula and ship 80% of LNG to Asia. The line-up described in the document, if backed in full, would cover the need for the external financing, earlier estimated by Novatek at \$9-\$11 billion.

The project's equity partners include France's Total, China National Petroleum Corp, China's CNOOC and the Japan Arctic LNG consortium made up of Mitsui & Co and state-owned JOGMEC, formally known as Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. Bpifrance's recommendation, which could yet be rejected by the government, highlights the importance of the project for one of France's industrial champions.

The document said Bpifrance Assurance Export gave a "favorable opinion" to the strategic project guarantee "subject to subsequent examination of the project's risk profile and its economic fundamentals" and with a "strong reserve" waiting for the finalization of the environmental and social analysis.

Total declined to comment and Novatek had no immediate comment. Relations between Europe and Russia, including energy, remain tense after a poisoning attempt of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny sparked calls for another key energy project between the two, Nord Stream 2, to be ditched.

The role of European development institutions in

### Climate concerns remain



Europe's bankrolling of LNG projects is facing increasing criticism. —Reuters

bank-rolling LNG projects around the world has also come under greater scrutiny given the EU's ambitious climate goals. Export credit agencies such as Bpifrance provide government-backed loans, guarantees, credits and insurance to private companies to help make it easier for them to do business abroad.

A spokeswoman for JBIC, which has already announced one loan for up to 125 million euros (\$148 million) to help Mitsui & Co and the Japan Oil, Gas

and Metals National Corporation take an equity stake in the venture, declined to comment on the Bpifrance document as she could not confirm the figure.

SACE declined to comment. CDB did not immediately reply to a request for comment. Euler Hermes directed the question to the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy. The ministry said it was not "not authorized to provide third parties with any information in this respect". —Reuters

## India passes farm bills amid protest from oppn parties

**NEW DELHI:** India's parliament yesterday passed new bills the government says will make it easier for farmers to sell their produce directly to big buyers, despite growing protest from opposition parties and a long-time ally of the ruling party.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the new laws will reform antiquated laws and remove middlemen from agriculture trade, allowing farmers to sell to institutional buyers and large retailers like Walmart. The bills also make contract farming easier by providing a new set of rules.

But Modi's food processing minister from an alliance party resigned on Thursday in protest calling the bills "anti-farmer", and the opposition parties have said farmers' bargaining power will be diminished by allowing retailers to have tighter control over them. On Sunday, some opposition lawmakers raised slogans, tore documents and tried to grab the speaker's microphone in the upper house of India's parliament, before two controversial bills were passed by a voice vote.

"The passage of both the bills in parliament is indeed a landmark day for Indian agriculture," one of Modi's senior cabinet ministers, Rajnath Singh, said on Twitter.

Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Modi's former food processing minister, is from a regional party which has a strong base in the northern state of Punjab and believes the bills will increase farmer suffering



AMRITSAR: Farmers shout slogans against the passing of agriculture bills in the Lok Sabha (lower house) of representatives, on the outskirts of Amritsar yesterday. —AFP

in the breadbasket state. Her party believes the laws will destroy wholesale markets which ensure fair and timely payments to farmers, weaken the state's farmers and the overall state economy.

Many farmer organizations have in recent days held street protests in Punjab and the neighboring Haryana state near New Delhi. Yesterday, India's

main opposition Congress party criticized the government. "We will make sure that the government will have to step down on its knees before the farming community of this country," said Randeep Surjewala, a party spokesman. "It will be farmers one side and big businesses on the other side, how will they fight?," he added. —Reuters

## Corporate debt frenzy rolls on amid markets fears

**NEW YORK:** Investors are gearing up for the year's record-breaking pace of corporate bond issuance to continue in the coming week, even after the US Federal Reserve rattled nerves at its September meeting with a gloomier-than-expected economic outlook. The past week has seen roughly \$42 billion of high-grade debt come to market in 39 deals, most of which were small and offered by first-time issuers. "I would expect next week to be similar," said Monica Erickson, portfolio manager, global developed credit, at DoubleLine.

The breakneck pace of fresh issuance illustrates how the Fed's late March pledge to backstop credit markets and its policy of holding interest rates near zero have spurred borrowing by corporations this year. Companies had already issued \$1.7 trillion in debt through the end of August, according to SIFMA, compared with \$944 billion in the same period last year.

Demand is likely to stay elevated in the next few weeks, investors said, as historically low rates continue to drive a hunt for yield despite a cluster of economic and political concerns. Those include the Fed's downbeat economic projections as well as worries over waning fiscal support and potential uncertainty around the US presidential election. "You have low interest rates, you have tight credit spreads: If I'm an issuer, I'm going to issue as much as humanly possible because it's cheap debt," said Nick Maroutsos, head of global bonds at Janus Henderson Investors. "That demand is there because people are craving any sort of return." Just over \$18 billion in high-yield debt had priced in the week through mid-morning Friday, with two more deals in the pipeline from Aethon United and PMI General Purchaser, according to IFR Refinitiv. IFR's data showed that Friday's issuance was expected to drive the year-to-date total over \$337 billion, past the previous annual record of \$332 billion set in 2012. Jason Vlosich, head fixed income trader at Brown Advisory, said he



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor at the opening bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. —AFP

expects an additional \$40 billion or so in new investment-grade deals through the end of the month. Bank of America in August forecast that this month's investment-grade issuance was likely to be between \$120 billion and \$140 billion. September issuance stood at about \$115 billion on Friday, according to Refinitiv IFR.

In the coming week, investors will be watching earnings reports from Jefferies Financial Group, which is typically seen as a preview of what's to come from Wall Street banks, Nike, cruise line Carnival and retailers including Rite Aid and Costco. The economic data calendar is comparatively light, with Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index on Wednesday and weekly jobless claims on Thursday. In a break with recent trends, about 50 percent of new investment-grade debt in 2020 has been issued to pay off or refinance existing debt, versus the 20 percent or 30 percent that is typical, said Erickson. "Companies will come to market and buy back higher-priced debt just to lower their interest expense." As a result, a slowdown in M&A and share buy-backs - expected to continue through the end of the year - is less likely to dent issuance. Several factors could potentially slow the pace of corporate debt offerings, investors said. —Reuters

## Libyan oil firm lifts force majeure on 'safe' fields

**TRIPOLI:** Libya's state oil firm lifted force majeure on what it deemed secure oil ports and facilities on Saturday, a day after strongman Khalifa Haftar said he was lifting a blockade on oilfields and ports.

Pro-Haftar groups had blockaded key oilfields and export terminals from January 17 to demand what they called a fair share of hydrocarbon revenues. The blockade, which has resulted in more than \$9.8 billion in lost revenue according to the state-run National Oil Corporation (NOC), has exacerbated electricity and fuel shortages in the country. "The National Oil Corporation announces the lifting of the state of force majeure over safe oil fields and ports," a post on its Facebook page said.

But it said "force majeure continues on the oil fields and ports that confirmed the presence of elements of Wagner gangs and other armed groups that impede the activities and operations of the National Oil Corporation". Force majeure refers to external unforeseen elements that prevent a party from fulfilling a contract. The Wagner group alludes to a shadowy private security firm reportedly close to Moscow.

Libya has been in chaos since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The main military fault-line pits Haftar and an administration in Libya's east against a UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli.

Haftar's announcement on Friday about lifting the blockade comes after hundreds of Libyans protested last week in the eastern city of Benghazi, one of his strongholds, and other cities over corruption, power cuts and shortages in petrol and cash. —AFP

## Hungary extends loan moratorium as economy falters

**BUDAPEST:** Hungary will extend a moratorium on loan repayments for some households and companies until the middle of 2021, as its finance minister warned the economy could struggle to grow next year unless a coronavirus vaccine is found. Prime Minister Viktor Orban introduced the moratorium for all companies and private borrowers in March as one of his government's key measures to help reduce the economic fallout from the pandemic. It was due to expire at the end of the year.

In a video posted on his official Facebook page on Saturday, Orban said the moratorium would be extended by six months for families with children, the retired, unemployed and those in public works programs. The extension until the middle of 2021 will also apply to companies that have seen revenues drop by at least 25 percent.

Orban also said loan contracts for all households and companies agreed before the pandemic could not be terminated for six months.

The moves come as the government prepares to announce more steps to try to revive growth, after the economy plunged more than expected in the second quarter and prospects for a recovery next year have worsened. The weak economic outlook could represent the biggest threat to nationalist Orban's decade-long rule as he prepares to face parliamentary elections in the first half of 2022.

Finance minister Mihaly Varga said in an interview published earlier on Saturday that if a coronavirus vaccine was not available by the middle of 2021 the economy might struggle to grow next year, based on a pessimistic scenario.

Under an optimistic scenario, the economy could grow by 4-5 percent if a vaccine was available in the second quarter, he told newspaper Magyar Nemzet. A third scenario was for a protracted recovery with 3 percent-4 percent growth, also conditional on a vaccine being available, he added.

Hungary's economy is expected to shrink by 5 percent-6 percent this year.

