



3 Over 4,500 people rescued by Kuwait air ambulance service



5 Organic farmers find fertile ground in North Africa



8 Battle the algorithms: China delivery riders on the edge



16 New Zealand into T20 World Cup semis, India eliminated



Amir pardons several Kuwaitis convicted of various charges

Cabinet approves amnesty decrees • Speaker thanks Amir



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday approved draft Amir decrees which will pardon dozens of former MPs and political activists who had been convicted and sentenced to various jail terms, an official statement said. The statement was issued following an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet chaired by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

The move came after several sessions of national dialogue called by HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in which the government, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and three opposition MPs took part. HH the Amir then invoked article 75 of the constitution, which authorizes him to pardon prisoners or reduce their sentences, and decided to pardon a number of Kuwaiti citizens convicted and sentenced to jail terms.

HH the Amir had assigned the Assembly speaker, prime minister and head of the judicial council Ahmad Al-Ajeel to set out conditions for the planned amnesty. The three submitted their first report on the issue to HH the Amir late last week. "The Council of Ministers approved the necessary draft decrees which will be referred to the Amir," the Cabinet statement said yesterday.

Under Kuwaiti law, the Cabinet approves decrees and HH the Amir officially issues them. No details were published on the content of the decrees or the names of people who will be pardoned. But local media cited unnamed senior government sources as saying that around 70 people will be pardoned, topped by a dozen opposition former lawmakers and activists who have been living

in exile in Turkey since the summer of 2018 to escape verdicts of jail terms passed against them for storming the National Assembly building following an anti-corruption protest in 2011.

They include former prominent opposition MPs Musallam Al-Barrak, Faisal Al-Mislem, Jamaan Al-Harbash and others. The list is expected to include some convicts in Kuwait. More people will be pardoned later as the three-man high-level panel is still considering more cases, according to Ghanem, who thanked HH the Amir profusely.

The Cabinet also expressed its thanks and appreciation to HH the Amir for his gesture. It also thanked the Assembly speaker, head of the judiciary and members of the Assembly for their efforts. "The Council of Ministers is confident that this move will pave the way for fruitful cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities in accordance with the principles of the constitution," said the Cabinet statement.

Last Thursday, the speaker told reporters that the panel had submitted its first report and recommendations they had reached unanimously. "Things are now in the hands of the Amir," he said. He added there will be more reports as more cases of convicts will be discussed. "I was honored today, along with the heads of the judicial and executive authorities, with a meeting with His Highness the Amir to present the report, including the recommendations, to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf," Ghanem said. He indicated other reports concerning "crucial and complex" issues would be delivered to HH the Amir after "studying them", indicating that these matters could not be examined in a short period of time.

Iraqi PM urges restraint after home attacked

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi escaped unhurt from an "assassination attempt" in which an explosives-packed drone hit his Baghdad residence early yesterday, a new escalation in the country's post-election turmoil. US President Joe Biden condemned the "terrorist attack" and said he was "relieved" Kadhemi was not injured, while Iraqi President Barham Saleh called the attack, which was not immediately claimed by any group, an attempted "coup against the

constitutional system".

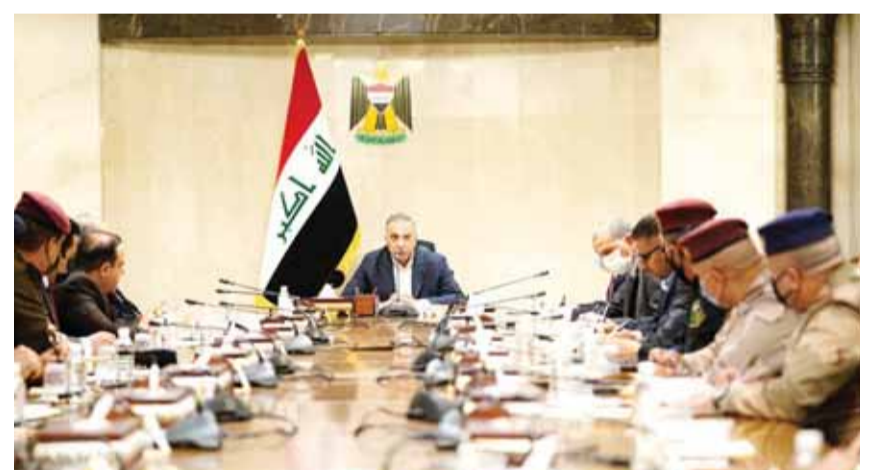
Kadhemi, aged 54 and in power since May 2020, appealed for "calm and restraint" before chairing a meeting at his office in the high-security Baghdad Green Zone, where the overnight attack took place. Three drones were launched from near a Tigris River bridge but two were intercepted, according to security sources, who said two bodyguards were wounded.

