

Friday Times

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Congress certifies Biden win after Trump supporters storm Capitol

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WASHINGTON, DC: Supporters of US President Donald Trump, including member of the QAnon conspiracy group Jake A, aka Yellowstone Wolf (center), enter the US Capitol on Wednesday in Washington, DC. Demonstrators breached security and entered the Capitol as Congress debated the 2020 presidential election's Electoral Vote Certification. — AFP

The island of opportunity



Scribbler's Notebook

By Jamie Etheridge

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The events that took place in America's capital on Wednesday have shocked the world. The storming of the Capital Hill building (the seat of the US Congress) by violent terrorists could not be more despicable. These people do not represent or reflect a civilized, advanced society but are a throwback to the worst of what humanity can become due to fear, ignorance and hate. Unfortunately the outgoing president has stoked this Molotov cocktail of misogyny, racism and turmoil in order to further his own political agenda, maintain power and support among a hardcore majority of America's political conservatives.

As former president Barak Obama has written: "For two months now, a political party and its accompanying media ecosystem has too often been unwilling to tell their followers the truth - that this was not a particularly close

election and that President-Elect Biden will be inaugurated on January 20. Their fantasy narrative has spiraled further and further from reality, and it builds upon years of sown resentments. Now we're seeing the consequences, whipped up into a violent crescendo."

For the rest of the world, the US descent into chaos heralds the country's long-time coming global decline. Since the end of the Cold War's division of the world into two polarities, the United States has been the undisputed, though often much hated, single super power. That role has often fueled anti-Americanism even as US culture and commodities were increasingly consumed abroad. There are many countries that will feel satisfaction in seeing America taken down a notch.

But the thing about America that the rest of the world often fails to appreciate may also be its saving grace, at least in this instance. America is an island nation, geographically separated by two massive oceans on its east and west coasts from the rest of the world. America is also culturally and politically disconnected. America may have close ties with the UK, though these have weakened in recent years and it has never been especially warm to either Mexico or Canada. There might be attempts at outside influence; certain Russian interference in the 2016

election cannot be wholly discounted. But for the most part, America stands and - as we are seeing now with the insurrectionists - will likely fall alone.

However this also means that America can pull itself back from the brink. Americans can see what happened Wednesday in Washington and decide collectively as a society, as a polity, as a people, that the slide into fascism is not what it wants. America can still pull itself together.

To hope that all the country will come together is unrealistic. Yes its true, 81.3 million voted for Biden and that represents an incredible record-setting number of people voting for positive change and democracy.

But there are still 74 million people who voted for Trump, who admire his brand of violent, hate-mongering populism. That's 74 million Americans who resist the idea of a multicultural, progressive America where inclusivity trumps bigotry, ignorance and fear.

So America has a long way to go, to bridging the divisions cultivated these past four years, to rebuilding democracy. But I believe it can and will achieve this. Being an island also means learning to be self-reliant, to pick yourself up whenever you fall. Wednesday, America hit the dirt. Now it is time to pick itself up and keep moving forward.

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Photo Feature



FORDA MARKET OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AGAIN

Al-Forda Market is busy again these days, as buyers are flocking there looking for fresh and cheap produce. Until some time ago, the market was closed to the public and only accessible to supermarkets and distributors. This wholesale vegetable market is located in Sulaibiya, where one can buy fruits and vegetables at very low prices.

Produce here comes from all over the world, especially neighboring countries.

The market cannot be accessed by public transport, but many private cars and taxis ply this route. All kinds of fruits and vegetables can be found here, with cooperative societies and supermarkets also sourcing their supplies from this market.

— Photos by Ben Garcia





Local

Training key to build diplomats' personality: Foreign Minister



KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah is seen during his visit to Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah affirmed the importance of training in building diplomats' personality, capable of representing their country's foreign policy. The remarks were made during the minister's visit to Saud Al-

Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute yesterday.

He also underlined the need to develop training courses and diplomatic workshops, set proper evaluation for these courses and make this training compulsory for Ministry of Foreign Affairs' employees. Meanwhile, the

minister called for a thorough evaluation of the institute's work in the past 15 years, and set a vision for the requirements diplomats must fulfill for 2030.

In the meantime, the institute's director general Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharikh ex-

pressed his pride of His Highness the Amir's granting of first degree medal for minister Sheikh Ahmad. Sharikh presented thorough details on the work and tasks of each department in the institute, as well as the institute's achievements and training courses. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Footbridges are a common sight in streets around Kuwait, providing safe passages for pedestrians to cross over busy highways. Yet, many foot-travelers complain there aren't enough footbridges to provide good coverage around the country, often leaving them with no choice but to take the risk of crossing the street especially when extreme weather conditions makes the long walk to the nearest footbridge equally as dangerous. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

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Local

Iraqi President congratulates Amir on GCC summit's success

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday received a telephone call from Iraqi President Barham Salih, congratulating him on signing the Al-Ula statement and the final communique of the GCC summit hosted by Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. During the call, the Iraqi leader lauded efforts made by His Highness the Amir to reunify the GCC ranks that were complementary to endeavors of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad that aimed at preserving the GCC and unity of Arab and Gulf nations. The Iraqi chief wished His Highness the Amir everlasting good health. His Highness the Amir, meanwhile, thanked President Salih for his sincere sentiments. His Highness the Amir affirmed that this a historic achievement that will contribute to bolstering the joint Arab and Gulf cooperation, and meeting the desired aspirations and hopes. His Highness the Amir wished President Salih permanent well-being.

In the meantime, the Qatari cabinet expressed gratitude to the State of Kuwait for its efforts in unifying the GCC ranks and lauded as well efforts in this respect on part of the United States of America. The government in a statement voiced deep admiration for the fruitful efforts that had been exerted by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and completed by his successor, the current Amir, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad. It lauded outcome of the 41st GCC summit and the atmosphere of brotherhood that prevailed at the top level gathering.

His Highness the Amir also received a cable from Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa who expressed gratitude to His Highness on the great efforts he had exerted for unifying the GCC ranks. The Bahraini Crown Prince noted in the cable that His Highness the Amir's efforts at this level were complementary to the efforts by his predecessor, the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad for maintaining the GCC bloc. These efforts have been crowned with success with the declaration at the end of the 41st GCC summit, he wrote in the cable. Reciprocating, His Highness the Amir expressed appreciation for the Bahraini Crown Prince warm sentiments and congratulated him on this historic accomplishment that would contribute to bolstering the GCC countries' solidarity.

Significant development

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom has welcomed the outcome of the summit, particularly the success of the Kuwaiti efforts to heal the Gulf rift. "The GCC Summit announcement is a significant development on the path to restoring Gulf unity," UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in a statement on Wednesday. "I pay testament to Kuwaiti mediation efforts, and urge the parties to continue building on this positive dialogue." Raab recalled that the UK has long encouraged all parties to find a resolution to this dispute. "The GCC is our third largest export market outside of the EU and we look forward

to continued collaboration with all our friends in the Gulf to strengthen our shared security and prosperity interests," he concluded.

Furthermore, Spain's Foreign Ministry highly extolled Kuwait's mediation efforts, along with the US, that aimed at resolving the crisis in the region and reaching a Gulf reconciliation. The Al-Ula Summit in which Egypt took part is a key step that will help get ties back to normal amongst GCC States, mainly after Saudi Arabia opened its borders with Qatar on the eve of the summit, it added. The ministry expressed the Spanish government's confidence that restoring cooperation will contribute to the regional stability and serving better the region's citizens through the ability to face common problems, including combating the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also expressed its appreciation for the continued efforts of the State of Kuwait and the United States to achieve this reconciliation and the constructive commitment of the parties to overcome the dispute. The ministry stressed that the reconciliation of the internal dispute of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries is a central pillar for enhancing stability and security in the region. Moreover, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs valued the Kuwaiti and US efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis, expressing full support to the unity of the GCC member states.

The European Union's High Representative Josep Borrell also praised the agreement on the



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

full normalization of relations among GCC states. "The European Union welcomes these significant developments as they will considerably strengthen regional stability and restore GCC unity and cooperation in full," he said in a statement. "We commend in this respect the mediation role played by Kuwait all along, as well as by the US. The EU stands ready to support further regional integration within the Gulf Cooperation Council and to strengthen its longstanding partnership with the GCC." —KUNA

News in brief

National Guard Deputy Chief hosts EU envoy

KUWAIT: Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Lt Gen Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to the State of Kuwait Cristian Tudor. The two sides discussed, during the meeting, means of enhancing mutual cooperation, according to a Kuwait National Guard statement. Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf welcomed the esteemed guest, conveying greetings from His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the National Guard's Chief. He moreover affirmed that the State of Kuwait and the EU are linked up with distinctive bonds. —KUNA

Cyprus commends Kuwait

BEIRUT: Cyprus yesterday lauded the State of Kuwait's role in cementing unity of the GCC member states. The ministry, in a statement posted on its Twitter account, applauded the declaration at end of the 41st GCC summit with respect of affirming the close bonds among the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The summit, hosted by Saudi Arabia earlier this week, would pave the way for boosting regional security and peace, the Cypriot Foreign Ministry said. —KUNA

Ethiopian envoy meets KRCS chief



KUWAIT: Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulfattah Hassan meets with chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer. —KUNA

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance worldwide, said Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulfattah Hassan in a statement. After a meeting with chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Ambassador Hassan said that Kuwait was a leading nation when it came to supporting humanitarian causes on a national, regional, and international level.

In regards to his meeting with Dr Sayer, the diplomat indicated that it focused on bolstering partnership between both countries especially within the humanitarian domain. Meanwhile, Dr Sayer welcomed the visit of the diplomat to the KRCS headquarters, indicating that the society was following up and evaluating the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia. He indicated that he brief Ambassador Hassan on KRCS activities in Kuwait and abroad, showcasing the vital role played by the society in providing assistance to those in need. —KUNA



Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulfattah Hassan poses for a group photo with KRCS staff.

Korea hails Kuwait's efforts

KUWAIT: South Korea welcomed the results of the GCC Summit, held in Saudi Arabia this past Tuesday. "The Korean government welcomes the Al-Ula Declaration announced at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit held in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia, on January 5, which affirms Gulf, Arab and Islamic solidarity and stability, as well as its decision to restore the free flow of goods and people," reads a statement released by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The Korean government also highly commends the mediation efforts made by the Kuwaiti government to resolve disputes and promote unity in the Gulf. The Korean government will continue to cooperate with Gulf and Arab countries, including the GCC Member States, and other countries concerned to promote peace and stability in the Middle East."

Local

Pharmacist traded drugs for illicit relationships

KUWAIT: Police arrested a public hospital pharmacist who dispensed narcotic pills to female drug addicts in exchange for illicit relationships, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily reported yesterday, quoting an informed security source. Detectives sent an undercover informant to the pharmacist as they had launched investigations in information they had received about his illegal activity. The suspect made a deal to provide the pills to the informant as long as she agrees to meet him in his apartment and to his illicit demands. Police raided the apartment as soon as the informant entered and arrested the pharmacist. The Arab man admitted during investigations that he had lured several women through this scheme for eight months. When asked about how he was able to secure enough quantities of the illicit drugs, he explained that he used his friends who work as doctors in the same hospital and took advantage of their trust to ask them to prescribe him the extra quantities. The suspect was sent to the public prosecution, and the health ministry was informed to take action, the source said.

Explosives in camp

Kuwait Municipality teams found explosive devices while raiding an illegal camp near Abdaly north of the country, Al-Jarida Arabic daily reported yesterday. Police were notified to report to the scene and put the camp owner under arrest. "During an inspection of an illegal camp, the inspection team found a bag containing substances believed to be explosive," said Sulaiman Al-Gheis, head of the violations' removal department at Jahra gov-

ernorate's branch of Kuwait Municipality. The substances were handed over the General Department of Criminal Evidence to determine if they are still active, a security source told the paper, adding that preliminary investigations indicate that the substances belonged to the camp owner's brother. The man was referred to state security to determine the source of the substances and the reason for keeping them in the camp, the paper wrote.

Traffic violations

Kuwait registered around 25,000 traffic violations last week, a considerable increase from the 20,000 average recorded over the course of the previous weeks, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily reported yesterday. Traffic police arrested 40 juveniles and three expats driving without a license during campaigns carried out last week. The campaigns also resulted in the arrest of 34 wanted individuals, while 69 violators were detained at the traffic department's holding cell.

About the role of each department, operations traffic departments' police issued 5,309 citations and detained seven violators, while five vehicles were impounded. Capital traffic officers issued 5,427 citations and sent three violators and two juveniles to concerned authorities. They also arrested 12 wanted individuals, one person in possession of liquor and narcotics, and an expat who was sent for deportation for driving without a license.

In Farwaniya, traffic officers issued 2,993 citations and de-



tained three persons. Ahmadi officers issued 2,435 citations and arrested two juveniles and two wanted persons. Jahra officers issued 2,394 citations and arrested nine violators, while 23 juveniles were arrested for driving without a license. Mubarak Al-Kabeer traffic police issued 1,262 citations and sent three violators to the holding cell, and seven juveniles to concerned authorities. They also sent two expats to deportation, while one person was arrested in possession of drugs and liquor.

Kuwait reports 540 new COVID cases, no deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday said coronavirus infections had risen by 540 registered over the previous 24 hours to a cumulative total of 152,978, while its death toll from the outbreak remained unchanged at 938. Around 3,801 people are currently hospitalized with the virus, 55 of whom are in intensive care units, according to health ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad. He added that 12,279 swab tests were conducted over the same period, bringing the total up to 1,300,034 as of yesterday. The ministry had earlier reported 224 fresh recoveries to up the total of those to have overcome the disease to 148,239. Dr Sanad further urged the public to abide by health precautions, mainly social distancing rules, to halt the spread of the virus. —KUNA

Firemen close 32 warehouses for safety violations



KUWAIT: Firemen closed 32 warehouses during a crackdown on safety violations at the agricultural area of Sulaibiya, Kuwait Fire Force said yesterday. The warehouses contained tires, oils, wood and combustible material that were stored in violation of fire pre-

vention regulations, Deputy Director for Prevention Maj Gen Khaled Fahad said. The inspection campaign took place in cooperation with the Interior Ministry, Kuwait Municipality and Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

وزارة الصحة
الإعلام الصحي

تطورات مرض فيروس كورونا COVID-19		
Thursday, 2021/1/7		
<p>540</p> <p>إصابة جديدة</p> <p>NEW CASES</p> <p>الإجمالي</p> <p>152,978</p>	<p>0</p> <p>حالة وفاة جديدة</p> <p>NEW DEATHS</p> <p>الإجمالي</p> <p>938</p>	<p>224</p> <p>حالة تعافى جديدة</p> <p>NEW RECOVERIES</p> <p>الإجمالي</p> <p>148,239</p>
<p>55</p> <p>إجمالي الحالات في العناية المركزة</p> <p>TOTAL SERIOUS CASES</p>	<p>3,801</p> <p>إجمالي الحالات التي تتلقى العلاج</p> <p>TOTAL ACTIVE CASES</p>	<p>12,279</p> <p>مخبرية جديدة</p> <p>NEW TESTS</p> <p>الإجمالي</p> <p>1,300,034</p>

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Wong joins ranks of Hong Kong dissidents arrested for 'subversion'

Myanmar police arrest nearly 100 trafficked Rohingya in raid



WASHINGTON, DC: Electoral college votes are brought in before House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Mike Pence resume presiding over a Joint session of Congress to certify the 2020 Electoral College results after supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol earlier in the day on Capitol. — AFP

US Congress certifies Biden win

Trump supporters storm Capitol, triggering scenes of mayhem in seat of democracy

WASHINGTON: Congress formally certified Joe Biden as the next US president yesterday, dealing a hammer blow to Donald Trump whose supporters stormed the Capitol hours earlier, triggering unprecedented scenes of mayhem in the seat of American democracy.

Lawmakers in the Senate and House of Representatives successfully beat back Republican efforts to deny Biden the electoral votes needed to win, prompting loud cheers when the certification was announced. The affirmation of Biden's 306-232 victory over Trump in November essentially closes the door on the unparalleled and deeply controversial effort by Trump and his loyalists to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The president immediately released a statement pledging an "orderly transition" but suggesting he would remain in frontline politics, amid speculation that he may run again in 2024. "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th," he said. "I have always said we would continue our fight to ensure that only legal votes were counted. While this represents the end of the greatest first term in presidential history, it's

only the beginning of our fight to Make America Great Again!" The certification came hours after a mob breached the US Capitol and sent lawmakers scrambling for safety. They were able to return hours later, shaken but determined to complete the task.

Egged on in an extraordinary rally across town by an aggrieved Trump, a flag-waving mob had broken down barricades outside the Capitol and swarmed inside, rampaging through offices and onto the usually solemn legislative floors. Security forces fired tear gas in a four-hour operation to clear the Capitol. Police said that one woman, reportedly a female Trump partisan from southern California, was shot and killed and that three other people died in the area in circumstances that were unclear.

One Trump backer in jeans and a baseball cap was pictured propping a leg up on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's desk, as throngs climbed onto risers set up for Biden's inauguration.

Another held a banner that read: "We the people will bring DC to its knees/We have the power." Biden called the violence an "insurrection" and demanded that Trump immediately go on national television to tell the rioters to stand down. "Our democracy's under unprecedented

assault," Biden said in his home state of Delaware. "This is not dissent. It's disorder. It's chaos. It borders on sedition. And it must end now."

Trump soon afterward released a video in which he called on the mob to leave but repeated his unfounded claims of election fraud. "We have to have peace. So go home. We love you—you're very special," he said.

In a significant new crackdown, social media companies pulled down the video on charges it aggravated violence and Twitter temporarily suspended his account, warning the tweet-loving tycoon of a permanent ban if he does not conform to rules on civic integrity.

Democracy 'death spiral'

The chaos at the Capitol came a day after Biden enjoyed a new triumph, with his Democrats projected to win two Senate seats in runoffs in Georgia—handing the party full control of Congress and dramatically increasing Biden's ability to pass legislation, starting with new COVID-19 relief.

Historians said it was the first time that the Capitol had been taken over since 1814 when the British burned it during the War of 1812. For more than two centuries, the joint session of Congress

has been a quiet, ceremonial event that formally certifies the election winner.

But Trump urged members of his Republican Party to dispute the outcome. Congress rejected challenges to Biden's win in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Efforts were made to challenge the counts in Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin, but after the mob violence Senate Republicans dropped objections to Biden's wins there, eliminating any need for debate.

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell, closely aligned with Trump throughout his presidency, had tried to prevent the challenges. He noted that the election results were not even close, and that dozens of courts had thrown out lawsuits alleging irregularities. "If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral," McConnell said.