Varga said the government was working on new stimulus measures that could include targeted tax cuts for crisis-hit sectors. After a spike in new cases in recent weeks, Hungary reported 809 new coronavirus infections on Saturday, bringing the total to 16,920, with 675 deaths. —Reuters



## Business

# Crackdown on WeChat to affect millions of users in US and China

## WeChat has around 19 million active daily users in US

**WASHINGTON:** Washington's crackdown on WeChat will disrupt communications between millions of people in the United States and their friends, families and business partners in China. But the app had not managed to reproduce in the US its success in China as the dominant smartphone-based payments platform.

The US Commerce Department announced partial bans on Friday on WeChat as well as video app TikTok. The order will slow down WeChat to make it unusable in the United States for video chats with family and friends. "They are slowing the speed to technically make it virtually impossible to use audio, video, or send images," said Wu Ziyi, a Chinese graduate student in political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### Universal app

In China, WeChat took the country toward cashless commerce in just a few years, and it is used by hundreds of millions for everyday payments. It is a kind of universal app, a digital bank account and identification card, for ordering food or a car, sending gifts, managing medical issues, and interfacing government services.

Owned by technology giant Tencent, WeChat in the United States has around 19 million active daily users, said Adam Blacker of AppTopia, a mobile apps consultant. "It's mostly used by Chinese visiting or working here or by Chinese-Americans staying in touch with their relatives," said William Reinsch of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

That includes several hundred thousand Chinese students in the US, who use it for "at least 90 percent" of their daily online conversations,

according to Wu.

He said that it can be used to exchange small amounts of money. But it cannot be connected to a US bank account or credit or debit card, and because it only works in Chinese yuan.

US businesses also use WeChat for communications with Chinese suppliers, and can possibly use it for payments, though other services-like the Alipay function of TenCent rival Alibaba-are better built to handle large sums and foreign exchange.

If US businesses do use its payments function, said Reinsch, "I haven't heard of anybody complaining that they might be stopped from doing that." Now, under the Commerce Department order, WeChat cannot be used for transferring money inside the United States.

Reinsch said US businesses were mainly concerned that the long-flagged crackdown would apply to use of WeChat outside the United States, which would hamstring their China businesses. That usage appears to still be allowed.

### Tough competition in US

WeChat did once try to break into the US payments market, but made few inroads due to resistance by banks and merchants, regulations that favor credit and debit cards over digital wallets, and stiff competition. In 2018 the company declared its WeChat Pay app was poised to take off, especially in brand-name shops where Chinese tourists abound, hoping to leverage that for a broader expansion.

The gambling and tourism conglomerate Caesars Entertainment began taking WeChat payments at restaurants, shops and entertainment venues in Las Vegas, aiming to help Chinese tourists



BIEJING: QR codes for WeChat Pay (left) and Alipay (right) are seen at a food store in Beijing on Saturday. —AFP

spend their money.

But with US-based rivals like Zelle, Venmo and Apple Pay contesting the market, WeChat barely registered, and Caesars appears to have given it up. The company did not respond to a query on WeChat. Wu said Chinese in the United States

might still find ways to use the app, through VPN networks or by other means, but most are already moving to other chat apps for communications with families back home. "My family is very traditional, so we will probably just go back to the phone call," he sighed. —AFP

## Iran's rial hits record low as tension spikes with the US

**DUBAI:** The Iranian rial fell to a record low against the US dollar on the unofficial market yesterday, a day after the US President Donald Trump's administration declared all United Nations sanctions on Tehran had been restored. The dollar was offered for as much as 273,000 rials, up from 267,800 rials on Saturday, according to foreign exchange site Bonbast.com, which tracks the unofficial market.

Iran has dismissed the US move as "void and illegal" and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council on Saturday he cannot take any action on the US declaration because "there would appear to be uncertainty" on the issue. The three European parties to the nuclear deal - France, Britain and Germany - said in a statement on Sunday that any decision or action taken to reimpose UN sanctions "would be incapable of legal effect" because Washington used a mechanism agreed under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, which the United States quit in 2018.

However, Trump plans to issue an executive order allowing him to impose US sanctions on anyone violating sanctions against Iran. The Iranian foreign ministry described Washington's efforts as "futile", adding that "the US approach is a major threat to the international peace and security and an unprecedented threat to the UN and the Security Council". "Iran emphasizes that if the US, directly or with the cooperation of a number of its allies, makes any move in line with these threats, it will face a serious reaction and should account for all its dangerous consequences," the ministry said in a statement, without elaborating. Washington has unilaterally reimposed sanctions on Iran since 2018, which combined with a drop in oil prices have crippled the economy in Iran, which also has the highest COVID-19 death toll in the Middle East with 24,301 deaths. Iran's rial has lost about 49 percent of its value in 2020. —Reuters

## India announces \$250 million loan to Maldives

**MALE:** India yesterday announced a \$250 million loan to the Maldives to boost its coronavirus-battered economy in a further bid to counter China's growing financial footprint in South Asia. The Indian Ocean archipelago, renowned for its luxury resorts, has been badly hit by the pandemic, with foreign tourists failing to flock back in large numbers after international flights restarted in mid-July. India's High Commission in the Maldives said the loan was being provided after a request by Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for "financial assistance to overcome the difficult economic situation."

"The Maldives is at liberty to use the money in repairing the domestic economic situation in line with its own priorities," it said in a statement. A sale of treasury bonds issued by the Maldives government to State Bank of India (SBI) will raise the money, with ten years given for repayment, the statement added. —AFP

## Gulf Bank offers auto financing solutions at authorized dealers

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is keen on providing multiple banking services and financing solutions across a variety of sectors that are crucial to customers, including the automotive sector. In cooperation with all local dealerships, Gulf Bank provides its customers with a variety of financing solutions to make the process of owning a car easier than ever.

Regarding the various financing solutions offered by the Bank, Assistant General Manager for Communications at Gulf Bank Ahmad Al-Amir, said: "With customer experience always a priority at Gulf Bank, we strive to ensure our clients are always receiving the best service possible wherever they are. That is why we have ensured that our employees are always available across auto showrooms to assist our clients in acquiring the cars of their dreams, during both the morning and evening periods - all while enhancing their banking experience with easy credit terms, distinguished services, and private office spaces within the showrooms. It is important to note we are also keen to provide all of

these services in accordance with the highest quality standards and health protection measures recommended by the Ministry of Health in Kuwait."

### The best financing solutions, for everyone

Gulf Bank car loans are open to everyone, and are available to both Gulf Bank customers and non-customers, and Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, provided that the borrower's salary is KD 300 or more.

### Exclusive packages for frontline workers

In recognition of the vital role of the employees working to limit the spread of the pandemic, Gulf Bank has launched a variety of new offers for our frontline heroes. In light of Gulf Bank's ongoing and distinguished partnerships with various auto dealerships across Kuwait, the Bank is presenting these offers for the first time, available to both Gulf Bank customers and non-customers alike.

### At your service throughout the day

Gulf Bank's direct sales staff are present across more than 40 new and certified auto showrooms and dealerships in Kuwait, during both morning and evening shifts. With the help of Gulf Bank's showroom staff, clients can learn about the various offers presented by Gulf Bank, including the exclusive packages available for frontline workers and their terms and conditions.

## Donkeys turn into assets as Yemen economy sags

**ADEN, Yemen:** Abu Mohammed fusses over the donkeys he is selling in war-torn Yemen, where the animal has become a must-have commodity at a time of biting fuel and currency crises. Yemenis have resorted to using donkeys to transport water and goods, as the conflict that has ravaged the economy for more than five years leaves gas-guzzling SUVs out of reach for most.

"The higher the price of fuel and costs of living, the more demand there is for donkeys," said Mohammed, as he saddled up along a garbage-strewn road in the southern port city of Aden.

No part of Yemen has been spared the conflict, in which rebels have captured swathes of the north from the internationally-recognized government. Meanwhile, rampant inflation has made most supplies scarce and expensive. Aden is under the control of the separatist Southern Transitional Council, which while technically an ally of the government, is at odds with the loyalists over the future status of the south.

## No guarantee of a post-Brexit US-UK trade deal

**WASHINGTON:** US presidential candidate Joe Biden's recent warning that Britain must honor Northern Ireland's 1998 peace agreement to secure a US trade deal adds new complexity to already tough trade talks between the United States and the UK.

"We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit," Biden wrote on Twitter on

Wednesday, referring to the deal that ended three decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and created a shared regional government. Biden was echoing Democratic House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's warning last week that any move by Britain to erect physical customs borders between British-ruled Northern Ireland and European Union member Ireland meant "no chance" for a US-UK trade deal.

### 'Simpler methods'

In Aden, built partly on a volcanic site called Crater, the use of donkeys was long the norm for the hilly coastal district before modern means of transport. Now, in the 21st century, children on donkeys transporting heavy loads and jerrycans of water have once again become a common sight.

"Sometimes gasoline can't be found for as long as two weeks," said Mohammed. "People are returning to simpler methods." The 38-year-old father of nine, who looks far older than his years, turned to donkey trading two years ago after he lost his job.

Business has since boomed. He buys the animals from nearby Abyan province, where they cost less, and then puts them up for sale in Aden.

