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Gun salutes fired across UK to mark Prince Philip's death

Amir condoles with Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles



LONDON: The Death Gun Salute is fired by the Honorable Artillery Company to mark the passing of Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (inset), at the Tower of London yesterday, a day after his death at the age of 99. —AFP

LONDON: Gun salutes echoed around the United Kingdom yesterday as the military paid solemn tribute to Queen Elizabeth II's husband Prince Philip after his death aged 99. The coordinated 41-round volleys to the former Royal Navy commander were fired at a rate of one per minute from 12:00 (1100 GMT) in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, as well as at naval

bases, from warships at sea, and in the British territory Gibraltar. Similar salutes - the most according to military protocol - were also held in Canberra and Wellington, as the queen is head of state in Australia and New Zealand.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Queen Elizabeth II on the death of Prince Philip on Friday. HH the Amir hailed the efforts and support Prince Philip showed towards Kuwait's issues, adding that the UK lost one of its most influential figures. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Queen Elizabeth.

HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf also addressed a cable to Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, expressing deepest condolences on the demise of his father. HH the Amir, in the cable, wished Prince Philip forgiveness, and the Royal Family patience, recalling his noble stances towards Kuwait and the highly-esteemed stature he had enjoyed at the local and international

SEE PAGE 5

levels, as well as his contributions for serving his homeland. HH the Crown

Prince Sheikh Mishal and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah sent similar cables to Prince Charles.

At the Tower of London, a crowd of more than 100 onlookers kept a respectful silence as they watched the Honorable Artillery Company fire shots on the banks of the River Thames. One onlooker, Heather Uttridge, said she had come to show her respects "for a superhuman". "It's a great loss to not just the Queen, but actually to the country. He represented stability for all of our lives," the 65-year-old told AFP. **Continued on Page 2**

Saudi executes three soldiers for 'high treason'

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday executed three soldiers for "high treason", the defense ministry said, in a rare public announcement that accused them of colluding with an unspecified enemy. The executions come as a Saudi-led military campaign intensifies in neighboring Yemen.

The soldiers were convicted of "the crime of high treason in cooperation with the enemy" in a way that threatens the kingdom and its military interests, the ministry said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The statement named the three soldiers - Mohammed bin Ahmed, Shafer bin Issa and Hamoud bin Ibrahim - without identifying which enemy they were accused of aiding.

Saudi Arabia views Iran as its main regional foe and identifies Yemen's Tehran-aligned Houthi rebels as a major security threat to the oil-rich kingdom. The statement makes a rare announcement of military executions in the kingdom, which is known to be highly secretive about its armed forces.

"The fact that the names of the decedents were publicized means the Saudis must consider their alleged misconduct to be exceptionally egregious and thus worthy of exemplary punishment," David Des Roches, from the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, told AFP.

The defense ministry said the soldiers were executed in the military's Southern Command, based close to the border with Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is leading a six-year campaign against the Houthi rebels. Riyadh led a military coalition into Yemen in March 2015 to prop up the internationally recognized government, but it has struggled to oust the Houthis. It has also faced a surge in missile and drone attacks against the kingdom.

Fighting has intensified for the key Yemeni region of Marib, with 53 pro-government and **Continued on Page 2**

Iran starts up advanced centrifuges

TEHRAN: Iran announced yesterday it has started up advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges in a breach of its undertakings under a troubled 2015 nuclear deal, days after the start of talks on rescuing the accord. The United States had said Friday that it had offered "very serious" ideas on

reviving the hobbled agreement but was waiting for Tehran to reciprocate, something yesterday's move signally failed to do.

President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated a cascade of 164 IR-6 centrifuges for producing enriched uranium, as well as two test cascades - of 30 IR-5 and 30 IR-6S devices respectively - at Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant, in a ceremony broadcast by state television. State TV aired no images of the injection of uranium hexafluoride gas into the cascades, but broadcast a link with

Continued on Page 2



A screen grab from a videoconference shows views of centrifuges and devices at Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant, as well as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani delivering a speech yesterday. — AFP

Lockdowns as vaccine efforts stumble

MUMBAI: Fresh lockdowns and curfews were imposed on tens of millions of people from India to Argentina yesterday, as COVID-19 infections surged again and vaccine rollouts were hampered by shortages and scares. In India, the worst-hit state of Maharashtra was running out of vaccines as the health system buckled

under the weight of the contagion, which has killed 2.9 million people worldwide.

Having let its guard down with mass religious festivals, political rallies and spectators at cricket matches, the world's second-most populous nation has added more than a million new infections since late March. Every weekend from yesterday until the end of April, Maharashtra's 125 million people will be confined to their homes unless travelling or shopping for food or medicine.

"I'm not for the lockdown at all but I don't think the government has any **Continued on Page 2**



MUMBAI: A Hindu priest is seen near the deserted Chowpatty beach during a weekend lockdown imposed by the state government amidst rising COVID-19 cases yesterday. — AFP

Egypt unveils 3,000-yr-old 'lost' city

LUXOR, Egypt: Archaeologists yesterday showed off their finds at what they say is the "largest" ancient city ever found in Egypt, dating to a golden age of the pharaohs 3,000 years ago. At the site near Luxor, home of the legendary Valley of the Kings, workers

carefully carried ancient pots and showed human and animal remains dug up from the earth as members of the media toured around curved brick walls and rudimentary streets.

"This is a large city that was lost. It was connected with the god Aton and Amenhotep III," famed Egyptologist Zahi Hawass enthusiastically told reporters yesterday. "We found three major districts: one for administration, one for workers to sleep in and another for industry," he said. Spaces include workshops for drying meat, making **Continued on Page 2**



LUXOR: A picture taken yesterday shows a view of a 3,000-year old-city, dubbed The Rise of Aten. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Amir sends letter to Turkish president on boosting ties

Foreign Minister meets Turkish Parliament speaker



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan meets Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan receives a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, delivered by Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Speaker of the Grand Turkish National Assembly Mustafa Sentop.



Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah leads Kuwait's delegation during a meeting with Speaker of the Grand Turkish National Assembly Mustafa Sentop.

ANKARA: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a written message to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dealing with the close relations between the two friendly countries and means of boosting these ties in various spheres as well as issues of common concern. Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for

Cabinet Affairs, delivered the message to the Turkish President during his official visit to the Turkish capital Ankara, where he headed the State of Kuwait delegation that took part in the second session of the Kuwaiti-Turkish Cooperation Committee on Thursday. The meeting with President Erdogan was attended by the State of Kuwait Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad met Speaker of the Grand Turkish National Assembly Mustafa Sentop, on the occasion of his official visit to Ankara, Turkey. Sheikh Dr Ahmad headed his accompanying delegation to chair the second session of the Kuwaiti-Turkish committee for cooperation in Ankara. During the meeting, both sides discussed bilateral relations, besides ways to

enhance joint cooperation in various fields. From the Kuwaiti side, the meeting was attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador Zawawi, General Consul in Istanbul Mohammed Fahad Al-Mohammed, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's Office Affairs Advisor Ahmad Al-Shuraim, Deputy Foreign Minister Assistant for Europe Affairs Counselor Mohammad Hayati and some Ministry's officials. — KUNA

Gun salutes fired across UK...

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Alexander Beaten, 30, said the royal couple, who had been married for 73 years, had been an integral part of British identity and culture. "We can disagree with the government, we can disagree with so many things that the country may or may not do, but the Queen and Prince Philip are just such a constant," he said.

Sporting events, including Premier League football matches and at English county championship cricket, held moments of silence as part of worldwide tributes to mark the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, during a period of national mourning. The death of the duke, the longest serving royal consort in British history, on Friday is a profound loss for the 94-year-old monarch, who once described her loyal husband as her "strength and stay" throughout her long reign.

Flags are flying at half-mast on government buildings and will do so until the morning after his funeral on April 17. The well-rehearsed protocol for the duke's death - codenamed "Forth Bridge" - includes the recall of parliament tomorrow. British television stations cleared their schedules for special broadcasts looking back on his life, although the BBC said it had received complaints about the blanket coverage.

Westminster Abbey, where the couple married in 1947, tolled its tenor bell 99 times on Friday, once for each year of the prince's life. Political campaigning for May local elections stopped, and loyalist leaders in Northern Ireland, who have been rioting for days amid heightening political tensions in the British province, urged a pause in violence on Friday.

The call - "as a mark of respect to the Queen" - was largely heeded. Marches that had been planned by members of the pro-UK unionist community in Belfast were cancelled yesterday. But despite the calls for calm, some lower-level disorder continued overnight.

Philip - who would have celebrated his 100th birthday in June - had been ill for some time, and spent more than a month in hospital from Feb 16 being treated for a pre-existing heart condition and an infection. Despite looking frail on his release from hospital on March 16, hopes were raised for his recovery.

But the queen announced Philip's passing "with deep sorrow" after he died peacefully on Friday morning at Windsor Castle, west of London. Philip's eldest son and the queen's heir, Prince Charles, reminisced about his father in pre-recorded comments aired in a special BBC program on Friday. "Well, you know he didn't suffer fools. So if you said anything that was in any way ambiguous - he'd say 'make up your mind!'" Charles said. The queen and the duke's two youngest children - Prince Andrew and Prince Edward - both visited Windsor Castle yesterday morning. Prince Charles saw his mother there on Friday.

The duke's death dominated Britain's newspapers yesterday. "We're all weeping with you Ma'am," The Sun tabloid said on its front page. The Daily Mail splashed a picture of the queen looking at her husband along with the headline "Farewell, my beloved" on the front page of its 144-page souvenir edition.

Tributes came in from home and abroad, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson giving "thanks, as a nation and a kingdom, for the extraordinary life and work of Prince Philip". Political and faith leaders in Britain, and from the United States, Europe and Commonwealth countries including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and Pakistan also paid their respects. — Agencies

between the temples of Ramses III and Amenhotep III near Luxor, some 500 km south of Cairo. Amenhotep III inherited an empire that stretched from the Euphrates River in modern Iraq and Syria to Sudan and died around 1354 BC, ancient historians say. He ruled for nearly four decades, a reign known for its opulence and the grandeur of its monuments, including the Colossi of Memnon - two massive stone statues near Luxor that represent him and his wife.

Betsy Bryan, professor of Egyptian art and archaeology at Johns Hopkins University, had said in a statement this week that the find was the "second most important archaeological discovery since the tomb of Tutankhamun" nearly a century ago. "The archaeological layers have laid untouched for thousands of years, left by the ancient residents as if it were yesterday," the team's statement said. Archaeologists have unearthed items of jewelry, colored pottery vessels, scarab beetle amulets and mud bricks bearing seals of Amenhotep III. — AFP

Egypt unveils 3,000-yr-old...

Continued from Page 1

clothes and sandals, and crafting amulets and small statues.

Mostafa Waziri, head of the country's Supreme Council of Antiquities said the site was not limited to buildings. "We can see... economic activity, workshops and ovens," he said. Hawass had announced earlier this week the discovery of a "lost golden city", and the archaeological team said the find was "the largest" ancient city ever uncovered in Egypt. "We found one portion of the city only," Hawass told AFP yesterday. "The city extends to the west and the north."

The team began excavations in September

Lockdowns as vaccine efforts...

Continued from Page 1

other choice," media professional Neha Tyagi, 27, told AFP in Maharashtra's megacity Mumbai. "This lockdown could have been totally avoided if people would take the virus seriously."

The crisis is being exacerbated by a shortage of vaccines. India has so far inoculated 94 million of its 1.3 billion people, but The Times of India reported Friday that states on average had just over five days of stock left, citing health ministry data, with some regions already grappling with severe shortages.

Iran starts up advanced...

Continued from Page 1

engineers at the plant who said they had started the process and showed rows of centrifuges.

Rouhani also launched tests on the "mechanical stability" of its latest-generation IR-9 centrifuges, and remotely opened a centrifuge assembly factory to replace a plant that was badly damaged in a July 2020 "terrorist" blast. Under the 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers, Iran is currently only allowed to use "first-generation" IR-1 centrifuges for production, and to test a limited number of IR-4 and IR-5 devices.

The US unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, who reimposed crippling sanctions on Tehran, which responded by stepping back from several of its commitments under the deal. Trump's successor Joe Biden has said he is prepared to return, arguing the deal had - until Washington's withdrawal - been successful in dramatically scaling back Iran's

Stay-at-home orders were also set to come into force for the eight million inhabitants of Bogota, as the Colombian capital battled a third wave of infections, adding to curfews already covering seven million across four other major cities. Elsewhere in South America, Argentina entered a night-time curfew Friday running from midnight to 06:00 am every day until April 30.

It will be in force in the country's highest-risk areas, mainly urban centers, where bars and restaurants will close at 11:00 pm. Both Argentina and Colombia have recorded about 2.5 million coronavirus cases, numbers surpassed only by Brazil in the region.

All of France is subject to restrictions of some form, while the German government's attempts to curb movement and commerce have been stymied by several states refusing to go along with the proposals. — AFP

nuclear activities.

Iran's latest move to step up uranium enrichment follows an opening round of talks in Vienna Tuesday with representatives of the remaining parties to the deal on bringing the US back into it. The Vienna talks are focused not only on lifting the crippling economic sanctions Trump reimposed, but also on bringing Iran back into compliance.

All sides said the talks, in which Washington is not participating directly but is relying on the European Union as an intermediary, got off to a good start. Iran has demanded that the US first lift all sanctions imposed by Trump, including a sweeping unilateral ban on its oil exports, before it falls back in line. The "US - which caused this crisis - should return to full compliance first," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, adding that "Iran will reciprocate following rapid verification."

Washington has demanded movement from Tehran. "The United States team put forward a very serious idea and demonstrated a seriousness of purpose on coming back into compliance if Iran comes back into compliance," a US official told reporters as talks broke for the weekend. But the official said the United States was waiting for its efforts to be "reciprocated" by Iran. — AFP

the world's highest rates of executions and what human rights campaigners call an opaque judicial system. But earlier this year, the government-backed Human Rights Commission (HRC) reported a sharp drop in executions in 2020, as the kingdom seeks to blunt international criticism of its human rights record.

The HRC said it documented 27 executions in 2020, a decrease of 85 percent over the previous year, due in part to a moratorium on the death penalty for drug-related offences. Since the beginning of this year, Saudi Arabia has carried out the death penalty against 20 people, according to a tally based on official figures published by state media. — AFP

Saudi executes three soldiers...

Continued from Page 1

Houthi rebel fighters dead in the past 24 hours, loyalist military officials said yesterday. The Houthis have been trying to seize oil-rich Marib, the government's last significant pocket of territory in the north, since February.

The kingdom has long faced criticism for one of

Local

Kuwait curfew: What you need to know

KUWAIT: Kuwait imposed a curfew from 7:00 pm to 5:00 am until April 22, 2021 to help curb the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases registered in recent weeks. During the curfew hours, pharmacies, medical stores, co-operative societies and supermarkets are allowed to continue operation only through delivery services, while restaurants and cafes are allowed to deliver food from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm (7:00 pm to 3:00 am during Ramadan). Also during the curfew, people are allowed to go to prayers at mosques only by walking, and the government allowed people to practice walking and jogging from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm (7:00 pm to 10:00 pm during Ramadan). The government meanwhile allowed salons and health clubs to reopen during the day but kept restaurants and cafes closed except for drive-through and delivery services. Meanwhile, taxis are allowed to carry only two passengers.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched a booking service, allowing people to shop from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm during the curfew hours (7:00 pm to 12:00 am during Ramadan). The service is valid for all co-ops and supermarkets around Kuwait. To book an appointment, a shopper should visit www.moci.shop, enter the required information (civil ID number and serial number, contact number and email address), the reason for appointment (food supply center) and the time and date of the appointment. The shopper would then receive a barcode to show once they reach the shopping center.

Where to obtain a curfew pass?

Citizens and residents that need a pass during the curfew hours to leave their homes can apply for a pass at <https://www.paci.gov.kw/>. The pass is available for those in need of emergency medical treatment, doctor's visits, blood donation, COVID-19 swabs and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Co-op delivery during curfew hours

During curfew hours, co-ops, grocery stores and other markets will be allowed to offer delivery services. Most co-ops will accept orders via delivery. Here is an incomplete list of co-op WhatsApp numbers. Each co-op will be responsible for deciding if and when they provide delivery services and not all may be providing.

Omariya Co-op
WhatsApp 6041-0067

Farwaniya Co-op
WhatsApp 6767-8211

Qairawan Co-op
WhatsApp 9000-3749

Jahra Co-op
WhatsApp 5160-2458

Abdulla Al-Mubarak Co-op
WhatsApp 6066-6338

Nuzha Co-op
WhatsApp 9784-5531

Khaitan Co-op
WhatsApp 6777-9745

Ardhiya Co-op
WhatsApp 6902-0779

Rabiya Co-op
WhatsApp 2438-8316

Wafra Farm Co-op
Tel: 9883-5245 / 5170-0085

Salmiya Co-op
Tel: 22253225

Jabriya Co-op
Tel: 1805-353
WhatsApp 6566-6084

Rawdha & Hawally
WhatsApp 9662-2883

Shaab Co-op
WhatsApp 9090-4455

Wafra Co-op
WhatsApp 5055-0539

Keifan Co-op
WhatsApp 5178-1719

Rehab Co-op
WhatsApp 9222-2358

Mishref Co-op
WhatsApp 5055-9900

Faiha Co-op
Tel: 1861-000
WhatsApp 9098-6000

Rumaithiya Co-op
WhatsApp 6066-0045

Bayan Co-op
WhatsApp 9004-2500

Fahaheel Co-op
WhatsApp 5178-9951

Adan & Qusour Co-op
Tel: 5034-3111 / 6593-3975

Salam Co-op
WhatsApp 9788-7832

Zain implements 'Kuwait Mobile ID' app for digital identity verification in branches

First operator in Kuwait to utilize the app in collaboration with PACI

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its collaboration with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) to implement the use of the Kuwait Mobile ID app for digital and secure verification of identities during transactions at any of its branches across the country. Zain is the first telecom operator in Kuwait to implement the usage of this app, a step that comes in line with the company's comprehensive digital transformation journey.

This collaboration reflects Zain's ongoing efforts to continue its active partnership with the public sector, something that is well in line with its integrated strategy towards full digital transformation. The announcement also comes under the umbrella of the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait Vision 2035), a plan that has digitization at its core.

Zain has completed all the technical requirements needed to integrate its backend systems along with those of PACI. All Kuwait Mobile ID users, both citizens and residents, can now present the app via their smart-

phones when completing any official transactions that require identity verification at Zain branches. Through the app, the customer's certified digital civil ID will be accepted for verification, authorization, e-signatures, and other digital services.