Gunfire rang out and smoke rose from the Green Zone after the strike, which the premier's office labelled a "failed assassination attempt". Photos issued by Kadhemi's office showed debris strewn on the ground below a damaged exterior stairway and a door that had been dislodged. Kadhemi said in a short video that "my residence has been the target of a cowardly assault. Praise God, I am fine."

The attack came two days after security forces clashed with supporters of Iran-backed parties that lost support in the October 10 parliament election and who have charged they were the victims of vote irregularities. The Conquest (Fatah) Alliance, the political arm of the pro-Iran Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network, suffered a substantial decline in seats, leading it to denounce the outcome as "fraud". After the drone attack, Qais Al-Khazali, the head of Assaib Ahl al-Haq, one of the main pro-Iran groups of the Hashed, called for the perpetrators to be "brought to justice".

The United States, which has around 2,500 troops in the country, said it was "relieved to learn the Prime Minister was unharmed".

Continued on Page 2



BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi heads a meeting yesterday, hours after his residence was targeted by a drone attack. — AFP

US reopening borders after 20 months

WASHINGTON: The United States reopens its land and air borders today to foreign visitors fully vaccinated against COVID-19, ending 20 months of restrictions on travel from around the globe that separated families, hobbled tourism and strained diplomatic ties. The ban, imposed by former president Donald Trump in early 2020 and upheld by his successor Joe Biden, has been widely criticized and become emblematic of the upheavals caused by the pandemic. The restrictions were particularly unpopular in Europe and US neighbors Canada and Mexico.

In an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, US borders were closed after March 2020 to travelers from large parts of the world, including the European Union, Britain and China, India and Brazil. Overland visitors from Mexico and Canada were also banned. The months of restrictions affecting hundreds of millions of people helped fuel both personal and economic suffering brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been so hard," Alison Henry, 63, told AFP. "I just want to see my son." The British woman plans to fly Monday to see her son in New York, after 20 months of separation. Families on both sides of the Atlantic are eager to finally reunite with their loved ones. Although travel from the United States to Europe has been possible since the summer, foreign US residents holding certain visas have had no guarantee of being able to reenter the country.

To cope with surging demand, airlines have increased the number of transatlantic flights. They also plan to use larger planes, as the easing of restrictions represents a major boost for a sector plunged into crisis by the pandemic. Along the border with Mexico, many cities in the big US states of Texas and California have seen significant economic struggles due to anti-COVID trade restrictions. Local economies are also impatiently waiting for a return to normalcy. Meanwhile, Canadian seniors will be able to resume their annual car trips to Florida in order to escape the bitter northern winters.

Lifting the travel ban will affect more than 30 countries. But entry to the United States will not be totally unregulated: US authorities plan to closely monitor travelers' vaccination status and will still

Continued on Page 2

Iran launches military drills near oil lanes

TEHRAN: The Iranian army began yesterday drills in the southwest of the country, near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, where it said a stand-off with the US recently took place. "The exercise of the army of the Islamic Republic of Iran on an area of more than one million square kilometers east of the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman and north of the Indian Ocean has begun," state television said.

It broadcast images of the military exercises which involved helicopters, tanks, drones, ships and speedboats. "This exercise is a serious warning to our enemies and those who have ill intentions towards Iran," the spokesman for the drills, Admiral Mahmoud Moussavi, was quoted as saying by Irib News Agency.