"We can make a profit of between 7,000 and 8,000 riyals a day, and it



ADEN: A Yemeni boy stands in the back of a transport donkey cart in the southern city of Aden. Yemenis are resorting to using donkeys to transport water and haul goods, as the long years of conflict that have ravaged the economy make gas-guzzling vehicles unaffordable for many. —AFP

costs almost nothing to feed the donkeys," he said. "How could I have fed my children with the cost of living so high? Even if I looked for another job, I can't find one," he said. "Thanks to God, and then to donkeys, I have an income."

Mohammed Anwar, a father of three who also supports his mother and sister, said his household is one of many in Yemen without piped water. "If we didn't

have a donkey, we wouldn't have water," he said, as he led the animal to the local pump with a pile of jerrycans.

But as queues at petrol stations stretch longer and demand for donkeys rises, the price of the animal is also going up. "A donkey can now cost between 70,000 and 100,000 riyals, and the poor still cannot afford that," Anwar said. —AFP

come as US negotiators in the Trump administration wrap up a fourth round of trade talks with their British counterparts in Washington this week. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday the talks could "reach a successful conclusion before too long."

No matter how they end, US law gives Congress authority over trade policy. Trump has sometimes sidestepped that authority on trade issues, but US and British officials have said they are aiming for a comprehensive agreement that would need Congress's approval. The US election on Nov 3 is expected to leave the House in Democratic hands, giving extra weight to Pelosi's words. Both the US and Britain have other hurdles to clear as well, trade experts say. —Reuters



# Classifieds

Monday, September 21, 2020

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Fax: (+965) 24348714

www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind with speed of 20 - 55 km/h causing rising dust.

**BY NIGHT:** Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind with speed of 12 - 42 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

WEATHER WATCH

Fresh wind + dust

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	41 °C	32 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	44 °C	32 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	27 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	44 °C	31 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	41 °C	32 °C
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	43 °C	29 °C
WAFRA	44 °C	28 °C
SALMY	46 °C	27 °C

SFC. CHART

20/09/2020 0000 UTC

MSL Analysis (hPa)

Valid 0000 UTC 20 SEP 2020

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	09/21	Hot with a chance for rising dust	42 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	20 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	09/22	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	43 °C	28 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	09/23	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	44 °C	30 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Thursday	09/24	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	31 °C	NW-SE	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:16
Sunrise	05:35
Zuhr	11:42
Asr	15:10
Sunset	17:48
Isha	19:05

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	25 °C
MAX. RH	44 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

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

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Carmina** Leticia Falcao, r/o H.no. 66/A Binvaddo Betalbatim Salcete South Goa would like to correct my name from Carmina Leticia Pereira to Carmina Leticia Falcao. Hereafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known as Carmina Leticia Falcao. (C 5759) 21-9-2020

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

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

Airlines

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

Word Search

Cannoli

Pancake

Italian Desserts

Word Search

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

Biscotti

Bombolone

Ciambella

Gelato

Nutella

Panna Cotta

Pignolata

Pizzelle

Semifreddo

Pancake

Sfinge

Sfogliatella

Spumoni

Struffoli

Tiramisu

Torta Caprese

Zuppa Inglese

Zuppa Inglese

Join the Dots

## STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

There could be trouble brewing in the workplace, Aries. Some of your colleagues neither like nor trust each other and find it impossible to work together. Adjustments are needed if everyone is going to work to the best of their abilities. If you're in a position to handle this, do it now. If you aren't, distance yourself from the situation. It's the only way to stay sane!

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Too much rigorous exercise over the past few days might have you feeling a little sore and tired, Cancer. Your nerves may be on edge, and you could be more likely than usual to snap at those around you. Try to ease both nerves and muscle aches by soaking in a hot bath. Herbal tea might also help. Accept that you should take it easy today and then do it!

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Is your significant other caught up in family problems and unable to spend time with you? Don't let your insecurity get the best of you. Your partner needs to deal with family now. Relax, do what you want to do, and have confidence that you'll be spending more time together as soon as possible. After dealing with family quarrels, you'll be a peaceful refuge for your partner.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

If you've been having trouble reaching a romantic partner, Capricorn, it might be a good idea to stop trying. Your friend is having a rough day and might not make the best company. In fact, your beloved could view a call from you as an unwelcome interruption and be short, if not downright rude. If you speak with your friend, keep it brief and plan to get together - just not today.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Squabbles may come up between you and a sibling or neighbor, Taurus. Your ability to compromise is definitely called for here. If you aren't careful, this could turn into a battle of wills. The minute the disagreement comes up, try to talk it out and turn it into a win/win situation. Otherwise, things may be said that shouldn't be, and feelings could remain hurt for a long time.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Spiritual breakthroughs may have you feeling a little disconcerted, Leo. Clearing away deadwood, such as past traumas, might tell you a few things about yourself you'd rather not face. It's vital to release them in order to progress as a human being. Even if tears are involved, this is a positive development. You'll feel happier once it's all set free. Onward and upward!

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Matters involving communication seem to be fouled up, Scorpio. Messages may not get delivered, emails may not go through, and people might misinterpret your words. This could create a mess that brings everything to a screeching halt. You need to speak to people directly, give detailed instructions, use simple language, and make sure they take notes, or beware of the consequences!

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may feel a bit restless and unsettled without really knowing why, Aquarius. Stresses on the job could churn up repressed resentment from the past that you need to release. Try to discern exactly what these stresses remind you of. If you're unable to do this, however, you'll probably still reap the benefits of the release. Stay focused on your work and just let it happen.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Money matters might cause you a few headaches, Gemini. You could be torn between the desire to put money aside for the future and the impulse to buy something that you've wanted for a long time. There may be a way to have it both ways. Save a little less and try to find a bargain price for your item. Take everything into consideration and work it out before you make yourself crazy.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A virtual conference of some kind could touch upon some pretty volatile issues, Virgo. People could disagree to the point that the meeting turns into a shouting match. You probably have strong opinions on this as well, but don't get involved. You won't be able to stop the argument, and it can only cause you stress. If you can, avoid joining this meeting altogether. Think about it!

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your values could oppose those of a business or romantic partner today, Sagittarius. One of you may be overly pragmatic and the other too idealistic. One seems callous, while the other seems to be living in a dream world. This could be a milestone in your relationship if approached properly. If you can't create a win/win situation, perhaps you should reconsider the partnership.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Too many people could be vying for your attention today, Pisces. All of them want advice or help. This could be flattering, and you'll probably want to help them, but it can also be unsettling and make it hard to focus. Don't let this set your temper on edge and cause you to snap at your friends. Take each request one at a time, make no promises, and do your best.





Hearing-impaired employees working at a bakery run by Uwe Brutzer in the city of Changsha in China's Hunan province. — AFP photos



Hearing-impaired employees working at a bakery run by Uwe Brutzer.



Hearing-impaired employees working at a bakery run by Uwe Brutzer in the city of Changsha.



Hearing-impaired employees using sign language while working at a bakery run by Uwe Brutzer in Changsha.

## German bakery helps deaf Chinese earn their daily bread

The oven's warm glow and aroma of fresh bread signal the morning rush at Bach's Bakery in the central Chinese city of Changsha, but although the baking staff chatter excitedly, you could hear a pin drop. Bach's employs mainly hearing-impaired staff, whose banter over trays of pumpkin bread, Danish sausage rolls and apple turnovers is done entirely in sign language. The operation, owned and operated by German national Uwe Brutzer, provides work opportunities that are often hard to come by for his employees. Despite growing awareness of disabled needs, life remains a challenge for China's hearing impaired, officially estimated at between 20 and 30 million. It's difficult to "make good money and get an education," said Wan Ting, a 28-year-old employed by Bach's since 2017 after a previous unsuccessful stint in advertising design.

"It's hard (to find work) in other places. You need to know someone to be able to find good work. If not, you have few options," added Wan, hearing-impaired since birth and speaking via sign language translated by Brutzer. With their communication challenges, the hearing-impaired are often steered into work requiring skilful use of the hands, said the 50-year-old Brutzer, making the bakery a nice fit. Bach and his wife Dorothee first came to Changsha in 2002 with a German charity to help hearing-impaired children. He took over the bakery in 2011 and has since trained around 20 bakers. Most go on to work in other bakeries, restaurants or hotels. But other aspects of running a business—hiring, working with suppliers, talking to customers—pose major challenges to opening their own bake shops. "Two of our very experienced bakers (have tried), but they both closed their shops later again. It was too much hassle for them," he said.

The bright and compact bakery has had a devoted local



Hearing-impaired employees working at a bakery run by Uwe Brutzer in the city of Changsha in China's Hunan province.

clientele for years in the city-known more for its peppery Hunan cuisine—despite being hidden in a non-descript residential side alley. Bakery margins are thin, however, and Bach's has struggled, said Brutzer. But things are looking up, despite China's traumatic coronavirus lockdowns earlier this year. Moving to no-touch take-out service during the epidemic kept volumes humming, and Bach's went viral this summer thanks to a spate of feel-good Chinese media coverage. Today, a loud creak from the front door announces a new customer every few minutes and business is up five-fold from last year, said Brutzer. The challenge now is meeting demand. "But that will slow down, I hope, to a good level where we can pay better salaries and people will be happier," he said. — AFP

## London's music goes underground to beat lockdown blues

London's hard-hit live entertainment sector is hoping to prove it can resurrect itself from the coronavirus shutdown—and a series of gigs from a maze of tunnels could show the way to do it. "Lockdown Town", which opens on October 2, will see socially distanced performances of American music from the 1920s to 1950s in a network of vaulted venues near Waterloo station. Audiences will have their temperatures checked during staggered arrival times, move from one venue to the next wearing masks, and not stay in one area for more than 15 minutes. The number of spectators has been capped at a maximum of 360 each evening—well below the 500-700 capacity in normal times.