The Kuwait Mobile ID app can replace the use of the physical civil ID card, as it is considered a legal identity that is issued and accredited by PACI. This step will contribute to eliminating fraud and identity theft attempts, in addition to being an easy and quick method for automatically filling in customers' official data, which saves both time and effort. Furthermore, using the app minimizes the need for using papers and printing, which contributes to keeping the environment green.

Zain recently reopened many of its main branches in an all-new digital theme, a step that goes in line with the company's digital transformation strategy. The implementation of Kuwait Mobile ID is another step towards achieving full digitization at Zain's points of sale, reflecting the company's keenness on offering the



latest and best digital services to its customers to maintain the leadership position in enjoys in the Kuwaiti market.

Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all the services it offers to its customers. The company affirms its continuous efforts in meeting customers' needs and aspirations, and delivers its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies. Zain constantly looks at ways to improve the retail experience for its customers, including providing them with the latest solutions to better serve their needs through the biggest network of branches in Kuwait.

The Public Authority for Civil

Information (PACI) offers the Kuwait Mobile ID app to present users with a secure, mobile-based, and certified digital ID that is capable of identity verification, authentication to online e-services, and applying a trusted digital signature to documents and transactions within government entities and private sector companies. All Kuwaiti citizens and residents of Kuwait who have previously issued physical civil ID cards may set up a digital one via the app, which is available on all main app stores, including the App Store for iOS users, the Play Store for Android users, as well as the Huawei AppGallery.

Zain caters to underprivileged families' needs by delivering 'Ramadan Machla'

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of its first charitable initiative on the occasion of the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan by delivering 'Ramadan Machla' (food supplies) in collaboration with its Strategic Partner, the Kuwait Food Bank. The initiative aims at catering to underprivileged families' needs before the arrival of the Holy Month and during the pandemic.

Zain delivered food supplies to the Kuwait Food Bank storage facility at Sulaibiya with the presence of Kuwait Food Bank Vice Chairman Meshal Al-Ansari and Zain's team. This year, over 10,000 individuals are set to benefit from the supplies provided by Zain before the arrival of the Holy Month. The supplies will be distributed via special drive-thru routes that were built for this purpose in an effort to abide by health measures and protect everyone from the danger of infection.

The 'Ramadan Machla' initiative is one of the main pillars of Zain's annual Ramadan campaign, which comes in line with the company's Corporate

Social Responsibility and Sustainability strategy to serve the needs of underprivileged families in the country. Zain is keen on strategically partnering with the various certified charitable organizations, including the Kuwait Food Bank.

This year, Zain's distribution plan features the delivery of food supplies to the biggest certified non-profit organizations across Kuwait to ensure their delivery to those in need before the arrival of the Holy Month and during the pandemic in order to guarantee that disadvantaged families have enough quantities of the most basic supplies. The company hopes this initiative has a deep positive impact on the community's various segments, especially the most vulnerable ones, during such circumstances.

Zain's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan aims at helping less fortunate people to enjoy Ramadan happily, as well as celebrating the true spirit the Holy month brings by supporting and launching humanitarian and charity campaigns.



Kuwait Food Bank Vice Chairman Meshal Al-Ansari with Zain officials and the bank's team.



Zain's team delivering the food supplies.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Wishes for speedy recovery

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times management and staff wish Mr Javaid Ahmed, our senior colleague, a speedy recovery after he underwent an eye surgery. Well-wishers may contact Mr Javaid or send messages on WhatsApp to 99476967.



Mr Javaid Ahmed

Kuwait oil price down 27 cents

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 27 cents to \$61.89 per barrel on Friday as oppose to \$62.16 pb the previous day, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. On the global level, the price of the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate both went down by 16 and 22 cents respectively, ending at \$63.04 pb and \$59.38 pb. — KUNA



Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A cat walks in front of a patrol vehicle outside a police station in Kuwait. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Human Rights society signs agreement to educate workers on rights

KUWAIT: Khaled Al-Hamidi, Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights, announced that the Kuwait Society for Human Rights has signed a partnership agreement with the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to cooperate together in educating migrant workers in Kuwait of their rights guaranteed by law.

Hamidi said: The agreement resulted in educating workers about their rights by providing legal consultation service to workers in the private sec-

tor and those who are subject to the Kuwaiti Labor Law No 6 of 2010, or workers in the domestic sector who are subject to the Domestic Workers Law No 68 of 2015. Workers in the two sectors can call the hotline 22215150 or enter the electronic platform and obtain any legal advice directly in five different languages: English, Arabic, Filipino, Hindi and Urdu.

According to Hamidi, during the period of the 16-month agreement, psychological and social support will be provided to those wishing to obtain it. The Society has appointed a psychosocial expert to provide psychological and social counseling. Periodic reports will be issued related to monitoring labor market variables in Kuwait. Legal support will also be provided to workers whose cases have been transferred to labor courts and who cannot bear the burdens and costs of attorneys-at-law.

Hussein Al-Otaibi, Secretary General of the Society, said that the Kuwait Society for Human

Rights aspires, through the agreement, to continue its civil activities in bearing its responsibility in order to create a culture and legal awareness among migrant workers in Kuwait by providing them with legal advice and direct support for their cases in courts.

Otaibi pointed out that the agreement was signed in implementation of the directives of the high leadership urging Kuwaitis to lead humanitarian service initiatives that give the State of Kuwait its status and consideration, as a global humanitarian center.

The project is being implemented as a third phase of the 'Together' project on educating migrant workers about their rights in Kuwait, which was implemented for the first time in cooperation with the Dutch embassy in Kuwait, while it was implemented for the second time in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

KRCS sends 3 food aid trucks to Syrian refugees in Jordan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) sent three trucks carrying food aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan on Friday. The trucks are carrying 60 tons of food for the month of Ramadan, and will be distributed in cooperation with Jordan Red Crescent Society, head of emergency and disasters department at KRCS Yousef Al-Meraj said. He added that the society is continuously aiding Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan to ease their suffering. — KUNA



NBK, Refood support low-income families in Ramadan initiative

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Refood continue supporting low-income families in "Ramadan Basket" initiative. This is a food solidarity initiative that is launched as part of NBK's Annual Ramadan Program "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan". Refood and NBK volunteers collected, sorted and stored surplus food and goods to share to the 3000 unprivileged families in Kuwait. Through this initiative, rescuing food and saving the environment go hand-in-hand.

NBK and Refood volunteers deliver the "Ramadan Basket" via refrigerated trucks to maintain the quality and safety of products. The baskets are tailored to meet long-term family's needs and include food and non-food high quality items as well as household requirements. The main objective

of this initiative is to bridge the gap between the excess food in the industry and the lack of food with in the beneficiary communities.

NBK in partnership with Refood is pleased to create such an initiative that encourages sustainable solutions and reduces food waste. This partnership involves educating the Kuwaiti public about food waste and its dangers. NBK is committed to support Kuwaiti promising projects that aims to give back to Kuwait. NBK has maintained its leadership as a pioneer in adopting initiatives for the benefit of the community. NBK is constantly seeking to further enhance its investments promoting a sustainable future.

Refood is a non-profit company that aims to reduce waste from the food sector by collecting excess and near expiry products from local suppliers and manufacturers. Refood collaborates with the industry's largest food suppliers in Kuwait to save the largest possible quantity of products from ending up in landfills. Refood provides a Beneficiary registration service. Families that meet the eligibility requirements can register and subscribe to available Refood programs to benefit from the packages.



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Myanmar's UN envoy urges action against junta amid carnage

Biden aims \$1.5 trillion budget at health, education, social services

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GLASGOW: Billboards with an image of Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh are displayed alongside the Clydeside Expressway in Glasgow, Scotland on Friday after the announcement of the death of Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. —AFP

Prince Philip: The strength behind the crown

The silent stalwart who shelved his ambitions to support Queen Elizabeth II

LONDON: He often grabbed headlines for his gaffes, but Prince Philip was portrayed by royalists as the silent stalwart, who shelved his personal ambitions to support Queen Elizabeth II over seven decades. Born into the Greek royal family—although he preferred to be thought of as a Danish prince—the Duke of Edinburgh never wore a crown himself.

Yet he was a permanent public presence at the queen's side, who called him her "strength and stay". Like her, his life was ruled by duty and tradition, putting his considerable energy behind numerous charities and carrying out 22,219 solo public engagements since Elizabeth rose to the throne in 1952. But Philip regularly got into hot water for what were politely referred to as "politically incorrect" off-the-cuff remarks—quips that from anyone else would be seen as downright racist. "You managed not to get eaten, then?" he remarked to a British student who had trekked in Papua New Guinea in 1998. And on a historic state visit to China in 1986, the self-described "cantankerous old sod" warned a group of British students: "If you stay here much longer, you'll all be slitty-eyed." There was also his reputation as a womanizer, something that worried the royal family even before he and queen married. They reportedly found the young naval officer "rough, ill-mannered and uneducated" and worried he "would probably not be faithful". The man the queen's formidable mother privately referred to as "The Hun" because of his German Battenberg blood, was quickly suspected of a string of affairs, which would later be resurrected in the hit Netflix series "The Crown".

But Philip laughed off talk of philandering—with Sarah, the Duchess of York's mother often cited as one of his former lovers. "For the last 40 years I have never moved anywhere without a policeman accompanying me. So how the hell could I get away with anything like that?" he said. At home, the duke had a reputation for being cold towards his four children, Charles, Anne, Andrew and Edward.

But many observers considered Philip to be the glue that held together the royal family. And in a rarely seen softer side, it emerged the late princess Diana addressed him as "Dearest Pa" in letters in which he offered solace over her deteriorating marriage to his eldest son Charles.



In this file photo taken in 2007 shows Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (left) walking at Broadlands, Hampshire, earlier in the year. —AFP photos



LONDON: In this file photo taken on November 18, 2007 Britain's Queen Elizabeth II (Centre foreground) and Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (right foreground) are joined at Clarence House in London by Prince Charles, (left foreground) Prince Edward, (right background) Princess Anne (center background) and Prince Andrew (left background) on the occasion of a dinner hosted by The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall to mark the forthcoming Diamond Wedding Anniversary of The Queen and The Duke, 18 November 2007.

ter-in-law Camilla, wife of Prince Charles.

Never one to talk about his own feelings, the prince admitted in a rare 2011 interview that he had carved out his own role in the royal family by "trial and error". Asked if he had been successful, he told the BBC in his typical forthright manner: "I couldn't care less. Who cares what I think about it? I mean it's ridiculous." But the queen has been more forthcoming about his worth. "He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years," she said in a speech to mark their golden wedding anniversary in 1997.

Exile from Greece

Prince Philippos of Greece and Denmark was born on a kitchen table on Corfu on June 10, 1921, the only son of prince Andrew of Greece—the younger brother of Greece's king Constantine—and princess Alice of Battenberg. Aged just 18 months, he and his family were evacuated in a



LONDON: A girl adds a flower to tributes laid outside Windsor Castle, in Windsor, west of London.

'Trial and error'

Philip, the world's longest serving consort, was blessed with robust health for much of his long life, and conducted his final official appearance in August 2017 at the age of 96. But he was admitted to hospital with various complaints as he advanced into his 90s, most recently for a heart procedure. In January 2019, at the age of 97 and still driving, he was involved in a car accident near the royal estate of Sandringham in eastern England. His Land Rover Freelander overturned and two other motorists were injured. Prosecutors decided not to press charges after the prince, who walked away unscathed, voluntarily surrendered his driving license. The accident saw him withdraw from public life and he spent much of 2020 in isolation with the queen at their Windsor Castle home west of London, shielding from the coronavirus pandemic.

But he made several appearances, including at the wedding ceremony of his granddaughter Princess Beatrice in July, four months before celebrating his own 73rd wedding anniversary. He also attended a military ceremony at Windsor in July when he handed over his ceremonial military role as Colonel-in-Chief of The Rifles regiment to his daughter.

Britain's press bids farewell to 'indomitable Duke'

LONDON: Britain's famously partisan press were unusually united yesterday, as they led tributes to Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth II, the day after his death at the age of 99. Most focused on the importance of their seven-decade union to the monarch, with the Times and the Guardian calling him the queen's "steadfast support", while the Daily Star called him "her rock" and the "man who made Lilibet (his pet name for the queen) laugh".

Scotland's Press and Journal bid "Farewell to the 'royal

rock" too, alongside an old photo of a younger royal couple with their children wearing kilts; and the Times' Scottish edition carried an old quote from the queen, "my strength and stay". Tabloids the Daily Mirror and the Daily Mail, normally found on diametrically opposite ends of the political spectrum, saw a rare convergence of front pages, both running full page pictures of the queen and Philip with the headlines "Farewell, my beloved," and "Goodbye, my beloved" respectively.

The Mirror reported that the Duke of Edinburgh's death had "united (the royal family) in grief", with Prince Harry putting aside recent tensions "as he scrambles to return home" for the funeral.

A bumper issue Daily Mail contained an account of the duke's final days, "the sun on his face and a rug on his lap... with his 'Lilibet'". "We're all weeping with you, Ma'am," ran the Sun's headline, paired with a picture of the couple on their wedding day, as well as more recent photos of the two. "What an extraordinary life. What epic

British Royal Navy ship from politically unstable Greece, with the toddler reputedly carried in a cot made from an orange box. The family settled in Paris with young Philip heading to the austere Gordonstoun public school in Aberdeenshire, northeast Scotland, where he became head boy. He pursued his love of sailing and at the outbreak of World War II in 1939 became an outstanding Royal Navy cadet before serving on battleships in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. As the war progressed, Philip was mentioned in dispatches and promoted through the ranks. By 1945, he was a first lieutenant and witnessed the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay with the British Pacific Fleet. Philip had been formally introduced to princess Elizabeth, the future queen, in July 1939. The pair shared a great-great grandmother—Queen Victoria—making them distant cousins, and they kept in touch during the war, meeting on a number of occasions. But it was not until July 1947 that their engagement was announced and they tied the knot that year on November 20 at Westminster Abbey in London.

'Duty to serve her'

The royal couple made their first major tour together—to Canada and the United States—in 1951. By now a commander, Philip's naval career was cut short by the death of Elizabeth's father, king George VI, in 1952, which brought her to the throne. "Prince Philip was a highly talented seaman," said his contemporary Terence Lewin. "If he hadn't become what he did, he would have been First Sea Lord (chief of naval staff) and not me." Philip once admitted the curtailment of his career was "disappointing" but said, "being married to the queen, it seemed to me that my first duty was to serve her in the best way I could".

Yet he remained closely involved with the armed services and the queen marked his 90th birthday in 2011 by appointing him Lord High Admiral—the titular head of the British Royal Navy and an office until then held by her. He was a keen flyer, clocking well over 5,000 hours of pilot time, and turned his

love of horses to competition, first as a polo player and later representing Britain at carriage-driving.

He also maintained an interest in science, technology and the environment and for years drove a liquid petroleum gas taxi around London. His greatest legacy may lie in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which was set up in 1956 to develop the confidence and skills of young people aged 15 to 25 in Britain and the Commonwealth. His youngest son, Edward, said its importance was likely to be greater due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on formal education. "I think the role of the non-formal in this present climate is going to be even more important than ever before because it's those skills and experiences which are going to be looked for," he told Sky News television Philip was also patron of a number of organizations, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, and chancellor of the universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh. —AFP



LONDON: This file photo taken on January 01, 1952 the Royal British couple, Queen Elizabeth II, and her husband Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, with their two children, Charles, Prince of Wales (left) and Princess Anne (right).



BRIGHTON: A spread shows the front pages of British newspapers reporting on the death of Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, is pictured in Brighton, south England yesterday. —AFP

International

Biden aims \$1.5 trillion budget at health, education, social services

President keeps cap on Pentagon budget at \$715 billion

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's administration on Friday unveiled a more than \$1.5 trillion budget proposal that would see funding for health, education and social services eclipse defense spending, in a reversal of his predecessor's policies. The discretionary spending request for fiscal year 2022 would allocate \$769.4 billion to non-defense programs, surpassing the \$753 billion apportioned for defense, which was prioritized under Donald Trump but only slightly increased under Biden's proposal. The Biden administration characterized the increase in non-defense spending as necessary to help the country recover from the COVID-19 downturn and create a more equitable economy in the years ahead. "The President's funding request makes things fairer," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

"It injects capital into communities where capital is usually hard to come by. It will make paying taxes a more seamless process for millions of Americans. And it makes sure that corporations actually pay what they owe." The nearly 16 percent increase in non-defense spending would the total to 3.3 percent of GDP, about equal to its historical average over the past three decades, Shalanda D. Young, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), said in a letter to lawmakers.

Outside of the Defense Department, Health and Human Services would receive the most funding at \$133.7 billion, a jump of more than 23 percent from the prior fiscal year, which runs from October to September. The Education Department would get a 40.8 percent funding increase that would bring its budget to \$102.8 billion.

"Over the past decade, due in large measure to overly restrictive budget caps, the nation significantly underinvested in core public services, benefits and protections," Young wrote, saying the plan would be a reversal of that austerity.

The budget is a yearly undertaking for US presidents, signaling their major funding priorities, but must be approved by Congress. The plan also proposes a funding increase of more than 10 percent to \$13.3 billion for the US tax authority, Treasury's Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which would help it improve its services and better monitor corporations and high earners.

It also aims \$36.5 billion at schools serving poor populations, \$6.5 billion for federal health research and \$10.7 billion to fight the opioid epidemic. The spending bill will be considered by a Congress where



WASHINGTON: This file photo shows the Pentagon in Washington, DC. US President Joe Biden kept an effective lid on US military spending in his first budget draft, proposing to spend \$715 billion, a marginal hike after sharp increases under predecessor Donald Trump. - AFP

Democrats hold small majorities in the House and the Senate, and where lawmakers currently are debating the \$2 trillion jobs and infrastructure bill Biden unveiled last week.

Patrick Leahy, Democratic chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, called the proposal's spending "necessary and urgent," and tied caps in federal spending over the last decade to the terrible toll wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States. "I look forward to receiving the administration's full budget in the coming weeks so that Congress can pass a budget resolution and the Senate Appropriations Committee can begin its work of marking up bills," he said in a statement.

Biden kept an effective lid on US military spending in his first budget draft, proposing to spend \$715 billion, a marginal hike after sharp increases under predecessor Donald Trump. But Republican lawmakers quickly blasted the proposal as weakening the US military in the face of China's strong defense push, and

demanding a larger budget. For fiscal 2022, which starts October 1 this year, Biden asked Congress to allot a total of \$753 billion for defense and national security.

Of that \$715 billion would go to the Pentagon, up from \$704 billion budgeted for the current year but a slight fall when measured in real terms after inflation. Biden's budget supports expansion of the US Navy's fleet, amid concerns of it being outpaced by rival China, which the Defense Department considers its primary challenge. Biden is also proposing to modernize the country's nuclear weaponry and strengthen the delivery systems-bombers, submarines and missiles.