The elite Revolutionary Guard Corps announced on Wednesday it had thwarted an attempt by the US Navy to seize a vessel carrying its oil in the Sea of Oman the previous week. But US defense officials



Iranian soldiers participate in a military exercise on the shore of the Sea of Oman in the coastal region of Baluchistan. — AFP

offered a contrasting version of events, saying the Iranians had seized the tanker, while US forces "monitored" the incident without engaging.

The Strait of Hormuz is a chokepoint for global oil shipments, where US and Iranian naval vessels have faced off in the past. The latest tanker incident took place amid protracted efforts to revive a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that the US unilaterally pulled out of in 2018

under then-President Donald Trump. The deal would offer Iran vital relief from debilitating sanctions in return for severe limits in its nuclear activities.

In 2019, a series of attacks on tankers in the Gulf threatened to further drive US-Iran tensions. Nuclear talks are expected to resume on November 29 in Vienna, after they had been suspended since June after the election of Iran's hardline President Ebrahim Raisi. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir congratulates Saudi King on 7th anniversary of assuming office

Crown Prince receives senior state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Minister and Minister of State for Nazaha Enhancement Abdullah Al-Roumi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, congratulating him on the 7th anniversary of assuming office. His Highness the Amir praised the brotherly relations that the two countries share and commended all the accomplishments the Kingdom

has achieved, wishing the King good health and the kingdom further development and prosperity under his reign. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar congratulatory cables.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem at Bayan Palace. His Highness the Crown Prince also met His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali

Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also welcomed Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Minister and Minister of State for Nazaha Enhancement Abdullah Al-Roumi. — KUNA

Foreign Minister receives credentials of Canada's envoy

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Ministry the credentials of Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani. The Minister wished the new appointed ambassador all success in her mission, and further prosperity to the bilateral ties between both countries.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Ahmad received the Ambassador of Chad Al-Batool Zakaria, on the occasion of the end of her tenure in the country. The Foreign Minister hailed the diplomat's efforts and distinguished contributions to enhancing and boosting the bilateral ties between both nations, during a meeting held at the Foreign Ministry yesterday. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets the Ambassador of Chad Al-Batool Zakaria.

Iraqi PM urges restraint after...

Continued from Page 1

"This apparent act of terrorism, which we strongly condemn, was directed at the heart of the Iraqi state," State Department spokesman Ned Price said. Iran condemned the attack and urged "vigilance to foil plots aimed at the security and development" of Iraq.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Said Khatibzadeh directed blame at the United States, which led the 2003 invasion of Iraq that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein and kicked off years of sectarian conflict. "Such incidents are in the interest of those who have violated the stability, security, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq over the past 18 years," said Khatibzadeh. "They have sought to achieve their sinister regional goals by creating terrorist groups that seek to cause sedition."

President Saleh said Iraq must not "be dragged into chaos and a coup against the constitutional system". The attack was also condemned by the Arab League, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and United Arab Emirates as well as the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq. Moqtada

Sadr, an influential Shiite Muslim preacher whose political movement was the big election winner, condemned the drone attack as "against Iraq and the Iraqi people".

The strike came amid soaring tensions over the elections, the fifth such vote since the 2003 US-led invasion. Hundreds of Hashed supporters clashed with police on Friday while protesting near the Green Zone to vent their fury over the preliminary result. One protester died of injuries in hospital, according to a security source, while a Hashed source said two demonstrators were killed.

Several hundred supporters of pro-Iranian groups returned to the edge of the Green Zone on Saturday to protest, and some burned a portrait of the prime minister, whom they called a "criminal". Final election results are only expected in a few weeks. Kadhem brought forward the ballot, originally planned for next year, in a concession to anti-government protests over endemic corruption, unemployment, failing public services and the influence of Iran.

Activists accuse the Hashed's armed forces - whose 160,000 fighters are now integrated into Iraq's state security forces - of being beholden to Iran and acting as an instrument of oppression against critics. Other drone attacks in Iraq have occurred over the last few months, particularly against American interests. — AFP

US reopening borders after...