"We have created a really flexible model," "Lockdown Town" director Kerri McLean told AFP, adding ingenuity was key to getting the event on track. "We are just a tiny little piece in a huge puzzle but it does feel that we are giving an opportunity and a boost to these many talented people who haven't had a gig for seven months." Organizers expect to employ more than 300 musicians playing ragtime to rock 'n' roll, with the event described as London's first Covid-safe "immersive experience".

Carpenters, sound engineers and musicians were busy this week preparing the 30,000 square feet (2,800 meters) of space that once served as parking lots before the opening night. The activity is a stark contrast with the scene at most theatres and nightspots in central London, which were shut in



Musicians perform a staged funeral for the 'death' of live music, during a socially-distanced photocall performance for One Night Records' forthcoming 'Lockdown Town' production, on the banks of the River Thames in London. — AFP photos

late March as part of the nationwide coronavirus lockdown. The government has allowed venues to partially reopen but many nightspots, particularly older theatres, remain closed because of strict social distancing rules. One study published in June estimated that theatres and concert venues face a £3-billion (\$3.9-billion, 3.3-billion-euro) shortfall in revenues this year.

### 'Ghost town'

"It's been horrendous for the creative industry," said McLean of the shutdown. "It has affected every single industry but for the live industry,



the bounce back is really, really tough." The government this week tightened restrictions on socializing because of a surge in coronavirus cases, and imposed local lockdowns across swathes of the country. Under current rules, groups of more than six people from different households are not allowed to mix to curb the close-contact spread of the virus.

Fears of another wider shutdown persist but organizers One Night Records remain optimistic and say they have shifted "lots of tickets", which are priced at £52. Some dates are already sold out. Production manager Joanna Penso said

London, which is normally packed with tourists and revelers, had been transformed into a "ghost town" by the pandemic. But the gigs could be just the tonic the city needs. "The public really want to see something at the moment... I've been craving to go dancing and listen to live music," she said. "It's something that we have all been missing." During the shows, a costumed character with a cane will ensure health and safety regulations are strictly enforced. Penso predicted that would be the biggest challenge "but also that audiences are feeling safe enough to actually enjoy themselves".—AFP

## Disgraced Harvey Weinstein loses top royal honor

Queen Elizabeth II has stripped Harvey Weinstein of the royal honor he was awarded before his predatory sex crimes came to light, an official government statement said on Monday. The disgraced Hollywood movie mogul, who is currently serving a 23-year jail term for rape, received the honor in 2004 in recognition of his contribution to the British film industry. But an announcement in The Gazette, the UK official government record, said it had now been withdrawn. "The Queen has directed that the appointment of Harvey Weinstein to be an Honorary Commander of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, dated 29 January 2004, shall be cancelled and annulled and that his name shall be erased from the Register of the said Order," it read.

Royal honors can be forfeited in circumstances where Buckingham Palace considers the system has been brought into disrepute. Decisions are approved by the monarch herself. Previous recipients who have had their honors removed



Harvey Weinstein

include Rolf Harris, the Australian-born entertainer and artist who was jailed in 2014 for a string of sexual assaults. He had been given a CBE in 2006 after painting Queen Elizabeth's portrait to mark her 80th birthday. He was also stripped of his Australian honors. Zimbabwe's former president Robert Mugabe lost his honorary knighthood in 2008 because of what the UK government said were "human rights violations" and "disregard" for democracy. — AFP

## Palestinian National Museum art show opens in Paris

An exhibition of art donated to the as yet only notional National Museum of Palestine has gone on show in Paris. Works by the first couple of photography, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Martine Franck, as well as the street artist Jef Aerosol are featured in "Colors of the World", which runs at the Arab World Institute (IMA) in the French capital until December 20. Art given to the exiled museum has been held in the IMA's reserves in France since 2015. IMA chief and former French culture minister Jack Lang told AFP that so far the institute has been looking after some 400 works. "It is a Palestinian museum in exile made up of donations from artists from a number of countries which we keep in our reserves," Lang added.

He said he hoped a bricks and mortar Palestine museum "will be built one day in East Jerusalem". Palestine's ambassador to UNESCO, Elias Sanbar, said the project "may seem utopian", but similar museums in exile were set up for South Africa under apartheid and Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship. Alongside the show, the IMA is also staging an exhibition of photos and videos by Arab artists called "Shared Memories" drawn from the vast donation of Lebanese collector Claude Lemand. — AFP





This picture shows an instructor (right) correcting a trainee's action during a training session at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin. — AFP photos



Two trainees playing basketball after a training class at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.



Trainees training at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.

# China's rich seek bodyguards schooled in digital dark arts

At the "Genghis Security Academy", which bills itself as China's only dedicated bodyguard school, students learn that the threats to the country's newly-rich in the tech age are more likely to emerge from a hacker than a gunman. Each day students in matching black business suits toil from dawn until midnight at the school in the eastern city of Tianjin, where digital defenses are given equal pegging to the traditional close-protection skillset of combat, weapons training and high-speed driving. Around a thousand graduate each year, hoping to land jobs as guards to China's burgeoning ranks of rich and famous, positions which can be worth up to \$70,000 — several times more than an annual office wage.

But the school says it can't meet demand as China's rapid growth mints millionaires — 4.4 million according to a Credit Suisse 2019 report, more than in the US. The course fees are up to \$3,000 a student; and while they had to cancel training between February and June because of the coronavirus pandemic, it has not dampened demand. Only the best make the cut, says founder Chen Yongqing, insisting his disciplinarian standards are stricter than in the army. "I'm quick-tempered and very demanding," the army veteran from China's northern Inner Mongolia region told AFP. "Only by being strict can we cultivate every good sword. If you don't forge it well, it will break itself."

About half of the students are ex-military, Chen says. They train in rows in a large, shabby sports hall, holding blue plastic guns ahead of them with a steady stare-before practicing hustling their clients safely into a black Audi with smashed windows. Other sessions are held in a classroom or gym, where they box in matching red T-shirts. Mobile phones are confiscated throughout, while meals are taken in silence in a large dining hall presided over by pictures of acclaimed graduates, who have protected everyone from China's second richest man Jack Ma to visiting French presidents.

"We have been defining the standard of Chinese bodyguards," instructor Ji Pengfei told AFP. In one class, students in pairs work through a scenario protecting a "client" from an intruder. "Danger!" shouts Ji, prompting the guard to quickly throw their "boss" behind them and pull out a gun in the same move. Those who fail to do it in two seconds are assigned 50 push-ups. The guns at the Tianjin school are fake-China outlaws possession of firearms. For live firearms training, students are taken to Laos in Southeast Asia.

## Wiping data, blocking hacks

But in a highly surveilled country with a low rate of street crime, the modern minder needs an up-to-date skillset, against state monitoring or professional hackers. "Chinese bosses don't need you to fight," Chen tells his students of a client base which includes the country's biggest real estate and tech firms. Repelling hacks on mobile phones, network security, spotting eavesdroppers and wiping data are all



A group of trainees attending a training session at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.



A group of trainees attending class at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.

required tools in the bodyguard's armoury. "What would you do if the boss wants to destroy a video file immediately?" Chen asks a class.

Even so, old-school threats still exist in China-earlier this year billionaire He Xiangjian, founder of Midea and one of the country's richest men, was kidnapped at his home. According to Chinese media, He's son escaped by jumping into a river and was able to call the police, who said they arrested five suspects at the scene. Student Zhu Peipei, a 33-year-old army veteran from northern Shanxi province, hopes becoming a bodyguard could offset his lack of professional skills or academic qualifications. "And of course, it's cool," he added.

But the alumni of the Genghis Academy also provide humdrum services, like accompanying children of the rich and famous to school-for a fee of 180,000

yuan (\$26,000) a year. That in itself is far more than the base salary in private companies of around 53,000 yuan. Students must also navigate the quirks of their wealthy clients, says trainer Ji. Some only trust bodyguards whose Chinese zodiac sign matches theirs, he explains-while one, from a Fortune 500 company, only wanted to hire from his hometown. Another demanded a prospective bodyguard tell him what books he liked to read-he was hired after saying he liked military novels. The best can command as much as 500,000 yuan a year inside China, but some set their sights on a posting overseas, potentially working with foreign clients. "I want to work in the Philippines or Myanmar," one student said, requesting anonymity. "Then I can carry a gun... it will be more challenging and I can earn more." — AFP



A group of trainees attending a training session at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.



A group of trainees attending a training session at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.



A group of trainees attending a training session.



A trainee attending a training session



A trainee training at the Genghis Security Academy.