But Senator Josh Hawley, who has taken the lead on the effort and is seen as a future Republican presidential aspirant, insisted on going ahead even after the mob attack. "Violence is not how you achieve change," the 41-year-old senator said, insisting that he wanted to offer a "lawful process" to Trump supporters to assess their unfounded claims of fraud. — AFP

International

Washington chaos leaves image of 'exceptional' America in tatters

Allies unable to hide shock, authoritarian regimes exploit unrest

SYDNEY: The storming of the US Congress left America's image as a beacon of democracy severely tarnished yesterday, with allies unable to hide their shock and authoritarian regimes gleefully exploiting the unrest. In normal times, a state-backed gang rampaging through a legislature to demand a lost election be nullified would have US diplomats marching to their laptops to draft a statement of condemnation. But after the deadly violence in Washington on Wednesday, it was the turn of officials in capitals from Bogota to New Delhi to call for calm.

In a string of statements, leaders could barely contain their shock at seeing Donald Trump's supporters briefly—but quite easily—overrun the crucible of US democracy and challenge the peaceful transfer of power. "Where were the police and the Senate bodyguards...?" Czech foreign minister Tomas Petricek asked aloud, as the world watched Trump supporters cart off podiums, ransack offices or strut around Congress in a horned helmet unmolested.

Through slavery and segregation, Civil War and Cold War, US presidents have often hailed their democracy as exceptional, what Ronald Reagan called the "shining city on the hill." That image has been questioned many times before, but after four norm-shattering years of Trump, it took just a few hours of mob rule to make America look pretty ordinary, and as fragile as any-

where else.

Former president George W. Bush went as far as to compare the situation to a "banana republic," while calling out fellow Republicans for fuelling the "insurrection." Australia warned its citizens in the United States to take care given the "ongoing potential for violence."

Brave new world

Some reached for historical comparisons to put the momentous events—and the scale of the threat to democracy—in context. Germany's foreign minister likened incitement at the US Capitol to the Reichstag in Nazi Germany, while Italian newspaper La Repubblica drew a parallel to dictator Benito Mussolini's "March on Rome" and seizure of power.

But as the initial shock subsided, policymakers began to try to imagine the profound implications of the world's preeminent superpower so visibly stumbling. Former president Barack Obama's top security aide Ben Rhodes told AFP that "Americans should not have any illusions: today's images, like the Trump presidency, will permanently alter how the United States is viewed around the world."

"Tragically, this debasement of democracy comes at a time when authoritarian nationalism is ascendant on every continent." The moment was not lost on such regimes, some of which immediately issued wry statements mimicking the criti-



WASHINGTON, DC: A group of pro-Trump protesters climb the walls of the Capitol Building after storming the West lawn on Wednesday in Washington, DC. — AFP

cism they normally received from Washington.

Venezuelan minister of foreign affairs Jorge Arreaza expressed his "concern" about the violence, while calling for an end to US political polarization and for the country to follow a new path of "stability and social justice." China's state-backed tabloid the Global Times—just a day after a mass crackdown on Hong Kong's besieged

democracy movement—crowed that "bubbles of 'democracy and freedom' have burst."

Mike Gallagher, a Republican Congressman from Wisconsin lamented: "If we don't think other countries around the world are watching this happen right now, if we don't think the Chinese communist party is sitting back and laughing, then we're deluding ourselves." — AFP

Woman shot dead in US Capitol was Trump supporter

WASHINGTON: The woman who died Wednesday of a bullet wound during the violent storming of the US Capitol was shot by police, authorities said. The only fatality tied to Wednesday's unrest was the woman, reportedly a dedicated Donald Trump backer and air force veteran who was among a throng of supporters of the president that invaded the US legislature.

Washington police chief Robert Contee said three other people, one woman and two men, had died Wednesday in the area around the Capitol, but did not link those deaths to the violence.

Each of the three "appeared to have suffered medical emergencies which resulted in their deaths," Contee told reporters. Contee said 52 people had been arrested Wednesday, 26 of them on the grounds of the Capitol, for curfew violations, unlawful entry and weapons charges. Fourteen police were injured, one seriously after he was pulled into a crowd and assaulted, he added.

He also said two pipe bombs had been discovered near the Capitol, one at democratic Party offices and the other at Republican Party offices. In addition, a vehicle was discovered parked on Capitol grounds with a long gun and Molotov cocktails inside.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser announced an extension of the city's state of emergency for 15 days through the January 20 presidential inauguration of Joe Biden, amid fears Trump and his supporters will continue to threaten violence over their unsupported claims that Biden's election win was fraudulent. "I know that I speak for all of us when I say that we saw an unprecedented



WASHINGTON, DC: A crowd control barrier is used as a stretcher by police officers transporting a protester outside the US Capitol in Washington DC on Wednesday. — AFP

attack on our American democracy incited by the United States president, and he must be held accountable," Bowser said. Trump was blamed for the death of the woman, one of thousands of supporters he urged to descend on the Capitol after a midday rally at the White House in which he told them that he lost the November 3 election due to massive fraud.

They flocked to the Congress just as it opened a joint session to certify Biden as the election winner. — AFP

China goes online to mock 'beautiful sight' of US Capitol

BEIJING: China's internet erupted in mirth at America's troubled democracy after supporters of President Donald Trump broke into the US Capitol, with Beijing criticizing the "sharp contrast" between Washington's response to the chaos and the 2019 Hong Kong anti-government protests.

Yesterday morning, state media tabloid Global Times tweeted side-by-side photo comparisons of Hong Kong protesters occupying the city's Legislative Council Complex in July 2019 with Wednesday's Washington riots. The latter saw hardcore Trump fans invade the US Capitol to protest the election defeat, taking selfies, scuffling with security and ransacking parts of the building.

"@SpeakerPelosi once referred to the Hong Kong riots as 'a beautiful sight to behold'," the Global Times said in the tweet, referring to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's June 2019 comment about Hong Kong's mass pro-democracy demonstrations, which at that time were mostly peaceful.

"It remains yet to be seen whether she will say the same about the recent developments in Capitol Hill." China's Communist Youth League also described the unrest as a "beautiful sight" on the Twitter-like Weibo platform. Beijing's foreign ministry echoed those sentiments, saying "the reaction of some people in the US, including that of some media outlets, is completely different." Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that the "sharp contrast (in reactions) makes one ponder, and deserves serious and profound reflection." — AFP

International

World leaders condemn 'assault on democracy' at US Capitol

'Furious and saddened' leaders say Trump must share the blame

PARIS: World leaders and governments expressed shock and outrage at the storming of the US Capitol in Washington by supporters of President Donald Trump.

Germany

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday she was "furious and saddened" by the events and said Trump shared blame for the unrest. "I deeply regret that President Trump has not conceded his defeat, since November and again yesterday," she said. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called on Trump supporters to "stop trampling on democracy".

Britain

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Twitter condemned the "disgraceful scenes in US Congress. The United States stands for democracy around the world and it is now vital that there should be a peaceful and orderly transfer of power". British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab added in his own tweet: "The US rightly takes great pride in its democracy, and there can be no justification for these violent attempts to frustrate the lawful and proper transition of power."

Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "ram-page at the Capitol yesterday was a disgraceful act and it must be vigorously condemned." "I have no doubt that... American democracy will prevail. It always has," added Netanyahu, who has repeatedly called Trump Israel's best-ever friend in the White House.

European Union

The EU's foreign policy chief condemned an "assault on US democracy". "In the eyes of the world, American democracy tonight appears under siege," Josep Borrell tweeted.

Calling the action an "assault on US democracy, its institutions and the rule of law", he added: "This is not America. The election results of 3 November must be fully respected."

France

French President Emmanuel Macron said: "We will not give in to the violence of a few who want to question" democracy. In a video posted on his official Twitter account, he added: "What happened today in Washington is not American". French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian also condemned "a serious attack on democracy".

Russia

Russian officials pointed to the storming of the US Capitol as evidence of America's decline, with Konstantin Kosachyov, chairman of the Russian upper house's foreign affairs committee, saying it showed US democracy was "limping on both feet". "The celebration of democracy has ended. It has, unfortunately, hit rock bottom, and I say this without a hint of gloating," Kosachyov said in a post on Facebook. His counterpart in the lower house, Leonid Slutsky, said "the United States certainly cannot now impose electoral standards on other countries and claim to be the world's 'beacon of democracy'."

Poland

Polish President Andrzej Duda, a close Trump ally who did not congratulate Biden on his victory until more than a month after the election, described the events as "an internal issue for the United States". "Poland believes in the power of American democracy," he added on Twitter.

Iran

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the chaos unleashed on the US Capitol "shows above all how fragile and vulnerable Western democracy is". "We saw that unfortunately the ground is fertile for populism, despite the advances in science and industry," Rouhani said in a speech broadcast by state television. "I hope the whole world and the next occupants of the White House will learn from it."

Canada

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted: "Canadians are deeply disturbed and saddened by the attack on democracy in the United States, our closest ally and neighbor."

Australia

Australian PM Scott Morrison condemned the "very distressing scenes" in the US. "We condemn these acts of violence and look forward to a peaceful transfer of Government to the newly elected administration in the great American democratic tradition," he tweeted.

New Zealand

Jacinda Ardern tweeted: "Democracy - the right of people to exercise a vote, have their voice heard and then have that decision upheld peacefully should never be undone by a mob." The PM added her country's thoughts were with everyone "devastated" by the events in Washington, adding: "what is happening is wrong."

NATO

"Shocking scenes in Washington, DC," NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg tweeted. "The outcome of this democratic election must be respected."

The Netherlands

"Horrible images from Washington D.C. Dear @realDonaldTrump, recognise @JoeBiden as the next president today," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said on Twitter. The plain-speaking Rutte once during a visit to the White House in 2018 interrupted Trump with a loud "no" when Trump made an assertion about EU-US trade.

Ireland

Irish premier Micheal Martin, who has invited the Irish-American Biden to visit his ancestral homeland early in his presidency, tweeted his condemnation. "The Irish people have a deep connection with the United States of America, built up over many generations. I know that many, like me, will be watching the scenes unfolding in Washington DC with great concern and dismay," Martin said.

India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Trump ally who has heaped praise on the outgoing US president in the past, said he was "distressed to see news about rioting and violence" in Washington. "Orderly and peaceful transfer of power must continue. The democratic process cannot be allowed to be subverted through unlawful protests," the Hindu nationalist leader tweeted.

Greece

"Extremely troubled by the violence and horrible events taking place in Washington D.C. American democracy is resilient, deeply rooted and will overcome this crisis," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a tweet.

Turkey

"We are following with concern the internal developments happening in the US," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement.



WASHINGTON, DC: Damage is seen inside the US Capitol building early yesterday in Washington, DC, after supporters of US President Donald Trump breached security and entered the building during a session of Congress. —AFP

"We call on all parties in the US to maintain restraint and prudence. We believe the US will overcome this internal political crisis in a mature manner."

Austria

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said in a tweet that "this is an unacceptable assault on democracy. A peaceful and orderly transfer of power must be ensured."

Czech Republic

"The looting and violence at the US Senate are not a good example for countries where democracy is fighting hard for a place in the sun," Czech Foreign Minister Tomas Petricek said in a tweet. "Given the emotions sparked by the US presidential election, we could expect today's session to be far from ordinary. Where were the police and the Senate bodyguards...?"

Denmark

"Extremism, violence, polarisation and violence is never the way forward. Terrible pictures from Washington. May democracy be brought back to working again," Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Facebook.

Spain

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez tweeted that "Yesterday's attack on the Capitol has only succeeded in reaffirming the principles we share. Spain will work with the United States for a more just world and the triumph of democracy over extremism."

Slovenia

Slovenia's right-wing Prime Minister Janez Jansa, who backed Trump and who has yet to congratulate Biden on his victory, tweeted: "All should be very troubled by the violence taking place in Washington D.C." "We hope American democracy is resilient, deeply rooted and will overcome this crisis. Democracy presupposes peaceful protest, but violence and death threats -from Left or Right- are ALWAYS wrong."

Fiji

Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama—who led a coup in 2006 and was accused of assaulting an opposition lawmaker in 2019 — added his condemnation. "The violent scenes we saw in Washington today are an affront to democracies around the globe. True and genuine democracy is a precious treasure that no nation should ever take for granted," he tweeted. —AFP

International

Friday, January 8, 2021

Gulf states to restore links with Qatar within a week: UAE

Rebuilding confidence and addressing geopolitical issues longer-term tasks

DUBAI: The Gulf states will restore travel, trade and transport links with Qatar within a week, the UAE said yesterday after a landmark deal to normalize ties ended a damaging rift.

Saudi Arabia and its allies the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, in June 2017 slapped a boycott on Qatar over claims it backed Islamist groups and was too close to Iran. The quartet agreed to lift the restrictions at a summit Tuesday in the Saudi desert city of Al-Ula, after energetic diplomacy from the Trump administration which was keen for a foreign policy win in its closing days.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash said that although rebuilding confidence and addressing difficult geopolitical issues were longer-term tasks, there was a push to quickly restore physical links. "The practical measures will be within a week... including travel, transportation, trade etc," he told a press briefing, also flagging the prompt

reopening of diplomatic missions.

Analysts have warned that the hasty reconciliation did not address underlying resentments which risk resurfacing. And the United Arab Emirates, the staunchest critic of Doha and its leadership throughout the crisis, was seen as a reluctant party to the rapprochement. But Gargash said that the UAE endorsed the process, even if the thornier issues including Qatar's relationship with Iran and Turkey's presence in the Gulf may take time to work through.

The UAE is "behind this deal, and positive about the prospect of re-establishing relations with Qatar," he said. "We recognize that any crisis will leave its repercussions, and dealing with the repercussions from that perspective will take some time." Washington had intensified pressure for a resolution to what Doha called a "blockade", insisting Gulf unity is necessary to isolate US foe Iran. —AFP



A picture taken yesterday shows a general view of the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing with Saudi Arabia following the opening of crossings between the two countries earlier this week. —AFP

Israel strikes on Syria killed 3 Iran-backed fighters

BEIRUT: Strikes conducted overnight by Israel in Syria left three fighters from Iran-backed groups dead, a war monitor reported yesterday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based organization with an extensive network on the ground, was not immediately able to provide the casualties' nationalities. Syrian state media had reported an "Israeli aggression" overnight against targets in the south of the country, adding that its anti-air defense system had intercepted most missiles.

Israel routinely carries out raids in Syria, mostly against targets affiliated with Iran in what it says is a bid to prevent its archfoe from securing further foothold along its borders.

Iran has members of its own military as well as fighters from a variety of nationalities fighting with militias it supports deployed across Syria. Last month, Israel said it had hit about 50 targets in the neighboring country in 2020.

The Israeli army has carried out hundreds of air and missile strikes on Syria since the civil war broke out in 2011, targeting Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah forces as well as government troops. The Jewish state rarely acknowledges individual strikes, but has done so when responding to what it describes as aggression inside Israeli territory.

Syrian air defense forces responded late Wednesday to "Israeli aggression" in the south of



Ahmed Aliwi, a displaced Syrian from the city of Aleppo repairs a damaged tent at his makeshift sewing workshop in a camp near his current place of residence, in the rebel-held town of Kafr Yahmul in the northern countryside of Idlib, on Wednesday. —AFP

the country, the state news agency said. Israel launched missiles in the air attack from the disputed Golan Heights at around 11 pm (2100 GMT), SANA reported, citing a military source.

"Our anti-air defenses responded, targeting most of the missiles," the source added.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) later said that the Israeli strikes caused "deaths and injuries" but did not give details. SOHR said the Israeli raids targeted several positions south of Damascus and came two days after a delegation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard visited the area. Israel has not commented on the incident.

Last month, Israel said it had hit about 50 targets in the neighboring country in 2020. The Jewish state has consistently vowed to prevent its arch-enemy Iran from gaining a foothold in Syria, where Tehran has backed President Bashar Al-Assad throughout the nearly decade-long war. Israel and Syria, still technically at war, have a border along the Golan Heights, which the Jewish State has occupied since the Six-Day War of 1967. —AFP

HRW urges Libya's GNA to identify Tarhuna missing

TRIPOLI: Human Rights Watch appealed yesterday to Libya's internationally recognized government to launch an investigation aimed at identifying hundreds of people reported missing in a western town where mass graves have been unearthed. The United Nations voiced "horror" after the discovery of the mass graves around Tarhuna, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the capital Tripoli, in June last year.

The discovery came the day after the withdrawal of forces loyal to eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar, who used Tarhuna as the main staging point for his ultimately abortive attempt to seize the capital in a military offensive launched in April 2019. The New York-based HRW says hundreds of people have been abducted or reported missing between 2014 and 2020 in Tarhuna, which is now under the control of pro-GNA forces. "At least 338 residents of Tarhuna were reported missing after the local Al-Kani militia, known as Kaniyat, took control of the town in 2015," HRW said, citing the authority charged with carrying out exhumations.

"Residents reported that the militia often abducted, detained, tortured, killed, and disappeared people who opposed them or who were suspected of doing so," added the rights watchdog.

It called on the GNA to "investigate what happened to the missing residents," recalling that since the first macabre discovery, 120 bodies have been exhumed from 27 mass graves, including women and children. Human Rights Watch also appealed to foreign governments and the UN to "provide forensics experts and conduct DNA testing to help with the GNA's gravesite investigations".

The Libyan authorities told HRW that they have not yet identified the bodies. They said the main reason behind the delay was the lack of funds and that some staff needed additional training.

"The authorities should act on the grim discovery of mass graves by taking proper steps to identify the bodies and bringing those responsible for abuses to justice," said Hanan Salah, senior Libya researcher at HRW. The United States blacklisted the Al-Kani militia in November, saying it was "responsible for the murder of civilians recently discovered in numerous mass graves in Tarhuna".

The sanctions sought to freeze any property of those named under US jurisdiction and to block their access to the world trade and banking system. Libya has been wracked by violence since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

It has pitted the Tripoli-based GNA which is recognized by the United Nations and backed by Turkey against the eastern-based administration of Haftar, who is supported by Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Russia. —AFP

International

Ethiopian top general confirms Eritrean troops entered Tigray

Seyoum goes against Abiy's denials in video

ADDIS ABABA: A top-ranking member of Ethiopia's army confirmed that troops from neighboring Eritrea entered the northern Tigray region during the conflict there, in a video seen by AFP on Wednesday.

Ethiopia's federal government has long denied persistent claims that Eritrean troops were in Tigray, where Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched a military offensive against dissident regional leaders in November that left thousands dead. But Major General Belay Seyoum, the head of the Ethiopian army's northern division, went against those denials in a video dated from the end of December which emerged on social media Wednesday.

"An unwanted foreign force entered into our territory" during the fighting in Tigray, he said in the video, in which he spoke with residents of the regional capital Mekele. Eritrea's army "entered our territory by itself, this has to be made clear," he added, without specifying when the soldiers crossed the border, where they went, or whether they were still in Ethiopia.

"The main mission of the Ethiopia Defense Force is safeguarding the territorial integrity of Ethiopia," he said. "My conscience doesn't allow me to ask the Eritrean army to help us. We can solve our problem by ourselves."