Continued from Page 1

require them to present negative COVID-19 tests. The United States, from today, will require air passengers to be fully vaccinated and be tested within three days before travel. Airlines will be required to put in place a contact tracing system.

The land border opening will happen in two phases. Starting today, vaccines will be required for "non-essential" trips - such as family visits or tourism - although unvaccinated travelers will still be allowed into the country for "essential" trips, as they have been for the last year and a half. A second phase beginning in early January will require all visitors to be fully vaccinated to enter the United States by land, no matter the reason for their trip.

US health authorities have said all vaccines approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization would be accepted for entry by air. At the moment, this includes the AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer/BioNTech, Covaxin, Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines. The United States has not yet commented on the increase in COVID-19 cases in Europe.

But speaking for the US, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said yesterday on ABC that "I'm cautiously optimistic about where we are," while adding: "We can't take our foot off the accelerator until we're at the finish line." The WHO, for its part, expressed "grave concern" over the rising pace of coronavirus infections in Europe, warning that according to "one reliable projection" the current trajectory would mean "another half a million COVID-19 deaths" by February. — AFP

Sudan forces fire tear gas at protesters

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security forces yesterday fired tear gas at multiple anti-coup rallies, with protesters in several cities joining a call for two-days of civil disobedience against last month's military takeover. Hundreds of anti-coup protesters rallied in the capital Khartoum, as well as in its twin city of Omdurman, Wad Madni to the south, and the northern city of Atbara.

"The authority belongs to the people," they chanted and "no, no to military rule" as they demanded a "civilian government". Nationwide anti-coup protests have occurred since the Oct 25 power grab by the army, but have been met by a deadly crackdown.

At least 14 demonstrators have been killed and about 300 wounded, according to the independent Central Committee of Sudan's Doctors. "Protesters barricaded the streets, set car tyres ablaze, called out against the military rule, and chanted that civilian government is the people's choice," said Hoda Othman, who witnessed protests in Omdurman.

Almost two weeks ago Sudan's top general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan dissolved the government, as well as the ruling joint military-civilian Sovereign Council that was supposed to lead the country toward full civilian rule. Burhan also declared a state of emergency and detained Sudan's civilian leadership. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was briefly detained, but later placed under effective house arrest.

Yesterday's rallies followed calls for two-days of civil disobedience made by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella of unions which were also instrumental in the protests which led to the ouster of longtime strongman Omar Al-Bashir in April 2019. "The Sudanese people have rejected the military coup," the SPA said, vowing "no negotiation, no partnership". — AFP

Local

Air ambulance service rescues over 4,500 people in Kuwait

Rescuing patients in areas out of ambulances' reach



KUWAIT: These handout photos provided by the Ministry of Health show helicopters of the Kuwaiti ambulance and medical evacuation fleet.

KUWAIT: Having been launched by the Kuwaiti Health Ministry in the first quarter of 2015, the air ambulance and medical evacuation service has rescued more than 4,500 people. Air medical services are mainly intended to use air transportation, airplane or helicopter and to take patients from accident scenes to healthcare facilities, offering them prehospital and emergency care. In this context, the Health Ministry's Medical Emergency Department Monther Al-Jalalma underlined that airborne medical services are now unquestionably essential for rescuing patients, specifically at outlying desert and frontier areas where ambulances can hardly reach.

Speaking on the facility, the official said the paramount significance of the project stems from the fact that it provides critical medical care and transports those wounded in accidents, and even handles natural disasters like fire, where fast-track help matters a lot. The substantial service is always done in collaboration between several state bodies concerned, primarily the health, interior and defense ministries and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), he said. He emphasized that his directorate is using all its potential in order to save the lives of citizens and residents, boasting that medical services are careful-

ly done nationwide. Swiftness matters so much in view of airborne rescue services, so it just takes a few minutes for a medically equipped plane to be on the spot, the medical official pointed out.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Al-Sabah Health District's Air Ambulance Center Naser Al-Sarhan said the facility is a landmark in medical services in



Landmark in Kuwait's medical services

the country, and is part of the Health Ministry's blueprint purposed to revamp the medical system and back clinics and hospitals. The center boasts some 65 highly qualified, efficient and professional medical workers, two air ambulance planes and a jet aircraft to transport patients in need of overseas



medical care, he elaborated.