An instructor (center) demonstrating during a training session.



A trainee training at the Genghis Security Academy in Tianjin.



Trainees attending a training session.



A trainee selecting a model gun during a training session.

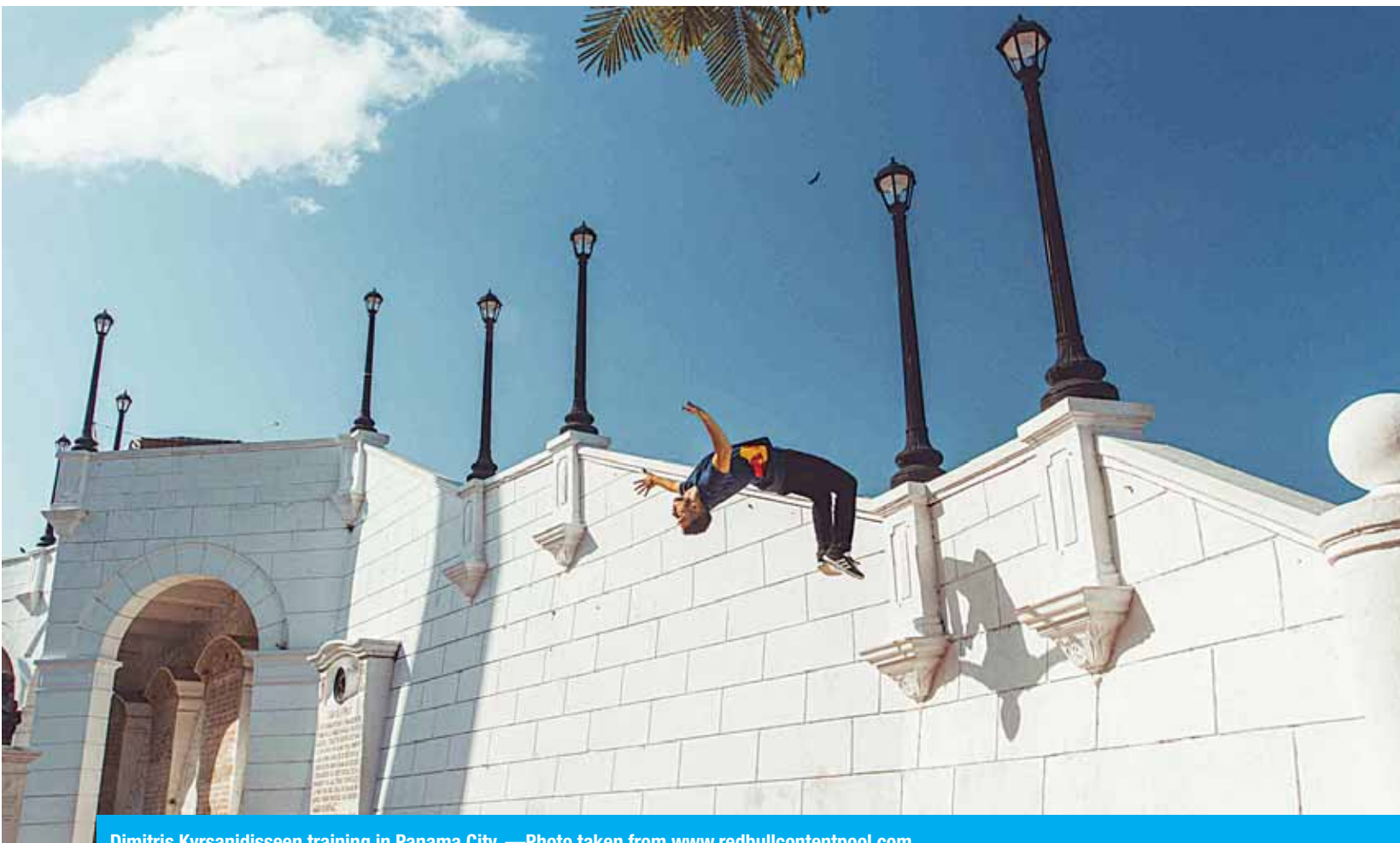


A group of trainees attending a training session.



## Sports

## Photo of the day



Dimitris Kyrsanidis seen training in Panama City. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# New York Yankees rout Red Sox 8-0 for 10th straight win

## Dodgers beat Rockies; White Sox blank Reds

**NEW YORK:** JA Happ struck out nine batters over eight innings as the visiting New York Yankees recorded their season-high 10th straight win on Saturday with an 8-0 victory over the Boston Red Sox. Clint Frazier homered among his three hits and drove in three runs for the Yankees, who have won 10 in a row for the first time since June 8-18, 2012. New York has won 12 straight over Boston dating back to last season. Happ (2-2) recorded his first outing of at least eight scoreless innings without a walk since June 27, 2009.

The 37-year-old left-hander scattered four hits in 113 pitches to improve to 13-4 in his career against the Red Sox. Luke Voit and Kyle Higashioka each had an RBI single and Gio Urshela had a pair of sacrifice flies for the Yankees. DJ LeMahieu extended his hitting streak to 12 games with a single off Chris Mazza (1-2) to lead off the first inning. He advanced to third on a pair of walks before scoring on Urshela's first sacrifice fly.

### Athletics 6, Giants 0

Jesus Luzardo combined with three relievers on a six-hitter and Jake Lamb broke open a tight game with a two-run home run as host Oakland once again beat Bay Area-rival San Francisco. The win lowered the magic number for the first-place As to one for clinching the American League West. With second-place Houston's win over Arizona later Saturday, the magic number stayed at one. Luzardo (3-2) took a no-hitter into the fourth and then caught a break when the Giants pieced together three singles in the inning. The third of the three was an infield single by Mauricio Dubon, but As' first baseman Matt Olson, after taking a late throw from shortstop Marcus Semien, was able to pick Donovan Solano off third base to end the threat after he'd rounded the bag too far.

### White Sox 5, Reds 0

Tim Anderson hit two of Chicago's five solo homers and Dallas Keuchel grinded through four innings in his return from the injured list as Chicago cooled off host Cincinnati, which had its six-game winning streak snapped. Anderson, Yasmani Grandal and Jose Abreu hit back-to-back-to-back home runs in the eighth to break open a two-run game. Keuchel, who dealt with back spasms and most recently started on Sept. 6, was far from dominant, but was good enough to make it through 75 pitches while allowing four hits, walking three and striking out seven against the Reds, who are back in playoff contention.

### Twins 8, Cubs 1

Eddie Rosario, Miguel Sano and Josh Donaldson homered, and Minnesota gained an easy win over host Chicago to clinch a playoff berth for the second straight year and the third time in the past four seasons. Jorge Polanco added two hits and a run for Minnesota, which won for only the second time in its past six games. The Twins ended the series against the Cubs, with the finale set for yesterday. David Bote doubled and drove in Chicago's lone run. The loss snapped a five-game win streak for the Cubs.

### Astros 3, Diamondbacks 2

Jose Altuve recorded his first multi-RBI game in almost a month, and Michael Brantley delivered a crucial defensive play in the seventh inning as host Houston defeated Arizona to square their three-game interleague series at one game apiece. Altuve produced a run-scoring fielder's choice grounder in the third inning and an RBI double in the sixth that pulled the Astros even at 2-2. Altuve drove home George Springer with his two-base hit and scored the go-ahead run when Kyle Tucker chased Arizona starter Luke Weaver (1-8) with an opposite-field RBI single three batters later. With the Astros clinging to that one-run lead in the top of the seventh, Brantley completed an inning-ending double play by corraling a line drive off the bat of Jon Jay and firing to Altuve at second base to double off the Diamondbacks' Pavin Smith. A replay review upheld the call.

### Marlins 7, Nationals 3

Miguel Rojas finished a triple short of a cycle and

Garrett Cooper homered and drove in three runs to lead host Miami past Washington. The Marlins, who are chasing their first postseason berth since 2003, remained in second place in the National League East with nine games remaining. Miami will close out its home schedule on Sunday with a doubleheader that also concludes the five-game series against the Nationals. Rojas went 3-for-5 with his fourth career leadoff home run off Nationals starter Patrick Corbin (2-6, 4.76 ERA). Cooper's two-run homer in the third made it 3-0. Corbin allowed all seven Marlins runs on 14 hits over six innings, with no walks and seven strikeouts. Winner Pablo Lopez (5-4, 3.96 ERA) struck out seven and walked three while allowing three hits over 5 1/3 innings.

### Dodgers 6, Rockies 1

Chris Taylor homered and hit a triple, AJ Pollock also went deep, and Los Angeles beat Colorado in Denver. Clayton Kershaw pitched seven strong innings and Justin Turner also had two hits for the Dodgers. Kershaw (6-2) allowed one run on four hits and struck out six without walking a batter to help the Dodgers win their fifth straight and sixth in their last seven. Kevin Pillar had two hits for the Rockies, who have dropped four in a row. Rockies starter Chi Chi Gonzalez (0-2) retired the last six batters he faced before leaving after five innings. He allowed three runs on four hits and struck out two with one walk.