In December the US State Department

said it was "aware of credible reports of Eritrean military involvement in Tigray," and called for the troops to be withdrawn. Ethiopia's ambassador to the US Fitsum Arega denied the claim, tweeting: "Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth!"

Tigray residents also told AFP that Eritrean troops were in the region, accusing them of various abuses and looting. Prime Minister Abiy reached a historic peace agreement with Eritrea shortly after taking office in 2018, winning him the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Abiy's ascension ended decades of federal political dominance by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) — sworn enemies of Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki after a 1998-2000 war between the two countries.

The premier launched the military operation against Tigray's TPLF leaders on November 4, claiming victory when federal forces captured Mekele later that month. Before the conflict began, Tigray was home to 96,000 Eritrean refugees who fled Afwerki's regime in one of the world's most authoritarian states.

The UN is among those to have expressed fear the Eritrean refugees in Tigray could face reprisals from Eritrean troops-or even be forced to return to the country.



Ethiopian refugees who fled the Tigray conflict gather in front of a tent during the Coptic Christmas celebrations, at a village next to Um Raquba refugee camp in Gedaref, eastern Sudan, early yesterday. —AFP

Mosque damaged

Also on Wednesday, the council representing Ethiopia's Muslims condemned the partial destruction of one of Africa's oldest mosques in the Tigray fighting. Qassim Mohammed Tajuddin, the secretary of the Ethiopia Islamic Affairs Supreme Council,

said the al-Nejashi Mosque had been hit by artillery fire and its materials had been looted. He called on the government "to bring to justice speedily those entities that committed these shameful acts". Built in the 7th century, the mosque is considered one of the oldest Muslim burial sites. —AFP

Senior Trump aide quits saying 'I can't stay'

WASHINGTON: Mick Mulvaney, a former chief of staff in Donald Trump's White House, announced yesterday he has quit his diplomatic post to protest mob violence by the president's supporters at the Capitol. "I can't stay here, not after yesterday. You can't look at that yesterday and think I want to be a part of that in any way, shape or form," Mulvaney told CNBC television. Mulvaney, who had been moved from chief of staff to special envoy for Northern Ireland, said he told Secretary of State Mike Pompeo he was resigning. "I can't do it. I can't stay," he told CNBC, indicating that other White House staff were eyeing the exits.

"Those who choose to stay, and I have talked with some of them, are choosing to stay because they're worried the president might put someone worse in," he said. On Wednesday, thousands of Trump supporters left a rally with the president, then stormed into Congress, temporarily halting proceedings to certify Democrat Joe Biden as the winner of the November presidential election.

Immediately after the violence, which Trump has still failed to condemn, deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger resigned. Another departure was Stephanie Grisham, a former White House press secretary now working as spokeswoman for First Lady Melania Trump. US media reported that Marc Short, chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence, had been blocked from entering the White House — apparently in retaliation for Pence's decision to ignore Trump's demand that he block the certification of Biden. —AFP

Japarov: From prison to presidency

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan: Just over three months ago, Kyrgyzstan's frontrunner in the Sunday presidential vote, Sadyr Japarov, was languishing in jail, mourning his parents and a son who all died whilst he was imprisoned. But an October crisis over a disputed vote saw him sprung from his cell by supporters and a court overturn his sentence for hostage-taking as local power-brokers lined up to back his overnight leadership bid.

Japarov's rise was so remarkable that it appeared to catch even Kyrgyzstan's key ally Russia off guard and fuelled speculation over the role that organised crime may have played in the high-speed events.

Yet it was also typical of ex-Soviet Central Asia's most volatile country, where political fortunes have often been made in street protests first and only later at the ballot box. Japarov's election campaign, which packed out stadiums across the country despite the threat of the coronavirus, was headlined by banners reading "Sadyr - President".

The same slogan was chanted by supporters who massed in the capital Bishkek and demanded that Sooronbay Jeenbekov step down in Japarov's favour after a parliamentary election marred by vote-buying allegations. Jeenbekov assented, citing the need to avoid bloodshed as he became the third Kyrgyz leader to resign during political turbulence since independence from Moscow in 1991.

Japarov became head of state on an interim basis, quitting the post in November to compete in Sunday's vote while installing loyalists in key positions to retain his grip.

Voters on Sunday are widely expected to grant him a first round victory.

Man of the people?

Japarov, 52, entered Kyrgyzstan's political scene as a lawmaker in 2005, after building up a small oil business in his native eastern Issyk-Kul region. His star rose under the patronage of then-president Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who appointed him head of the anti-corruption agency in 2008.

But the agency's investigations never touched on the family of Bakiyev—widely viewed as the main beneficiary of systemic graft at the time. Bakiyev was overthrown in 2010, in a revolution far more violent than the one that displaced the first post-Soviet president Askar Akayev five years before. Violence erupted between ethnic Kyrgyz and minority Uzbeks two months later, claiming hundreds of lives. A nationalist opposition party that included Japarov among its leaders won parliamentary polls later that year, but was shut out of the ruling coalition.

Japarov's political brand then became associated with chaotic rallies against the Canadian operators of Kyrgyzstan's largest gold mine, which contributes up to 10 percent of GDP annually but has been dogged by corruption accusations and environmental concerns.

During one rally in his native province in 2013 the local governor was briefly taken hostage and doused with petrol. Authorities opened a criminal case against Japarov, who fled the country. —AFP



BISHKEK: A billboard supporting presidential candidate Sadyr Japarov is pictured ahead of presidential election in Bishkek yesterday. —AFP

International

Pandemic tips more into extreme poverty in Nigeria's Lagos: WFP

7m more people are estimated to become poor in Nigeria this year: WB

LAGOS: Shopkeeper Toyin Jacob never thought she would have to rely on handouts. Before 2020, food and cash distributions were for her neighbors in Makoko, a coastal community in Nigeria's economic hub Lagos. Thousands of families live in the floating slum, often in tightly packed huts with no running water or electricity.

Until recently, 60-year-old Jacob was better off, living in a concrete house connected to the grid, on a busy asphalted road. Her daughter went to university and her son had a job.

But everything fell apart last year after her husband died, the "arrival of the coronavirus" pandemic and the economic crisis that followed. Jacob's small business had been just enough to get by, but could not withstand the five-week lockdown imposed at the end of March. "With COVID-19 I couldn't continue the business," she said.

"There is no money to buy new provisions," added Jacob, who has started selling household items to survive. In a matter of weeks she became like many of her neighbors in Makoko, a person categorized by aid agencies as "extremely poor", who depends largely on assistance. "After the lockdown, until now, I'm not doing anything", Jacob said.

'Cushion the blow'

Before the pandemic, nearly half of Nigeria's 200 million people were living on less than \$1.90

a day, rivaling India for the world's highest number of poor. Seven million more people are estimated to become poor in the West African nation this year, according to the World Bank, which added they will be "more urban" and "more educated".

Extreme poverty is rampant in the country's rural areas, but the lockdown has also affected city dwellers, the World Food Programme (WFP) said. In the second largest city, Kano, the number of hungry people tripled in just six months, reaching 1.5 million.

The economic situation became so dire it prompted WFP, which usually concentrates relief efforts in the country's conflict-hit northeast, to start delivering aid along with the government to the largest hubs of Lagos, Abuja and Kano. Jacob was among 68,000 people who have received 37,000 nairas (\$97) in Lagos since October, the equivalent of two months' worth of food.

"We want to make sure the most vulnerable people have something to cushion the blow of Covid-19, and support them, so they'll be able to get out and look for money, knowing they have food at home", WFP spokeswoman Chi Lael said. In the narrow waterways near Jacob's home, residents were barely surviving before the pandemic struck.

But when COVID-19, which has killed 1,319 people out of 92,705 infected in Nigeria, led to markets being shut, many were left hungry.



Bidemi Aye receives a pre-paid debt card for cash and food provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) in a makeshift home in the Makoko riverine slum settlement in Lagos. —AFP

'Survive by the grace of god'

On a baking hot afternoon, Bidemi Aye sat in front of her house, a doorless bamboo construction elevated on stilts, with her three-year-old in her lap. It was 1 pm and neither had eaten anything yet. With the little her husband, a fish seller, brings home, the family can normally only afford to eat one meal a day. "With the coronavirus, it's worse," Aye said. "We only survive by the grace of god". The food distribution

represents just a drop in the ocean, especially in Lagos, a megacity of 20 million people where most depend on a daily wage. In 2016, the oil-dependent country had been starting to recover from the price of crude collapsing. But the pandemic and a second fall in oil prices saw Nigeria enter its second recession in four years. Youth unemployment in Africa's most populous country had reached 40 percent even before COVID-19 emerged. — AFP

After 8 years of Mali campaign, France seeks exit strategy

PARIS: Eight years after France sent troops to Mali to prevent jihadists from overrunning the country, it faces tough choices over how to keep pursuing Islamist extremists without becoming bogged down in a potentially unwinnable war. Five French soldiers have been killed by roadside bombs in Mali over the past 10 days, bringing to 50 the number of troops killed across the Sahel since France launched a campaign to clear northern Mali of jihadists in January 2013.

The latest victims included Sergeant Yvonne Huynh, the first female soldier killed since the French intervention began. Her death Saturday, claimed by a group linked to Al-Qaeda, coincided with a massacre across the border in western Niger, where unidentified gunmen killed around 100 villagers in one of the region's worst atrocities. These deaths—and disputed claims Tuesday from villagers in central Mali that up to 20 wedding guests were killed in an air strike—have clouded recent successes chalked up by France's 5,100-member Barkhane counterterrorism force and its African partners.

Shifting public mood

In the past year, the French have killed the leader of the notorious Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb group, Abdelmalek Droukdel, as well as one of the military leaders of the Al-Qaeda

affiliated Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM). Anxious to avoid becoming mired in a long Afghan-style conflict, Paris is preparing to announce a withdrawal of the 600 additional troops it deployed to the Sahel last year.

But whether the drawdown signals the beginning of the end of France's Sahel mission is not yet clear.

Defense sources have told AFP that President Emmanuel Macron would like to go further in reducing the number of French troops in the Sahel region before the next presidential election in April/May 2022. "Up until now the French have not really questioned France's role in the Sahel. But you have to be very careful. Public opinion can change very quickly," a government source told AFP.

Buying time

In a sign that the Sahel mission could become a domestic political football, some opposition politicians have already begun to question the wisdom of staying the course. "War in Mali: for how much longer?" the hard-left France Unbowed party queried on Monday. "The more we help Mali the more it collapses," said Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos of France's Institute of Development Research (IRD). He pointed to a military coup in August that echoed a putsch in 2012, a year before the French arrived. "The longer we stay the harder it will be to leave," Perouse de Montclos said, adding: "Beyond the number of (French) dead, the real question is how to withdraw without losing face." But for Michael Shurkin, senior political scientist at the US-based defense think-tank Rand Corporation, "this was never going to be quick." Citing long-running governance issues in the region, he said: "All France can do is buy time and create space for its African partners to be doing what they should be doing." — AFP

News in brief

Protests erupt in Dakar

DAKAR: Youths protesting a coronavirus curfew clashed with security forces overnight in the Senegalese capital, burning tyres and erecting barricades as police fired tear gas in Dakar's Ngor district, an AFP photographer reported. Incidents were also reported in other parts of the capital overnight Wednesday. President Macky Sall called a state of emergency on Wednesday as he imposed a curfew from 9 pm to 5 am in Dakar and one other region of the West African country. Dakar and the Thies region account for nearly 90 percent of COVID-19 infections, according to health authorities. — AFP

Ghana army quells parliament clash

ACCRA: Ghanaian soldiers intervened overnight to quell a clash between opposing parties in parliament ahead of the body's swearing-in set for yesterday. Chaotic scenes erupted after a ruling party deputy tried to seize the ballot box during the vote for parliament speaker. The ensuing clash lasted several hours until the army stepped in, with national television broadcasting the drama live. "There was total breakdown of law and order," said MP-elect Kwame Twumasi Ampofo of the opposition National Democratic Congress. "Looking at a member of parliament and a minister of state snatching ballot papers... was so shameful." — AFP

International

Asian nations toughen virus fight as pandemic rages worldwide

China reports 63 new infections; Mexico reports 1,100 deaths in 24 hours

TOKYO: Countries in Asia were stepping up their fight against the coronavirus again yesterday in a fresh effort to suppress an illness they had previously tamed, joining Europe in imposing new curbs. Japan was set to declare a state of emergency in Tokyo ahead of the release of figures expected to show a record number of infections, while China reported its highest single-day case number since July.

It comes a day after the world clocked up a record number of deaths in a single day and the European Union approved a second vaccine. There was also no slowing of the spread in North America where Canada was forced to order its first curfew of the pandemic in a push to halt a second wave.

The global outbreak shows no signs of abating, with more than 1.8 million people known to have died worldwide from 86 million confirmed cases. Japan's outbreak has not been as severe as those in Europe and the US, but yesterday the government was forced to announce new restrictions in the capital region that it said would last a month, primarily targeting restaurants and bars.

The government declared a month-long coronavirus state of emergency in the greater Tokyo area yesterday as the capital reported another record surge in daily infections. Prime Minister

Yoshihide Suga described a "great sense of crisis" as he announced the measure, which begins Friday and is less strict than the harsh lockdowns seen elsewhere or even the country's first virus emergency last spring. It primarily targets restaurants and bars, which will be asked to stop serving alcohol by 7 pm and close an hour later.

The curbs will be far less strict than the harsh lockdowns seen in other parts of the world. Businesses are being asked to stop serving alcohol by 7 pm and close an hour later, and residents have been requested to avoid non-essential outings after 8 pm. Local media said Tokyo would report more than 2,400 new cases yesterday, shattering the previous record of 1,591 logged a day earlier. The minister in charge of Japan's pandemic response warned that Tokyo's medical system was "stretched thin".

'Can't leave the city'

In neighboring China, authorities reported 63 new infections yesterday—the highest daily tally since July—as authorities tried to stamp out an outbreak in a city of 11 million near Beijing.

The government in the city of Shijiazhuang in China's northern Hebei province has imposed school closures, cut travel links and begun mass testing as cases spike. "I did the nucleic acid test



TOKYO: A large screen shows Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga during a live broadcast of a press conference on a state of emergency declared for the greater Tokyo area amid the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

last night, but don't have the results yet. Without it I can't leave the city," one young woman told state broadcaster CCTV. One district in the city

has been sealed off while major highways leading into the area have been closed and inter-city bus travel halted. —AFP

WHO urges intensified measures over 'alarming' virus variant

COPENHAGEN: The World Health Organization's European branch yesterday said more needed to be done to deal with the alarming situation brought on by a recently discovered variant of the novel coronavirus. Speaking at a press conference, the WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge, called the current situation "a tipping-point in the course of the pandemic," as Europe was both challenged by surging cases and new strains of the virus causing COVID-19.

"This is an alarming situation, which means that for a short period of time we need to do more than we have done and to intensify the public health and social measures to be certain we can flatten the steep vertical line in some countries," Kluge said, referring primarily to the new variant first discovered in the UK. While it is natural for viruses to change over time and the variant is not believed to cause more severe symptoms, its "increased transmissibility," means it is still raises concern, according to WHO Europe.

"Without increased control to slow its spread, there will be an increased impact on already stressed and pressurized health facilities," Kluge said. The measures proposed by Kluge were those "with which we are all familiar," listing the adherence to generalized mask wearing, limiting social gatherings, maintaining physical distance and hand washing as prudent but in need of being intensified. These measures coupled with adequate testing, quarantine and isolation, and vaccination, "will work if we all get involved," Kluge said. — AFP

UK scrambles for hospital beds as virus surges

LONDON: Hospital chiefs in England were scrambling for hospital beds yesterday as the surge in coronavirus cases risked overwhelming the system, healthcare providers and medics said.

A leaked briefing suggested that even in a relatively positive scenario, London's hospitals could be beyond capacity in less than two weeks. The UK on Wednesday confirmed more than 62,000 new cases in 24 hours, with numbers growing quickly outside southeast England, where clusters of a new highly infectious strain of the virus were first identified.

Over 30,000 people were in UK hospitals with the virus, more than at the peak of the first wave. The sharp rise has forced hospital bosses to consider shifting some inpatients to beds in nursing homes or care homes, said the head of NHS Providers, which represents hospitals in England. "We've seen 5,000 new patients in hospital beds with Covid-19 over the past week—that's 10 full hospitals' worth of Covid patients... so it's a really big challenge," Chris Hopson told BBC radio.

Hospital chiefs "know there is some spare capacity in the care and nursing home sector and they're in the middle of conversation with care and nursing home colleagues to see if they can access that capacity", he added. England entered a strict lockdown on Tuesday with schools and non-essential shops closed for at least six weeks after previous measures failed to halt a steep rise in cases.

More than 2.8 million have been infected in the UK and on Wednesday there were more than 1,000 deaths recorded within 28 days of a positive test—the highest figure since April.



CURRIE: A healthcare worker poses with a vial of the Oxford/AstraZeneca coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine at the Pentland Medical Practice, in Currie, Scotland yesterday. — AFP

'Take lockdown seriously'

The situation comes even as Britain ramps up delivery of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, with more than one million people already receiving a first jab. HSJ, a website for healthcare professionals, on Wednesday leaked a briefing by the head of NHS London, Vin Diwakar, saying the capital could be short of nearly 1,500 beds for general and acute patients by January 19.

In the worst-case scenario, the shortfall could be 4,400 beds, it said. Hospital capacity is at risk unless people knuckle down to anti-virus lockdown rules, said Rupert Pearse, a professor of intensive care medicine at Queen Mary, University of London, who works at Royal London Hospital.

Asked by the BBC whether he believed the NHS could be overwhelmed in two weeks, he said: "I never thought in my entire career that I would say something like this but yes, I do." — AFP

International

Myanmar police arrest nearly 100 trafficked Rohingya in raid

Rohingya headed to Malaysia as part of a trafficking network

TANGON: Nearly 100 Rohingya smuggled from Myanmar's conflict-scarred Rakhine state were arrested in a raid in Yangon, police announced yesterday, with authorities saying they had been headed to Malaysia as part of a trafficking network. The plight of the Rohingya captured international headlines in 2017 after a military crackdown in western Rakhine state sent almost 750,000 fleeing across the border to Bangladesh.

Members of the stateless minority group have long faced discrimination in Myanmar, where they are denied freedom of movement and citizenship, and lack access to work, healthcare and schools. With the remaining languishing in camps that rights groups have described as "apartheid-like", many choose to embark on treacherous routes with human smugglers to reach Malaysia and Indonesia.

The latest smuggling operation was uncovered by Yangon police Wednesday, who raided two houses in Shwepyitha township and discovered 99 Rohingya. "They came from Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Sittwe and Kyauktaw townships (in Rakhine state) to travel to Malaysia to work," Tin Maung Lwin, the township's deputy police superintendent, said yesterday. Images published by local media showed the Rohingya huddled barefoot and wearing face masks, in front of a leafy multi-story house where they had reportedly been hiding for months.