Nearly \$107 billion would go to weapons- and defense-related research and development, the highest level ever, with a growing focus on hypersonic missiles, artificial intelligence, microelectronics and autonomous vehicles. But it also places an emphasis on military operations that acknowledge and address climate change.—AFP

In Houston, a race to vaccinate its student population

HOUSTON: On the campus of Houston University, students meet in small groups, sit alone at computers and attend virtual meetings. It appears they are taking precautions against the coronavirus, but the Texas metropolis is still rushing to get its population of about 300,000 university and college students vaccinated as quickly as possible. "Right now, college students make up a large percentage of super spreaders," said Isaiah Martin, 22, a fourth-year student in political science who is leading a campaign for students to get their shots.

With some 500 new cases a day in April, down from about 2,000 in January, the situation in Houston-the fourth-largest city in the United States-is improving, yet it remains worrying. Where it goes from here will depend in large part on the behavior of students, many of whom are chafing under a year of restrictions and isolation. But a College Pulse survey in January of 1,000 US students found that only 21 percent were not concerned about vaccine safety.

Vaccination competition

At the University of Houston, home to 47,000 students, Martin says his peers still "go out and a lot of time they ignore the guidance from the CDC and other health departments and so they'll go out, they'll party, they'll do things college kids normally do." After more than a year of the pandemic, words of caution are increasingly difficult to heed. That is why the city has organized its "Take Your Best Shot" campaign, a competition between universities to see which can get the most of its current and former students vaccinated.

The competition began March 29, the first day the vaccine was available to all adults, after Texas decided it had sufficiently inoculated its at-risk population.

12 beheaded in Mozambique attack in March

MAPUTO: Twelve decapitated bodies were found after a jihadist raid on the Mozambique town of Palma last month, strewn in front of a hotel where dozens had sought safety, army and private security sources said. Islamic State-linked militants launched coordinated attacks on the northern town on March 24, ransacking buildings and murdering residents as thousands fled into surrounding bush. Close to 200 people, mainly civil servants and foreigners working on a nearby gas project, sheltered in the beachfront Amarula Palma Hotel for several days. Officials claim the town is back under government control and have allowed some media in to report on the aftermath.

Mozambican state television TVM on Wednesday broadcast images of the plundered Amarula, and a local police officer pointing to various spots near the main entrance where he said 12 decapitated bodies were scattered. The officer, Pedro da Silva Negro, told



HOUSTON: With some 500 new cases a day in April, down from about 2,000 in January, the situation in Houston — the fourth-largest city in the United States — is improving, yet it remains worrying.—AFP

Vaccinating students is deemed so important that Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner came to the University of Houston to kick off the campaign.

'Don't even know what I'm missing'

Rice University, the most prestigious school in the Houston area, is not participating in the challenge. It has, however, set up a vaccination center managed by hospital group St. Luke's Health on its campus in the heart of the city. On this April day, several dozen students received their first doses, hoping to put an end to online courses and limited social interactions. "I think online classes have been isolating and we haven't been able to learn as well in our dorm rooms instead of the classroom," said Sarah Sowell, 19, after getting her shot.

First-year students remain the most isolated, having never experienced the highlights of campus life and its close friendships. "It's hard to make friends when you only see them on a Zoom call, they're only little pictures on a screen," said Lillian Cui, 18, who came from Pennsylvania to study planetary science. English student Hannah Hoskins, who also came to Rice at the start of the academic year, finds it "strange to hear these really amazing stories about previous years and I think that's a little difficult to have to be like 'Man, I'm missing out,' but I don't even know what I'm missing."—AFP

reporters he personally "took charge" of burying them under a nearby mango tree. "Their hands were tied and they were in an advanced state of decomposition," he said. The grim finding was later confirmed by a private security source and a military commander. "There were 12 bodies, they were all beheaded, one of my officers was there," Lionel Dyck, owner of Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), a private South African security company contracted to help Mozambique fight the insurgency, told AFP on Friday.—AFP



Internally displaced people (IDP) from Palma gather in the Pemba Sports center to receive humanitarian aid in Pemba. — AFP

News in brief

Biden eyes Supreme Court expansion

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden on Friday established an expert commission to study reforming the powerful US Supreme Court, including the explosive question of expanding its bench. The move follows months of debate over whether Democrats should seek to expand the court beyond its current nine justices, after moves during Donald Trump's presidential term gave the bench a firm conservative majority. The Supreme Court sits as the final arbiter on fundamental American legal matters, which can include minority and LGBTQ rights, racism, the death penalty and electoral controversies-and its justices are appointed for life. —AFP

NASA copter ready for Mars flight

WASHINGTON: The helicopter that NASA has placed on Mars could make its first flight over the Red Planet within two days after a successful initial test of its rotors, the US space agency said Friday. The current plan for the first-ever attempt at powered, controlled flight on another planet is for the four-pound (1.8 kilogram) helicopter, dubbed the Ingenuity, to take off from Mars' Jezero Crater today at 10:54 pm US eastern time (0254 GMT Monday) and hover 10 feet (3 meters) above the surface for a half-minute, NASA said. "The helicopter is good, it's looking healthy," said Tim Canham, Ingenuity operations lead, in a press conference. — AFP

Guaido accuses govt of vaccine lies

CARACAS: Opposition leader Juan Guaido on Friday accused Venezuela's government of lying about the country's lack of coronavirus vaccines, denying regime claims that sanctions are to blame. The government claimed on Wednesday that it would have already purchased the 30 million vaccines it needs but for economic sanctions, led by the United States. "I won't tire myself out repeating it... faced with the official lie about the externalization of responsibilities: (President) Nicolas Maduro is the only person responsible" for the lack of vaccines, Guaido told a press conference in the capital Caracas. — AFP

Biden's Mexico border tsar to quit

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's top official for the Mexican border, where US authorities are struggling to stop a huge flow of undocumented migrants, will step down, the White House said Friday. Roberta Jacobson, officially known as coordinator for the Southwest Border at the National Security Council, will leave "at the end of this month," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a statement. According to Sullivan, Jacobson had committed to serving only for Biden's first 100 days, which expire on April 30. However the departure comes as the administration is struggling to handle waves of migrants-and to fend off criticism that it has lost control of the situation. — AFP

Canada election talk heats up at conventions

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has rejected going to the polls during the pandemic, but Canada's capital was abuzz Friday with election chatter as political parties firmed up planks at policy conventions. It comes after last month's virtual convention by the main opposition Conservatives, when rookie leader Erin O'Toole's pleaded for members to accept the reality of climate change if they were to have any hope of victory at the ballot box. His appeal fell on deaf ears.

That left an opening for the Liberals, who are meeting through Saturday, to drive Trudeau's proposed stepped-up climate agenda that surveys show is already gaining traction with voters. The New Democrats are also holding a convention this weekend to hammer out strategies to boost the fourth-ranked leftist party's electoral fortunes.

Trudeau, whose party was returned to office with a minority government in October 2019, was scheduled to give a keynote address at the convention later. Former central banker Mark Carney, meanwhile, made his hotly anticipated political debut at the convention late Friday. "I'll do whatever I can to support the Liberal Party in our efforts to build a better future for Canadians," he said.

Although coy about his political aspirations since returning to Canada after serving as governor of the Bank of England, he is considered by some insiders as a potential successor to Trudeau.

Finance Minister Christy Freeland told delegates at the opening of the Liberals' convention late Thursday that the pandemic revealed social inequities that urgently need addressing. Liberals are to debate a universal basic income in order to alleviate poverty, and a proposal to pin Canada's economic recovery on massive clean energy investments. —AFP



ATHENS: Greek police experts investigate near the house of Giorgos Karaivaz, a veteran crime journalist, after he was shot dead in Athens Friday. — AFP

Greek PM demands swift probe into journalist's murder

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis yesterday demanded the "swift resolution" of a probe into a crime journalist's murder already condemned by leading EU officials, political parties and media unions. Mitsotakis had summoned his police minister Michalis Chrysochoidis to a meeting on the case yesterday, the PM's office said. Giorgos Karaivaz, who worked for private TV station Star and also ran the news blog bloko.gr, was shot several times Friday as he exited his car outside his house in the southern Athens district of Alimos, witnesses said.

He had just returned home from work. A police source told AFP the 52-year-old journalist had been shot by two men on a motorbike. Seventeen bullet casings were recovered from the scene. The murder was rapidly condemned by the European Commission and the Council of Europe commissioner for human rights.

"Murdering a journalist is a despicable, cowardly act," Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen tweeted Friday. "Europe stands for freedom. And freedom of press may be the most sacred of all. Journalists must be able to work safely. My thoughts are with the family of George Karaivaz. I hope the criminals are soon brought to justice," she said.

Karaivaz had worked for some of Greece's leading newspapers and TV channels in a 32-year career. "(He) was one of the most experienced crime reporter in the field... and was held in high regard by colleagues," the Esia union of Athens daily newspaper journalists said in a statement. The federation of Greek police officers said Karaivaz was personally interested in improving working conditions for law enforcement and was "strongly critical of anybody" standing in their union's way. While Greek media offices are frequently targeted in firebomb and vandalism attacks, journalist killings are rare.

Some journalists request police protection after receiving threats, but Karaivaz was unguarded. "It was not his style to request protection," a police officer who knew Karaivaz well told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. The shooting occurred at a time when Greek authorities had received criticism for allocating too many police guards to a controversial TV presenter. And in July, tabloid newspaper editor Stefanos Chios survived after being shot in the neck and chest by a hooded man outside his home. The case is still under investigation.—AFP

International

Myanmar's UN envoy urges action against junta as carnage continues

Civilian toll crosses 600 amid crackdown in Bago

YANGON: Myanmar's own ambassador to the United Nations has urged "strong action" against the junta, as reports emerged of scores killed in the military's latest crackdown. The country has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February, with protesters refusing to submit to the junta regime and continuing to demand a return to democracy.

With more than 600 people killed by security forces trying to quell the movement, the international community has increasingly raised the alarm on the crisis. During a UN Security Council meeting on Friday, Myanmar's ambassador pushed for more concrete action-proposing a no-fly zone, an arms embargo and more targeted sanctions against members of the military and their families.

"Your collective, strong action is needed immediately," Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun told the meeting.

"Time is of the essence for us," he said. "Please, please take action." An independent analyst with the International Crisis Group also warned the council that Myanmar was "at the brink of state failure".

"The vast majority of the population does not want military rule and will do whatever it takes to prevent that outcome. Yet the military seems determined to impose its will," said Richard Horsey.

"Its actions may be creating a situation where the country becomes ungovernable. That should be of grave concern to the region and to the broader international community." China and Russia wield veto power at the Security Council and generally oppose international sanctions. However, Beijing-the top ally of Myanmar's military-has voiced growing concern about instability, and has said it is speaking to "all parties". There have been reports that China has opened contact with the CRPH, a group representing the ousted civilian government.



MANDALAY: This photo taken and received from an anonymous source via Facebook yesterday shows protesters holding a banner as they march during a demonstration against the military coup in Mandalay. — AFP

Bloodshed in Bago

At least 618 civilians have been killed in the military's crackdown on protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a local monitoring group. Efforts to verify deaths and confirm news of crackdowns have been greatly hindered by the junta's throttling of mobile data within the country-effectively shunting most of the population into an information blackout.

News emerged yesterday morning of more violence in the city of Bago, 65 kilometers (40 miles) northeast of Yangon-the site of a day-long crackdown that forced residents into hiding in nearby villages. AFP-verified footage shot early Friday showed protesters hiding behind sandbag barricades wielding homemade rifles, as explosions could be heard in the background.

A resident told AFP that the military crackdown killed at least 40 protesters, and authorities refused to

let rescue workers remove the bodies. "They piled up all the dead bodies, loaded them into their army truck and drove it away," he said, adding that authorities then proceeded to arrest people around the community.

Local media reports have put the death toll for Bago's crackdown at far higher.

The junta had branded the victims of anti-coup unrest "violent terrorist people", putting the total death toll since February 1 at 248, according to a spokesman Friday.

Despite the daily bloodshed, protesters have continued to take to the streets, with dawn strikes sprouting across the country yesterday. Demonstrators are also manifesting their discontent in pointedly creative ways. In commercial hub Yangon, crimson paint-representing the blood already spilled-was splashed across the streets in view of the historic Shwedagon Pagoda.—AFP

Two dead whales wash up on Bangladesh beach

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh: Two dead whales have washed up on the same stretch of Bangladesh coastline in two days, officials said yesterday, raising suggestions that they were killed by sea pollution.

Officials said the second, much longer whale washed up on Himchari Beach, outside the resort city of Cox's Bazar, at around 8:30 am (0230 GMT) yesterday, just a day after the carcass of another Bryde's whale was found two kilometers (1.25 miles) from the spot. "The carcass of the whale found today is at least 50 feet (16

meters) long and 10 feet wide. It weighs three-four tons," Jahirul Islam, executive director of the Cox's Bazar-based Marine Life Alliance, said.

Islam said the whales could have been killed in a collision with a ship plying the Bay of Bengal, or have died after eating plastics which litter the sea. "Primarily we think the two have died from consuming plastic and polluted objects. There is an injury mark on the back of the second whale. We suspect it could have been hit by a high-speed vessel," Islam said. Mohammad Shahidul Alam, a professor at the Institute of Marine Science and Fisheries, said parts of the Bay of Bengal are seriously polluted, and that could have led to the animals' demise.

A spokesman for Bangladesh's environment and forestry department said its researchers had collected samples from the carcasses for post mortem examinations. Two similar whales also washed up on Cox's Bazar beaches in 1996 and 2006. — AFP



COX'S BAZAR: People gather around a dead whale washed ashore on a beach in Cox's Bazar yesterday. — AFP

Veteran ruler Guelleh re-elected Djibouti president for 5th term

DJIBOUTI, Djibouti: Djibouti's veteran ruler Ismail Omar Guelleh was re-elected for a fifth term as president with more than 98 percent of the vote, according to provisional results announced early yesterday, after the election in the tiny but strategically important country was boycotted by the main opposition. Around 215,000 citizens were registered to vote in the ballot pitting Guelleh, 73, against a little-known businessman widely seen as posing scant threat to the strongman, who has been in power since 1999.

Counting started shortly after polling stations closed around 7:00 pm in the Horn of Africa nation, which overlooks one of the world's busiest trade routes at the crossroads between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. "President Ismail Omar Guelleh obtained 167,535 votes, which is 98.58 percent," Interior Minister Moumin Ahmed Cheick told public broadcaster RTD early Saturday, adding that confirmed results would be released soon by the Constitutional Council.

Independent election observers said the process went smoothly, with no reports of misconduct.

Earlier, after voting in the capital where most of Djibouti's one million people reside, Guelleh praised the trouble-free conduct of the electoral exercise. Dressed in immaculate white traditional robes, he said he was "very, very confident" of victory, after placing his vote in a transparent ballot box.

'My vote is useless'

Guelleh was the handpicked successor to his relative Hassan Gouled Aptidon, the country's first president after independence from France in 1977. He faced just one challenger-political newcomer Zakaria Ismail Farah-after Djibouti's main opposition parties boycotted the election. Farah, a 56-year-old cleaning

products importer, ended up with under 5,000 votes, according to the provisional results.

Farah cast doubt on the transparency of the voting process, saying his delegates were not present at polling stations. "My vote is of no use, nor are the votes of 80 percent of the Djiboutian people," the opposition candidate told AFP in a text message.

Ahmed Tidiane Souare, the head of an African Union (AU) observer mission, said all candidates were free to send their officials to any polling station. Farah, who had styled himself as the "flag bearer of poor Djiboutians", had alleged unfair treatment during the election campaign, including that he was not provided security at his rallies. Guelleh, and his extended family, have controlled Djibouti with an iron fist since he was handed power. A rare wave of opposition protests in 2020 were brutally suppressed. His predicted fifth term will be his last, under a 2010 constitutional reform that scrapped term limits while introducing an age limit of 75, which would lock him out of future elections.

Guelleh has clinched at least 75 percent of the vote in every presidential election he has contested.

"I am with President Ismail. I voted for him, I love him," said 64-year-old Ahmed Abdillah Hadi after casting his ballot. The vote proceeded despite a surge in Covid-19 cases and infection rates, and few wore face masks as they cheered Guelleh at a crowded final rally this week.—AFP



DJIBOUTI: Djibouti's incumbent president Ismail Omar Guelleh (center) leaves the polling station after he cast his ballot at the Ras-Dika district polling station in the capital Djibouti on Friday.— AFP



SILIGURI, West Bengal: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures as he speaks in a rally during the ongoing Phase 4 of West Bengal's assembly election in Kawakhali yesterday. — AFP

Indian troops shoot dead four in fresh election bloodshed

KOLKATA: Five people were killed in fresh election bloodshed in the Indian state of West Bengal yesterday, including four shot dead by paramilitary troops "in self-defense", officials said.

West Bengal in eastern India has seen thousands killed in decades of political violence, and the current state election campaign has triggered deadly clashes between rival parties. The latest incident in the northern district of Coochbehar 700 kilometers (450 miles) north of Kolkata saw a crowd of around 400 people surround troops guarding a polling station. "Paramilitary troops opened fire in self-defense after being challenged by over 400 people," a senior Election Commission official said.

"They also formed a ring around the troops and tried to snatch rifles... Four people were killed in the shooting." Addressing an election rally in Siliguri, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said chief minister Mamata Banerjee "and her goons provoked the paramilitary forces to open fire". Elsewhere in the state a man was shot dead on Saturday in clashes between supporters of Banerjee's All India Trinamool Congress and Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), police said.

"The victim was a BJP supporter," local party chief Dilip Ghosh said. "Three people who were injured in the clash were admitted to a local health facility." Winning power in the state of 90 million people when results are announced on May 2 would be a major victory for Modi. Banerjee, one of Modi's most prominent critics, has accused the BJP of attempting to import divisive sectarian politics into the state. — AFP

Defying Beijing, US loosens curbs on Taiwan contacts

WASHINGTON: The State Department said Friday it will make it easier for US officials to meet Taiwanese representatives, defying pressure from China at a time of high tensions. The United States still considers Beijing as China's legitimate government, consistent with its switch of recognition in 1979, but will do away with some of the convoluted rules that restricted dealings with Taiwan including in-person meetings. The updated guidance "underscores Taiwan is a vibrant democracy and an important security and economic partner that is also a force for good in the international community," State Department spokesman Ned Price said.