### Phillies 3, Blue Jays 1

Andrew Knapp and Adam Haseley each produced two hits and an RBI to lift host Philadelphia to a victory over Toronto. Andrew McCutchen added an RBI single and two walks for the Phillies, who won their third in a row in this four-game series. Phillies starter Vince Velasquez threw 104 pitches over six innings. Velasquez (1-1) allowed two hits and one run while striking out six and walking three. The Blue Jays have lost six straight games after managing just two hits. Blue Jays starter Hyun Jin Ryu gave up six hits and two runs in six innings. Ryu (4-2) struck out eight and walked only one.

### Mets 7, Braves 2

Rookie David Peterson struck out a career-high 10 while Robinson Cano homered and finished with three RBIs as host New York beat Atlanta. Peterson (5-2) got the better of fellow rookie Ian Anderson by allowing one run on three hits and four walks. He carried a shutout into the sixth. Peterson is the first Mets starter other than Jacob deGrom to strike out at least 10 since Noah Syndergaard whiffed 11 against the Chicago White Sox on July 30, 2019. Atlanta's Freddie Freeman went 0-for-5 as his 12-game hitting streak and 33-game on-base streak each came to an end. Anderson (3-1) took his first big league loss after allowing three runs on four hits and four walks while striking out eight over 4 2/3 innings.

### Rays 3, Orioles 1

Yoshi Tsutsugo homered early, and Randy Arozarena added a tiebreaking two-run shot later as visiting Tampa Bay defeated Baltimore. The Rays have won the first four games of this five-game weekend series and will try to finish the sweep Sunday afternoon. Charlie Morton (2-2) pitched five solid innings to get the win. He squirmed out of trouble a few times, allowing one run on five hits. He struck out six and walked two. The Rays' bullpen came through once more, throwing four shutout innings. Jorge Lopez (2-1) took the loss for the Orioles, giving up all three runs over six innings. He surrendered eight hits and one walk while striking out five.

### Tigers 5, Indians 2

Detroit scored four eighth-inning runs following the retirement of their manager prior to the game and downed visiting Cleveland. Ron Gardenhire cited health reasons for his sudden departure. He was replaced by Lloyd McClendon, who will manage the club for the remainder of the season. Eric Haase and Daz Cameron each had two hits, a run scored and an

## Dhoni praises Chennai 'Dads Army' after IPL win over Mumbai

**NEW DELHI:** Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has heaped praise on the experienced players in his side after they toppled defending champions Mumbai Indians in the opening match of the Indian Premier League. South African veteran Faf du Plessis smashed an unbeaten 58 to guide Chennai to a five-wicket win, chasing Mumbai's 162 in Abu Dhabi as glitzy Twenty20 tournament started months late because of the coronavirus pandemic. Once labeled "The Dads Army" by the media, Chennai have a number of players over the age of 35, including Dhoni, Australia's Shane Watson, du Plessis and South African Imran Tahir.

But Dhoni said that kind of experience would always be an asset to any team, with the perfect side needing the "right mix of youngsters and the experienced players". "What really helps youngsters in (the) IPL is the fact senior cricketers (come) from... different countries and they have their own experience," said Dhoni, who retired from international cricket last month. "So that way we are blessed to have the senior cricketers who are part of the team." Dhoni added that players with more than 300 one-day internationals under their belt have built up the kind of experience that is difficult to accumulate. "You need a number of years to play those," said the Indian star. "And now with three ODIs a series, 300 ODIs is a dream for anybody to play." Du Plessis smashed six boundaries in his 44-ball stay including a 115-run partnership with 34-year-old Ambati Rayudu, who hit 71, to help the three-time IPL winners chase the target with four balls to spare.

England's Sam Curran smashed 18 off six balls after the 22-year-old all-rounder was sent ahead of Dhoni in a move that surprised many. But Curran's hitting affirmed Dhoni's faith in him. "That's one thing we haven't done," Dhoni said, referring to experimenting with the batting order. "At some point... we need to give (Ravindra) Jadeja and somebody like Sam to express themselves." —AFP



BALTIMORE: Kevin Kiermaier #39 and Brett Phillips #14 of the Tampa Bay Rays celebrate a win after a baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles on September 19, 2020. —AFP

RBI. Victor Reyes and Harold Castro each reached base three times and drove in a run for Detroit. Jose Ramirez drove in both runs for the Indians.

### Cardinals 5, Pirates 4

Tommy Edman's RBI single capped a five-run seventh inning for visiting St. Louis, who obliterated what had been a no-hitter in a win over Pittsburgh. Mitch Keller pitched six no-hit innings for Pittsburgh, which built a 4-0 lead, but Sam Howard (2-3) gave up two runs and three hits in the seventh. Ke'Bryan Hayes and Jose Osuna each hit a solo homer, and Colin Moran had an RBI single for the Pirates, who have lost 11 of their past 12 games. Tyler O'Neill added a two-run double and Kolten Wong an RBI single for St. Louis. Cardinals starter Kwang Hyun Kim pitched 5 1/3 innings, giving up four runs and six hits, with four strikeouts and one walk.

### Brewers 5, Royals 0

Corbin Burnes struck out nine in six scoreless innings in his latest stellar performance to help Milwaukee blank visiting Kansas City. The right-handed Burnes (4-0) gave up just four hits without issuing a walk before leaving after 100 pitches for Milwaukee, which won its third straight game and fifth in its past seven. Ryan Braun broke the game open with a three-run homer during a four-run eighth inning against the Royals, who have lost the first two contests of the three-game series after entering with seven wins in their previous eight games.

### Mariners 4, Padres 1

Justus Sheffield pitched six strong innings and Luis Torrens hit a tiebreaking, two-run double against his former team as Seattle defeated San Diego. The Mariners were considered the home team as the series was moved from Seattle because of hazardous air conditions in the Pacific Northwest due to wildfires. The loss prevented the Padres from clinching a National League playoff berth.

### Angels 4, Rangers 3

Los Angeles rallied against one of the best pitchers in the majors to defeat Texas in the second game of their four-game series in Anaheim, Calif. Mike Trout singled home David Fletcher in the bottom of the eighth to give the Angels a one-run lead and complete the comeback after falling behind 3-0 to the Rangers' Lance Lynn. Lynn threw at least 100 pitches for the 36th consecutive game, and allowed three runs and seven hits, struck out five and didn't walk a batter in seven innings. Los Angeles starter Andrew Heaney went 6 2/3 innings, allowing three runs and six hits, striking out eight and walking one. Mike Mayers (2-0) retired the final six batters to earn the win. Shohei Ohtani homered, singled and scored two runs for the Angels. —Reuters

## Nadal crashes out as Djokovic battles into Italian Open semis

**ROME:** Clay court king Rafael Nadal crashed out of the Italian Open on Saturday, falling to a straight sets defeat to Argentine Diego Schwartzman in a tournament the Spaniard had won nine times. Eight-seeded Schwartzman meted out a punishing 6-2, 7-5 loss in Nadal's final warm-up before his bid for a 13th French Open, and record-equalling 20th Grand Slam in just over a week. Top men's seed Novak Djokovic also stumbled on the Roman clay but recovered to win through 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 against German qualifier Dominik Koepfer.

"It was not my night at all," said Nadal, who had won all nine previous meetings against 28-year-old Schwartzman, but could not match his rival's stunning game on the red clay of the Foro Italico. "He played a great match, not me, when this happens you have to lose," continued the 34-year-old. "It's not a moment for excuses. I've spent a long time without competing. I played two good matches." The two-time defending champion was making his comeback after a six-month coronavirus-enforced break having skipped the US Open ahead of Roland Garros with its first round on September 27. "Losing as many serves, you can't expect to win a match, it's something that I have to fix. I know how to do it," he warned. "It's a special and unpredictable year, I'll probably go back home and let's see." Schwartzman next plays Canadian 12th seed Denis Shapovalov for a place in the final. "Today I played my best tennis," said the Argentine.

Djokovic, meanwhile, let his frustrations spill over in a two-hour battle with his 97th-ranked German rival. Two weeks after his US Open default for accidentally hitting a line judge with a ball, the Serb struggled to contain his emotions, throwing his racket after a lost service game, with shouts of anger resounding in the silence of the empty Central Court. "Well, let me tell you that it's not the first nor the last racquet that I'll break in my career. I have done it before," he warned. "I'll probably do it again. I don't want to do it, but when it comes, it happens. That's how I guess I release sometimes my anger."

Djokovic was broken four times before advancing to his 11th semi-final in Rome, where he reached the final nine times and won four titles. The 33-year-old next plays Norway's Casper Ruud who also needed to fight to get past Italian fourth seed Matteo Berrettini 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5). "Clay is definitely Casper's preferred surface," said Djokovic of his first meeting with the 34th-ranked Norwegian. —AFP



## Sports

# Celtics strike back with 117-106 win over Heat

## Celtics bounce back from consecutive losses

**MIAMI:** The Boston Celtics hit back on Saturday, leading wire-to-wire in a 117-106 victory over the Miami Heat that cut the gap in the NBA Eastern Conference finals to two games to one. Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and Jayson Tatum added 25 points and 14 rebounds for the Celtics, who avoided falling into an 0-3 hole from which no NBA team has rallied to win a best-of-seven playoff series. After their 17-point lead slipped away in a game-two loss on Thursday-the second straight game they surrendered a double-digit lead in defeat-Celtics players could be heard exchanging heated words in their locker room.