The service provider's Air Ambulance Base Commander Captain Jassem Boqambar said that they had initially used two helicopters for air ambulance services, together with a jet aircraft for medical evacuation. Boasting that all pilots are retired Kuwaiti aviators of the Air Force, he said they have carried out 4,565 operations since the air ambulance and medical evacuation facility was put in place. The contracted company was established by retired officers of the health, interior and defense ministries, KFF and Kuwait National

Guard, he said, expounding that it has 20 pilots, 20 medics, eight maintenance technicians, four helicopters and two jet aircraft.

Under the contract signed between the Health Ministry and the company, once given a tip about an emergency, a helicopter or a jet aircraft must be on the spot within 15 minutes and 24 hours respectively, he pointed out. Immediate response is of paramount significance to rescuing those wounded in accidents, he said, noting that medically equipped planes are always on standby for medical emergency.—KUNA

Kuwait has the right to invest in residents' expertise: KCCI Chief

KUWAIT: Kuwait has invested in the expertise of residents and has the right to continue benefiting from their skills, Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Mohammad Al-Saqer said, adding that world studies have proved that the age period between 60 and 70 years are the most productive.

The senior official was commenting in a statement yesterday on the Public Authority for Manpower's recent decision to allow residents aged 60 and over who do not hold a university degree to renew their residence permits, provided they pay an annual fee of KD 500, in addition to paying for private health insurance. Saqer said Kuwait views the issue of reforming the labor and population structure as a three-dimensional national cause, as it is seen as a key component in efforts to reform the



Mohammad Al-Saqer

state's budget situation "and the basic condition to strengthen the national identity through which Kuwait can move to become a producing country."

Saqer added that reforming the labor and population structure cannot be done with "partial and unstudied decisions," rather

through an integrated long-term plan that relies on Kuwait's needs and its developmental model. He said another dimension revolves around the argument of creating job opportunities for Kuwaitis in place of residents over 60 who wouldn't have been able to renew their visas under the old ban. Saqer noted that those job opportunities would not have attracted national manpower anyway "at least not at the present time." "It would have been better if efforts were instead redirected towards eliminating visa trafficking," he said. And while the new decision helps reduce pressure on the state's health services system, Saqer says it remains an "isolated decision" that is away from a comprehensive plan to reform the population structure.

statement. "This recent chaos in Iraq, escalated by this shameful attempt on the prime minister's life, proves once again that the Iraqi state should resolutely handle the issue of (unlicensed) firearm and outlawed groups," he underlined.

However, the bloc's chief voiced confidence that Iraqi security organs are able to protect state institutions and stand against any bid to undermine this Arab country's security and stability. He restated that the Arab League would carry on standing by Iraq and its people in order to overcome this critical time peacefully and safely.

The Arab Parliament also strongly condemned the failed drone "terrorist" attack that targeted Kadhem's residence. The Parliament stated in a statement that they stand with Iraq and its people in any measures they take in order to keep their country's security, stability and territorial integrity. The Parliament also affirmed that "the security of Iraq is part of the Arab national security", and demanded an urgent investigation regarding the failed assassination attempt targeting the Prime Minister.

Moreover, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressed strongly worded condemnation of the assassination attempt on life of the Iraqi Prime Minister, affirming that it is closely following latest updates on the situation. The Organization's Secretary-General Yousef Al-Othaimeen said in a press statement that the assassination attempt is a "terrorist act targeting Iraq's unity, security and stability". Othaimeen stressed the necessity of protecting Iraq's security, stability and territorial integrity, urging all political parties to resort to peaceful dialogue in order to overcome obstacles. Earlier yesterday, the Iraqi Joint Operation Command announced that Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi survived an attempted assassination involving an explosive-laden drone attack.—KUNA

Many 60+ workers mull leaving Kuwait for good

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Many foreign workers aged 60 and above (without university degrees) are still contemplating whether to renew their residencies, wait for some more time or not renew at all. "I am still waiting for clarification about the private health insurance charges. The new rule is that KD 500 must be paid to the immigration department, and around KD 500 to KD 700 to private insurance companies. But many of us in this category are still waiting," a Jordanian employee told Kuwait Times.