Seventy-three of the group were women, Tin Maung Lwin told AFP, and they were accompanied by a number of children between the ages of five to 10. They are currently quarantined in a local university where they have been tested for coronavirus, said Kyaw Soe Aung from the Arakan City Cooperation Network, a Rohingya aid group.

"We heard they haven't eaten for three days, so we sent them food and clothes yesterday," he told AFP. Police said authorities



Rohingya refugees are seen next to eatery stalls at the housing complex of Bhashan Char island after they were relocated in Noakhali. — AFP

were first alerted to a "suspicious man" who wasn't able to speak Burmese fluently. They followed him to a house where they discovered the others. No smugglers were reportedly arrested.

"We will continue investigating the people who brought them here," Tin Maung Lwin said, adding that he couldn't say whether the Rohingya would be sent back to Rakhine state. Myanmar—which has long maintained the 2017 crackdown was necessary to root out Rohingya militants—now faces charges of genocide at the

UN's top court. Faced with widespread discrimination and little chance to build a viable livelihood, many of the Rohingya trapped in squalid camps are willing to pay around \$1,500 to traffickers—life savings for some—in order to get out of Myanmar.

"Camp leaders try to warn people about the traffickers, but people are still trying to leave," said one Rohingya man at The Kal Pyin camp near Rakhine's capital Sittwe, declining to be named. "It is their hope for a better life." — AFP

N Korea's Kim poses in military uniform with gun in new portrait

SEOUL: North Korean state media have displayed an unprecedented portrait of leader Kim Jong Un in military uniform—and an assault rifle on his desk—as the nuclear-armed nation holds a key meeting of its ruling party. Kim always dons civilian dress for public appearances and it is the first time he has been shown in uniform since he inherited power following his father's death in December 2011.

News of the display came as Kim pledged to strengthen North Korea's defenses, just weeks before Joe Biden's inauguration as US president. The huge portrait shows Kim in a gleaming white uniform with a marshal's star hanging around his neck and on his epaulettes. He is seated in front of a book-lined wall, with a pair of binoculars on his desk as well as the weapon.

The portrait appeared in state television's Wednesday coverage of the Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, hanging in a corridor of the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang.

More images of Kim—one of them on horseback—lined the passageway, where delegates were shown studying them closely. Kim has overseen a rapid increase in the North's missile and nuclear technology.

Reports citing satellite imagery said there are indications Pyongyang is planning a parade "with military ele-



This picture taken on Wednesday and released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) yesterday shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaking during the second day of the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in Pyongyang. — AFP

ments" to mark the gathering. While this is the first formal portrait of Kim in military uniform, similar military images of Kim have emerged previously, including film footage from before he became leader that showed a younger and slimmer Kim wearing the insignia of a four-star general.

In another first, state-owned KCTV showed a modernist bust of Kim, describing it as a gift from Chinese President Xi Jinping, commissioned from his country's "most famous sculptor", according to the South's News 1 agency. — AFP

Indian villagers carry corpse to bank to withdraw funeral money

PATNA: The corpse of an Indian farm laborer was carried to the bank by his neighbors to demand money for his cremation, police said yesterday. Mahesh Yadav, 55, died early Tuesday in a village in the eastern state of Bihar after a lengthy illness, leaving no family. His body was found by neighbors several hours later, officials said. The villagers searched his home for valuables to pay for his funeral, but unable to find any, they instead took his bank passbook that showed he had \$1,600 in his account.

That afternoon, they took the passbook—and Yadav's corpse—to his bank, refusing to leave until the branch manager released his funds, local police officer Amrendar Kumar said. "Villagers demanded the bank gave them money from his account for the cremation or else they would not cremate him," Kumar said. "It put pressure on the bank, which finally released some money following the intervention of the local police station." Canara Bank's branch manager Sanjeev Kumar said the extraordinary scenes created panic.

"It was the first such case," Kumar said. "After over an hour, I gave them money (\$135) and they finally left the bank with his body for the cremation ground." Neighbour Shakuntala Devi said Yadav did not own any land and did not receive any support from the government. "There was no-one to look after him although he had been ailing for months. We used to provide him cooked food and other things," she said. — AFP

International

Wong joins ranks of Hong Kong dissidents arrested for 'subversion'

53 prominent figures including a US citizen arrested in dawn raids

HONG KONG: Jailed dissident Joshua Wong yesterday joined the ranks of Hong Kong democracy figures arrested under a new security law as the United States threatened fresh sanctions in response to Beijing's mounting crackdown in the finance hub. More than 1,000 police officers detained 53 prominent figures—including a US citizen—in dawn raids Wednesday on charges of "subversion", a new national security crime that carries up to life in prison.

The sweep was the latest salvo in Beijing's battle to stamp out dissent in the semi-autonomous city after millions hit the streets in 2019 with huge and sometimes violent democracy protests. A senior police source told AFP that Wong—who is currently behind bars—was arrested on a new charge of subversion, the first time he has been detained under the national security law. The 24-year-old is one of the city's most recognizable democracy advocates and is currently serving a sentence for his role in organizing democracy protests.

Wong's Facebook account later posted a statement saying he was being questioned on suspicion of violating the security law. Local media reported Tam Tak-chi, another activist currently in custody on a sedition charge, was also arrested for subversion yesterday morning.

International anger

Western nations have accused Beijing of using

its crackdown to shred the freedoms that were promised under the "One Country, Two Systems" setup when the former British colony was returned to China. "The United States will not stand idly by while the people of Hong Kong suffer under Communist oppression," said US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, adding the outgoing Trump administration would consider new sanctions.

Washington has already sanctioned multiple Chinese and Hong Kong officials, including city leader Carrie Lam. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying dismissed Pompeo's threat as the "final madness" of an outgoing administration.

"This kind of move... will surely be punished by history," she told reporters.

But the US was not alone in its criticism. British foreign minister Dominic Raab called the detentions "a grievous attack on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms" and said Beijing "deliberately misled the world about the true purpose" of the security law. Canada, France and the European Union also issued statements condemning sliding freedoms in Hong Kong and called for the release of those detained. On Thursday the UN's rights watchdog said the arrests confirmed fears the security law "is indeed being used to detain individuals for exercising legitimate rights to participate in political and public life".

The alleged offence of those arrested for sub-

version was to organize an unofficial primary last summer to decide who would stand as candidates for the city's partially-elected legislature in the hopes they might take a majority for the first time. Many of those candidates were ultimately disqualified from standing and authorities scrapped the



HONG KONG: In this file photo taken on November 24, 2019 pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong (center), who was disqualified from running, queues up to cast his vote during district council elections in the South Horizons district in Hong Kong. — AFP

version was to organize an unofficial primary last summer to decide who would stand as candidates for the city's partially-elected legislature in the hopes they might take a majority for the first time. Many of those candidates were ultimately disqualified from standing and authorities scrapped the

election because of the coronavirus. But Chinese and Hong Kong officials have labeled the primary as an attempt to "overthrow" and "paralyze" the city's government and therefore a threat to national security. Analysts said it was a new watershed moment for the semi-autonomous city. — AFP

Pompeo threatens US sanctions over HK mass arrests

WASHINGTON, DC: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo yesterday threatened sanctions against individuals and organizations involved in the arrest of dozens of Hong Kong democracy figures, voicing anger that an American was among those rounded up. Pompeo said the 53 people arrested Wednesday "should be released immediately and unconditionally".

"The United States will not stand idly by while the people of Hong Kong suffer under Communist oppression," Pompeo said in a late-night statement after a day of political violence in Washington. "The United States will consider sanctions and other restrictions on any and all individuals and entities involved in executing this assault on the Hong Kong people."

Pompeo, who remains in office for two weeks, said the United States would also "explore restrictions" against the financial hub's trade representative office in Washington. In an operation involving 1,000 officers, Hong Kong police arrested the activists for "subversion" in an escalation of Beijing's imposition of a tough security law in the wake of huge and sometimes violent

democracy protests in 2019.

Pompeo, a vehement critic of Beijing, said he was "appalled" by the arrest of John Clancey, a lawyer working for a firm known to take up human rights cases. "Let me be clear: The United States will not tolerate the arbitrary detention or harassment of US citizens," he said.

Hua Chunying, spokeswoman for China's foreign ministry, said Pompeo's statement was "in serious violation of the norms governing international relations", and urged the secretary of state to "stop interfering in China's internal affairs". "For a period of time, we have seen a minority of anti-China politicians in the Trump administration continue to stage their final madness, unscrupulously using their remaining term to deliberately undermine China-US relations and serve their personal political interests," she said. "This kind of move goes against the trend of history and (...) will surely be punished by history."

Pompeo also announced that Kelly Craft, the US ambassador to the UN, would soon travel to Taiwan, calling the island "a reliable partner and vibrant democracy that has flourished despite CCP (Chinese Communist Party) efforts to undermine its great success".

"Taiwan shows what a free China could achieve," he added. The outgoing Trump administration has sent a bevy of high-level diplomatic delegations to Taiwan in the last year as it clashes with China on trade, security and human rights. No date was given for Craft's upcoming visit. — AFP

UN urges 'immediate release' of detained Hong Kong dissidents

GENEVA: The United Nations voiced alarm yesterday at the arrest of 53 prominent figures in Hong Kong on charges of "subversion", urging their immediate release. In an operation involving 1,000 officers, Hong Kong police arrested the activists for "subversion", a new national security crime that carries up to life in prison.

"We are deeply concerned about the arrests on Wednesday of 53 political activists, academics, former legislators, current district councilors, and lawyers in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and we call for their immediate release," UN rights office spokeswoman Liz Throssel said in a statement. "Yesterday's arrests were the latest in a series of detentions related to the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly, in Hong Kong," she said.

Wednesday's arrests under a new security law marked the latest salvo in Beijing's battle to stamp out dissent in the semi-autonomous city after millions hit the streets in 2019 with huge and sometimes violent democracy protests. "These latest arrests indicate that — as

had been feared — the offence of subversion under the National Security Law is indeed being used to detain individuals for exercising legitimate rights to participate in political and public life," Throssel said.

She pointed out that the UN rights office and rights experts had repeatedly warned that offences like subversion under the new law, passed last June, were "vague and overly broad, facilitating abusive or arbitrary implementation." "We stress that exercise of the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely chosen representatives, is a fundamental right" under international law and Hong Kong's Basic Law. The UN rights office, she said, called on authorities to "refrain from using the National Security Law to suppress the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association."

"We also urge the authorities to guarantee the right to freedom of expression in the context of ongoing investigations, including by allowing journalists and news organizations to fully and freely exercise their legitimate functions." — AFP

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Photo shows Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel. — Rex Features

**Coco Chanel's final days
still fascinate 50 years on**

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Photo shows Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel. — Rex Features



A file photo shows creations by French designer Gabrielle Chanel displayed during the exhibition "Gabrielle Chanel Manifeste de Mode" at the Galliera Palais fashion museum in Paris.



This picture shows an ancient bottle of Chanel No. 5 perfume displayed during the exhibition "Gabrielle Chanel, fashion manifesto" at the Galliera Palais fashion museum in Paris. — AFP

COCO CHANEL'S FINAL DAYS STILL FASCINATE 50 YEARS ON

The greatest fashion designer of the 20th century, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, died suddenly in her suite at the swish Hotel Ritz in Paris half a century ago this week. The woman whose designs still shape what we wear today, died at 9:00 pm on January 10, 1971. Despite it being a Sunday, the 87-year-old was working on a new collection, which was shown a fortnight after her death.

A perfectionist to the very end, the designer was seen by staff at her fashion house at rue Cambon the day before checking the slightest details, choosing cloth and inspecting all the buttons. AFP broke the news the middle of the night: "Mademoiselle Coco Chanel died on Sunday evening in Paris." The creator of the little black dress had freed women from the tyranny of Victorian corsetry, borrowing liberally from men's wardrobes to do so. But while her tweed suits, two-tone shoes and quilted handbags were synonymous with French elegance and female liberation, she also had a darker side.



A file photo shows a shoe by French designer Gabrielle Chanel displayed during the exhibition "Gabrielle Chanel, fashion manifesto" at the Galliera Palais fashion museum in Paris.

Don't mention the war

Many in France accused her of collaboration with the Nazis during the occupation of their country during World War II. Which may explain why it took until last year for the first major exhibition dedicated to her work to open in Paris. Chanel had spent the war

at the Ritz with her lover, an aristocratic German intelligence officer called Baron Hans Gunther von Dincklage. The two took off for neutral Switzerland after the liberation, where she kept a low profile for a decade. And when she returned to Paris in 1954, it was to her suite in the Ritz. It fell to her close friends at the luxury hotel to announce her passing.

"Her end was very gentle. We are dismayed because nothing in the days running up to it led us to believe this would happen," one said. With her willowy silhouette, pearl necklace, eternal straw boater and a cigarette habitually hanging from her lips, Coco Chanel was a familiar sight at the hotel, which she had called "home" since 1937. She rented a 188-square-metre (2,023-square-feet) suite, on the second floor with a view over Paris's Place Vendome. Black and white dominated the suite-where she received few visitors-in line with her belief that "black is timeless". She also furnished it with her suede sofa from her fashion house and Chinese screens

with lion talismans, which would later turn up on her tomb-Chanel being very superstitious. The designer order that no one was to be allowed into the suite after her death. Only her family-two nieces and a nephew-were allowed to pay their respects.

Premonition

The next morning at her fashion house her shocked staff members pointed to the haste with which she had gone about her work in the past few days, saying it amounted to a premonition. "She wanted to get everything ready before dying," one said. Tributes flowed in, including from some for whom Coco had not minced her words. "Chanel came with her fine lines, adapted to life and blew everyone away with her modernity," said Spanish designer Paco Rabanne, whom she had dismissed as "the metal worker". French designer Pierre Balmain said she "always dared, always strips, never adds, there is no other beauty than the freedom of the body."



In this file photo taken on April 11, 2018 furniture of a "Suite Mlle Chanel" from the Ritz Paris, part of some 10,000 Ritz objects set to be auctioned, are displayed at the Artcurial auction house in Paris.



A file photo shows creations by French designer Gabrielle Chanel displayed during the exhibition "Gabrielle Chanel, fashion manifesto" at the Galliera Palais fashion museum in Paris.



A picture taken on January 4, 2021 at the Bois-de-Vaux cemetery in Lausanne shows the grave of French couture legend Gabrielle Coco Chanel who died fifty years ago on January 10, 1971.



A file photo shows a handbag by French designer Gabrielle Chanel displayed during the exhibition “Gabrielle Chanel, fashion manifesto” at the Galliera Palais fashion museum in Paris.

Thousands at funeral

On Wednesday, January 13, a crowd of several thousand people gathered in front of the Madeleine church in Paris for the funeral. Most of haute couture’s big names were there, but not Pierre Cardin, whom Coco Chanel had criticised many times, AFP wrote. Fashion journalists, customers, models and all the 250 staff of the Chanel fashion house were out in force. All paid homage to Coco, an orphan from a humble background who had many unhappy love affairs, and who was one of the first women to cut her hair short “because it annoys me”. She was also the creator of what has been dubbed the “perfume of the century”—Chanel N° 5.



In this file photo taken on January 1, 1960 French fashion designer Coco Chanel poses onboard of a plane at Paris airport. — AFP

Her label would eventually be turned into a \$100 billion business by Karl Lagerfeld. The coffin disappeared after the absolution under a heap of white flowers, including an immense wreath of camellias—her favorite—from producers of the Broadway operetta about her life, “Coco”. She was then taken to a cemetery in Lausanne, Switzerland, where she had spent the war, to be buried in private. Her tomb there with its ever-changing floral arrangements has become a place of pilgrimage for fashionistas ever since. — AFP

Strong whiff of wartime scandal clings to Coco Chanel

When Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel died in her suite at the Ritz in Paris 50 years ago this week, the world mourned the greatest fashion designer of the century. What no one mentioned was that Chanel had spent World War II in the luxury hotel with her German officer lover working as a spy for both German military intelligence and the SS. After the war, Chanel—who had risen from grim childhood in an orphanage to befriend, and sometimes hang out with, some of the richest and most powerful men in the world—did her utmost to cover her tracks. So successful was her rewriting of history that AFP, like the rest of the world’s media, was taken in.

“At the beginning of the war, Chanel closed her couture house and withdrew to the shores of Lake Geneva, where she lived for 15 years on the royalties of her perfumes,” it reported after her death, quoting her official biography. The reality was quite different. Although Chanel did close her famous studio on the rue Cambon once the French capital was occupied by the Nazis, her perfume boutique stayed open so German soldiers could buy bottles of Chanel N° 5 for their sweethearts.

German lover

Soon Chanel, then 57 but just as glamorous as ever, was on the arm of an aristocratic attache at the German embassy, Baron Hans Guenther von Dincklage. Dincklage was 13 years her junior and a spy. The two took up together in the Ritz where Chanel had lived since 1937, and which had been requisitioned by the Germans to serve as their headquarters and to accommodate the luxury-loving head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Goering.

Chanel began working for Dincklage’s colleagues in Germany’s Abwehr military intelligence in return for her young nephew Andre Palasse being released from a German stalag after being captured defending France’s Maginot Line. She became Abwehr Agent F-7124 in 1941, codenamed “Westminster” after her longtime lover the Duke of Westminster, Britain’s richest landowner.

Dealing with the devil

More darkly, Chanel began pulling strings to claw back the rights to her perfumes from the Jewish Wertheimer brothers, who had fled to the US when the Germans invaded. She hoped to use the Nazi’s “aryanisation” laws to take back control of the perfumes that she signed away to the Wertheimers in 1924. But the brothers had foreseen the danger and signed their business over to a non-Jewish businessman before fleeing France.

Chanel’s work as a spy involved wining and dining British diplomats in neutral Spain. But as the tide of the war turned against Germany, and her efforts to get her brand back were frustrated, Chanel set her ambitions still higher—on ending the war itself.

‘Operation Modelhut’

In April 1943 she made one of two visits to Berlin to see General Walter Friedrich Schellenberg, the head of SS intelligence. He wanted to send word to Chanel’s old friend, British prime minister Winston Churchill, that senior SS officers wanted to negotiate a peace. But “Operation Modelhut” (meaning fashion model’s hat, after Chanel’s famous boater) ended in farce with Chanel and

Dincklage forced to hot-foot it out of Madrid when English socialite Vera Lombardi, who was carrying Chanel’s letter to Churchill to the British embassy, denounced them as German spies.

Chanel had arranged for Lombardi—a mutual friend of hers and Churchill’s—to be released from an Italian prison where she was being held as a British spy. Lombardi had been close to Chanel since the 1920s, introducing her to her friend, the future king Edward VIII, an admirer of Hitler, and the cream of London society.



Hugh Grosvenor, 2nd Duke of Westminster at Chester Races with Coco Chanel, 1924.