But they were all on the same page on Saturday, displaying a sense of purpose in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida, and maintaining their poise as the Heat narrowed a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit to five with less than a minute to play. Marcus Smart, a perfect 10-for-10 from the foul line, produced a string of clutch free throws and the Celtics hung on for the win. "Down 0-2 in the series, we played some games we thought we should have played better," Brown said. "We wanted to make it an emphasis to come out tonight and play 48 minutes, and we did."

Center Bam Adebayo led the Heat with 27 points, 16 rebounds and three steals. Rookie Tyler Herro scored 22 points for Miami and star forward Jimmy Butler scored 17. But Boston outscored Miami 60-36 in the paint and held the Heat to 38.8 percent shooting from the floor. "They came out, Boston did, with great force in this game," heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "You do have to credit them for that. "They sustained it for the better majority of the game. We were on our heels most of the game."

The Celtics were buoyed by the return from injury

of playmaker Gordon Hayward, who played 30 minutes off the bench and scored six points with five rebounds and four assists in his first game in more than four weeks. "The first five minutes I was gassed," admitted Hayward, adding that he was feeling it in the right ankle he sprained in game one of the Heat's first-round series against Philadelphia. Hayward left the bubble to rehabilitate the injury, returning and going through quarantine before he could return to the court. Boston led 31-22 at the end of the first quarter, and were up by 12 early in the second before the Heat surged back.

### Celtics family

Miami, led by Herro's 16 points in the period, twice cut the deficit to three points before the Celtics reasserted themselves to take a 62-50 lead into half-time. "There's some great guys in that locker room," Brown said of the Celtics' unity. "A lot of emotion, a lot of passion, but we're a family and we're here for each other. "We exemplified that when we came out together and stayed together during some tough moments. They made a big run I think at the end of the second quarter, Tyler Herro made some big plays.

"We didn't hang our heads, we kept our will high and persevered to win this game." Celtics coach Brad Stevens acknowledged that his team was challenged emotionally by the two tough defeats in the first games of the series. Game three, he said, "was more about what are we going to show ourselves to be. "The first time we were pushed to more emotions that challenged us, we got better," Stevens said. "And that's encouraging." The Celtics will try to level the series in game four on Wednesday. Brown could barely wait. "Looking forward to the next game," he said. "We all are." — AFP



FLORIDA: Jayson Tatum #0 of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket against Tyler Herro #14 of the Miami Heat during the fourth quarter in Game Three of the Eastern Conference Finals during the 2020 NBA Playoffs on September 19, 2020. — AFP

## Stars down Lightning in Stanley Cup opener

**LOS ANGELES:** The Dallas Stars struck hard against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday, winning the opening game of the Stanley Cup final 4-1 in Edmonton. Joel Hanley, Jamie Oleksiak and Joel Kiviranta scored for the Stars in the first two periods and Jason Dickinson added an empty-netter in the waning minutes as Dallas held off Tampa Bay's third-quarter rally bid to take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven championship series.

It seems an unlikely run for a Stars team that had lost six games in a row before the coronavirus pandemic forced the NHL to pause its season in March. They were outscored 10-5 in the round-robin when play resumed in August - but made their way into the playoffs and now have a chance to add a second NHL title to the one they captured in 1999.

Hanley opened the scoring at 5:40 of the first, taking a pass from Roope Hintz and beating Andrei Vasilevskiy to notch his first career NHL goal. Yanni Gourde pulled the Lightning level seven minutes later on a fluke goal after the puck hit the skate of both Gourde and Hintz. Oleksiak scored off his own

rebound at 12:30 of the second, and Kiviranta - the hat-trick hero of game seven in the second round — stretched the lead to 3-1 with 27.4 seconds left in the second.

### Khudobin shines in goal

Dallas held Tampa Bay's leading playoff scorer Nikita Kucherov without a shot until the third period, but Stars goaltender Anton Khudobin worked hard in the third, making 22 of his 35 saves as Dallas were out-shot 22-2. "He made some huge saves at the right moments," Stars coach Rick Bowness said. "You know you're on your heels a little bit and with their elite-level offensive skills you know they're going to get some chances. You don't want to give them a goal at the wrong time and you need a big save at the right time. "Anton certainly did that for us tonight." The Stars had the luxury of four nights' rest after completing a five-game Western Conference final win over the Vegas Golden Knights on Monday.

Tampa Bay had just one day off after playing back-to-back overtime games in their Eastern Conference final



EDMONTON: Ryan McDonagh #27 of the Tampa Bay Lightning attempts a shot against Mattias Janmark #13 of the Dallas Stars during the third period in Game One of the 2020 NHL Stanley Cup Final on September 19, 2020. — AFP

triumph over the New York Islanders. "Been a few days here, we got some rest," Dallas captain Jamie Benn said. "I thought we had a good start to the game, they got a lucky one but it didn't faze us and we just kept playing our game." "They're a good team, they're going to get their chances," Benn added. "(Khudobin) made a lot of great saves there in the third period, kept us in it, and we found a way to win."

Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said his players came out flat. "I don't even know if you need to take a shower

after the first two periods," he said. "We just didn't have our legs, and clearly it showed. "We're going to have to make it a little tougher on their goalie if we're going to score." Game two is today in Edmonton, one of two quarantine "hub cities" used by the NHL when it resumed play in August, and host of both conference finals and the Stanley Cup final. The Cup itself was on display Saturday - a break from tradition, which usually sees it brought to an arena only when a team has a chance to clinch the title. — AFP



LONDON: Arsenal's German goalkeeper Bernd Leno (back) goes over the back of Arsenal's Spanish midfielder Dani Ceballos (front) as he claims the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and West Ham United on September 19, 2020. — AFP

And West Ham were made to rue those missed chances as Arsenal were clinical with their only clear sight of goal in the second-half. "Not to be

rewarded with some points tonight is really hard on us," added Moyes. "For us just to turn off in the last five minutes, it's criminal." —AFP

## Arsenal strike late to beat wasteful West Ham

**LONDON:** Mikel Arteta praised Arsenal's mental strength to strike late through Eddie Nketiah and beat West Ham 2-1 despite an underwhelming performance at the Emirates. The Gunners move level with Everton and Crystal Palace on maximum points at the top of the table after two games, but were far from the standards they have set under Arteta. After Michail Antonio cancelled out Alexandre Lacazette's opener for the hosts, West Ham enjoyed the majority of the chances.

Antonio saw a second-half header come back off the bar, but Arsenal were ruthless with their chance to win the game as Dani Ceballos timed his run perfectly in behind the West Ham defense to square for Nketiah, who had the simple task of rolling into an empty net. "I am really happy with the three points and it's a time to analyse properly because we have a lot of issues," said Arteta. "What I like is the approach the boys had in the last 25 minutes where I could see they were a bit down and then they lift it and probably a few months ago we would have drawn or lost that game and today we win it."

"In the end you have to find a way because there will be games like this through the season." After winning the FA Cup and Community Shield and starting their season with a flourish by winning 3-0 at Fulham on the opening weekend, Arsenal were expected to swot aside a West Ham team that were easily beaten by Newcastle last week

ago. But David Moyes's men deserved something to show for their performance and felt hard done by with some decisions that went against them.

After a relatively trouble free first weekend of the season for VAR reviews, the inconsistent application of what constitutes handball reared its head on Saturday. Manchester United's Victor Lindelof was penalised for handling inside the box during his side's 3-1 home defeat to Crystal Palace, but West Ham were not awarded a penalty for what seemed a much more obvious handball from Gabriel Magalhaes early on. "I definitely think we should have had a penalty," said Moyes. "But we don't know the rules, really, do we?"

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang committed his future to Arsenal earlier this week by signing a new three-year contract and the Gunners' prolific goalscorer was the creator for the opening goal as he just managed to stay onside from Bukayo Saka's pass before crossing for Lacazette to power a header home. That was the only clear opening the hosts created before half-time and West Ham leveled just before the break when Antonio outmuscled Rob Holding to turn home Ryan Fredericks's inviting cross. Antonio was a constant menace to the Arsenal defence and came close twice more in the second period. Gabriel just did enough to take the sting out of his first effort for Bernd Leno to save on the line before Antonio powered a header back off the crossbar.