"These new guidelines liberalize guidance on contacts with Taiwan, consistent with our unofficial relations," he said in a statement. The move by President Joe Biden's administration formalizes increasingly vocal US support for Taiwan, a self-governing democracy, and comes in response to an act of Congress that required a review. Taiwan's mission in Washington-officially called the "Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States", rather than an embassy-welcomed

News in brief

Earthquake strikes off Java

JAKARTA: A 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia's Java island yesterday, the United States Geological Survey said, but no tsunami warning was issued. The quake hit at a depth of 82 kilometers (50 miles), about 45 kilometers southwest of Malang city in East Java. There were no immediate reports of casualties, but the tremor shook Malang, a city of several million people. "It was pretty strong and went for a long time," resident Ida Magfiroh told AFP. "Everything was swaying." Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.—AFP

Russian agents raid journalist

MOSCOW: Russian security agents on Friday raided the home of the editor of an online investigative journal which recently published articles on the security services, his editorial team said. Operatives of the FSB security agents searched the apartment of Roman Anine, his "Vajnie historie (Important stories)" website colleagues said. They cited his lawyer saying that Anine was targeted in connection with enquiries into "violation of privacy by abusing his professional functions", an offence punishable by up to four years in prison. He was due to go with his lawyers to talk to the committee in charge of criminal enquiries, according to media reports.—AFP

Mali tightens COVID restrictions

BAMAKO: Mali decided Friday to tighten restrictions aimed at curbing COVID-19, suspending events while closing leisure centers due to an increase in infections in the West African nation. National authorities in a statement spoke of "a worrying increase in the spread of the disease in the country". All leisure centers will be closed from Saturday until April 25, while festivals and other events will be suspended for 15 days with immediate effect. They also announced a new free distribution of masks and a ban on gatherings of more than 50 people, while pledging to speed up the acquisition of vaccine doses. — AFP

Portugal PM Socrates to stand trial

LISBON: A Portuguese judge cleared the way on Friday for former prime minister Jose Socrates to stand trial for alleged money laundering and falsifying documents, but cleared him of corruption charges in the years-long case. Prosecutors have accused Socrates of pocketing 34 million euros (\$40 million) from three companies while he was in power between 2005 and 2011, but the ex-prime minister has maintained his innocence. The 63-year-old is alleged to have concealed funds with the complicity of businessman and longtime friend Carlos Santos Silva. — AFP

Trudeau urges strict COVID curbs

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday called on Canada's provinces to tighten public health measures as an accelerating vaccination program fails to keep pace with surging coronavirus infections. "In several places in the country, stricter measures are needed to curb the spread of the virus," he told a news conference days after Ontario imposed a stay-at-home order and Quebec tightened restrictions. But Alberta, which is leading the country in new cases per capita, has been more passive, only now closing bars and restaurants. — AFP

the new guidelines, saying they reflected a bipartisan consensus for closer relations. "Taiwan and the US share a deep and abiding partnership based on our common values and joint interests," it said, pointing to cooperation on global health, space, trade and democracy promotion.

Former secretary of state Mike Pompeo, a staunch critic of Beijing, in his last days in office said he was getting rid of previous guidelines on dealing with Taiwan but not issue new ones, drawing confusion in some quarters on what had changed. Under the guidelines issued by the Biden administration, US officials will be allowed to invite Taiwanese representatives into government buildings in Washington or attend working-level meetings at the Taiwanese mission, both of which were earlier prohibited, a State Department official said. The United States has already begun allowing open interactions with Taiwanese diplomats since Pompeo ended earlier guidance. The Biden administration last month sent the US ambassador to Palau on a visit to Taiwan to accompany the president of the island nation-one of a dwindling number of countries that recognize Taipei. Similarly, the acting US ambassador in Japan in March tweeted a picture of himself meeting at his official residence with his Taiwanese counterpart-the type of day-to-day diplomacy that is usually a non-event but which Washington had previously shied away from with Taiwan for fear of upsetting Beijing.—AFP

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

Business

Saudi Aramco in \$12.4 billion oil pipeline deal with EIG-led group

EIG deal marks a crucial step for energy giant as it seeks to monetize assets

RIYADH: Energy giant Saudi Aramco said it has struck a 12.4-billion-dollar deal to sell a minority stake in a newly formed oil pipeline business to a consortium led by US-based EIG Global Energy Partners. The deal underscores how Aramco-the kingdom's cash cow-seeks to monetize its once-untouchable assets to generate revenue for the Saudi government as it accelerates efforts to diversify the oil-reliant economy. "Upon closing, Aramco will receive upfront proceeds of around \$12.4 billion, further strengthening its balance sheet through one of the largest energy infrastructure deals globally," the company said in a statement late Friday.

"As part of the transaction, a newly-formed Aramco subsidiary, Aramco Oil Pipelines Company, will lease usage rights in Aramco's stabilized crude oil pipelines network for a 25-year period." The EIG-led consortium will hold a 49 percent stake in the subsidiary, Aramco said, adding that it will retain "full ownership and operational control".

In a separate statement, EIG, a Washington-based energy investment firm, said the new venture is valued at approximately \$25.3 billion. The deal covers all of Aramco's "existing and future stabilized crude pipelines" in the kingdom, an elaborate network that connects oil fields to downstream facilities, EIG said. "We are proud to partner with Aramco in this marquee global infrastructure asset," said EIG chairman R Blair Thomas.

Neither company said which other firms were part of the consortium. The announcement comes as Aramco faces pressure to maintain hefty dividend payments to the Saudi government, its biggest shareholder, despite posting consecutive falls in profits



Aramco engineers working in eastern Saudi Arabi. Energy giant Saudi Aramco said it has struck a \$12.4-billion deal to sell a minority stake in a newly formed oil pipeline business to a consortium led by US-based EIG Global Energy Partners. — AFP

since it began disclosing earnings in 2019.

Last month, Aramco posted a 44.4 percent slump in 2020 net profit due to lower crude prices, piling pressure on government finances as Riyadh pursues multi-billion dollar projects to diversify the economy. The company's debt has climbed as Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter, was hammered last year by the double whammy of low prices and sharp cuts in production triggered by the coronavirus pan-

demic. Even so, Aramco said it stuck by its commitment to pay shareholders dividends worth \$75 billion in 2020 — an amount that exceeds the declared profit and available cash flow.

Saudi 'crown jewel'

"The (EIG) deal marks an innovative step for Aramco as it seeks to monetize assets to pay down debt, maintain its dividend payments and fund

planned investments," the Energy Intelligence group said. Long seen as the kingdom's "crown jewel", Aramco and its assets were once tightly under government control and considered off-limits to outside investment. But with the rise of de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is pushing to implement his "Vision 2030" reform program, the kingdom has shown readiness to cede some control. Aramco sold a sliver of its shares on the Saudi bourse in December 2019, generating \$29.4 billion in the world's biggest initial public offering.

In January, Prince Mohammed said the kingdom would sell more Aramco shares in the coming years.

He said future share offerings would be a key way to boost the Public Investment Fund, the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund which is the main engine of its diversification efforts. In a major new diversification push late last month, Saudi Arabia announced plans to pump investments worth \$3.2 trillion into the national economy by 2030, roping in the kingdom's biggest companies including Aramco. Under a program named "Shareek", or partner, Aramco and other top Saudi companies will lead the investment drive by contributing five trillion riyals (\$1.3 trillion) over the next decade, Prince Mohammed said. In a briefing to reporters, he added that the companies, many of them listed, had agreed to lower their dividends and redirect the money into the domestic economy in exchange for incentives such as subsidies. In the statement announcing the deal with the EIG-led group, Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser said the company was "capitalizing on new opportunities that also align strategically with the recently-launched Shareek program". — AFP



Virgin Galactic's Spaceflight System as it prepares for flight at Spaceport America in the desert near Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. — AFP

All aboard! Next stop space...

WASHINGTON: Several hundred people have already booked their tickets and begun training for a spectacular voyage: a few minutes, or perhaps days, in the weightlessness of space. The mainly wealthy first-time space travellers are getting ready to take part in one of several private missions which are preparing to launch. The era of space tourism is on the horizon 60 years after Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space.

Two companies, Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin, are building spacecraft capable of sending private clients on suborbital flights to the edge of space lasting several minutes. Glenn King is the director of spaceflight training at the National Aerospace Training and Research Center, a private company based in Pennsylvania which has already trained nearly 400 future Virgin Galactic passengers for their trips.

"The oldest person I trained was 88 years old," King said. The training program lasts two days-a morning of classroom instruction and tests in a centrifuge. This involves putting the trainee in a single-seat cockpit at the end of a 25-foot-long (eight-meter-long) arm and spinning them around to simulate gravitational force, or G force. A medical team is on hand at all times.

'Enjoy the view'

NASA's training for shuttle crew members lasted two years but the duration has been drastically reduced by the commercial space industry because of the "numbers of people that want to get up in space," King said. "We can't take two years to train these people," he said. "We've got to get this down to a matter of days to get these people up."

"These people aren't crews, just strictly passengers," he noted. "For a passenger, there isn't a lot of

work for you to do other than just relax, endure the G forces of launch or reentry.

"And then once you're orbital, enjoy the view out the window." King said the pass rate for the training course has been "99.9 percent." The cost ranges from several thousand dollars to as much as \$10,000 if special care or medical monitoring is needed. The single biggest barrier to "spaceflight for all" remains the price tag. Some 600 people have booked flights on Virgin Galactic, the company owned by British billionaire Richard Branson, and thousands more are on a waiting list.

The cost per flight? \$200,000 to \$250,000. Virgin Galactic hopes to take its first private astronaut on a suborbital flight in early 2022, with eventual plans for 400 trips a year. Blue Origin, owned by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, has not yet published prices or a calendar. Money aside, pretty much anybody could go on a spaceflight. "You don't have to be in perfect physical health now to be able to go to space," King said. "I've trained people with prosthetic devices. I've trained people with pacemakers."

All kinds of people

The US Federal Aviation Administration, which oversees the aviation industry, recommended in 2006 that future "commercial passengers" on suborbital flights fill out a "simple medical history questionnaire." Orbital flights which go further and last longer would require a more detailed form and blood tests, X-rays and urine specimens. Such flights, which cost millions of dollars each, are envisioned by SpaceX, the company founded by billionaire Elon Musk, which has at least four planned over the coming years. The first launch of only civilians, baptized "Inspiration4," is scheduled to take place in September. The American billionaire Jared Isaacman has fully paid for a trip powered by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that will take him and three passengers on a three-day flight in low Earth orbit. In January 2022, the company Axiom Space plans to send a former astronaut and three newcomers to the International Space Station. —AFP

Workers urge Google parent to get tough on harassment

SAN FRANCISCO: A letter calling for Google's parent company Alphabet to better protect people who report sexual harassment on the job was signed by more than 1,000 workers soon after being posted online Friday. The open letter contended the tech giant had a pattern of safeguarding or even rewarding those responsible for sexual harassment while leaving victims

to suffer in the workplace. "Alphabet does not provide a safe environment for those who face harassment in the workplace," the text says. "Even when (human resources) confirms harassment, no action is taken to make the reporter safe."

Anyone found to have harassed a co-worker should be barred from leadership roles, and be made

China hits Alibaba with record \$2.78bn fine for market abuses

SHANGHAI: Chinese regulators hit e-commerce giant Alibaba with a record 18.2 billion yuan (\$2.78 billion) fine yesterday over practices deemed to be an abuse of the company's dominant market position. Alibaba, the Jack Ma-founded Chinese e-commerce leader and one of the world's most valuable companies, said it accepted the penalty and pledged to outline plans tomorrow for bringing its operations in compliance. The fine appeared to cap a government crackdown on major Chinese tech platforms, and Alibaba in particular, over allegations of anti-competitive behavior and misuse of consumer data.

The State Administration for Market Regulation said it assessed the fine after concluding an investigation into Alibaba that began in December. The probe centred on Alibaba's practice of forbidding merchants who wish to sell their wares on its popular online marketplaces from simultaneously offering them on rival e-commerce sites. "Since 2015, Alibaba Group has abused its dominant position in the market" with the exclusivity requirement, the regulator said. The requirement harmed competition, innovation, and the interests of merchants and consumers, it added.

The fine was a record and nearly three times the almost \$1 billion levied against Qualcomm in 2015, Bloomberg said. The size of the penalty was determined after the market watchdog decided to fine Alibaba four percent of its 2019 sales of 455.7 billion yuan.

Shortly after the decision was announced Alibaba issued a contrite statement that used many of the government's recent talking points on the issue, pledging to make changes to safeguard fair competition. "We

accept the penalty with sincerity and will ensure our compliance with determination," it said. The company added that it would hold a conference call with investors on Monday to share its "thoughts and plans for the long-term healthy development of our business in the future." "We are committed to ensuring an operating environment for our merchants and partners that is more open, more equitable, more efficient and more inclusive in sharing the fruits of growth," it said.

Big Tech under scrutiny

E-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com, along with messaging-and-gaming colossus Tencent, became hugely profitable on the back of growing Chinese digital lifestyles and government restrictions on major US competitors in the domestic market. But as the platforms amassed hundreds of millions of regular users, concern has risen over their influence in China, where tech-savvy consumers use them to communicate, shop, pay bills, book taxis, take out loans and perform a range of other daily tasks.

Alibaba has faced special scrutiny after Ma publicly criticized Chinese regulators in October as being stuck in the past after they expressed growing concern over the push into online lending, wealth management and insurance products by Alibaba's online-payments arm, Ant Group. The government has in recent years sought to rein in runaway personal debt and chaotic lending, and upstart Ant's growing profile-and Ma's rare public criticism-have been widely viewed as a challenge to vested interests in the country's state-dominated financial sphere. The government campaign against its tech giants reflects the growing global unease with the clout wielded by Big Tech and which has Facebook, Google and others also facing scrutiny at home and abroad. Even before yesterday's announcement, the Chinese crackdown had already cost Alibaba and Ma dearly. A planned record-shattering \$35 billion Hong Kong-Shanghai IPO by Ant Group, which would have added to Ma's already massive wealth, was abruptly shelved.—AFP



SHANGHAI: A woman jogging in front of Alibaba headquarters in Hangzhou, some 175 kilometers (110 miles) southwest of Shanghai. Chinese regulators have hit e-commerce giant Alibaba with a massive 18.2 billion yuan (\$2.78 billion) fine over practices deemed to be an abuse of the company's dominant market position, state-run media reported yesterday. — AFP

to switch teams to be distanced from victims, the letter demanded.

"We're deeply aware of the importance of this issue," a Google spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry. "We work to support and protect people who report concerns, thoroughly investigate all claims and take firm actions against substantiated allegations."

In a column published Friday on the New York Times website, former Google engineer Emi Niefeld said her "stalker" co-worker was left sitting at a desk next to her in the office even after she complained to human resources. Google has faced criticism in recent years regarding its internal response to sexual harass-

ment, especially if the accused were executives.

Thousands of Google employees joined a coordinated worldwide walkout in late 2018 to protest the US tech giant's handling of the issue. Some 20,000 Google employees and contractors participated in the protest in 50 cities around the world, according to organizers. "We've made significant improvements to our overall process, including the way we handle and investigate employee concerns, and introducing new care programs for employees who report concerns," the Google spokesperson said. "Reporting misconduct takes courage and we'll continue our work to improve our processes and support for the people who do." — AFP

Business

Boeing grounds some 737 MAX jets temporarily after ‘potential’ issue

‘Electrical issue’ new setback for Boeing’s top-selling model

NEW YORK: US aircraft manufacturer Boeing said on Friday it had recommended that 16 airlines flying its 737 MAX planes address a “potential electrical issue” in a new setback for the top-selling model. Major carriers began temporarily removing some of their MAX planes from service after the aerospace giant flagged the electrical issue—which is not a concern for all of the aircraft.

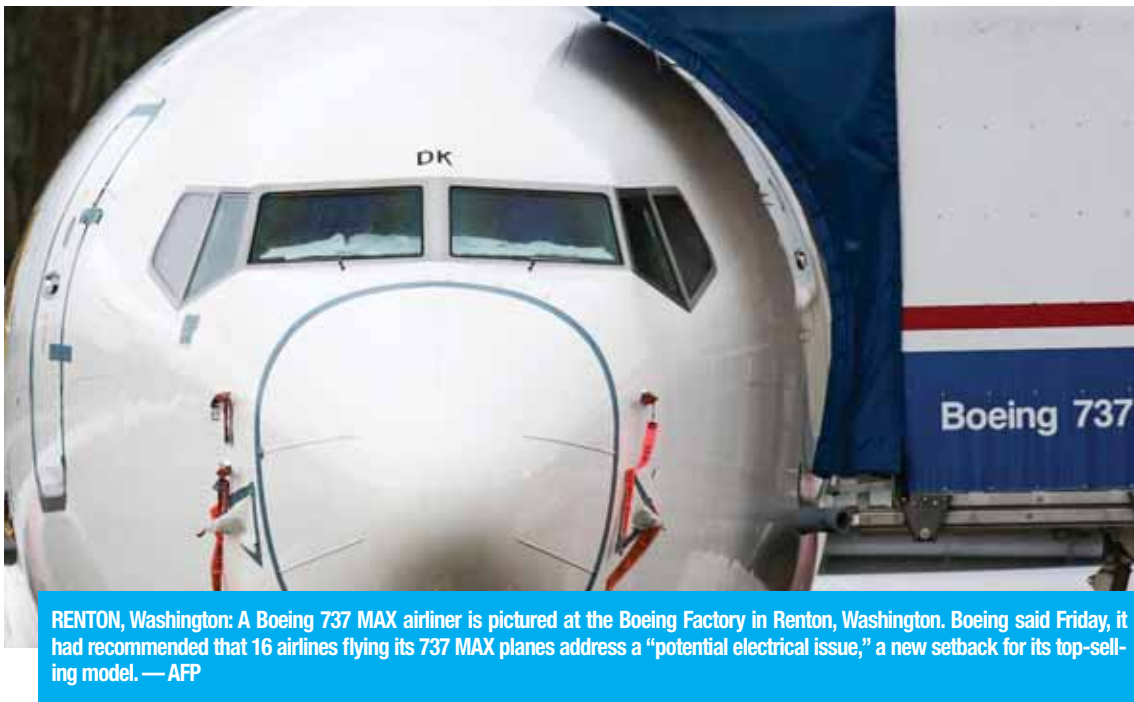
The potential problem requires “verification that a sufficient ground path exists for a component of the electrical power system,” Boeing said. Electrical systems must be grounded to avoid overloads that can cause serious failures. Boeing shares fell Friday, although the likely impact of this latest issue appeared limited. A note from the investment website Briefing.com said it was encouraging that a major Boeing customer, Southwest Airlines, expects only a minimal disruption.

“However, the news is another blow for customers’ and investors’ confidence in the company,” Briefing said. Boeing managed to get the 737 MAX back in the skies late last year after it was grounded for 20 months following two fatal crashes, and recently announced an order for 100 of the aircraft as the airline sector begins to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

The manufacturer discovered the latest issue on a plane in production “during normal build activity,” a Boeing spokeswoman said. It is “premature” to discuss the time needed to address the issue, and “could take a matter of hours or a few days” before planes are returned to service,” she said.