"I have to pay it, whether it's KD 1,500 or KD 2,000, because I have to stay in Kuwait legally since my children are under my sponsorship," he said. "I hope the authorities will be sympathetic towards us. I've been in Kuwait since I was 18. I got married here, had kids and they are all under my sponsorship. I am 60 with a steady job here, so I have no option but to pay the new fees. It's difficult, especially during the pandemic, but again I have no choice," he added.

Last week, the Public Authority for Manpower allowed expats aged 60 and over who do not hold a university degree to renew their residence permits, provided they pay an annual fee of KD 500, in addition to paying for private health insurance. The decision means that the authority has scrapped a controversial decision it issued last year for elderly expats to leave Kuwait, some of whom have spent most of their lives here.

The government's legal body, the Fatwa and Legislation Department, ruled last month that the decision breaches the constitution and called for abolishing it. Close to 90,000 residents were reportedly affected by this decision.

A Filipina restaurant worker in her early 60s said she is no longer willing to renew her residence permit. "My employers won't pay - they said it's a big amount. So my decision is to stay as I have a job, even though I have no iqama for the past four months. But I am also packing my bags in case I am arrested," said Linda, who has worked in Kuwait for almost 33 years.

"I was very happy to hear last month that they were scrapping the KD 2,000 fee agreed before, but after I heard the new rules, I still don't think I have enough money to pay. I will set aside this amount instead and go home. KD 1,200 is a huge amount in the Philippines and I can start a small business with it," said Linda.

When private health insurance companies were contacted, they told Kuwait Times they have not received any directives about this new decision. "We are waiting for confirmation. At the moment, we only deal in regular health insurance," an insurance agent said.

Residents aged over 60 under article 22 (dependent) visas will continue paying the usual immigration fees plus the regular health insurance. Meanwhile, Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Salman exempted children and spouses of Kuwaiti women, holders of Palestinian passports and people born in Kuwait from the new decision.

The earlier decision was harshly criticized by many MPs and local human rights bodies as "inhumane", who repeatedly called on the government to cancel it. It was also seen by some as a means to reduce the number of foreign residents, who form close to 70 percent of Kuwait's population of 4.5 million.

Kuwait strongly condemns attempted assassination on Iraq PM

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday strongly condemned the assassination attempt on Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi. The ministry said in a statement that this criminal act does not only target the Prime Minister, but it also targets Iraq's unity and achievements made on all levels, voicing confidence that the Iraqi people are able to face any act that undermines their national unity. It emphasized that Kuwait stands with Iraq in solidarity and supports all the measures taken to preserve its security, stability and sovereignty.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary-General Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf condemned the "wrongful" assassination attempt targeting Iraqi Prime Minister. Hajraf affirmed in a press release absolute opposition to such aggressions threatening the stability and security of Iraq, which is part of the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The GCC chief also expressed solidarity with Iraq and its people to safeguard the country's security, stability and territorial integrity.

In the meantime, Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul-Gheit denounced, in the strongest words, the "disgraceful attempt" to target Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa. "This explosive-laden drone attack on the (Iraqi) prime minister's house targets the Iraqi state's prestige, security and stability," the Cairo-based Arab bloc said in a press

PAAAFR, volunteers plant Sidr trees in Kaifan walkway



KUWAIT: A team from Kuwait's Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) planted seedlings of Sidr trees in Kaifan area's walkway, as part of the authority's efforts to increase the green areas in the country. PAAAFR's Director-General, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Yousef, and a group of volunteers planted around 240 seedlings of the Sidr tree. Ziziphus tree or Sidr is an evergreen tree or plant native to northern and tropical Africa, Southern and Western Asia. It is native to the Levant, East Africa and some tropical countries.—KUNA

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

News in brief

Domestic helpers' numbers down 30K

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Manpower statistics revealed that the number of domestic helpers in Kuwait has dropped by nearly 30,000 within a month. The figures released yesterday show 606,364 registered domestic workers in October, compared to 636,525 in September. No reasons were given to explain the drop in numbers.