### News in brief

#### Dortmund young guns sparkle

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund's Erling Haaland scored twice and teenager Giovanni Reyna added another goal as they cruised past Borussia Moenchengladbach 3-0 in their season opener on Saturday. The 20-year-old Haaland scored a 54th minute penalty, awarded for a foul on Reyna, and bagged another with a sensationally quick counter-attack and a Jadon Sancho assist as Dortmund utilized their fearsome youthful attacking weapons. Norway forward Haaland, who joined in January, took his tally to 15 goals in his 16 Bundesliga games so far this year. A day after Bayern Munich opened their season with an 8-0 demolition of Schalke 04, Dortmund sent a warning to the title holders with their dominant performance over Gladbach, who will be competing in the Champions League this season. — Reuters

#### AS Roma kick off new era

**VERONA:** AS Roma were held to a 0-0 draw at Verona in their opening Serie A game of the season on Saturday as they began a new era under the ownership of the Texas-based Friedkin Group who took over the club last month. Verona hit the woodwork in each half while Roma also struck the bar but otherwise gave a disjointed performance in front of billionaire owner Dan Friedkin and his son Ryan, who both saw the match on a balmy evening at the Bentegodi stadium. The Veneto regional government had given permission for up to 1,000 fans to watch the game but the club did not have time to sell tickets, instead inviting a small number of friends and relatives of club employees. — Reuters

#### Ambitious Hertha crush Werder

**BERLIN:** Hertha Berlin beat hosts Werder Bremen 4-1 in their Bundesliga opener on Saturday to earn their first win there in 14 years as they go into the season with renewed ambition. Hertha, who announced a 127 million euro investment in June in their effort to eventually compete for silverware, barely had any chances until they struck twice in three minutes late in the first half. Peter Pekarik was left unmarked at the far post and tapped in for the lead in the 42nd minute. Forward Dodi Lukebakio then stunned the hosts - and 8,500 home fans allowed to attend the match - firing in a second on the stroke of halftime. With Werder forced to go forward, Hertha found the space to score again with Matheus Cunha wrongfooting keeper Jiri Pavlenka with a low shot before newcomer Jhon Cordoba added his first goal for the club in the 90th minute. — Reuters

#### Villa sign Lyon forward Traore

**LONDON:** Aston Villa signed Burkina Faso forward Bertrand Traore from Lyon for a reported £17 million (\$21 million) on Saturday. Traore returns to the Premier League after starting his career with Chelsea, where he spent three years with Villa's current assistant manager John Terry. The 25-year-old's signing is another boost to Villa's attacking options after the arrival of Ollie Watkins from Brentford for a club record £28 million earlier this month. "We're delighted that Bertrand has chosen to come to Villa," manager Dean Smith told his club's website. "He's a player with immense talent who will really enhance our attacking options." — AFP

Live		
Matches on TV		
(Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER		
Aston Villa v Sheffield United FC	20:00	
beIN Sports HD 1		
Wolverhampton Wanderers FC v Manchester City	22:15	
beIN Sports HD 1		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
AC Milan v Bologna FC	21:45	
beIN Sports HD 4		



# Sport Times

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

**14** Yankees rout Red Sox for 10th straight win



**15** Stars stun Lightning 4-1 in Stanley Cup final opener



**15** Celtics strike back with 117-106 win over Heat



## Liverpool's Mane sinks 10-man Chelsea

Tottenham crush Southampton 5-2; Son hits 4 in Spurs rout



LONDON: Chelsea's German striker Timo Werner jumps over a challenge from Liverpool's Spanish midfielder Thiago Alcantara during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Sadio Mane tormented Chelsea as the Liverpool forward struck twice after sparking Andreas Christensen's dismissal in the champions' 2-0 win, while Son Heung-min scored four as Tottenham crushed Southampton 5-2 yesterday. Mane was involved in the turning point at Stamford Bridge as the first clash between Premier League title contenders this season swung Liverpool's way.

In first half stoppage-time, Jordan Henderson picked out Mane's run behind Christensen and the Denmark defender responded by rugby-tackling the Senegal star to the ground. Referee Paul Tierney initially booked Christensen, but VAR told him to consult the pitchside monitor and he changed his decision to a red card. Mane grabbed his first goal of the season in the 50th minute as he met Roberto Firmino's cross with a thumping header after eluding Reece James' slack marking.

Mane was gifted his second goal as Chelsea keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga made a hash of trying to

play out from the back, allowing the Liverpool forward to intercept and slot into the empty net. It was the latest costly blunder from Kepa, who was dropped twice by Chelsea manager Frank Lampard last season despite his status as the world's most expensive keeper. Lampard will be relieved that Chelsea are reportedly close to signing Rennes' Senegal international Edouard Mendy as he looks to replace Kepa.

Thiago Alcantara made his Liverpool debut at half-time after his move from Bayern Munich, but the Spain midfielder conceded a 74th minute penalty with a foul on Timo Werner. Alisson Becker came to Thiago's rescue as he saved Jorginho's spot-kick. After their chaotic 4-3 win over Leeds on the opening weekend, this was a return to the kind of dominant display Liverpool produced so often en route to their first English title for 30 years last season. While Chelsea have spent £200 million (\$258 million) on new signings in a bid to close the gap on the

champions, Liverpool remain streets ahead of the Blues at present.

### Son shines

At St Mary's, Jose Mourinho hailed Son and Harry Kane after the pair destroyed Southampton. Just 24 hours after Tottenham signed Gareth Bale, Son delivered a virtuoso display that showed Mourinho's side already have plenty of firepower. Bale has returned to Tottenham on a season-long loan from Real Madrid seven years after he left the north London club for a then world record £85 million fee. But the Wales forward will not be available until mid-October as he recovers from a knee injury, so Mourinho needs Son and Kane to carry the attack until then.

Danny Ings put Southampton ahead in the first half, but Son equalized before the break and scored three more in the second half, with each of his goals coming from Kane assists. Kane, who hit the back of

the net twice in the first half only to have them ruled out for offside, capped a swaggering display with his second goal of the season. "Son was on fire and for me Harry Kane was the man of the match, what he did for the team," Mourinho said. "With him dropping back and connecting the game between the lines for Sonny to attack, the space they created was a problem they couldn't resolve."

After losing to Everton in their Premier League opener last weekend, Tottenham have lifted the gloom with this vibrant second half performance after the Bale coup. Neal Maupay's quick-fire double inspired Brighton's 3-0 win against Newcastle as the Seagulls claimed their first Premier League victory of the season. Graham Potter's side raced into a two-goal lead after just seven minutes at St James' Park thanks to the brace from French striker Maupay. Aaron Connolly grabbed the third for Brighton, who had Yves Bissouma sent off after his raised boot caught Jamal Lewis in the face.— AFP

## Werner-less Leipzig stroll to opening day win over Mainz

**BERLIN:** RB Leipzig showed no signs of missing Timo Werner yesterday as they strolled to a comfortable 3-1 home win over hapless Mainz in their first Bundesliga game of the season. Third in the table and Champions League semi-finalists last season, pundits in Germany had predicted a tougher ride for Leipzig this year after they sold star striker Werner to Chelsea. Yet Julian Nagelsmann's side were at their free-flowing best as they started the new campaign in front of 8,500 fans, chalking up 23 shots on their way to a deserved win.

"It was simply amazing to play in front of our fans again. We put on a great performance for them today," said Emil Forsberg, who opened the scoring

from the penalty spot and set up another for Amadou Haidara. "To beat the best teams you have to give 100 percent. If we're as motivated as we were today, we'll be among the top sides again." Leipzig have now scored 16 goals in their last three games against Mainz, who are preparing for another relegation dogfight this season. The home side burst out of the blocks, with both Dani Olmo and Marcel Halstenberg coming within inches of taking the lead in the first few minutes.

The opener came after just a quarter of an hour, as Olmo was tripped by Leandro Barreiro in the box and Forsberg slotted home the resulting penalty. Danish international Yussuf Poulsen then sent a fizzing shot over the crossbar before doubling the lead with a looping header on 21 minutes. After Forsberg hit the post on the half-hour mark, it seemed a rout was on the cards. Jean-Philippe Mateta beat the offside trap just after the break to bring Mainz back into the game, but Haidara linked up with Forsberg just a few minutes later to make it 3-1 and put Leipzig out of reach. — AFP

## Osimhen lifts Napoli

**MILAN:** Victor Osimhen proved decisive on his Serie A debut inspiring Napoli to a season-opening 2-0 win at Parma yesterday, the first game in which fans were allowed to return to an Italian stadium. Italy's government from yesterday allowed up to 1,000 spectators at open-air sports events. And Rino Gattuso's Napoli and new Parma coach Fabio Liverani's side faced off on front of a sparse gathering at the Stadio Ennio Tardini. After a barren first hour in Emilia Romagna, Osimhen came off the bench to provide an electric shock for Gattuso's side. Dries Mertens and Lorenzo Insigne scored both goals after his arrival which were set up by Mexican Hirving Lozano.

"Osimhen at this moment has an extra gear," said Gattuso of the 21-year-old Napoli paid French club Lille a club record 80 million euros (\$94.6 million) for this summer. — AFP

## Mbappe shines; PSG hit top gear in Nice

**NICE:** France forward Kylian Mbappe marked his return to action with a vintage performance and a goal as champions Paris St Germain rediscovered their form with an impressive 3-0 win at Nice in Ligue 1 yesterday. Mbappe, who missed the opening three games after contracting the coronavirus, fired PSG ahead with a 38th-minute penalty and had a big part in Angel Di Maria's strike before Marquinhos headed home the third in the second half.

"I was just happy to put the jersey back on because here in Paris when you miss a game, it's like you've missed 10," Mbappe told Canal Plus television. "I spent the last few days watching television and I couldn't wait to come back. It was nice to score but we are still going through a complicated period and it's not easy to live with. — Reuters