Airlines checking planes

Boeing did not say which airlines were concerned, nor did it specify the number of aircraft involved. The company notified the US Federal Aviation Administration of the issue on Thursday night, an FAA



RENTON, Washington: A Boeing 737 MAX airliner is pictured at the Boeing Factory in Renton, Washington. Boeing said Friday, it had recommended that 16 airlines flying its 737 MAX planes address a “potential electrical issue,” a new setback for its top-selling model. — AFP

spokesperson said. “The FAA is in contact with the airlines and the manufacturer and will ensure the issue is addressed,” the agency said. “Passengers should contact their airlines about specific flight cancellations or delays.”

Southwest Airlines, which announced a large order of new MAX planes last month, said it removed from service a “subset” of its MAX fleet. “While Southwest has not experienced any known operational chal-

lenges related to the issue, 30 of the airline’s 58 737 MAX 8 aircraft are affected by the notification,” the carrier said. “Southwest anticipates minimal disruption to our operation.”

United Airlines, which also has ordered additional MAX planes since the jet was approved by regulators to resume service, said it is “voluntarily and temporarily removing 16” of its MAX planes from its schedule. “We have been in touch with the FAA and Boeing and will

continue to work closely with them to determine any additional steps that are needed to ensure these aircraft meet our rigorous safety standards and can return to service,” United said. “We are working to swap out aircraft to minimize the impact to our customers.” American Airlines said it removed 17 aircraft “to complete necessary inspections and make any changes recommended or required by Boeing or the Federal Aviation Administration,” a spokeswoman said.

All three US carriers still have MAX planes in their fleet not affected by the issue.

Deadly crashes

The 737 MAX has been a huge hit with airlines, and was Boeing’s best-selling aircraft until it was grounded in March 2019 following the second of two crashes that together claimed 346 lives. And after the COVID-19 crisis hammered the air transport sector, airlines cancelled hundreds of orders.

Investigators said a main cause of both crashes was a faulty flight handling system known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System or MCAS. Boeing continues to face litigation from families of victims who died in crashes on Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines flights. The FAA in mid-November cleared the MAX to return to service following upgrades to the plane and pilot training protocols. Other national regulators have followed suit since then.

Recent MAX orders by Southwest, Ryanair and others have underscored the appeal of the single-aisle MAX in the nascent airline industry recovery following the pandemic travel shutdown. Aviation experts expect demand for domestic and short-flight service to recover before international flying. Shares of Boeing fell 1.0 percent to \$252.36. — AFP



WASHINGTON: An activist dressed as Argentina’s Evita Peron takes part with others in a rally calling for debt reform during the virtual Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, outside of IMF headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

IMF warns more funding needed to safeguard global economy

WASHINGTON: Warning that the recovery from the pandemic crisis is not yet over, the IMF on Thursday called on policymakers to continue to spend money to shore up the global economy and ensure no one is left behind. Without that aid, and additional financing from both the fund and the World Bank, developing nations and the poor in many countries could struggle to rebound from the downturn caused by COVID-19, the International Monetary Fund said at the conclusion of its spring meeting. Continued support is needed to “mitigate and heal economic scars,” IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva told reporters.

“We want to make sure everybody has a fair shot to a better life.” That means accelerating access to vaccines and taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the crisis to invest in green technology, which can create good paying jobs and address climate change. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen joined the call, urging “significant” new spending to ensure a solid rebound from the damage inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the economic outlook has “improved significantly,” especially due to substantial government support, “the job is not yet done, given high uncertainty and the risk of permanent scarring,” Yellen said.

“I urge major economies to not just avoid removing support too early, but to strive to provide significant amounts of new fiscal support to secure a robust recovery,” she said. The IMF now projects global growth of six percent this year after the 3.3 percent contraction last year, and credited the \$16 trillion in global public spending during the pandemic with

keeping the worst peacetime recession in a century from being three times as severe. Yellen highlighted the \$1.9 trillion US aid package President Joe Biden signed last month, as well as his proposal announced last week to spend \$2 trillion on infrastructure and jobs.

Boosting resources Yellen said that with stimulus already boosting the recovery from the pandemic shutdowns, the US economy “could reach full employment as soon as next year,” but many developing countries do not have similar resources to support their economies. Georgieva warned about a “dangerous divergence” in low-income countries’ prospects compared to rich nations, which could worsen if advanced economies like the United States raise interest rates sooner than expected.

She also praised the IMF members who agreed to allow the fund to issue \$650 billion in new Special Drawing Rights, an additional pool of IMF currency that will add to nations’ reserves and boost their ability to access financing. The IMF is expected to present a proposal to its board in June, and Georgieva said the fund is working with rich nations to shift some of their share of those reserves to help aid developing nations, which “face a crucial policy transition from crisis to recovery.” The officials again stressed that ending the health crisis remains central to the economic recovery, and the closing statement from the IMFC, the fund’s steering committee, lamented the “uneven access to vaccines.” The committee emphasized “the need for strong international cooperation to accelerate vaccine production and support affordable and equitable distribution to all.” — AFP

LuLu Hypermarket launches special promotion during Ramadan

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, has embarked on a special promotion drive to welcome the holy month of Ramadan. The promotion, which will run throughout the entire month of Ramadan has already begun with a precursor ‘Ahlan Ramadan’ offer being launched on 31 March.

During the promotion period, special offers will be available on all items categories at the hypermarket, including on items from the Grocery, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and Household sections, as well as on items from the Hot-Foods and Roastery sections. The annual special Ramadan promotion at LuLu Hypermarket is a widely anticipated promotional campaign that shoppers in the country eagerly look forward to each year. The promotion allows shoppers to purchase their extra needs during the holy month in a convenient and easily accessible environment, while being assured of the finest quality products at very competitive prices.

This year, in view of the ongoing pandemic and the



need to adhere to all health guidelines issued by the authorities, the hypermarket is requesting all shoppers to use face-masks and maintain proper social distancing within the hypermarket. This would make the special Ramadan shopping time a safe experience for everyone.

German firms unveil lavish post-blast Beirut port plan

BEIRUT: A German delegation on Friday unveiled a spectacular multi-billion-dollar project to rebuild Beirut port and its surroundings but admitted it was contingent on far-reaching government reforms. Swathes of the port and adjacent neighborhoods were destroyed when fire ignited poorly stored ammonium nitrate on August 4, causing one of the world’s largest ever non-nuclear explosions and killing more than 200 people. The ambitious German project was met with skepticism by some observers who argued Lebanon’s leaders were showing no sign of providing the most basic conditions for foreign investment.

The plan put forward by two German firms envisions moving most port activity away from the city center and re-urbanizing the most damaged areas. Speaking at a press conference in Beirut, Colliers Germany managing director Hermann Schnell listed “affordable housing for families, green space and good infrastructure” among other features. The project envisions beaches and a “central park” alongside restored architectural heritage, all wrapped in a plan that would generate 50,000 jobs and billions in profit. The German pitch saw an “opportunity for a new city”, mapped out in a presentation that featured what it said were successful examples of redeveloped ports in cities like Cape Town, Bilbao and Vienna.

Lars Greiner of Hamburg Port Consulting (HPC) said the concept would “develop the port precinct of Beirut into a world class, state-of-the-art port” that would be more automated, cost-efficient and ready for regional trade growth. The private initiative is the first large-scale, comprehensive plan after last year’s blast and has the support of Germany, whose ambassador attended the press conference. Other international players are also working on alternative or complementary proposals. French shipping giant CMA CGM, which leads container operations in Lebanon, submitted its own master plan in September.

“Such a huge project... can only be built if there is accountability and transparency,” German ambassador Andreas Kindl said at the news conference. The project envisions the creation of a trust overseen by independent international appointees to manage funding from the European Investment Bank and other investors.

“I don’t see these proposals... becoming reality anytime soon,” economist and anti-government activist Jad Chaaban told AFP. “Who today is prepared to invest one penny in a country whose collapse is in full swing, which has no government and defaulted on its debt?”

The German team admitted the corruption that has defined Lebanese politics for decades was an obstacle. “What’s on the table is incredible... The only thing that you really need to do is make sure that there is transparency, that’s it,” HPC managing director Suheil Mahayni told AFP.

“We don’t dream, we have a clear vision... But if some pre-conditions are not fulfilled and don’t allow full transparency, it’s not going to work,” he said. — AFP

Brazil eyes record grain harvest as China demand booms

SALTO DO JACUI, Brazil: Brazil is on track to harvest record amounts of soy, corn and other grains this year, fueled by newly booming demand for commodities, particularly from China. Farmers in the world’s number one soy producer and number three corn producer have been harvesting at a record pace, capitalizing on prices that have leapt to multi-year highs on world markets after plunging because of the coronavirus pandemic last year.

The South American giant got off to a slow start because of a drought last season in key grain-belt states, but now has a bumper crop coming in thanks to superb weather. “Grain production in Brazil continues at the record pace we have seen through the 2020-21 harvest season, with growth of 16.8 million tons, or 6.5 percent, over the last harvest,” the government’s agricultural supply agency, Conab, said Thursday in its latest update. Brazilian grain farmers expanded their total crop land this year by 68.5 million hectares (169.3 million acres), a 3.9-percent increase, it said.

The soy harvest is forecast to come in at an all-time high of 135.5 million tons, 8.6 percent above last year’s crop, which was itself a record. Corn is also on track for a record, with a forecast harvest of 109 million tons, up 6.2 percent. The huge crop has farmers working full-steam in places like Salto do Jacui, which sits at the heart of farm country in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil’s third-biggest grain producing state. Working side by side, combines have been plying the golden fields, cropping the sea of soybeans under a bright blue sky. “We’re very happy with the results of this year’s harvest,” said farmer Adroaldo Rossato. “Thanks to great weather we had excellent productivity. And prices are also very high, way above previous years,” he told AFP on a break from harvesting.

Much of Brazil’s crop will be heading for China, whose rebound from the pandemic has put it back in the market for commodities in a big way. The Bloomberg Commodity Index is up 32 percent over the past year, as Beijing’s renewed appetite for raw materials drives prices to multi-year highs.

China has again become a voracious importer of not just soy—which it largely uses for hog feed—but oil, copper, iron ore and coal. The trend has some analysts wondering whether the world is at the start of a new “commodities supercycle.”

But it is likely too early to call. “If we are to see the start of a new supercycle, this robust demand growth that we are seeing from China will have to be sustainable for several years,” said ING bank head of commodities strategy Warren Patterson in a note. — AFP



SALTO DO JACUI: A worker scatters cropped soybeans in a truck in a field at Salto do Jacui, in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Rio Grande do Sul is the third-largest state producer of grain in the country, which is the world’s largest producer of soy. — AFP

Business

Al-Bahar: Egyptian banks succeeded in financing economic recovery

NBK Group Deputy CEO and Chairperson of NBK - Egypt in an interview with The Banker magazine

KUWAIT: In an interview with The Banker international magazine, Shaikha Al-Bahar, NBK Group Deputy CEO and Chairperson of NBK - Egypt said that the year 2020 witnessed the harshest operating conditions and unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the banking sector successfully proved its resilience and ability to overcome these conditions thanks to the high quality of its assets, healthy capitalization, and strong liquidity.



finance government and CBE initiatives aimed at stimulating economic growth, thanks to their strong liquidity. Despite lowering the interest rates in March, total deposits jumped, within six months, by more than 12 percent, with more than EGP 5 trillion in deposits by the end of September.

Promising opportunities

On a question about her take on the future of the Egyptian economy, Al-Bahar said that Egypt was the only country in the region to witness economic growth during the pandemic. We expect the economy to improve further on hopes for sustainable progress in the vaccination campaign and a faster recovery in the global economy. Growth is projected to reach around 2.8 percent in the current fiscal year, and to rebound strongly to about 5 percent over the medium term, benefiting from the authorities' continued commitment to reforms and renewed IMF support.

Egypt has an ambitious plan to develop its infrastructure and spend on its development projects. This was reflected in its draft budget for the current fiscal year which saw capital spending jump by 26 percent over the previous fiscal year, reaching EGP 177 billion. This represents a main pillar for business activity and supports credit growth, mentioned Al-Bahar.

Adding to the key factors that create promising prospects for the Egyptian economy, Al-Bahar said: "The Egyptian demographic profile is also another main pillar attributing to business growth, with 66 percent of the total population under the age of 35. Therefore, we see promising opportunities for the rapidly growing retail sector, as we aim to expand our market share in this lucrative sector going forward."

Given this demographic composition, about two-thirds of Egypt's population don't have bank accounts. This provides a great opportunity for future growth, especially in light of the initiatives rolled out by the government and CBE to increase financial inclusion, the most recent of which was CBE's decision to facilitate the opening of new bank accounts for individual customers and SMEs.

Supporting the economy

About the banking sector's role in providing support to the economy and customers during the pandemic, Al-Bahar mentioned: "Egyptian banks managed to carry out their financing role during the pandemic amid low interest rates and without the need for CBE to relax regulatory standards thanks to their strong financial solvency and high liquidity ratios that enabled them to finance increased government spending aimed at mitigating the spread of the virus and reviving the economy. There were also several initiatives launched by CBE to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic on the affected sectors."

Al-Bahar applauded CBE for launching several initiatives and directives that have greatly contributed to mitigating the economic impact of the pandemic, most importantly slashing interest rates by 400 basis points to stimulate economic growth, in addition to the deferral of all bank loan payments for individual customers and SMEs for a period of six months, with no additional interest or fines charged on late payments. Additionally, CBE issued instruction for debt restructuring based on the customer's future cash flows, and launched several initiatives to support the most affected sectors including tourism.

Controlling inflation

Commenting on interest rate cut applied by CBE and its impact on the banking sector's performance, Al-Bahar said: "Cutting interest rates as part of easing the monetary policy and control inflation led to the acceleration of credit growth, which was not affected by the crisis. This in turn contributed to reducing some of the pressures on interest margins



Shaikha Al-Bahar

due to cutting the interest rates. Credit growth was reflected in the loan-to-deposit ratio, which exceeded 47 percent at the end of September, up from less than 45 percent at the end of 2019, supporting banks' profitability."

Margins may face some pressures during this year and next year as a result of lower interest rates and further easing of the monetary policy, especially as inflation continues to trend lower below its target levels, with most banks' credit portfolio continue to depend on financing government debt instruments, exceeding EGP 2.7 trillion in government treasury bill investments. This number is expected to decline in light of the goals announced by the government to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio, posing a challenge for banks to maintain their profitability, noted Al-Bahar.

"In general, despite the low interest rates, real

old law presented over 17 years ago. The new integrated legislative framework is aimed at keeping pace with the latest economic, business, and banking sectors developments, and furnishes a new stage to develop the Egyptian banking system."

Al-Bahar praised CBE for dedicating a whole chapter in the new law to regulate payment services and FinTechs, noting that the law also outlined a legislative framework that supports bank's capitalization and increases their ability to deal with certain exceptional circumstances.

The law also focused on developing an integrated strategy to remedy loan default, ensuring early CBE intervention through clearly outlined standards and indicators that help protect the banking sector from future crises. A specific mechanism was also set for dealing with banks in the event of default and establish a fund to finance the settlement of those defaults, she added.

Digital transformation

On a question about digital banking and fintech grown in Egypt, Al-Bahar said: "The pandemic crises proved that digital transformation is no longer a luxury, it is critical to the survival of busi-

- CBE's new banking law supports digital transformation and paves the way for a new era of developing the banking sector
- Banks have succeeded in financing government and CBE initiatives aimed at stimulating economic growth without the need for any regulatory adjustments
- Digital transformation is no longer a luxury, it is critical to the survival and competitiveness of business
- The successful reform measures increased the resilience of the Egyptian economy making it more shock-proof
- CBE succeeded in controlling inflation after implementing tough reforms
- Carrying on with implementation of the infrastructure projects contributed to containing NPL ratios
- Reduction of government debt posing a challenge for banks to look for alternative financing
- The new legislation supports bank's capitalization and increase their ability to deal with certain exceptional circumstances

interest rates remain attractive to foreign investment compared to other emerging markets. This is supported by a decline in inflation rates to less than CBE's target levels and the ability to achieve most of the reform measures, which may increase inflationary pressures in the future," she added.

The new banking regulations

About the new banking regulations, Al-Bahar said: "There is a growing need to issue new legislation to cope with the various economic stages and the ever-changing economic developments in general and the banking industry in particular due to the developments on the FinTech front and the challenges posed by the global financial crisis which resulted in numerous challenging factors, thus leading to urgent need to issue new legislation to regulate the banking sector framework to replace the

ness. It is an alarm bell that warns anyone that slows down in taking serious steps towards their implementation by showing them that they have no place in the banking industry."

In recent years, the government has been interested in FinTech and electronic payments. These efforts were clearly reflected on payments, as the number mobile payment service users exceeded 19 million, with an annual growth of 41 percent, and the value of monthly transactions reached approximately EGP 9.6 billion, added Al-Bahar.

On the digital services front, banks actively increased their investments in digital transformation, allocated departments for digital banking services and products, and continued to encourage customers to execute their banking transactions through electronic channels using online or phone banking solutions, she concluded.



Adel Al-Rashood



Athba Al-Humaidi



Fahad Al-Saad

KFH demonstrates benefits of its salary campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) demonstrated "It's Worth Transferring your Salary" Campaign that includes a wide range of offers and discounts to customers. This took place during an interview on Q8 Pulse Radio Station brought together Executive Manager Personal Finance Products- Adel Al-Rashood, Manager Retail Segmentation Affluent Segments- Athba Al-Humaidi and Assistant Manager Public Relations and Event Management- Fahad Al-Saad.

KFH representatives, during the interview, underlined the benefits of the new KFH salary transfer such as: 0% profit on selected car brands up to KD 25,000 and payment period up to 5 years, Special discount from more than 10 car brands, Special offer on Tayseer cards with credit limit up to KD 5000,

Up to 50,000 miles with "Oasis Club" Mastercard World, and a chance to win 77 kg with Alrabeh Account.

The campaign encompasses all existing and new customers of the bank. Customers can apply for all or any of these offers based on their eligibility at the time of application for the offer, where terms and conditions apply. It is worth noting that customers are eligible to these offers providing that they are obligated to transfer salaries for period of the offer taken.

E-signature for personal financing

Executive Manager Personal Finance Products- Adel Al-Rashood, highlighted the e-signature service for personal financing products that includes the electronic handling of all paper docu-

ments for personal finance transactions. He said that the new service enables KFH customers to electronically sign any required document using any device and anywhere as well as complete the entire financing request automatically in accordance with the terms and conditions.

He added that this initiative reinforces KFH leadership in implementing the digital transformation strategy. Meanwhile, Manager Retail Segmentation Affluent Segments- Athba Al-Humaidi said that the "It's Worth Transferring your Salary" campaign reflects the strong ties between KFH and its customers, indicating KFH works tirelessly to meet the ambitions and requirements of its customers.