Britain’s Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill with his son Randolph and Coco Chanel in the forests near Dieppe. — Getty Images

Saved by Churchill

When Paris was liberated in 1944, Chanel was arrested by the French Resistance but released a few hours later when Churchill intervened. She was soon safely out of the country in Switzerland when she set up home in a luxury hotel in Saint Moritz. She didn’t return until 1953, when she made a comeback at 70 and reopened her fashion house, having done a deal with the forgiving Wertheimers. It wasn’t until the French writer and Resistance heroine Edmonde Charles-Roux published her book, “Chanel: Her life, her world, and the woman behind the legend she herself created”, three years after the designer’s death, that the truth began to trickle out.

In 1995 the French weekly L’Express uncovered more compromising testimony, which its German counterpart Der Spiegel added to in 2008. But the veil was truly lifted in 2011 with the publication of “Sleeping With the Enemy” by the American Hal Vaughan.—AFP



Cannes says film festival may be put off till summer

The Cannes Film Festival, the world's biggest, may be pushed back to the summer this year from its usual May date because of the Covid crisis, organisers said Wednesday. The festival, scheduled for May 11 to 22, "will certainly take place in 2021", a spokeswoman told AFP, but could be postponed to a time between the end of June and the end of July. The festival was cancelled last year, while rival European events in Berlin and Venice went ahead under strict health restrictions. Organisers still need some time "to evaluate the situation at the start of the year" before making a decision, the Cannes spokeswoman said. The Berlin Film Festival, which usually kicks off in February, said last month it would run

this year's edition in two stages, an online offering for industry professionals in March and a public event in June.

In 2019, Cannes' coveted Palme d'Or was awarded to South Korean film "Parasite" by Bong Joon-ho, which went on to win the first Best Picture Oscar for a non-English film at the Hollywood Academy Awards. The Cannes festival attracts some 45,000 people with official accreditations every year, of whom around 4,500 are journalists. Its Film Market, held alongside the main competition, is the industry's biggest marketplace for producers, distributors, buyers and programmers. — AFP



In this file photo Canadian rock musician, Neil Young performs during the headline slot on the Pyramid stage on the first "official" day of the annual Glastonbury festival near Glastonbury, on June 26, 2009. — AFP

Neil Young sells 50 percent stake in his music

Neil Young is the latest high-profile musician to cash in on his song rights, selling a 50 percent stake in his music to British investment company Hipgnosis. The company said it acquired half of Young's global copyright and income interests of his catalog, which includes 1,180 songs. Hipgnosis did not disclose terms of the deal. The writer of hits including "Heart of Gold", "Rockin' in the Free World" and "Cowgirl in the Sand," Young has remained famously guarded and outspoken against the commercialization of music. Merck Mercuriadis, founder of Hipgnosis Songs Fund Limited, described himself as a lifelong fan of Young's and vowed the music would be used tastefully. "We have a common integrity, ethos and passion born out of a belief in music and these important songs," he said in a statement.

Greek film festival founder Dimitri Eipides dies aged 82

Dimitri Eipides, founder of the Montreal and Thessaloniki film festivals, died on Wednesday at the age of 82, the Greek culture ministry said. Athens-born Eipides, who studied theatre and cinema in the United States and Britain, founded the Montreal Film Festival in 1971 and headed it for 14 years. He subsequently founded the Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival in 1999. "Dimitri Eipides taught us how to watch documentaries, how to discover filmmakers. Cinema was his life," the TIFF wrote in a statement.

"He convinced viewers that documentary is a love affair that surpasses its own art and becomes part of our life. We will always remember him in front of a screen, watching a film, explaining passionately why it is ideal for a festival, ideal for our soul. We express our sincere condolences to his family," the statement said. Eipides was also a member of the Toronto Film Festival from 1988 and programming director of the Reykjavik film festival between 2005 and 2010.—AFP



Dimitri Eipides, founder of the Montreal and Thessaloniki film festivals.



Kim Kardashian West and Kanye West

KANYE AND KIM 'SPEND \$1MILLION ON CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR EACH OTHER DESPITE SPLIT'

Kim Kardashian West and Kanye West reportedly spent around \$1 million on each other's Christmas presents. The couple's relationship is rumored to be on the rocks and they have been having counseling, but they still spent the festive season at home with their kids North, seven, Saint, five, Chicago, two, and 19-month-old Psalm and went all out with gifts for one another. According to TMZ, the 43-year-old rapper gave his wife five of the new 2021 Maybach SUVs, which start at just under \$200,000 each. And it's said Kim, 40, returned the favor, with the reality star spending at least \$1 million total on a number of pieces by James Turrell. Her husband is a big fan of the artist, having been inspired by his visuals for his Sunday Service projects, while he also filmed 'Jesus is King' at Turrell's Roden Crater in Arizona. The report comes after it was revealed the couple are "trying to work through things" with their relationship after a rocky few months.

A source said of their counseling sessions: "Divorce has been discussed, but Kim wants more than anything for their relationship to work. There wasn't anything specific that happened that led them to this point ... They are 100 percent aligned when it comes to the kids." However, another insider insists the couple are just dealing with "regular relationship issues". They added: "It's just regular relationship issues. There is no one else involved. Divorce talks have been on and off with them since the spring." Kim and Kanye - who married in 2014 - have been through tough times as of late as she supported him with his mental health as well as his failed presidential bid last year. However, family has always been incredibly important to the rapper and he previously said that part of his goal in running for President of the United States is to bring a "culture of family" to the country as "family is the key to the world" for him. — Bang Showbiz

ICE, ICE, BABY: BEIJING'S WINTER SWIMMERS SHRUG OFF RECORD LOWS

Temperatures in Beijing were set to plummet to a three-decade low overnight on Wednesday, but that didn't stop a hardy group of retirees plunging into icy waters to indulge in their bracing hobby of outdoor swimming. As the mercury fell to minus eleven Celsius (-12 Fahrenheit) in China's capital by the afternoon—and was forecast to dip as low as minus 18 overnight—around 15 swimmers jumped into icy outdoor waters at a central city park. "It's cold in the water, but you will feel good when you come out," promises 60-year-old Nie Bing, emerging from the cold waves in a pair of trunks.

Wearing swimsuits, goggles, hats, water shoes and socks and even gloves, the band of swimmers take to the water every day for a dip, whatever the weather. In midwinter they often have to break the ice that forms over the lake, sweeping sheets of it to one side with a fishing rod to create swimming lanes. Nearby, less hardy souls, bundled up in layers against the chill, glide across the frozen



An ice swimmer swims in a frozen lake on a cold winter day in Beijing.

lake on their ice skates. "The colder it is, the more you want to swim," affirmed another swimmer surnamed Zhang, in his 70s. China's meteorological authority has issued a severe weather warning across large parts of the country, saying it will be hit by drastic temperature drops and strong gales.



A Chinese ice swimmer pushes the ice as he swims in a frozen river on a cold winter day in Beijing.—AFP photos

In Beijing, strong winds were predicted to drag the ground feeling down below minus 30 degrees overnight. As the swimming troupe emerged from the lake, some doused themselves in warm water and watched the steam rise off their bodies. After their daily swim, they bundle up in warm clothes and

gather on the banks to sing songs together. Zhang did admit that the temperature felt "colder than usual"—but no cause for concern. "I've swam in colder weather than this," he said. — AFP

SAG Awards bosses 'disappointed' about Grammy date clash

SAG Awards bosses are "extremely disappointed" the Grammy Awards have been rescheduled for the same day as their ceremony. SAG-AFTRA - who stage the annual Screen Actors Guild honours, which recognise excellence in TV and film performance - announced last July they would be delaying the 2021 event from their usual January slot to 14 March this year, and so are unimpressed when producers of music's biggest night revealed this week their own ceremony will also be pushed back until that date. SAG-AFTRA told TV Line in a statement: "We are extremely disappointed to hear of the conflicting date,

March 14th, announced today for this year's Grammy Awards telecast. "We announced the same date for the SAG Awards last July with the intent to give the greatest possible scheduling consideration for other awards shows. We expect the same consideration from sister organizations throughout the industry." Awards season typically kicks off in January, with a number of shows taking place between this month and the end of February or beginning of March, but the coronavirus pandemic has seen a number of changes to the schedule. The first major 2021 ceremony will be the Golden Globes, which won't take place until 28 February.

Grammy bosses explained earlier this week they had decided to delay their ceremony - which will be hosted by Trevor Noah - because of the "deteriorating COVID situation" in Los Angeles, where the event takes place. They said in a statement: "After thoughtful conversations with health experts, our host and artists scheduled to appear, we are rescheduling the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards to be broadcast Sunday, March 14, 2021. "The deteriorating COVID situation in Los Angeles, with hospital services being overwhelmed, ICUs having reached capacity, and new guidance from state and local governments have all led us to conclude that postponing our show was the right thing to do. "Nothing is more important than the health and safety of those in our music community and the hundreds of people who work tirelessly on producing the show. We want to thank all of the talented artists, the staff, our vendors and especially this year's nominees for their understanding, patience and willingness to work with us as we navigate these unprecedented times." The ceremony is also set to go ahead with no in-person audience, and plans are in place to only let presenters and performers on site, with winners likely to accept their awards remotely. — Bang Showbiz



Lea Michele

Lea Michele has postpartum hair loss

The 'Glee' star gave birth to her first child, son Ever Leo, with husband Zandy Reich in August and revealed on her Instagram Story this week that massive clumps of her hair have fallen out since. She captioned one picture of her holding strands of her brunette locks in her hand: "The postpartum hair loss is REAL." And alongside a mirror selfie, the 34-year-old actress admitted she might end up with a "mom bob" soon. She wrote: "Enjoying this long hair while it lasts because the mom bob is right around the corner." Lea previously admitted that her son is a "true blessing" when she shared the first picture of the newborn on social media. Alongside the black and white photograph of her and her spouse holding the baby's foot, she wrote: "Forever grateful for this true blessing (sic)" Meanwhile, it was previously revealed that Ever has been an "easy baby". The insider said: "Everyone's happy and healthy, and they're extremely grateful. He's been an easy baby so far." — Bang Showbiz





Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (front) being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping (right) as she exercises at a gym in Shanghai.
— AFP photos

FEMALE BODYBUILDER WITH ONE LEG CAPTURES HEARTS IN CHINA



bodybuilder Gui Yuna (center) being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping (right out of frame) as she exercises at a gym in Shanghai.

Tears fill Gui Yuna's eyes as she describes losing her right leg in a road accident aged seven and school bullies kicking away her crutch to make her fall. But they would not dare do that now—the 35-year-old is a prize-winning bodybuilder and former Paralympian whose inspirational story has gone viral in China. Gui, who competed in long jump at the 2004 Athens Paralympics, is new to bodybuilding but won the first time she competed in October. Images of her strutting on stage in a high-heel shoe and bikini—all while leaning on her crutch—featured heavily in Chinese media and won her a sizeable online following.

With her steely determination and positive attitude she has been feted as an inspiration in a country where disabled people are all too often marginalized. "It's possible that I won first place not because of my professionalism or muscles, but because of my confidence and bravery to stand on the stage and show myself to everyone," Gui said. She spoke following an intense workout at a Shanghai gym, sessions that she regularly posts to her 200,000 followers on TikTok.

Three-legged cat'

Gui has almost no memory of the fateful day when she was hit by a truck as she came home from school. But she cannot forget how, as a young child with only a stump where her right leg used to be, children at school tormented her by kicking away her crutch or yanking away her chair as she sat down. "They called me a cripple or 'three-legged cat,'" said Gui, tears welling in her eyes, even though this was nearly three decades ago. "Most of the time it was abusive language like that and sometimes physical abuse. "The first time they made me fall I cried, but then I got used to it and I thought: you can bully me however you want, but I'll be fine because I have a brave heart."



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (left) being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping (right) as she exercises at a gym.



This photo shows bodybuilder Gui Yuna being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping as she exercises at a gym in Shanghai.

Gui, who is from the southern city of Nanning, was raised by her mother because her father died before she was born. The odds were stacked against her but Gui's athleticism matched her determination and in 2001 she became involved in paralympic sports, going on to represent China at the 2004 Games, finishing seventh in her long jump category. She also did high jump and later archery, and took part in the torch relay for the 2008 Beijing Summer Games and Paralympics.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna checking her make-up she prepares for the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Beijing 2020 competition in Beijing.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (right) talking to her make-up artist as she prepares for the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Beijing 2020 competition in Beijing.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna taking a break between workouts at a gym in Shanghai.

'Thankful for hardships'

After retiring from competition in 2017 Gui endured yet more discrimination in the working world, rejected by employers who said she didn't match their "image". "(They were) implying that I'd damage their image," she said. "I applied to nearly 20 companies and all of them said the same thing."

And while many online commended her after her bodybuilding debut, where she dazzled in a traditional high-necked qipao dress and beat able-bodied rivals, there were a few dissenting voices telling her to stay at home. Occasionally people on the street ask Gui what happened to her right

leg and she is taken aback—missing a limb is so normal to her now that she no longer thinks about it. Gui's crutch is always close at hand but she appears to have few troubles negotiating everyday life. "Many people think that fate was unkind to me, but I don't think so," said Gui, who after the initial rejections is now a partner at a company specializing in home decoration. "I am thankful for having these hardships. "Why do I say that? Because of this I grew up, it made my heart stronger and made me what I am today."— AFP



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (right) being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping (left) as she lifts weights at a gym.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (top center) sitting on a bed as her coach Zhu Liping (bottom left) laughs while they prepare for the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Beijing 2020 competition in Beijing.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (right) being assisted by her coach Zhu Liping (left) as she exercises at a gym.



Bodybuilder Gui Yuna (left) having lunch with her coach Zhu Liping at a gym in Shanghai.



If you've got a laptop with a wi-fi connection, you can work anywhere. — Getty Images

TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A DIGITAL NOMAD IN 2021

By Joe Bindloss

As the COVID-19 vaccine starts to roll-out in destinations around the world, many people will be yearning for a change of scenery and wondering when they can get out on the road again, particularly if they've been working remotely all this time.

There are myriad perks to being footloose and fancy-free and unbound by the ties of working for one employer in one location. Here are some of the top advantages to the digital nomad life.

1. Choosing your own office

As a digital nomad, you choose where you work, whether that means a coffee shop, a co-working space, or a palm-thatched bungalow on a tropical beach. Numerous surveys have revealed that people feel happier with some variety in their working environment, rather than sitting every day doing the same thing in the exact same space.

2. Choosing your own hours

While it takes some discipline to set your own hours and stick to a routine, as a digital nomad, how you structure your time is completely down to you. If you want to start the day with a scuba dive and clock on at mid-day, you can. If you want to sleep all day and work through the night, there's no-one stopping you.

3. Maximum variety

Nothing stifles creativity quite like doing

the same thing over and over again. As a digital nomad, you'll be working on something new for every contract, sometimes for completely new people, and often in a completely new location. Freelancing is the embodiment of the maxim that variety is the spice of life!

4. No more commuting

Numerous surveys have shown that the daily commute is the number one hate for most workers. More than 50% of people resent the daily commute and the number is even higher for people working in big cities. Of course, during 2021, many of us dropped the commute in exchange for staring at the walls of our own home. For digital nomads, that same walk to the laptop can be appreciated anywhere.

5. More time for leisure

Most digital nomads rate having more time for leisure as one of the top perks of the freelance life, and being somewhere interesting means maximum opportunities to do new and exciting things you've never done before. Keep play and work in balance and this could be a lifestyle that never needs to end.

6. Less stress

Around 20% of people cite long working hours as the main cause of stress in their lives, and some 10% are stressed by office politics. Being a digital nomad means being your own boss, setting your own hours, and

spending time with the people you like being around - or spending time by yourself whenever the fancy takes you.

7. No dress code

Some people love wearing a suit; other people feel it's like school uniform for grown-ups. As a digital nomad, you can wear what you like, when you like, whether that's Gore-tex and snowshoes, board shorts and flip-flops or a made-to-measure three-piece suit from a Singaporean tailor.

8. Personal development

Being able to choose your own direction means plenty of opportunities for personal development. You will learn to be self-reliant and comfortable in your own company. You will become more organized and more confident in your ability to rise to a challenge. And you'll learn what is really important in life, without other people's ideas and preconceptions clouding your judgment.

9. Business skills 101

Working as a freelancer is a boot camp in the skills needed to run any business. You'll learn to manage your time and financial affairs, scout for new clients, stay on top of invoices and build a growing brand. Plenty of business-starters made the jump to creating their own empires after learning the ropes as a freelance sole trader.