Assistant Manager Public Relations and Event Management- Fahad Al-Saad said that the campaign is accompanied by several activities and competitions to customers in efforts to move forward in the bank's strategy of enhancing customer experience.

Burgan Bank's 'BuBa' customers get 10% discount from 'Teela'

KUWAIT: Ensuring its customers receive up to date offers and enjoyable shopping experiences, Burgan Bank announced its latest partnership with the toy shop app "Teela" that will entitle its BuBa customers a 10 percent discount. As one of the top online toy stores in the GCC, "Teela" provides the largest selection of toys for boys and girls in all categories, where customers enjoy a seamless experience from purchasing to having it delivered to their doorstep. Burgan Bank's current offer provides its customers with easier and faster access to a wide-ranging choice of new, trendy, and exclusive toys through "Teela". Customers can also discover an exciting collection of entertainment products such as costumes, birthday supplies, stationary as well as some of the best technology and gadget gifts from top brands such as LEGO and Disney.

"BuBa" Kids Account holders are entitled to the discount by simply entering the promo code "BBK10" on the checkout page when using Buba Debit Card. Dana Al-Nesef, Manager - Product and Segments at Burgan Bank said: "We always strive to keep track of rapidly evolving expectations and provide a

diverse mix of products and offers that will accommodate our different segments' lifestyle needs. Additionally, Burgan Bank is pleased to collaborate and support local businesses such as "Teela" and the value they bring to our customers."

The "BuBa" Kids Account aims at providing creative solutions for parents who want to earn more from their savings for their children while enjoying a wide range of additional benefits. It is a savings account that requires only a minimum opening balance of KD 10 wherein children up to 14 years old are provided with attractive offers and discounts from select merchants across Kuwait, throughout the year.

The bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.



Dana Al-Nesef

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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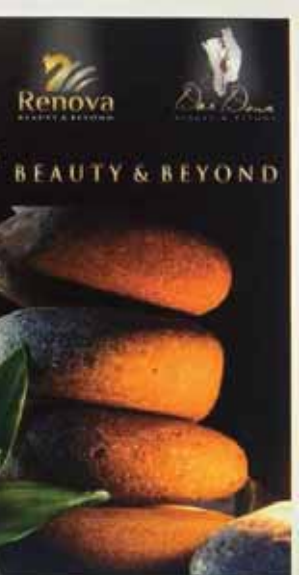
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Lifestyle | Features

HOW DID GAME OF THRONES BECOME SUCH A 'PHENOMENON'?

Winter came and went, leaving millions disappointed by the ending and a generation of adolescent boys exhausted from over-stimulation. Many more wondered whether all the blood and bare bottoms were strictly necessary. But few would argue that HBO's "Game of Thrones", celebrating its 10th birthday on April 17, was anything less than a televisual phenomenon.

Much to the chagrin of TV executives, figuring out how to repeat its global success remains as much a mystery as how anyone ever built a 700-foot wall entirely out of ice. The winning components are clear, not least

"Shameless" and "True Blood", with 236 and 137 nude scenes, respectively.

Power politics

Gore was another attraction, with a catalogue of skin-flaying, eye-gouging, throat-slitting, horse-heart-eating carnage that, famously, refused to spare even the show's main characters. Their unpredictable chances of survival added to its addictive appeal as the deaths racked up - 59 in season one, soaring to 3,523 in the massacrous eighth and final season, according to data site Statista.

Still, there are more violent shows

you exercise it... and how the young people spend the whole eight seasons looking for ways not to be like their parents or grandparents... these are what gave it its universal appeal."

For all the criticism around its treatment of women, the story had complex female characters at its core. "To maximize your audience, it's no good for fantasy shows simply to have manly men doing manly things while the women are just damsels in distress or mothers looking concerned," Larrington said.

'Intimidating size'

Even for fans of the books, the success came as a shock. "It's still hard to believe that the show exploded into a phenomenon like it did," said Myles McNutt, author of "Game of Thrones: A Guide to Westeros and Beyond". "It could have been that Martin's story was more accessible than we realised but it just had to be unburdened from the intimidating size of his novels."

He said that the timing also helped, coming just as social media became a vital part of TV viewing. "Game of Thrones" was indeed the show that launched a thousand memes. Many even found their way into political discourse, from a British lawmaker warning that winter would come if people didn't vote for Brexit, to then-president Donald Trump tweeting an image of himself in the show's artwork with the words "Sanctions Are Coming" aimed at Iran.

Thriving future?

It may be no surprise that concocting the next hit fantasy show looks challenging. HBO has multiple prequels in development, though only one, "House of the Dragon" is so far greenlit. Amazon, meanwhile, has forked out \$250 million for the rights to "Lord of the Rings". But the stakes are high, as the makers of "Game of Thrones" found when the final series was vilified by fans for seeming rushed.

Some 1.8 million people - and counting - have signed a petition demanding it be remade "with competent writers". McNutt said that it was unclear how audiences would respond to new takes on their favorite parallel worlds. "But HBO and Amazon are betting hundreds of millions of dollars that 'Game of Thrones' opened the door to a thriving future for fantasy television, and that's definitely never something I would have imagined a decade ago when the show premiered," he added. —AFP



A couple pays their respects at a makeshift memorial for hip-hop star DMX outside White Plains hospital in White Plains, New York on Friday.

HBO's penchant for naked - usually female - bodies. The non-stop sex brought controversy, especially when it was less consensual than in the original books, starting with the brutal consummation of Daenerys' marriage to Khal Drogo in the first episode in 2011.

"I think they misjudged the audience at the very beginning... There was something quasi-pornographic going on there," said Carolyn Larrington, a medieval literature professor at the University of Oxford and author of "All Men Must Die: Power and Passion in Game of Thrones". But overall, according to the experts at MrSkin.com, the show sits a lowly seventh in the all-time TV nudity rankings, with 82 nude scenes (74 percent female). That's far below

around and titillation alone cannot explain a viewership that reached 207 countries and saw 19.3 million people tune in live for the final episode in 2019 in the United States alone, according to HBO. Media analysts Parrot Analytics said it was still the most talked-about show through 2020, a year after it finished.

Much of the credit must go to the spectacular way in which the world of Westeros was brought to life by showrunners Dan Weiss and David Benioff, and above all to the rich story-telling of George R R Martin, on whose books the show was based. "What made the show so interesting were the twin poles of power politics and family," said Larrington. "How you gain power and how

'Fleabag' actor Waller-Bridge to star in new 'Indiana Jones'

"Fleabag" actor and creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge will star alongside Harrison Ford in the new "Indiana Jones" movie due to hit screens next summer, Lucasfilm said Friday. The series' fifth installment, to be directed by James Mangold ("Ford v Ferrari") has been billed as 78-year-old Ford's final film as the hero archaeologist. The "new adventure" will feature a "dream team



Phoebe Waller-Bridge

of all-time great filmmakers" including producers Steven Spielberg - who was initially due to direct - and Kathleen Kennedy, said Mangold in a statement to AFP.

"When you add Phoebe, a dazzling actor, brilliant creative voice and the chemistry she will undoubtedly bring to our set, I can't help but feel as lucky as Indiana Jones himself," Mangold added. The casting caps a

remarkable rise for British actor and writer Waller-Bridge, 35, who won multiple Emmys for "Fleabag," the smash-hit TV adaptation of her one-woman show about a disillusioned young singleton in London.

Waller-Bridge also co-wrote spy thriller "Killing Eve" and the upcoming, pandemic-delayed James Bond film "No Time To Die". She has worked previously with Lucasfilm, playing acerbic droid L3-37 in "Solo: A Star Wars Story" (2018). The fifth Indiana Jones film has been in production for years, with Lucasfilm parent company Disney confirming Ford's return at an investor day in December. Ford first picked up the adventurer's signature hat and whip in 1981's "Raiders of the Lost Ark" - just a few years after achieving global fame as Han Solo in the original "Star Wars" film. Three years later, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" followed. In 1989, "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" hit theaters, with Sean Connery playing Indy's dad.

Nearly 20 years would pass before Ford starred in the fourth film, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," which had box office success but was critically panned. Legendary composer John Williams, who created Indy's famous theme, will return to score the fifth film, which is due in July 2022. —AFP



NASA's Ingenuity helicopter unlocks its rotor blades, allowing them to spin freely, on April 7, 2021, the 47th Martian day, or sol, of the mission, captured by the Mastcam-Z imager on NASA's Perseverance Mars rover on the following sol, April 8, 2021. —AFP

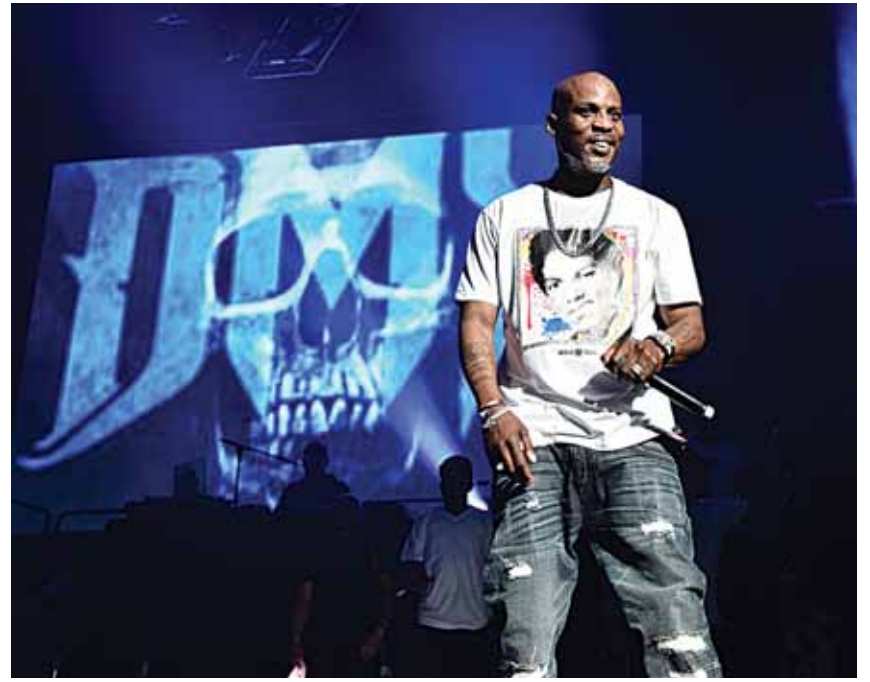
NASA space copter ready for first Mars flight

The helicopter that NASA has placed on Mars could make its first flight over the Red Planet within two days after a successful initial test of its rotors, the US space agency said Friday. The current plan for the first-ever attempt at powered, controlled flight on another planet is for the four-pound (1.8 kilogram) helicopter, dubbed the Ingenuity, to take off from Mars' Jezero Crater on Sunday at 10:54 pm US eastern time (0254 GMT Monday) and hover 3 meters above the surface for a half-minute, NASA said. "The helicopter is good, it's looking healthy," said Tim Canham, Ingenuity operations lead, in a press conference. "Last night, we did our 50 RPM spin, where we spun the blades very slowly and carefully," he said. The plan for today is to have it rise, flying only vertically, hover and rotate for 30 seconds to take a picture of the Perseverance rover, which touched down on Mars on February 18 with the helicopter attached to its underside.

Then the Ingenuity will be lowered back down onto the surface. The flight will be autonomous, pre-programmed into the aircraft because of the 15 minutes it takes for signals to travel from Earth to Mars, and also due to the demanding environment of the distant planet. "Mars is hard not only when you land, but when you try to take off from it and fly around, too," said MiMi Aung, Ingenuity project manager.

She explained that the planet has significantly less gravity than Earth, but less than one percent the pressure of Earth's atmosphere at the surface. The makes it necessary for the Ingenuity to be able to spin its rotor blades much faster than a helicopter on Earth in order to fly. "Put those things together, and you have a vehicle that demands every input be right," said Aung.

NASA captured the test of the rotors in a short video shot from the rover just a few meters away, showing what looks like a small drone. Aung said a second test would be conducted today, with the rotors running at high speed. "The only uncertainty remains the actual environment of Mars," she said, mentioning possible winds. NASA calls the unprecedented helicopter operation highly risky, but says it could reap invaluable data about the conditions on Mars. NASA plans up to five flights, each successively more difficult, in a period of a month. —AFP



In this file photo taken on June 28, 2019, DMX performs at Masters Of Ceremony 2019 at Barclays Center in New York City. —AFP

DMX, rap's explosive, tortured star, dies at 50

DMX, the hardcore hip-hop star whose raw, snarling raps chronicled the struggles of the American street and his own inner pain, has died. He was 50 years old. The rapper's longtime lawyer confirmed DMX's death to AFP, with a statement from his family saying the artist, born Earl Simmons, died after nearly a week on life support following a heart attack.

"Earl was a warrior who fought till the very end," the statement released Friday read, saying the rapper died at White Plains Hospital north of New York City, with loved ones by his side. "He loved his family with all of his heart and we cherish the times we spent with him," the statement read.

The rapper - who reigned over the late 1990s and early 2000s with hits including "X Gon' Give It To Ya" and "Party Up" - was among hip-hop's darkest yet most endearing stars. He laid out his inner demons for the masses in gritty, hard-driving anthems, with a distinctive poetic vulnerability that gained him commercial and critical acclaim.

Raised in the New York suburb of Yonkers, the artist endured a grim childhood, growing up in housing projects with his mother and siblings where he suffered abuse. Simmons was burdened with a reputation as a problem child, and shuffled in and out of homes for troubled boys for much of his youth.

At 14, he began struggling with addiction and entered a cycle of incarceration, both of which would persist throughout his life. Even after achieving international celebrity for his artistry, DMX continued to have run-ins with the penal system, with charges including drug possession, animal cruelty, reckless driving, failure to pay child support and tax evasion.

'A giant'

But while his criminal record made headlines, it was his blunt, confessional raps delivered in his powerful, gravelly voice that would cement the artist's legacy, leaving an indelible mark on hip-hop and gaining him legions of fans.

"DMX was a brilliant artist and an inspiration to millions around the world. His message of triumph over struggle, his search for the light out of darkness, his pursuit of truth and grace brought us closer to our own humanity," said Def Jam Recordings, the label with which DMX released some of his most iconic albums, in a statement following his death. "DMX was nothing less than a giant."

He began beatboxing in the mid-1980s, writing lyrics and peddling mixtapes. The charismatic artist spent most of the 1990s making a name for himself in New York's underground scene, especially in rap battle rings. It was late in that decade that he grew into the blazing,

urgent style of performance that would become his calling card, emanating a singular presence at once hypermasculine and sincere.

In the mid-1990s, he famously battled with Brooklyn's up-and-coming star Jay-Z, who was then primarily an emcee, for hours in a smoky pool hall in the Bronx. "It was dope. DMX, at the time, I had never really heard of DMX. I didn't know who this kid was," the producer Ski Beatz, who was in attendance, told the site HipHopDX. "But to hear him rhyme live, I was like, 'This dude is really ill'."

'Atomic energy'

DMX's love of dogs was such that he integrated barks and growls into his teeth-baring brand of rap. "Your dog will die for you," he told the Los Angeles Times in 1999. "That's how dogs get down, unconditional love. Humans are not really capable of unconditional love." He released his debut major-label single "Get At Me Dog" in 1998 with Def Jam, which came off his first studio album "It's Dark and Hell Is Hot."

The record debuted at number one on Billboard's top album chart and boasted another hit single, "Ruff Ryders' Anthem," ushering in commercial success that would last for years. Defying his ferocious, testosterone-addled image, DMX also charmed with his goofier side, notably in an impromptu remix of the holiday classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" that went viral in 2012.

He was vocal about his commitment to Christianity, even expressing hopes of becoming a pastor. DMX suffered from addiction to drugs including crack, which he said a mentor tricked him into trying at age 14 by lacing a blunt, exposure that led to a life of torment. "Why would you do that to a child?" he said in an emotional interview on rapper Talib Kweli's weekly podcast in late 2020. "I didn't really have anybody to talk to. In the hood, nobody wants to hear that... Talking about your problems is viewed as a sign of weakness, when actually it's one of the bravest things you can do."

Tributes poured in Friday from fans and fellow artists. T.I. called DMX a "cultural icon", as Missy Elliott dubbed the loss "heavy for the HipHop family". "No one radiated more agony, pain, and atomic energy," tweeted rapper Biz Markie. "The struggle incarnate." Snoop Dogg, who last year faced off with DMX as part of the Verzuz series, posted: "What they thought was a battle ended up being a family reunion. Of 2 Doggs who loved everything about each other thank U. X for loving me back." "God's poet," wrote Nas. "I love you." —AFP

Nike agrees to settlement with 'Satan Shoe' maker

The company behind the "Satan Shoes" released in collaboration with rapper Lil Nas X has settled with Nike over the sneakers the corporate giant said were trademark infringement. MSCHE, the Brooklyn studio that developed 666 pairs of customized Nike Air Max 97s - complete with an apparent drop of human blood in the midsole - issued a voluntary recall for the kicks.

In a Friday email the company offered a full refund of the original retail price and shipping costs to customers who purchased either the Satan Shoes or the previously released "Jesus Shoes" - which contained holy water in the sole. The Satan Shoes went for \$1,018 each.

"We have agreed to settle the lawsuit," the MSCHE email read. "As part of the settlement, Nike has asked us, and we have agreed, to initiate a recall in order to remove the Satan Shoes and the Jesus Shoes from circulation.

This is a voluntary recall: it is totally within your rights to choose whether to return your Satan Shoes or Jesus Shoes."

The Satan Shoes sold out almost instantly when they dropped late last month. Their release triggered controversy from some American conservatives, especially those already incensed by artist Lil Nas X's lusty video for the song "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" whose release was affiliated with the shoes.

Nike alleged in federal court documents that the sneakers prompted boycott calls against them from offended consumers, who erroneously associate the sneaker giant with the bloody soled-shoes due to their trademark swoosh symbol. Details of the settlement beyond the recall were not disclosed. "The parties are pleased to put this dispute behind them," a Nike spokesperson said in a statement. —AFP

S AFRICA'S GANGSTER BABOON COMES TO AN UNTIMELY END

As in any good film noir, the end has come quickly for a notorious South African baboon which went on a vicious crime spree and pushed things just that little bit too far. The alpha-male monkey found himself high on the unwanted list last year after he moved into the scenic Cape Town suburb of Smitswinkel Bay following a stint along a tourist-magnet road.

There, he terrorized residents with more than 40 raids for food in trash-bins, lawns and porches, sometimes entering homes while people were inside. In desperation, locals fortified their homes with "baboon-proof" measures - all in vain. But it was when the baboon started forming a gang that the authorities realized that things were getting out of hand.

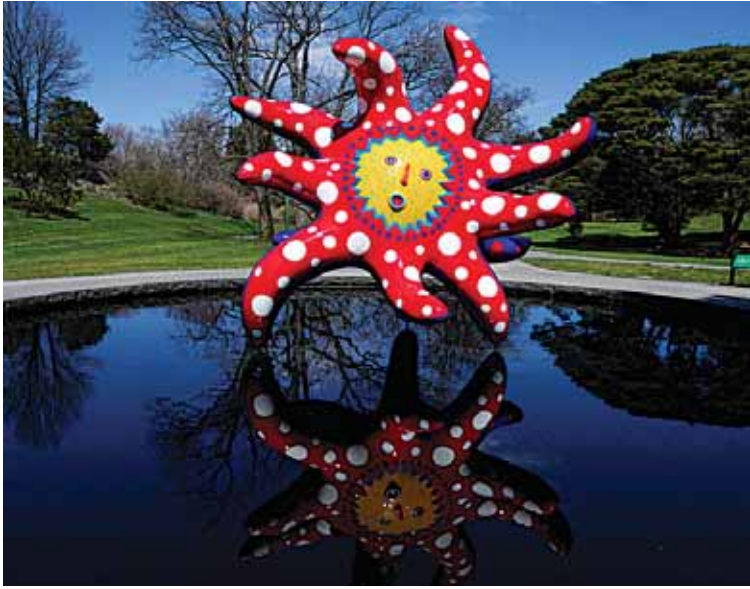
In recent weeks, a splinter group of females and juveniles had started fol-

lowing the baboon, placing themselves in danger, and the boss on Thursday had to be "humanely" euthanized, the city of Cape Town said. The conservation group CapeNature "supported the removal of this baboon (and) issued the permit," it said in a statement.

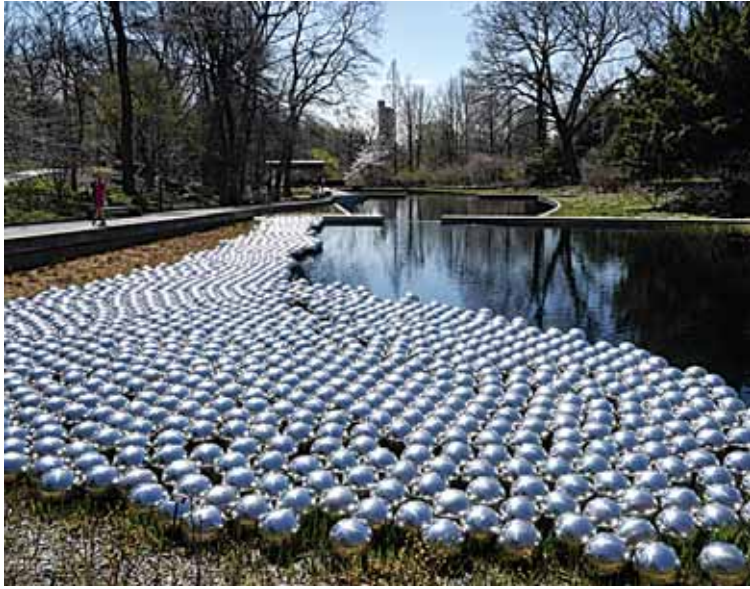
"The city can confirm that an independent veterinarian assisted with the procedure," it said, coyly casting a veil over details of the baboon's demise. Hundreds of baboons live around Cape Town and are often a mugging nuisance as they scavenge properties and attack tourists for edibles - a byproduct of factors including urban areas encroaching into their natural habitats.

The city said the monkeys could be injured or killed, or even contract coronavirus, by being in close proximity to humans. With the death of the leader, Cape Town hopes the gang will return to their natural habitat. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's "I Want to Fly to the Universe" on display during the KUSAMA: Cosmic Nature Media Preview on April 7, 2021 at the New York Botanical Garden. —AFP photos



Kusama's "Narcissus Garden" made up of 1,400 reflective spheres is on display.



Kusama's "Dancing Pumpkin", a 16-foot-tall sculpture, is on display.

PUMPKINS, PEAS, PEONIES: NEW YORK EXHIBIT CELEBRATES JAPAN'S KUSAMA

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama grew up among plants; walking through her grandfather's vast nursery as a child she first saw the pumpkins that would come to define her work. Now, the 92-year-old's sculptures stretch across the 250-acre grounds of the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx in a major exhibition that was delayed by a year because of the pandemic.

"KUSAMA: Cosmic Nature" was due to open in March 2020 following years of preparation and finally began welcoming visitors from yesterday as cultural life gradually returns to New York City. "It's not just big pumpkins and big flowers," explains Karen Daubmann, vice-president of exhibitions at the garden. "It's really looking at the life of an incredible artist and her roots in the natural world."

From Kusama's first drawings of flowers and leaves to her more recent series "My Eternal Soul," the exhibition traces her progression as an artist through her love of plants, a permanent source of inspiration and self-analysis, according to exhibition curator Mika Yoshitake. An example of this is "Self-Portrait," which resembles the blackened center of a sunflower.

"She grew up with fields of flowers, peonies, zinnias, pumpkins. Her first memories are walking through it with her grandfather and that's why there's

so many botanical images," said Yoshitake. Her later memories were more tormented: Artistic talents impeded in adolescence by her parents and then 15 years of living as an immigrant in the United States, mostly in New York.

Kusama, an admirer of American modernist painter Georgia O'Keeffe, struggled to establish herself in a male-dominated art world and a post-war America where anti-Japanese sentiment was rife. But for the avant-garde Kusama, whose art has been heavily influenced by bouts of hallucinations and mental illness, nature is also a world full of colors and joy, exemplified in her giant "Dancing Pumpkin" sculpture created specially for the Bronx exhibition.

The pumpkin's "tentacles" are covered with polka-dot patterns characteristic of Kusama's work. These symbols of sun and energy, according to Yoshitake, have helped make the nonagenarian one of the most Instagrammable artists on the planet. Daubmann describes the exhibition as "colorful" and "fun" and hopes it will break attendance records, as was the case with earlier Kusama exhibitions, most notably at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2019.

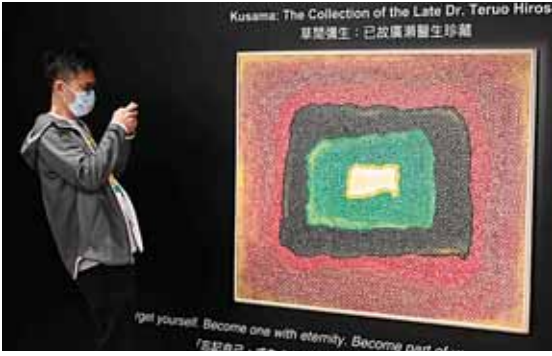
If the photos already posted online by the first visitors are anything to go by then its success, on social networks at least, seems assured. Polka dot patterns, mesh, flowers and bright colors - the recur-



Kusama's "Ascension of Polka Dots on Trees" is seen on display.

ring themes of Kusama's 75-year career are all present. The reflecting steel orbs of her "Narcissus Garden" roll slowly in the New York wind, 55 years after she first exhibited them, without authorization, in front of the entrance to the Venice Biennale.

Kusama, who since 1977 has voluntarily lived in a psychiatric hospital in Tokyo, will not travel to see the exhibition, which runs until Oct 31. She is in a wheelchair and hardly leaves home, according to Yoshitake, but continues to paint daily, in particular



A visitor to Bonhams auction house in Hong Kong on April 7, 2021 photographs a painting titled "Untitled", part of some of the earliest recognized works by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama - which have never been exhibited in public and will be offered in a special single-owner collection sale at Bonhams New York on May 12, 2021.

to feed the "My Eternal Soul" series and produce canvases, some of which are part of the exhibition. "It's been a rough year and no one's really felt inspired," said Daubmann. "I hope that everyone's inspired by this exhibition." —AFP



In this picture taken on Jan 31, 2021, female students of the Hazara community warm up before a martial arts training class at the Kazmi International Wushu Academy in Quetta. —AFP photos

PAKISTAN'S HAZARA WOMEN STRIKE BACK WITH MARTIAL ARTS

Hundreds of Pakistani Hazara women are learning how to deliver side kicks and elbow blows as martial arts booms within the marginalized community. Hazaras, who are mainly Shia Muslims, have faced decades of sectarian violence in the southwestern city of Quetta, living in two separate enclaves cordoned off by checkpoints and armed guards to protect them.

Women must also contend with routine harassment from men, with groping commonplace in crowded markets or public transport. "We can't stop bomb blasts with karate, but with self-defence, I have learnt to feel confident," 20-year-old Nargis Batool told AFP. "Everyone here knows that I am going to the club. Nobody dares say anything to

me while I am out."

Up to 4,000 people are attending regular classes in more than 25 clubs in Balochistan province, of which Quetta is the capital, according to Ishaq Ali, head of the Balochistan Wushu Kung Fu Association, which oversees the sport. The city's two largest academies, which train around 250 people each, told AFP the majority of their students were young Hazara women.

Many of them go on to earn money from the sport, taking part in frequent competitions. It is still unusual for women to play sport in deeply conservative Pakistan where families often forbid it, but martial arts teacher Fida Hussain Kazmi says exceptions are being made. "In general, women cannot exercise

in our society... but for the sake of self-defense and her family, they are being allowed."

The uptake is also credited to national champions Nargis Hazara and Kulsoom Hazara, who have won medals in international competitions. Kazmi says he has trained hundreds of women over the years, after learning the sport from a Chinese master in the eastern city of Lahore. The 41-year-old offers two hours of training six days a week for 500 rupees (\$3) but gives free classes to women who have lost a relative to militant violence. "The Hazara community is facing many problems... but with karate we can begin to feel safe," said 18-year-old student Syeda Qubra, whose brother was killed in a bomb blast in 2013. —AFP



In this picture taken on Jan 31, 2021, Mubarak Ali Shan (right), a martial arts instructor, trains female students of the Hazara community during a self-defense martial arts training class on the outskirts of Quetta.

SCAR TISSUE: VIETNAMESE WOMEN FIND HEALING WITH TATTOOS

In her tiny Hanoi apartment, tattoo artist Ngoc inks middle-aged women whose lives have been upended by divorce or illness, each of them searching for healing through an art form that is still largely taboo in Vietnam. Although attitudes are changing, tattoos remain associated with gangsters, prostitution and the criminal underground in the communist, broadly conservative country.

"I met many women who told me they loved tattoos but they were born at a time when no-one supported them," Ngoc, who goes by the name "Ngoc Like", told AFP. But some are choosing to push back against those old ideas, seeing body art as emancipation from some of the rigid societal norms they have lived by.

Getting inked is often a landmark moment in these women's lives, Ngoc, 28, says. "They have overcome that fear of social prejudice and have a personal wish to renew themselves... to open a new chapter in life." Educated and business-savvy, Ngoc was ridiculed when she started out as a tattoo artist less than a decade ago - with many assuming she did not go into the industry out of choice.

But she has since built up a solid, mostly female clientele. "Being a tattoo artist, I have had to accept the fact that people dismiss my skill, my studies, my personality... They say: 'You do this because you did not get good grades.'"



This photograph taken on March 20, 2021 shows tattoo artist Ngoc designing a tattoo over a female customer's scar at her studio in Hanoi. —AFP photos

'Strength and confidence'

Just four percent of Vietnamese have tattoos, according to a small survey in 2015 by Vietnam market research firm Q&Me, the most recent data available. It also suggested that 25 percent of people "feel scared" when seeing body art. But for Tran Ha Nguyen, a high school teacher, getting a tattoo was an act of celebration following a divorce from her "conservative and rigid" husband. "My ex strongly opposed any tattoo on my body," she recalled. "I on the other hand had been afraid I would lose my job if I had something visible."

After the separation, the 41-year-old told AFP she wanted a clean break from her old self and to do things she would never have dared do in her previous life. She chose a daisy design for her thigh, high enough that no-one can see it unless she is in a bikini. "It's just one small tattoo but I feel I have found my true self," Nguyen said.



This combination photograph shows a female customer's post-surgery scar before (top) and after a tattoo procedure at Ngoc Like's studio.

'I live for myself'

Ngoc has decided to focus her tattooing work on women with scars, both physical and mental. Demand is growing - her schedule is completely full, she says. Her clients in Hanoi, where average monthly income per capita is less than \$500, are often willing to spend double that amount on their body art. One of them, 33-year-old office worker Huong - not her real name - has felt ashamed of her body since appendicitis surgery 14 years ago left her with an "ugly" vertical scar.

"I considered going to a clinic to see if they could get rid of the scar. 'But then I thought: why can't I have a tattoo to hide it?' Her eyes shut tight in anxiety, Huong lies on the chair, waiting for the needle to begin its march across her midriff. This "is not just about beautification... The beauty here is giving a woman the chance to be herself," says Ngoc.

Hours later, looking in the mirror at a string of



Nguyen Hong Thai poses with her tattoo made in memory of her late husband at Ngoc's studio.

pink flowers across her stomach, a grin breaks out over Huong's face. "I was afraid if (my family) saw this big tattoo, they would think I was a party woman. 'But the most important thing is I live for myself. If I can lose the shame around my scar, life gets more interesting.'" —AFP

Sports

Young carries Hawks past Bulls, Pelicans' Williamson flies high

Tatum youngest Celtic to score 50 points in a game

LOS ANGELES: Trae Young bounced back from a subpar outing to score 42 points as the Atlanta Hawks overcame Zach LaVine's 50-point performance with a 120-108 win over the Chicago Bulls on Friday in Atlanta.

The second meeting of the season between the two teams played out similar to their first game in December when Hawks top scorer Young and Bulls all-star LaVine carried their respective offences in Atlanta's 124-104 win.

Young, who was coming off a poor shooting night on Wednesday against Memphis when he shot just six-of-12 from the floor, ratcheted up the intensity against the Bulls, who were gunning for their fourth straight win but playing on short rest.

Young shot 15-of-25 and finished with eight rebounds and nine assists as the wrapped up a four game homestand with the win. Young leads Atlanta, averaging over 25 points per game to go along with almost 10 rebounds a game.

Clint Capela contributed 22 points and 10 rebounds while shooting 10-for-12 from the field for the Hawks. Danilo Gallinari came off the bench to score 20 points for Atlanta, which earned its fifth win in the past six games.

"It gives everybody a lot of confidence," said Gallinari. "You win games like this and the next time you're going to approach it the same when you're in a tight fourth quarter when you know what you want to do, and the shots you want to take."

LaVine scored a career-high 50 points, making 18 of 31 shots from the field, seven of 12 threes, and missing just one of eight free throws. He scored 39 points in the first half, which tied for the best scoring production since Phoenix Suns Jamal Crawford

had 39 points in the second half in April 9, 2019.

"I just got in a rhythm," LaVine said. "My threes started falling and then I can get to the mid-range and get to the hoop. I was trying to get to the free-throw line late in the second quarter because I was so damn tired. Trying to get a little bit of a break." Atlanta outscored the Bulls 67-42 in the second half to come from behind for the win.

Pelicans answer challenge

Elsewhere, Zion Williamson finished with 37 points, a career high 15 rebounds and eight assists as the New Orleans Pelicans responded to a challenge from their coach to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 101-94 in New Orleans. Williamson's career night came just one game after his record streak of 25 consecutive games with at least 20 points on 50 percent or better shooting ended in a loss at Brooklyn. He now shares that record with former Los Angeles Lakers superstar Shaquille O'Neal.

"He played the game the way you're supposed to play the game. He was just tremendous," said Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy. Williamson also shot 15-of-28 from the floor for the Pelicans, who have won two of their last six games. "My teammates were giving me confidence and saying we trust you and every move you make," Williamson said. "All that stuff plays a part." The Pelicans win also comes one game after Van Gundy lashed out publicly at his team after their defense collapsed in back-to-back losses at Atlanta (123-107) on Tuesday and at Brooklyn (139-111) on Wednesday.

Van Gundy said the Pelicans "got totally dominated at both ends of the floor" and called their defense against the Nets "absurd." Brandon Ingram



ATLANTA: Trae Young #11 of the Atlanta Hawks high fives Kevin Huerter #3 during the game against the Chicago Bulls on Friday at State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

returned from a five-game injury absence on Friday to score 17 points and Willy Hernangomez had 10 points and 10 rebounds. Jaxson Hayes chipped in with 12 points. Tobias Harris led the Sixers with 23 points, Joel Embiid had 14 on five-of-16 shooting, Furkan Korkmaz scored 12 and Ben Simmons 10.

Also, Jayson Tatum became the youngest player in Boston history to score at least 50 points in a

game as the Celtics needed overtime to beat the last-place Minnesota Timberwolves 145-136. Tatum, at 23 years and 37 days, scored 35 of his career-high 53 points in the second half. Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and Marcus Smart 24 points and eight assists. Karl-Anthony Towns had 30 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists to lead the Timberwolves. — AFP

De Villiers stars as Bangalore win IPL opener

CHENNAI: South Africa's AB de Villiers hit a quickfire 48 as Royal Challengers Bangalore prevailed in a last-ball thriller against holders Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League opener played behind closed doors on Friday. The 14th edition of the popular Twenty20 tournament kick-started in Chennai as Virat Kohli's Bangalore chased down a target of 160 to win by two wickets.

De Villiers single-handedly lifted the team from a precarious 122-6 to take the chase into the final over, but he got run out on the fourth ball. Harshal Patel, who claimed five wickets to restrict Mumbai to 159-9 in their 20 overs, got the winning run in a tense finish.

"AB is probably the only player who's so versatile and can do what he did on slow pitches today, so we have to understand," Kohli said on the team's decision to make de Villiers bat at number five. "If there's a partnership on, you might see a totally different order. But in a tricky chase you want some options in the back end, where the opposition thinks it's not over till he gets out."

Kohli won the toss and elected to field first at the start of the 52-day tournament that concludes on May 30. Kohli said he "felt like home" on IPL's return to India after last year's edition took place in the United Arab Emirates due to the pandemic.

Glenn Maxwell, who was bought by Bangalore for \$1.95 million in an intense February auction, got going with his captain in a key partnership of 52. Kohli fell to Mumbai fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah for 33 and Maxwell, promoted to number four, fell to tall South African quick Marco Jansen for 39 as Bangalore faltered. But de Villiers soon took charge as he hit four fours and two sixes in his 27-ball knock.

Earlier Patel struck three times in the final over of the Mumbai innings to set up victory for a side searching its first IPL title. Bangalore batsman Devdutt Padikkal missed the game after he was one of the four IPL players to test positive for COVID-19 ahead of the gala event. All eight teams are in strict bio-bubbles as case numbers in India have skyrocketed to more than 130,000 a day since players arrived to prepare for the eight-week spectacle.