10. See the world

As they used to say in the navy: become a digital nomad, see the world. With the wireless lifestyle made possible by digital technology, you can set up almost anywhere, and move camp when you fancy a change of scenery. Work in one place all year, or move with the changing seasons? Spend the week on the beach and weekends in the mountains? The choice really is yours. — www.lonelyplanet.com



As a digital nomad, you set your hours and location. — Getty Images

Kids Page

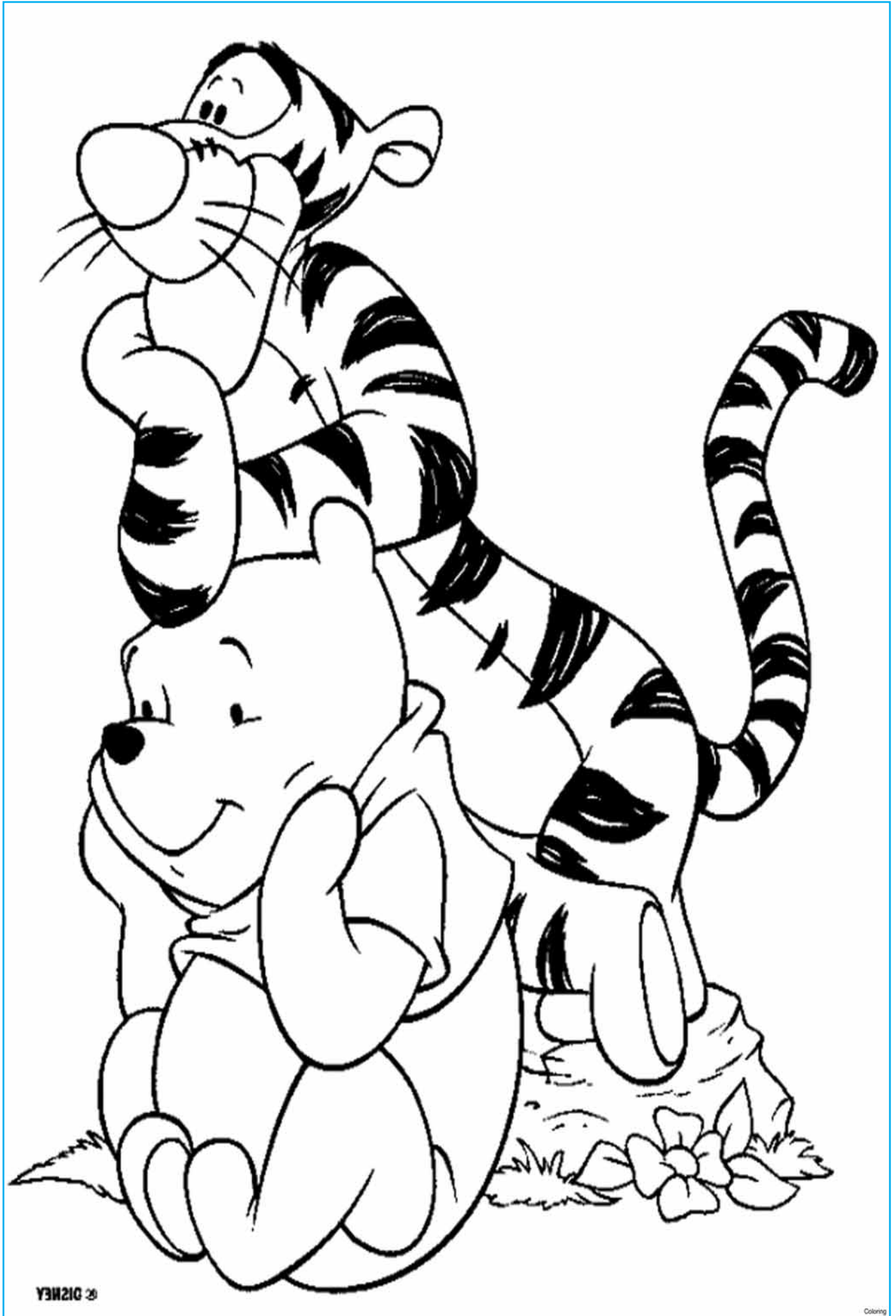
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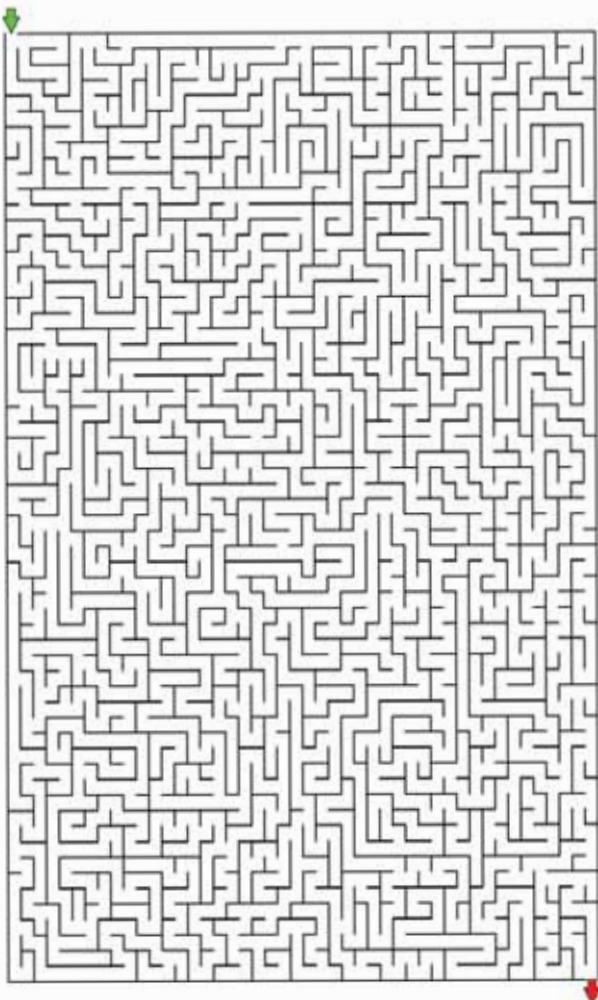
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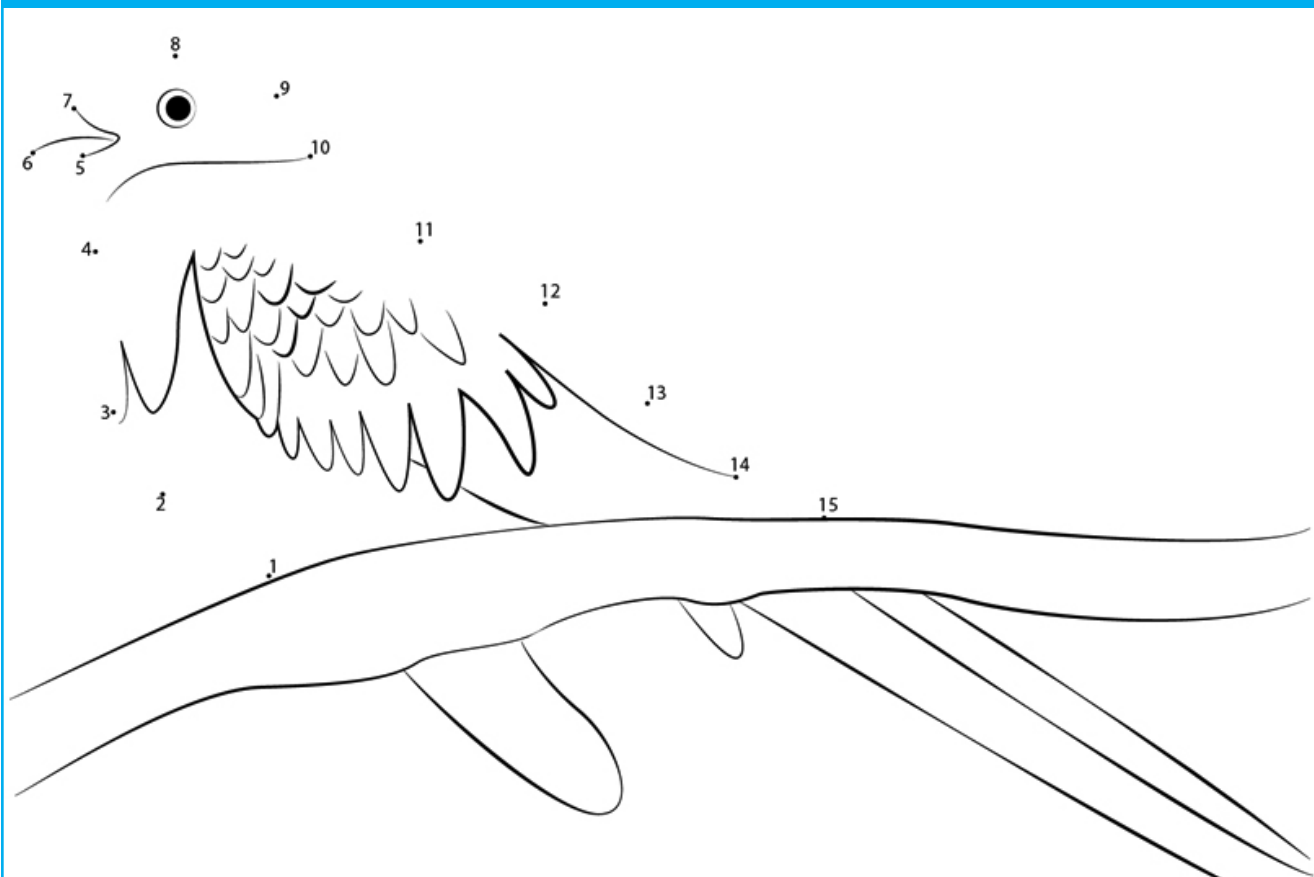
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Join the dots



Word Scramble



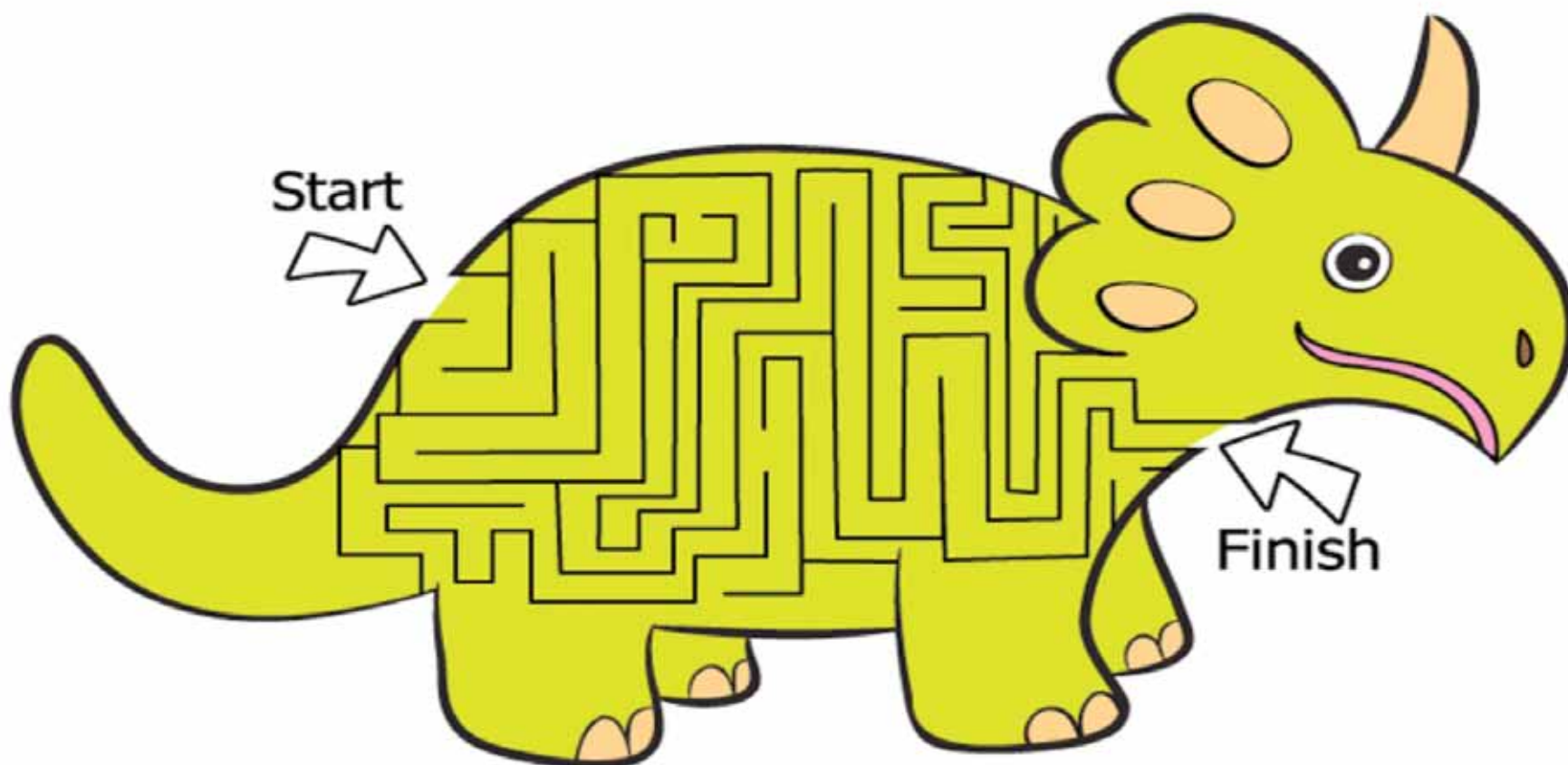
Veterans Day

Word Scramble

On November 11th of each year, Americans honor their citizens who have served in the armed forces. Can you unscramble the Veterans Day vocabulary words? Watch out! One of them is made up of two words.

ADEML	_____	OPTIART	_____
CEEVIRS	_____	AYODLHI	_____
EERANVT	_____	SHATKN	_____
RTEITUB	_____	IACFRERO	_____
AGOVECR	_____	STYHEOR	_____
OREH	_____	IEMANR	_____
PADRAE	_____	RAVBE	_____
OHRN	_____	ACEEP	_____
RPEID	_____	VYAN	_____
MILMEARO	_____	SELORIDS	_____
RMLYIITA	_____	MERVONEB	_____
YTUD	_____	TCOMBA	_____

Find the way



CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

Friday, January 8, 2021

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 Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
 Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
 Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
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- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of international journal of Dermatology.

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DR KHALED ALMERRI
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 Department: Heart & Vascular Center

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- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
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- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
 ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

- ◆ Kuwait Board of Otolaryngology.
- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship, McGill University- Canada.
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck surgery.
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association.
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society.
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.

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Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
 Surgery Department
 Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo – Rectal Surgeon

Scope of Clinical Practice:

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- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fetoscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
 Head of Cardiology department
 at Dar Al Shifa hospital

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Health & Science

Friday, January 8, 2021

Of mice and men: Keeping track of Ronaldo and co

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo and his Portugal team-mates may be surprised to learn the video and data analysis their coaches use was devised by scientists who used it to track the behavior of mice, monkeys and human eye movements. Ruben Saavedra, the Spanish CEO of Metrica Sports, says it is not a stretch to transfer the use of data to track the behavior of mice and rats to the task of tracking "movement of players on the pitch".

Saavedra and Argentinian co-founder Bruno Dagnino—who studied the eye movements of monkeys and humans—found they shared more than an

interest in science when they were studying for their PhDs in the Netherlands. "We had two things in common: as Barcelona and Argentina fans, Lionel Messi was an easy link, and we were the only people on our courses who loved football," Saavedra told AFP in an interview.

"There are lots of nerds in science who do not have other hobbies and so he and I could talk football, which was nice." The final part of the puzzle was complete with another Argentinean, Enzo Angilletta, who had a video production company. Together they developed a system that integrates data with video analysis, which had

been done only manually before. By marrying data and video they created what its developers call a "workflow of football analysts".

"Presenting graphs and raw data was not enough for clubs," said Saavedra. The process is unusual in that it analyses technical skills and positioning during matches, rather than simply measure distance covered. Thus, the national teams of Portugal and Paraguay, and clubs as far afield as Melbourne Victory and Santos in Brazil have benefited from the video and data analysis product, with the top clubs paying more 100,000 euros (\$122,000) a year.

Thanks to that level of income, Metrica have been able to produce a free plan, Play Basic, a version of the analysis tool which is available to download for free to anybody. It has already attracted a diverse clientele from academies in Africa to amateur players and coaches from rugby union, cricket and ice hockey. "A few years ago we had to have cameras in stadia but it has evolved," he said. "Now we can track any game on any video with our new technology. "We are working to automate the manual work in acquiring the data so it will be affordable for some clubs, who now can only dream of having it." — AFP

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DR. WALEED S. BUHAIMEED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- (IFSO) member.
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.

- Bariatric surgeries.
- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Cold and Partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

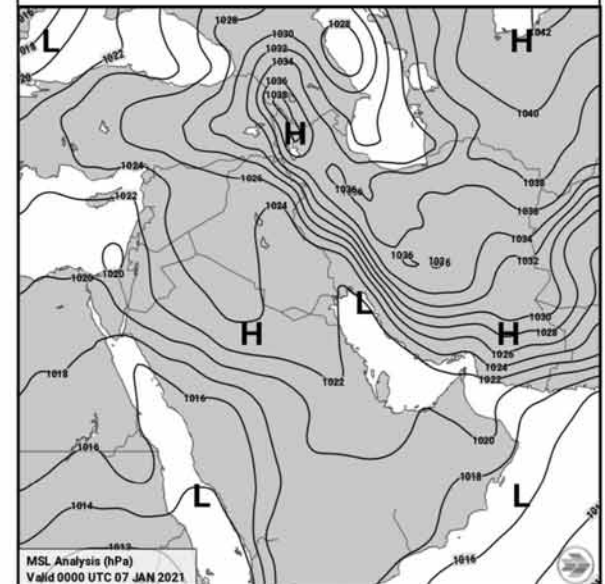
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	13 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	21 °C	07 °C
ABDALY	23 °C	06 °C
BUBYAN	19 °C	10 °C
JAHRA	22 °C	10 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	20 °C	15 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	22 °C	09 °C
WAFRA	22 °C	06 °C
SALMY	20 °C	06 °C

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07/01/2021 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	01/08	Fair and Partly cloudy with a chance for fog forming at night	20 °C	07 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h
Saturday	01/09	Fair and Visibility will improve gradually and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	06 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h
Sunday	01/10	Fair and Visibility will improve gradually and some high clouds will appear	21 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Monday	01/11	Fair and some high clouds will appear	21 °C	08 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:19
Sunrise	06:45
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	14:46
Sunset	17:05
Isha	18:27

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	09 °C
MAX. RH	79 %
MIN. RH	22 %
MAX. Wind	NW 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated.

UP.0

Business

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2021

34 UK finance sector unsure of post-Brexit future



35 Twitter and Facebook suspend Trump over Capitol attack posts



36 Tech titans Alibaba and Tencent dive in Hong Kong on US ban fears



US businesses slam Capitol 'chaos'

'Today marks a sad and shameful chapter in our nation's history': Tim Cook

WASHINGTON: Major US corporations and businesses groups yesterday condemned the occupation of the US Capitol by rioters angry at President Donald Trump's election defeat, with one organization raising the possibility of the president being removed from office. The statements came on a shocking day for the United States, which saw mobs overrun Congress after a rally by Trump, who had sought to thwart the process of lawmakers certifying election results.

That was the final administrative step before Democratic President-elect Joe Biden enters the White House later this month, but the normally ceremonial affair spiraled into mayhem.

"Today marks a sad and shameful chapter in our nation's history," Apple CEO Tim Cook said on Twitter late Wednesday. "Those responsible for this insurrection should be held to account, and we must complete the transition to President-elect Biden's administration. It's especially when they are challenged that our ideals matter most."

The Business Roundtable issued a statement calling on "the president and all relevant officials to put an end to the chaos and to facilitate the peaceful transition of power." The lobbying group, which represents over 200 chief executives, blamed the events on "unlawful efforts to overturn the legitimate results of a democratic election. The country deserves better."

US Chamber of Commerce CEO Thomas J. Donohue said: "The attacks against our nation's Capitol Building and our democracy must end now," and Congress should "conclude their Constitutional responsibility" to certify the winner of the presidential vote. Jay Timmons, president and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers went further, calling on Vice President Mike Pence to "seriously consider" invoking the US constitution's 25th amendment, which would allow him to temporarily become president



WASHINGTON, DC: Congress staffers barricade themselves after Trump supporters stormed inside the US Capitol in Washington, DC on Wednesday. —AFP

after Trump is deemed incapacitated. The group has been viewed as supportive of Trump's agenda of protecting American manufacturers, but Timmons said, "The outgoing president incited violence in an attempt to retain power, and any elected leader defending him is violating their oath to the Constitution and rejecting democracy in favor of anarchy."

'Coup' attempt

Without referring to the assault on the Capitol, Trump's Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Twitter, "Violence is always

unacceptable. We must respect our constitution and democratic process."

The attack saw flag-waving Trump supporters break down barricades outside the iconic white-domed building and swarm its halls, sending sessions of the House and Senate into an emergency recess.