"We are fortunate enough to be on the park playing cricket. That is more important, we can put a smile on people in India," said Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma. "As a country we are going through tough times and it's important we give them something to look forward to. This tournament is going to be exciting." — AFP

Pau Gasol dons Barca shirt again, twenty years later

MADRID: Twenty years after leaving Barcelona for the riches of the NBA, 40-year-old Pau Gasol returned to the Spanish club on Friday, playing in a EuroLeague clash against Bayern Munich. Gasol, who was an NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2009 and 2010, returned to Europe following two frustrating years in the United States where a serious left foot injury kept him sidelined at the Milwaukee Bucks.

On Friday, he ended the game with nine points and four rebounds as the German side ran out 82-72 winners. "Pau is doing well, he increases in intensity with each workout, he likes it here and I think that now we are thinking about giving him a few minutes, but we do not yet know how much," Barca coach Sarunas Jasikevicius had said on Thursday. Gasol started Friday's match alongside Greece's Nick Calathes, Leo Westermann of France and Spanish pair Sergi Martinez and Victor Claver. Barcelona were already assured of first place in the table and guaranteed a spot in the quarter-finals. — AFP



BARCELONA: FC Bayern Munich's German center Leon Radosevic (left) challenges Barcelona's Spanish center Pau Gasol during the Euroleague basketball match between Barcelona and Bayern Munich at the Palau Blaugrana arena in Barcelona on Friday. —AFP

Japan swimmer Ikee claims clean sweep but misses Olympic spot

TOKYO: Leukemia survivor Rikako Ikee completed a clean sweep of four wins at Japan's Olympic swimming trials yesterday — but missed out on an individual place at the Tokyo Games. Ikee, who only resumed training in March last year after being diagnosed with cancer in February 2019, won both the 50m butterfly and 50m freestyle to add to the two victories she claimed earlier in Tokyo.

She had already secured her place in Japan's medley and 4x100m freestyle relay teams for the coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Games going into the final day of the trials, which doubled as Japan's national championships. But her time of 24.84sec in the 50m freestyle — her only qualifier of the day as the 50m butterfly is not an Olympic event — was not enough to earn her an individual berth at the Games. "I want-

ed a better time, but the most important thing was that I won my fourth title, so I'm very happy," said Ikee, who had insisted before the trials that she was focusing on the Paris Games in 2024.

"I wasn't sure what the result was going to be right up until the race, but as soon as I came out to the pool, I was determined to win," she added. Ikee was named MVP of the 2018 Asian Games after claiming six golds and two silvers, and was expected to be one of the stars of the Tokyo Games. But she was hospitalized for around 10 months after being diagnosed with leukemia, and only resumed competing in August last year.

She won the 50m butterfly at the Tokyo Open in February to claim her first victory since her comeback. And she capped it off at this week's trials by winning the 100m butterfly and booking her spot on Japan's medley relay team. She went on to win the 100m freestyle to claim a place in the 4x100m relay team, but thought about dropping out of the 50m events after suffering fatigue. Now she is determined to "make a contribution to the relay team" when the Games begin this summer. "Once I decided to compete, I knew I had to do it properly," she



TOKYO: Japan's Rikako Ikee reacts after winning the women's 50m freestyle final during the Japan National Swimming Championships, which doubles as a qualifier event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre yesterday. — AFP

said. "I've got a few months to go before the Olympics, and I think I can build up some strength before then." — AFP

Match-play mindset helps revive Masters leader Justin Rose

AUGUSTA: Once Justin Rose shook off a miserable start and reminded himself he was still leading the Masters, the 40-year-old Englishman was able to play well enough to stay ahead. The reigning Olympic champion birdied three of the last six holes Friday after making bogeys on four of the first seven and held a one-shot lead after 36 holes at Augusta National. "The finger was heading towards the panic button a little bit," Rose admitted.

Rose, whose only major win was the 2013 US Open, opened Thursday with a 65 for a four-stroke lead, only to see it shrink to a single shot as he walked up the eighth fairway. That's when he decided to shift to a match-play mindset against Augusta National.

"I started to take the leaderboard out of it and I felt really good out there on the back nine. It was a solid round of golf," Rose said. "I had a little talk with myself on eight and said you're still leading the Masters and started to play match play against the golf course. I scratched a line on my scorecard and told myself I was three down and could I go ahead and beat the golf course from that point on."

Rose didn't beat the famed layout, but he put up

enough of a fight in a draw to stay ahead of all those pesky stroke-play rivals, his par 72 putting him on seven-under 137, one ahead of Americans Brian Harman and Will Zalatoris. "Had a putt on 18 to win my match 1-up, but unfortunately it just slipped by," Rose said. "But an honorable draw."

The two-time Masters runner-up, a heartbreak playoff loser to Sergio Garcia in 2017, said he was better off for the struggle and fightback. "I felt like I grew a little bit from today, which is good," Rose said. "It was a worthwhile day for me. There were some key moments in that front nine where I was pretty proud of myself for just keeping things ticking forward."

Rose provided some insight into the crucial conversion in his head that helped reverse his scorecard woes. "I told myself going up the eighth hole, 'You're leading the Masters. Your frame of reference is a little bit different. Four ahead is something, but you're still leading so just enjoy it and keep going.' I was able to do that... could then just walk onto the back nine and try to build something fresh and new."

Asked what happened to cause his lackluster round, Rose replied, "Augusta National happened. That's just the way it can be out there. That round could easily have been 74." Rose will try to keep the same frame of mind for the weekend. "That will be my mindset for tomorrow," he said. "Just tidy it up a little bit, get off to a better start and build a round from there."

With major winners such as US stars Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas gaining ground, Rose isn't worrying about what number it might take to win.



AUGUSTA: Justin Rose of England plays his shot from the 12th tee during the second round of the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club on Friday in Augusta, Georgia. — AFP

"You can see the leaderboard and who is stacking up behind," Rose said. "I feel like there's a lot of firepower there where you can't ever really hold anyone back to a number." — AFP

Sports

Cavani undecided over future at Man Utd, says Solskjaer

Arteta says Aubameyang 'totally' committed to Arsenal

LONDON: Edinson Cavani remains unsure about his Manchester United future beyond the end of the Premier League season, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Friday. The 34-year-old Uruguay international arrived at Old Trafford as a free agent in October on a deal until the end of the campaign with the option of a further year.

Unlike most extension clauses it has to be agreed by both parties before it can be triggered and there is speculation that Cavani could move to Argentine giants Boca Juniors. Solskjaer said he had discussed the matter with the former Paris Saint-Germain forward.

"I've kept in touch with Edi, of course, and we keep an open dialogue," said Solskjaer. "He's still unsure what he wants to do next season, which I find fine. It's not been an easy year either for him or the rest of the world this season, so he still wants time to make his mind up."

Cavani came off the bench in Thursday's 2-0 Europa League quarter-final first-leg win at Granada, making his 28th appearance of a season marred by injuries. He also served a three-match Football Association ban for using a racial term in a social media post. The striker apologized for any unintentional offence caused.

Solskjaer believes Cavani, who has scored seven times for United, will finish the season strongly despite the potential distractions. "I'm very sure that we'll get a good version of Edinson for the rest of the season," said the Norwegian. "He knows that this is the business end of the season, where we fight for the Europa League trophy and we can see the end line in the league. He's been so positive in and around the place, he's been great to have."

Second-placed United face Tottenham today, eager to atone for a 6-1 hammering earlier in the

season in a match in which Anthony Martial was sent off. "I think the players will remember that game with a lot of pain and their pride has been hurt, our professional pride's been hurt," said Solskjaer. "The way and the manner we lost is not ourselves and we know that. We gave ourselves a difficult game by having 10 men. Pre-season was short and we weren't up to the standard required, but we were so poor and I'm pretty, pretty sure we'll see some players wanting to prove that we're better than that."

'Totally' committed

Elsewhere, Mikel Arteta said striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is "totally" committed to Arsenal even though he has been in and out of the team and he played down comparisons with the Mesut Ozil situation.

Club captain Aubameyang signed a lucrative new three-year contract last year but has struggled for form this season and was dropped for last month's north London derby after arriving late. The Gabon international, 31, has scored just nine goals in 25 Premier League appearances this season compared with 22 goals last term.

His situation at the Emirates has been compared with that of Ozil, who under-performed despite being on huge wages before eventually being exiled by Arteta. The Arsenal boss, though, said he did not see the merits of comparing the two cases.

"I'm always positive about the future but once you think about things that happen in the past or compare different situations and personalities, I won't do that," he said. Asked whether Aubameyang was committed to the Gunners' cause, Arteta, whose side are languishing in mid-table in the English top-flight, added: "Totally."



GRANADA: Granada's Venezuelan midfielder Yangel Herrera reacts next to Manchester United's Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani (right) after missing a goal opportunity during the UEFA Europa League football match between Granada FC and Manchester United at the Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium in Granada on Thursday. —AFP

The forward came on as a late second-half substitute in the 1-1 draw with Slavia Prague in the Europa League quarter-final first-leg clash on Thursday, setting up Nicolas Pepe's goal. Arteta was pleased with Aubameyang's impact off the bench.

"In the Europa League everyone has contributed

in different ways, the whole squad has been involved and yesterday's role for him (was) he was sat on the bench and to make an impact and he made an impact," said the Spaniard. "He assisted Nico and should have scored a tap-in with his left foot and that's what the players have to do when they come in." —AFP

Mbappe 'focused' on PSG amid Real Madrid rumors: Pochettino

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe is not distracted by rumors of a possible move to Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino insisted on Friday. The France World Cup-winning superstar has long been linked with an eventual move to Madrid, who courted him as a teenager before he signed for first club Monaco. His current contract with PSG is due to expire at the end of next season.

The player and PSG are in talks over a possible extension, but Spanish television station Cuatro this week claimed Mbappe wants to move to Real and has decided not to sign a new deal in Paris. The story was denied by sources close to Mbappe, who spoke to French broadcaster RMC Sport.

"This is something we are accustomed to at the top level, when we talk about big clubs and great players like

Kylian, there are always rumors," Pochettino told reporters in a press conference on Friday. "The most important thing is that Kylian is at peace and is focused on helping the team to achieve its objectives. He is so mature despite his youth and both he and the club are focused on trying to reach an agreement so that Kylian stays here for a long time. That is what the club wants. We can't control everything that happens outside the club but all that stuff has no impact on the team."

Mbappe, 22, scored twice as PSG beat Bayern Munich 3-2 away in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final tie on Wednesday. The sides meet again in the return leg on Tuesday. Before that PSG travel to Strasbourg on Saturday in a key game in the Ligue 1 title race. Mbappe is the top scorer in Ligue 1 this season with 20 goals from 26 appearances. —AFP



MUNICH: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe celebrates scoring the 2-3 goal during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final first leg football match against FC Bayern Munich in Munich, southern Germany, on April 7, 2021. —AFP

France edge England in women's friendly before US clash

CAEN: France defeated England 3-1 in a women's international friendly on Friday in a perfect confidence boost ahead of tackling world champions United States next week. Sandy Baltimore, in the 32nd minute, Viviane Asseyi, with a 63rd-minute penalty, and a strike from Marie-Antoinette Katoto eight minutes from time secured the win. However, the French suffered a nervy conclusion when Fran Kirby scored with a 79th-minute penalty before Keira Walsh hit the post two minutes later. France next meet the United States in Le Havre on Tuesday. —AFP



CAEN: France's players celebrate after scoring a goal during the friendly football match between France and England, at the Michel d'Ornano Stadium in Caen, northwestern France on Friday. —AFP

Parker insists Fulham still have 'fighting chance' to beat drop

LONDON: Adama Traore grabbed a stoppage-time winner as Wolves beat Fulham 1-0 at Craven Cottage on Friday to send the Londoners closer to relegation from the Premier League. In added time, Traore ran down the right before firing home to secure his side's first victory since mid-February.

However, Fulham boss Scott Parker insists his team can still beat the drop. "We find ourselves in this position where we are, but we've got a fighting chance because of what you see at the end of the game, a team and a group of players that are desperate," he said. "We will continue, painful, hurt but as always you get your guard up and you come out swinging, and that's what we'll do."

For Traore, it was an evening to remember as it was his first goal in the Premier League since December 2019. "I am so happy. We needed the points, it has been tough for us," said the Spaniard. "I have been working hard through the weeks, trying to run in behind and mix the games up. If I can help the team the best I can I will. I trust in my quality."

Wolves striker Wilian Jose had earlier been

denied his first goal for the club when his header in first-half injury time was ruled out for an offside by Daniel Podence following a VAR review. Fulham have lost their last four league games with their most recent win a stunning victory over champions

Liverpool at Anfield on March 7. They remain third from bottom, three points behind Newcastle who have played two games fewer. Wolves are 12th and seemingly safe in the Premier League for another season. —AFP

Enyimba hope rising star Iwuala can cure 'travel sickness'

JOHANNESBURG: Enyimba hope exciting prospect Anayo Iwuala can help cure the 'travel sickness' that afflicts the Nigerian team when they face Entente Setif in Algeria today in the CAF Confederation Cup. The west Africans have lost three straight CAF away matches this season, and are about to confront opponents who must win to retain any hope of reaching the quarter-finals.

Capped for the first time by Nigeria last month, winger Iwuala, 22, enhanced his growing reputation with a brilliant dribble and perfect pass to create the winner when Enyimba beat Setif in Aba last weekend. Here, AFP Sport spotlights matchday 4 in the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League, with Raja Casablanca of Morocco poised to become the first qualifiers for the knockout phase.

Group A

Twice African champions Setif have fallen far short of expectations, collecting only one point from a possible nine in what is widely regarded as the toughest of the four sections. Recent home form offers little encouragement to the Algerian Black Eagles as they failed to score in draws with Asante Kotoko of Ghana, in a pre-group playoff, and Orlando Pirates of South Africa. Should leaders Enyimba falter in Setif, a Pirates team captained by centre-back Happy Jele will move to the top if the win in Soweto against Al Ahly Benghazi, a club they held in Libya last Sunday.

Group B

Title-holders Renaissance Berkane of Morocco are in trouble, trailing Coton Sport of Cameroon and JS Kabylie of Algeria with two away matches to come. The first of those is against six-time CAF title winners Kabylie, who forced a goalless draw in Berkane six days ago despite having Malik Raiah red-carded in the second half. Coton won away to bottom club NAPSA Stars of Zambia in matchday 3 thanks to an Abdouraman Daman goal and look set to garner another three points in Garoua.

Group C

This is tightest section with only two points separating leaders and record three-time Confederation Cup winners CS Sfaxien of Tunisia from bottom side Salitas of Burkina Faso. Sfaxien and Etoile Sahel failed to score in a Tunisian derby last weekend with the poor recent form of their leading scorers, Firas Chaouat and Ivorian Souleymane Coulibaly respectively, continuing. Salitas have been forced to switch a win-or-bust west African showdown with Jaraaf of Senegal to Benin because the stadium they use in Ouagadougou has been declared unsuitable for international games by CAF.

Group D

Former Confederation Cup title-holders Raja can clinch a last-eight slot if they complete a double over 2020 runners-up Pyramids of Egypt, having won at home last Sunday. No one will be more determined to impress in this match than 37-year-old Pyramids goalkeeper Sherif Ekramy, whose blunder led to him conceding an own-goal and gifting Raja the lead in Casablanca. African debutants Namungo of Tanzania have struggled in such high-quality company, failing to score when losing three matches in a row, and another loss looms away to Nkana of Zambia. —AFP



LONDON: Wolverhampton Wanderers' Spanish midfielder Adama Traore controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Fulham and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Craven Cottage in London on Friday. —AFP

Leeds stall Man City's title march

Dallas double sees 10-man Whites shock City • Last-gasp Liverpool up to fourth

LONDON: Manchester City's march to the Premier League title stalled yesterday as 10-man Leeds beat the runaway leaders 2-1, while Liverpool climbed into fourth place after Trent Alexander-Arnold's late strike sealed a 2-1 win against Aston Villa. City are counting down to their third title in four seasons, but Stuart Dallas's stoppage-time strike leaves them still needing 11 points from their last six games to clinch the crown.

Their first defeat in seven matches in all competitions came after Pep Guardiola made seven changes following their midweek Champions League quarter-final first-leg win over Borussia Dortmund. With Kevin De Bruyne on the bench at the Etihad Stadium, City were blow their best against lively Leeds and now turn their attention to cup competitions next week.

They have a 2-1 lead to defend in the second leg at Dortmund on Wednesday before Saturday's FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea at Wembley. "We did not create enough for the forwards. It is part of the game," Guardiola said. "When they defend in the way they were you have to stop them running and we did not do that. The best moment we had in the game we make a mistake behind and we tried but could not score. "We are going to rest and prepare two days for the game in Dortmund and decide on how we are going to play."

Leeds took the lead against the run of play three minutes before half-time. Helder Costa broke down the left and passed inside to Patrick Bamford. Northern Ireland midfielder Dallas took Bamford's lay-off on the edge of the area and hit a firm low shot that left Ederson

rooted to the spot as it rebounded in off the post. Moments later, Leeds defender Liam Cooper was dismissed for a foul on Gabriel Jesus.

Referee Andre Marriner initially booked Cooper after he caught the Brazilian on the knee, but changed his decision to a red card after reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor. City equalized in the 76th minute when Bernardo Silva flicked the ball into the path of Ferran Torres and the Spaniard clipped his shot past Illan Meslier.

But in the first minute of stoppage time, City were caught by brilliant Leeds counter. Dallas raced onto a fine through ball from Ezgjan Alioski and guided a cool finish past Ederson. It was Leeds' first victory against one of the Premier League's 'big six' clubs since their promotion last season.

Liverpool late show

Liverpool are desperately trying to salvage their troubled campaign by qualifying for next season's Champions League via a top-four finish. Beaten 3-1 by Real Madrid in the Champions League quarter-final first leg on Tuesday, Jurgen Klopp's side knocked West Ham out of fourth place in the most dramatic fashion at Anfield.

Liverpool had lost their previous six home league matches, but Alexander-Arnold clinched their first success in front of the Kop since December as the Reds avenged their humiliating 7-2 defeat at Villa in October. Villa striker Ollie Watkins scored a hat-trick in that rout and he was back on the scoresheet after 43 minutes. Taking a touch from John McGinn's pass into the Liverpool area, Watkins hit a low



MANCHESTER: Leeds players celebrate at the end of the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Leeds United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England yesterday. — AFP

shot that squirmed under Alisson Becker's weak attempted save.

Liverpool were denied an equalizer moments later when Roberto Firmino's close-range finish was chalked off by

VAR for an extremely tight offside call against Diogo Jota in the build-up. But Mohamed Salah levelled in the 57th minute with a close-range header after Andrew Robertson's shot was parried into

his path by Emiliano Martinez. Villa winger Trezeguet hit the post in the second half, but Alexander-Arnold won it in added time when the right-back blasted home from the edge of the area. — AFP






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