That interrupted the effort by some lawmakers from Trump's Republican party to mount a quixotic attempt to delay certification of Biden's win. In extraordinary images, armed security personnel were seen barricading the chamber with weapons drawn, while lawmakers huddled inside wearing gas masks. Labor

leader Richard Trumka, president of the powerful AFL-CIO, called the unrest "one of the greatest assaults on our democracy since the Civil War" from 1861 to 1865.

"Today's attempted coup has been years in the making as Donald Trump consistently spews venom, conspiracies, hate and lies to his supporters," he said in a statement.

While avoiding Trump's name, JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon said "our elected leaders have a responsibility to call for an end to the violence, accept the results, and, as our democracy has for hundreds of years, support the peaceful transfer of power." —AFP

Business

Future of UK's key financial services industry uncertain

Britain expects 50,000 financial job losses following Brexit

LONDON: While Britain's post-Brexit trade deal with the EU has at last been reached, the future of the country's key financial services industry is uncertain ahead of bilateral talks. London and Brussels finally clinched a deal over Christmas ahead of Britain's formal divorce from the European Union on December 31.

Britain then departed from the EU single market and customs union with effect from January 1. Yet crucially, the agreement—four and a half years after Britain narrowly voted to leave—did not encompass the finance sector. “This (trade) deal is a starting point. We've got months of this to come,” Simon Gleeson of law firm Clifford Chance told AFP in reference to financial services.

The 1,200-page post-Brexit agreement gives scant detail about the industry, which is worth about £150 billion (\$204 billion, 166 billion euros) per year or seven percent of the UK's annual economic output. Finance dwarfs Britain's politically-significant fishing industry, which accounts for less than 0.1 percent of GDP and yet was a key factor in delaying the trade deal.

Equivalence

Britain and the EU are now aiming to seal a memorandum of understanding about financial services by March, establishing a roadmap for cooperation, though officials have downplayed its impact. Bank of England governor Andrew

Bailey remains optimistic of negotiating a so-called “equivalence” regime that make rules compatible to keep trade in certain services flowing smoothly.

“We've been working on these issues for a long time,” Bailey told a virtual parliamentary hearing on Wednesday. “We have strong relationships with our partners in the EU... and our joint objective is to keep it that way because it benefits both of us.” From January 1, the UK financial sector lost single market access and its European “passport”, a device allowing UK financial products and services to be sold in the EU. The ability of the financial sector to do business in the bloc now hinges on obtaining equivalence across 59 specific areas. London has already granted equivalence to EU-based financial firms in a number of those areas.

“The mere hope that there might be a deal in four months is not enough.” The European Commission does not appear to be in a hurry because it is currently examining equivalence requests for just 28 specific areas. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson appears eager to agree an acceptable alignment deal—but does not want identical EU regulatory rules for political reasons.

Brexit job losses

British financial companies have meanwhile



MANCHESTER: A pedestrian walks past an anti-Brexit poster in Manchester, north west England. — AFP

been preparing the ground for a sharp slump in transactions with the European Union. Up to 7,000 jobs have so far been relocated from London to major rival hubs like Amsterdam, Dublin, Frankfurt and Paris, according to Bailey.

That is however far less than media speculation of up to 50,000 financial job losses. Nev-

ertheless, although markets have traded smoothly since the start of 2021, there has been a definite switch from UK to European equity platforms. Many British finance firms have meanwhile started to cease certain activities with some European clients, in a trend which looks set to continue. — AFP

Ireland seeks plain sailing with direct shipping to EU

LONDON: Ireland has ramped up direct shipping routes to mainland Europe since the end of the Brexit transition period, seeking new passages to the EU bypassing freight jams feared at UK borders.

Every year 150,000 trucks use the “UK landbridge” to transport three million tons of freight between the Republic and the European mainland. Trucks sail by roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) ferries from Irish ports and mainland Britain, driving onwards to shipping hubs in south-east England, then on to continental Europe.

Britain left the EU in January last year, but remained bound by the bloc's rules until December 31 as it sought to define the terms of its new relationship with Brussels. Even though tariff- and quota-free trade was secured in a last-minute deal, Britain's exit from Europe's single market and customs union meant an

end to frictionless freight transit through UK-EU port borders.

“Declarations, regulatory checks, controls... will now be a factor because the UK has left the EU,” warned Tom Talbot, of Irish Revenue, at Dublin Port on Monday.

“Because of that there will be delays.” Many Irish hauliers are already charting new routes guaranteeing freight remains inside the single market and customs union, and outside the scope of delay.

Rosslare Europort-Ireland's second busiest freight hub—is already running 28 weekly services to or from mainland Europe, up from 10 before the end of the Brexit transition. In December, Swedish firm Stenaline brought forward plans to double sailings between the south-eastern town and Cherbourg in northern France, as coronavirus restrictions blocked lorries entering the country from Britain. —AFP

Stocks, dollar rise as markets shrug off US violence

LONDON: Stock markets mostly gained yesterday as traders brushed off the storming of the Capitol building in Washington. After gains across much of Asia, Europe followed suit, though London dipped on profit-taking after a huge gain Wednesday.

The dollar rose across the board yesterday, while bitcoin continued its record run to strike an all-time high \$37,802. Oil prices steadied after recent strong gains.

“Traders are unfazed by the chaos that we experienced on Capitol Hill yesterday,” noted Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at AvaTrade. Congress formally certified Joe Biden as the next US president yesterday, dealing a hammer blow to Donald Trump whose supporters stormed the Capitol hours earlier, triggering unprecedented scenes of mayhem in the seat of American democracy.

It comes as Biden is set to push ahead with his legislative agenda that includes another huge stimulus package. Analysts believe that while the new president could undo a lot of Trump's tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations, he is unlikely to look at those until he has dealt with the virus and got the economy back up and running.

The violence in the US took attention away from soaring coronavirus cases around the world that are forcing governments to impose fresh lockdowns. Traders are optimistic that the rollout of vaccines, though slower than



TOKYO: A pedestrian looks at an electronic quotation board displaying share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (C, top) and other world's markets in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

hoped, will eventually allow life to get back to normal.

The Dow and S&P 500 both ended at new records Wednesday, though the Nasdaq reversed earlier gains on worries about possible Democrat-led regulation of big tech firms. Hong Kong was in the red Thursday after six days of gains, with market heavyweights Alibaba and Tencent diving following a report that the Trump administration is considering barring investment in their New York shares.

Elsewhere, electric carmaker Tesla closed trading on Wednesday with a market value topping \$700 billion for the first time. The latest surge means the company is worth more than General Motors, Ford, Toyota, Honda, Fiat Chrysler and Volkswagen combined. — AFP

Business

Twitter and Facebook suspend Trump over Capitol attack posts

Sanctions after president repeated false claims of election fraud on social media

SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter and Facebook suspended Donald Trump on Wednesday over posts accused of inflaming violence in the US Capitol, as social media scrambled to respond to mayhem by supporters buying into his baseless attacks on the integrity of the election.

The unprecedented sanctions came after the president took to social media to repeat his numerous false claims about fraud and other impropriety in the election he lost to Joe Biden. "This is an emergency situation and we are taking appropriate emergency measures, including removing President Trump's video," said Facebook vice president of integrity Guy Rosen.

"We removed it because on balance we believe it contributes to rather than diminishes the risk of ongoing violence." Facebook barred Trump from posting at the social network or its Instagram service for 24 hours, saying his messages were promoting violence.

Trump's falsehoods, ranging from specific allegations to broad conspiracy theories, also prompted Facebook to change a label added to posts aiming to undermine the election results. The new label reads: "Joe Biden has been elected president with results that were certified by all 50 states. The US has laws, procedures, and established institutions to ensure the peaceful transfer of power after an election." An activist group calling itself a mock Facebook oversight board said sanctions against Trump at the social network

were long overdue.

"This is too little, too late," the group said in a statement. "Donald Trump has breached Facebook's own terms and conditions multiple times. His account is not just a threat to democracy but to human life."

Permanent Twitter ban?

The crackdown came after Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol in an attack that led to one woman being shot and killed by police, interrupting congressional debate over Biden's election victory. The assault came after the president had urged supporters to march on the seat of government during a speech outside the White House in which he alleged baselessly that the election had been stolen from him. He later released a video on social media in which he repeated the false claim—even telling the mob "I love you."

YouTube removed the video in line with its policy barring claims challenging election results.

Twitter said Trump's messages were violations of the platform's rules on civic integrity and that any future violations "will result in permanent suspension of the @realDonaldTrump account." The messaging platform said Trump's account would be locked for 12 hours and that if the offending tweets were not removed, "the account will remain locked." Facebook said it would search for and remove content which praised the storming of



the Capitol or encouraged the violence.

The platform said it would seek to take down additional calls for protests, including peaceful ones, if they violated a curfew imposed by the city of Washington, or any attempts to "re-stage" the storming of Congress. "The violent protests in the Capitol today are a disgrace," a Facebook spokesperson said.

"We prohibit incitement and calls for violence

on our platform. We are actively reviewing and removing any content that breaks these rules." Facebook maintained that it was in contact with law enforcement officials and continued to enforce bans on QAnon conspiracy group, militarized social movements, and hate groups. A #StormTheCapitol hashtag was blocked at Facebook and Instagram, according to the internet titan. —AFP

Ryanair slashes annual traffic forecast on virus

LONDON: Irish no-frills airline Ryanair yesterday slashed its annual traffic forecast after axing more flights due to the coronavirus fallout. It expects to carry between 26 million and 30 million passengers in the company's financial to March, Ryanair said in a statement.

That compared with a prior forecast of less than 35 million. The Dublin-based carrier also cut its flight schedules during the first quarter of 2021 amid fresh Covid-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The airline said it still expects to make a net loss in the current fiscal year after the deadly pandemic ravaged the aviation industry. "Ryanair will significantly cut its flight schedules from Thursday 21 January, which will result in few, if any, flights being operated to/from Ireland or the UK" until restrictions are lifted, it said.

The carrier meanwhile urged the Irish and UK governments to accelerate the pace of their Covid-19 vaccine programs. —AFP

Virus impact keeps eurozone inflation negative

BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation remains doggedly negative, the latest official data showed yesterday, the fifth straight month it has languished in the red because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Eurostat figures for December gave the 19-nation zone an inflation reading of minus 0.3 percent, the same level as in November. It has been negative since August. The reading is well below the European Central Bank's inflation target level of just under two percent.

The biggest drag on inflation was energy, which was minus 6.9 percent in December compared with minus 8.3 percent the month before. The

LafargeHolcim to buy Bridgestone unit for \$3.4bn

ZURICH: Construction giant LafargeHolcim said yesterday it will snatch up roofing manufacturer Firestone Building Products (FSBP) for \$3.4 billion (2.7 billion euros). The world's largest cement maker, born out of a 2015 merger between the French group Lafarge and Holcim of Switzerland, announced it had signed an agreement to buy FSBP, a unit of Bridgestone Americas, which itself is a subsidiary of Japanese tyre giant Bridgestone. LafargeHolcim chief

biggest positive component was food, alcohol and tobacco, which rose 1.4 percent, compared with 1.9 percent in November.

Overall prices have been brought down by restrictions imposed in Europe to curb a second wave of the new coronavirus. Curfews, work-from-home orders, mandatory quarantines and travel restrictions have all taken their toll. And in several euro-using countries they have been hardened even further in late December. Europe's economy is on the brink of returning to recession after a brief recovery over its mid-year summer period. Persistently negative inflation is a worry for governments because it can lead to consumers holding off making big-ticket purchases in the expectation that prices will drop later on, creating a spiral that can wound economic activity and employment. The European Central Bank says that the services sector is bearing the brunt of the economic hit.

In mid-December it estimated that the eurozone economy would show a 7.3 percent contraction in 2020. The area would return to 3.9 percent growth this year, it said, lower than its previous forecast of 5.0 percent. The bank has deployed a massive bond-purchase scheme worth 1.85 trillion euros (\$2.27 trillion) in an effort to boost activity. —AFP

Jan Jenisch said in a statement that he was "excited to be entering the highly attractive roofing business."

"Today's milestone is a strategic leap on our journey to become the global leader in innovative and sustainable building solutions, to build a world that works for people and the planet," he said. Based in Nashville, Tennessee, FSBP makes roofing, wall and lining solutions, and raked in revenues of some \$1.8 billion last year. It's 1,900 employees will all transition to LafargeHolcim, the statement said. The acquisition will strengthen LafargeHolcim's position in the United States, its biggest market, it said, adding that it planned to "swiftly globalise the business", broadening its reach to Europe and Latin America. The acquisition, expected to be finalized in the second quarter, will be financed with cash and debt, LafargeHolcim said. —AFP

Business

Tech titans Alibaba and Tencent dive in Hong Kong on US ban fears

US officials assessing the impact of an investment ban

HONG KONG: Shares in China's two biggest companies Alibaba and Tencent tumbled in Hong Kong yesterday in response to media reports that the Trump administration plans to press ahead with a ban on Americans investing in them. Ecommerce titan Alibaba sank almost four percent and internet powerhouse Tencent shed 4.7 in morning trade after the Wall Street Journal said officials in multiple government departments were assessing the impact of an investment ban.

Such a move would be another blow to Alibaba, which has come under pressure from Chinese officials as regulators launch an anti-monopoly probe into it, while its fintech giant Ant Group was ordered to drastically change its business model. The moves come as Beijing puts the squeeze on the once unbridled empire of tech tycoon Jack Ma.

The Wall Street Journal report came the same day the New York Stock Exchange reversed course for a second time to say it would delist three Chinese telecom equities from trading owing to new US government guidance. Wednesday's announcement capped a dizzying few days of flip-flopping in which the stock exchange announced the removal at the weekend before making a U-turn on Monday, and then saying it would go ahead once more Wednesday.

The latest decision came after Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin disagreed with Monday's reversal.

The three state-owned telecom giants plunged, with China Unicom shedding more than 11 percent while China Telecom was down more than nine percent and China Mobile slipped more than seven percent. Trump issued an executive order in November banning Americans from investing in Chinese companies deemed to be supplying or supporting the country's military and security apparatus, earning a sharp rebuke from Beijing.

On Tuesday night he signed an executive order banning transactions involving Alipay, WeChat Pay and other apps linked to Chinese companies, drawing strong criticism



In this file photo, the logo of Alibaba Group is seen at its office in Beijing.

from Beijing.

Alipay is owned by Alibaba and WeChat is owned by Tencent. The Wall Street Journal reported that officials at the State Department, Department of Defense and Treasury Department had all discussed how to implement an investment ban on the two Chinese e-commerce giants.

Any ban could have a profound effect on US markets. While the three Chinese telecoms firms are comparative small fry for the

New York Stock Exchange, Alibaba and Tencent are China's two largest companies. At \$1.4 trillion, the combined market value of their primary listings is twice the size of Spain's stock market, according to Bloomberg News.

"If the bans are implemented then it'd be a huge thing for the market," Steven Leung, executive director at Uob Kay Hian (Hong Kong) told Bloomberg. "It's still too early to say. After the Biden administration starts, the policy could change again." —AFP

NYSE to delist 3 Chinese firms in new reversal

NEW YORK: The New York Stock Exchange reversed course again Wednesday saying it would delist three Chinese telecom equities from trading due to new US government guidance.

Meanwhile, Washington is considering adding Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba and tech giant Tencent to the blacklist, The Wall Street Journal reported. The latest flip-flop by the NYSE, which will remove China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom, reverts the exchange back to its original policy announced last week. The exchange had abandoned the decision to delist two days ago amid criticism from Beijing, but said Wednesday it will follow "new specific guidance received on January 5, 2021, that the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control provided to the NYSE."

The move will end trading in the firms after 1430 GMT on January 11. The US Departments of State and Defense have discussed expanding the list of prohibited firms to include Alibaba and Tencent, the Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter. According to the report, those officials have talked with the Treasury Department about the impact of delisting the major firms with a combined market value of \$1.3 billion and that are held by many US funds. — AFP

German industrial orders unexpectedly rise in November

FRANKFURT: German industrial orders beat forecasts in November, unexpectedly rising on the back of strong demand from eurozone countries, official data showed yesterday. Demand was 2.3 percent higher than in October, federal statistics agency Destatis said.

The data trumped analysts' expectations of a 1.4 percent slump, according to a poll by FactSet. Orders were also 4.0 percent above those in February 2020, the month before curbs were imposed to halt transmission of the coronavirus. The data for November marks the seventh month of rises in orders, albeit slightly below the growth of 3.3 percent in October, as Germany continued to recover from the economic slump of the first wave of the pandemic.

Industrial orders are widely tracked as a key indicator of future activity, especially in manufacturing powerhouse Germany. Europe's biggest economy shuttered restaurants, leisure and sporting facilities in November to curb a second wave of the virus.

But factories and manufacturing businesses stayed open. As a result, "new orders continued their recovery process in November," the economy ministry said in a statement. Or-

ders from inside Germany rose 1.6 percent month-on-month, while those from the euro area jumped 6.1 percent, and other countries by 0.9 percent.

"German industry has remained almost unharmed by the November lockdown," ING economist Carsten Brzeski said. But he warned that with upcoming "stricter lockdowns in many main trading partner countries, setbacks for industry seem hard to avoid." — AFP



BERLIN: German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier attends the weekly cabinet meeting on Wednesday at the Chancellery in Berlin. — AFP

76ers withstand Beal's 60 points, beat Wizards

Boston Celtics top Miami Heat

LOS ANGELES: Joel Embiid's 38 points and 28 from Seth Curry saw the Philadelphia 76ers withstand a 60-point performance from Washington's Bradley Beal in a 141-136 NBA win over the Wizards on Wednesday. Tobias Harris and Shake Milton scored 19 points each and Ben Simmons added 17 points and 12 assists as the 76ers notched their fifth win in a row and pushed their league-leading record to 7-1.

The Sixers led by as many as 21 points in the third quarter, but the Wizards hung around and knotted the score at 131-131 with four minutes left to play. From there Philadelphia scored eight straight points to pull away, the defeat more painful for the Wizards as Russell Westbrook departed in the waning minutes with a hand injury after contributing 20 points, eight rebounds and 12 assists.

The night's 11 games played out hours after a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol building in Washington, forcing lawmakers to flee to safety and leaving one woman dead. Around the league players and coaches addressed the violence, as well as the decision a day earlier not to bring charges against the white police officer who shot and paralyzed African American Jacob Blake in Wisconsin last August.

"We play tonight's game with a heavy heart after yesterday's decision in Kenosha and knowing that protesters in our nation's capital are treated differently by political leaders depending on what side of certain issues they are on," players from the Boston Celtics and Miami Heat said in a joint statement before their game. "The dras-

tic difference between the way protesters this past spring and summer were treated and the encouragement given to today's protesters who acted illegally just shows how much more work we have to do."

The marquee matchup in Miami was the first meeting between the teams since the Heat eliminated the Celtics in the Eastern Conference finals. The rematch saw the Celtics emerge from a close game with a 107-105 victory. Boston used a 10-0 scoring run to build a 10-point lead with 1:17 remaining only for the Heat to respond with a 10-0 run of their own before Celtics guard Payton Pritchard made a game-winning layup with two-tenths of a second remaining. Jimmy Butler led the Heat with 26 points. Jayson Tatum paced the Celtics with 27 and Jaylen Brown added 21.

Fultz out for season

In Orlando, Terrence Ross scored 20 points and Dwayne Bacon added 19 to lead the Magic to a 105-94 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers. But the victory was marred by a season-ending knee injury to point guard Markelle Fultz in the first quarter. Fultz's knee appeared to give out as he drove to the basket and he crashed to the court in obvious pain with what the team later said was a torn anterior cruciate ligament. Charlotte's free-agent acquisition Gordon Hayward scored a career-high 44 points to propel the Hornets to a 102-94 victory over the Hawks in Atlanta.

The Indiana Pacers, fueled by 35 points from Malcolm Brogdon, notched a 114-107 win over the Houston Rockets, whose star James Harden delivered a modest 15 points and 12 assists. The



PHILADELPHIA: Thomas Bryant #13 of the Washington Wizards plays defense during the game against the Philadelphia 76ers on January 6, 2021 at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. — AFP

Milwaukee Bucks, with 25 points from NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo, cruised to a 130-115 victory over the Detroit Pistons, who saw Derrick Rose depart early with a right knee contusion. The Oklahoma City Thunder edged the Pelicans in New Orleans 111-110. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 21 points and George Hill made two free throws to seal the win with 12.1 seconds left to play.

Zion Williamson's 29 points paced the Pelicans, who also had a triple-double of 10

points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists from center Steven Adams of New Zealand, whose first career triple-double came against his former team. With 21 points from both Kawhi Leonard and Paul George, the Los Angeles Clippers held off the Golden State Warriors 108-101 in San Francisco. Warriors star Stephen Curry endured a tough shooting night, scoring just 13 points after amassing 92 in his previous two games, including his career-high 62 against Portland on Sunday. — AFP

Pucovski, Labuschagne 50s put Australia on top in third Test

SYDNEY: Debutant Will Pucovski and Marnus Labuschagne smacked half-centuries as Australia recovered from an early setback to build a promising first innings in the rain-hit third Test against India yesterday. Following David Warner's departure for five, the hosts recovered to 166 for two at stumps after more than three hours' play was lost due to persistent drizzle at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Labuschagne was not out 67 while Steve Smith, who has struggled for runs this series, hit an attacking unbeaten 31. Pucovski contributed 62 in an impressive maiden Test innings.

Fellow debutant Navdeep Saini and Mohammed Siraj, in only his second Test, shared the wickets in a clash both sides are desperate to win with the four-match series level at 1-1. After captain Tim Paine won the toss and chose to bat in front of 8,692 socially-

distanced fans, just under the quarter of capacity allowed, the rain started falling 35 minutes into the opening session. It was enough time for Siraj to grab the key wicket of Warner on his return from injury, caught by Cheteshwar Pujara to put Australia on the back foot.

But a 100-run partnership between Pucovski and Labuschagne swung the momentum back in Australia's favour before the 22-year-old fell lbw to Saini. "It was a pretty incredible experience, it meant everything to me to be honest," said Pucovski on making his debut. "It was a very nice batting wicket and I'm hopeful with the amount of batting that's in now and what we've got to come that we can post a really good total. "And then with the world-class attack that we have, we can really put them under the pump and dominate the game." — AFP

Jamieson, modest but 'brutal' bowler who put NZ on top

CHRISTCHURCH: Less than a year into his Test career, Kyle Jamieson is already the toast of New Zealand and being compared to the country's cricketing greats, but despite stunning figures he considers himself still a work in progress. The towering fast bowler made his debut last February against India on a grey Wellington day when regular firebrand Neil Wagner was on paternity leave.

Eleven overs into the Test he was called up to bowl and 15 deliveries later had the first of his four wickets in the innings with Cheteshwar Pujara caught behind. Six Tests on, all on New Zealand's green, bowl-first wickets, Jamieson has taken 36 wickets at a stunning 13.27 average and has four five-wicket bags.

His 11-wicket, man-of-the-match performance in this week's innings defeat of Pakistan

helped put New Zealand on top of the world rankings for the first time. "Brilliant figures," purred the International Cricket Council on Twitter, while cricketing authority Wisden called Jamieson "a special find for New Zealand" with his "brutal" bowling. The most talked-about feature is the 26-year-old's height at 2.3 metres (6ft 8in) and the extraordinary bounce he generates when he bangs the ball into the wicket.

But he is no one-trick pony, with a repertoire that includes full and short deliveries as well as swing and seam movement which were all on display in his 11 for 117 against Pakistan in Christchurch. Only Richard Hadlee and Daniel Vettori have produced better figures for New Zealand. "It's kind of weird when you say it. — AFP

Sports

Juventus end AC Milan's 27-game unbeaten run

Inter miss out on top spot after Samp slip

MILAN: Federico Chiesa scored a brace as Juventus inflicted a first league defeat this season on Serie A leaders AC Milan, ending their 27-match unbeaten run with a 3-1 win on Wednesday. Stefano Pioli's side maintained their one-point advantage over city rivals Inter Milan who missed a chance to go top with a 2-1 loss at Sampdoria. AC Milan had been unbeaten since before the coronavirus lockdown last March, with a run of 12 matches without defeat to complete last season where they finished sixth, and 15 games this campaign.

But Chiesa, who joined from Fiorentina last October, bagged his first brace for the champions, scoring on 18 and 62 minutes in the San Siro with Weston McKennie getting a third with quarter of an hour to go. "This defeat hurts," said Pioli. "If there is an opponent against whom we have suffered it is Juventus, who have won the Scudetto for nine years in a row. "But understanding how bad you feel after a defeat will also help us grow." The hosts, chasing their first 'Scudetto' since 2011, had been hit hours before kick-off with the news that forward Ante Rebic and midfielder Rade Krunic had tested positive for COVID-19.

The absence of the pair was a blow for the side already without key players including their injured top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic for an eighth league game. Juventus pair Alex Sandro and Juan Cuadrado were also out with coronavirus as the champions moved up to fourth, seven points behind Milan, but having played a game less. "I saw the spirit of a team that wants

to lead and win," said Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo. "This match was crucial for us." Chiesa has come into his own for Pirlo's side who had been dependent on Cristiano Ronaldo's goals this campaign.

Paulo Dybala provided the assists for both Chiesa's goals. Chiesa rattled the woodwork minutes before picking up a clever Dybala back-heel flick to finish off after 18 minutes. Rafael Leao send through for Davide Calabria to grab the equalizer four minutes before the break to keep Milan's hopes alive. But Dybala again teed up Chiesa to rifle in the second before the pair were replaced by McKennie and Dejan Kulusevski. Kulusevski provided the pull back for McKennie to seal the victory after 76 minutes.

Inter miss out in Genoa

Inter's eight-match winning streak came to an halt earlier under the rain in Genoa. Alexis Sanchez missed an early penalty for Antonio Conte's side who were tripped up by goals from former Inter players Antonio Candreva and Keita Balde. "I'm sorry because I think we deserved something more. Lady luck was not on our side today," said Conte after their second league defeat this season after Milan last October.

Inter's leading scorer Romelu Lukaku started on the bench as the forward recovers from a muscular problem. Sanchez started in the Belgian's place but missed the chance to give the visitors an early advantage with Emil Audero saving a penalty. But Candreva made no mistake from the spot after 22 minutes, sending Samir



MILAN: Juventus' Polish goalkeeper Wojciech Szczęsny deflects a shot during the Italian Serie A football match AC Milan vs Juventus on January 6, 2021. — AFP

Handanovic the wrong way after Samp were awarded a penalty for a Nicolo Barella handball.

Keita Balde added a second after 38 minutes following good work from Mikkel Damsgaard, the Danish winger sending the Senegalese forward through to coolly finish. Lukaku came off the bench with just over an hour gone, two minutes before Stefan de Vrij's header from a Marcelo Brozovic corner reduced the deficit for the visitors. Third-placed Roma closed the gap on Inter to three points, with a 3-1 win at bottom side Crotona with Borja Mayoral scoring twice and Henrikh Mkhitaryan adding a third from the penalty spot.

Sassuolo beat Genoa 2-1 to move fifth ahead of Napoli who fell to a shock defeat by the same scoreline to 10-man Spezia, for their first loss in their newly-named Diego Armando Maradona Stadium. "I don't know how it's possible to lose a game like this, we had many shots on goal, I had a dozen myself," said Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne. "I'm seeing a schizophrenic Napoli," blasted coach Gennaro Gattuso. "It's not just bad luck, this season we're throwing away incredible matches. And that makes me furious." Seventh-placed Atalanta beat Parma 3-0 to stay ahead of Lazio who got back winning 2-1 against Fiorentina. — AFP

PSG held in 'disappointed' Pochettino's first match

PARIS: Mauricio Pochettino's first match as Paris Saint-Germain coach ended in a 1-1 draw at Saint-Etienne on Wednesday as his new team slipped three points behind Ligue 1 leaders Lyon. The defending league champions fell behind early on to Romain Hamouma's strike before Moise Kean levelled soon after, but laboured in the second half and failed to find a winner. "Of course I'm disappointed because we're PSG, we want to win," Pochettino told Telefoot. "I'm happy with the effort made by the players, by their attitude." The former Tottenham boss was only confirmed as Thomas Tuchel's successor on Saturday, four days after the German's sacking was officially announced.

But the scale of the task facing the former PSG defender was laid out in front of him at the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard as the capital-city giants' title defence suffered another blow.

"This is just the beginning," added the 48-year-old Pochettino. "We have to get to know each other. It was difficult because the preparation was too short. "It's positive but there are things to improve." Lyon survived a late Lens comeback to extend their lead with a 3-2 win, with Memphis Depay's double proving crucial.

PSG did move into second, above Lille on goal difference, after Christophe Galtier's team slipped to a surprise 2-1 home loss to Angers. Pochettino made just two changes to the final starting XI selected by Tuchel for the 4-0 win over Strasbourg before the winter break, with Moise Kean and Idrissa Gueye returning in place of Rafinha and Timothee Pembele. PSG started well going forwards but looked vulnerable at the back and were made to pay in the 19th minute as Gueye carelessly lost possession on the edge of his own area. — AFP

Boca and Santos play out tense stalemate

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's Boca Juniors and Santos of Brazil played out a tense 0-0 draw at an empty Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires on Wednesday in their Copa Libertadores semi-final first leg tie. Boca's Colombian forward Sebastian Villa came closest to breaking the deadlock in the first half but struck the woodwork.

The winners following next week's second leg in Brazil will face either Brazilians Palmeiras or Boca's arch city rivals River Plate in the January 30 final at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium. Palmeiras stunned 2018 winners River 3-0 in Buenos Aires on Tuesday. Chances were at a premium in the Bombonera that was devoid of spectators due to coronavirus restrictions. Villa crashed an early chance off the woodwork after he was teed up by veteran former Manchester United, Manchester City and Juventus star Carlos Tevez.

Six-time winners Boca threatened early in the second period when Eduardo Salvio's near post shot was pushed behind by Santos goal-

keeper John Victor. Just after the hour mark, Santos enjoyed a spell of pressure but Marinho's low shot was saved by goalkeeper Esteban Andrada before Kaio Jorge blazed over the bar.

With 15 minutes left Marinho appeared to be clearly fouled in the box by Carlos Izquierdoz but incredibly, despite the video assistant referee checking the incident, the referee waved away Santos' penalty appeals.

Tevez curled an effort wide after cutting in from the left while deep into injury time Leonardo Jara was teed up on the edge of the area but lashed his effort well over as Boca finished strongly. Boca last won the Libertadores in 2007 but lost to River in the epic 2019 final that had to be played in Madrid after the original second leg was postponed when Boca's team bus was attacked by River fans on the way to the stadium. Three time champions Santos, the team Brazil great Pele played for, last lifted the trophy in 2011. — AFP

Guardiola dedicates derby win to Man City legend Bell

City win battle of Manchester to reach League Cup final

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola dedicated Manchester City's 2-0 win over Manchester United to reach a fourth consecutive League Cup final on Wednesday to the family of Colin Bell, a day after the City great died aged 74. John Stones and Fernandinho were the unlikely goalscorers for Guardiola's men, who will face Jose Mourinho's Tottenham in the final at Wembley on April 25. Bell scored 152 goals in 492 appearances for City during a 13-year career in which he won five major trophies. City players warmed up in number eight shirts in honor of Bell's old number.

A minute's silence was held before kick-off with Bell's former teammate Mike Summerbee reduced to tears as he watched on from the stands. "That's for him and his family. This person helps to build something for this club," said Guardiola. "It is an incredible victory for us to beat United away and reach another final and, especially today, it is for him." City now have the chance to equal Liverpool's record between 1981 and 1984 of winning four successive League Cups. "I know the Carabao (League) Cup is not the Champions League but four times a row is incredible," added Guardiola. "I'm so impressed with the quality of this team."

'Not enough' from United

Mourinho was United boss the last time they lifted a trophy in 2017 and the Red Devils' wait for silverware under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer goes on as they lost a fourth semi-final in the

past two seasons. "It's not psychological, sometimes you meet good teams in the semis," said Solskjaer, whose side also lost to City at this stage of the competition last season. "We met the best team in England and for me we didn't have enough today. "But we're getting closer. This is a much better Manchester United compared to a year ago in those semis, that's positive but not enough."

Both sides have hauled themselves back into contention for the Premier League title in recent weeks, but neither manager took the opportunity to rest key players as both made just two changes from the weekend. Any fears of a repeat of the goalless draw between the sides last month in the league were quickly dispelled as both had goals ruled out inside the first five minutes. Stones breathed a sigh of relief when his own goal was chalked off for offside by Marcus Rashford in the build-up before Ilkay Gundogan was also denied by the offside flag.

Zack Steffen was deputising for first-choice goalkeeper Ederson, who was one of City's absentees due to a coronavirus outbreak, and the American produced an incredible save to deny Bruno Fernandes his 16th goal of the season with a curling effort that was destined for the top corner. City looked more like their old selves in a thrilling first-half performance to blow away Chelsea on Sunday and they were inches away from the opener thanks to a stunning move that started deep inside their own half and ended with Kevin De Bruyne smashing



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho (center) scores his team's second goal during the English League Cup semi final first leg football match between Manchester United and Manchester City on January 6, 2021. — AFP

against the post from the edge of the area.

The deadlock was finally broken five minutes into the second half when Stones cushioned in Foden's free-kick with his thigh for his first goal in three years. The England international's poor form saw him fall down the pecking order in recent seasons, but City have now kept nine clean sheets in the 11 games Stones has started this season as he has formed a formidable partnership with Ruben Dias.

City's issues this season have been at the other end and they again failed to make the most of their chances in the second half. Joao Cancelo's piledriver flew just over before Dean Henderson made fine saves to deny Raheem Sterling and Riyad Mahrez. However, Henderson could only watch as Fernandinho volleyed into the bottom corner after United failed to clear a corner for his first goal in two years, seven minutes from time. — AFP

Peterhansel retains lead as Al-Attiyah claims 4th stage

RIYADH: France's Stephane Peterhansel remained atop the overall standings despite Qatari Nasser al-Attiyah claiming his third stage win of the Dakar Rally on Wednesday. Al-Attiyah completed the 337km special fourth stage, as the caravanserai travelled a total of 813km from Wadi Ad-Dawasir to Riyadh, in 2hr 35min 59sec, just 11sec ahead of Peterhansel, a 13-time champion nicknamed "Mr Dakar".

It left the Toyota-driving Qatari 4:58 off Peterhansel in the overall standings. "It wasn't an easy stage. We lost a minute to an error, but we were hardly the only ones to make a mistake and we quickly got back on track," said Al-Attiyah, an Olympic skeet bronze medallist at the 2012 London Games. Peterhansel said the stage had been marked by "one relentless attack after another, and in the end we finished in the same time!" "Apart from a small navigation error near the finish, I don't think I can attack much more," said the Frenchman, whose previous Dakar victories came both in a car (seven) and on a motorbike (six). "To stay in contention, we need

to go all out. So far, so good, as we aren't making too many mistakes." Defending champion Carlos Sainz went some way in making up for a costly navigation error on Tuesday by surging through the field to eventually finish fifth, a result that took him into third in the general classification, 36:19 off his Mini teammate's leading time.

Spain's Joan Barreda Bort, on a Honda, won the motorbike category, his second stage win of this Dakar. The Spaniard timed 2hr 46min 50sec to finish the stage 5:57 ahead of Botswana's Ross Branch (Yamaha), with Australian Daniel Sanders (KTM) taking third, at 6:09. "It was another good stage. I started very far back because of my result yesterday, but that's the way it is in this Dakar, you're either at the front or far back. We need to keep it up," Barreda said. Barreda has been alternating victories with Toby Price since the first stage, but the Australian lost almost a quarter of an hour after opening the road for the stage and now sits 7:47 behind new overall leader Xavier de Soultrait. — AFP

Messi's double gives Barca renewed hope in La Liga title chase

MADRID: Ronald Koeman said Barcelona can still win La Liga after Lionel Messi scored twice on Wednesday in a 3-2 win over Athletic Bilbao. Messi's double helped Barca reduce the gap behind La Liga's leaders Atletico Madrid to seven points, even if Atletico will be hard to catch, given they also have two games in hand.

Koeman admitted last week it would be "very difficult" to close the gap but was more optimistic after the victory at San Mames. "There is always a chance," he said. "The season is very long and you can have ups and downs. It may be that one team that is doing very well will later find it difficult." Barca trailed to an early Inaki Williams strike but responded with a slick attacking performance that had Messi at the heart of it. It was his cross that led to Pedri's equalizer and then the Argentinean could have had a hat-trick, only for VAR and the woodwork to intervene.

But this was a vintage display from the 33-year-old, perhaps his best of the season so far, at a time when his future at Barcelona remains up in the air. Only a late mistake took some of the shine off Messi's night, a poor pass allowing Iker Muniain to finish and make the result look closer than it was. Bilbao had scored in the third minute and the 90th, each time exposing Barcelona's defensive frailties that remain unsolved. Yet in between, Koeman's team were able to dictate the match and demonstrate why going forward they are still a force to be reckoned with.

"The team is growing, playing with more confidence," said Koeman. "Sometimes we look close to our best." Pedri was excellent again, his sumptuous backheel for Messi's first goal another indication of the 18-year-old's talent and his understanding with his captain. — AFP



BILBAO: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi celebrates with Barcelona's French midfielder Antoine Griezmann (back) after scoring a goal during the Spanish League football match between Athletic Bilbao and Barcelona on January 6, 2021. — AFP

Messi's double gives Barca renewed hope

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