Rome, Milan flights resumed

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways announced on Sunday the resumption of commercial flights to Rome and Milan in December with two flights a week. The airways, on its Twitter, said that the Rome flight would begin on December 1 and will be scheduled on Wednesday and Friday weekly. The Milan flight, to begin on December 2, will be scheduled on Thursday and Saturday weekly, it concluded.

Ten medals in triathlon

ABU DHABI: Kuwait's athletes achieved 10 different medals in the World Triathlon Championship Abu Dhabi. In a statement to the press on Saturday, Kuwait's Triathlon Club Head, Rashid Al-Kandari, said that the Kuwaiti athletes won seven different medals in the GCC division and three in the general division.



Dr. George Villa



Abdulaziz Al-Babtain

Al-Babtain Foundation establishes peace chair at Maltese University

KUWAIT: The Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation, and the Center for the Study and Practice of Conflict Resolution at the University of Malta signed a memorandum of understanding to establish Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Peace Chair at the university to promote and teach a culture of peace. A press release issued by the foundation Sunday said that the signing came within the keenness of the President of Malta Dr George Villa, and the Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain, to develop cooperative relations with institutions, organizations, research centers and regional as well as international universities. The statement emphasized the foundation's endeavor to spread a culture of just peace worldwide and to establish the rules of peaceful coexistence among people, as it had previously established many scientific centers in universities in several countries, including England, Italy, Holland and Spain. The chair's activities include a scholarship for one student to enroll in a master's program in Mediterranean Conflict Resolution and Security at the university, it explained.

Successful candidates will receive a master's degree in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security from the University of Malta and a master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University, it added. The statement referred to other activities of the chair, including organizing an annual academic symposium entitled "Building a Culture of Just Peace," which brings together academic experts to discuss issues related to peacebuilding from various perspectives. The chair offers an academic exchange program to provide support for a lecturer from the University of Malta to visit Kuwait University and universities in the Arab world to carry out research and give lectures on issues related to peace for 4-5 days, as well as for a lecturer from Kuwait or the Arab world to visit the University of Malta. Meanwhile, Babtain said on this occasion that the establishment is a necessary step in order to instill and develop a culture of peace and activate "the foundations of our institution and completing its approach that seeks to popularize a culture of just peace. "It is worth noting that the foundation is holding the Second Edition of the World Forum for Culture of Peace in Malta under the auspices of Dr Villa, which will be held next March under the title "Leadership for Peace." — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive on a highway in Kuwait as a signboard shows a notice warning delivery motorbikes from using highways, after the ban went into effect yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Australian College of Kuwait hosts 2021 CDIO Asian Regional Meeting

Discussions focused on 'Post Pandemic Higher Education' theme

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Omar Ali Al-Kandari, Acting Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council in Kuwait, the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), successfully hosted the 2021 Conceive-Design-Implement- Operate (CDIO) Asian Regional Meeting virtually. Held for the first time in the Gulf Region, the international meeting took place over the course of three days, from October 26 to 28.

The CDIO Asian Regional Meeting focused on the theme "Post Pandemic Higher Education", bringing together leading CDIO experts from the globe to conduct various presentations and workshops about the most up-to-date CDIO engineering education approach, the best practices, and recommendations post-pandemic to favor the higher education sector in Kuwait specifically and in the region.

The meeting attracted a local and international audience from various teaching backgrounds, primarily engineering instructors, industry leaders, and CDIO specialists. The CDIO meeting served as a platform to share knowledge and experience about the CDIO engineering education approach, best-practice teaching methods adopted during and post-pandemic, and much more.

Following the opening ceremony, Omar Al-Kandari, Acting Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council, delivered his speech by welcoming the attendees and congratulating ACK for successfully launching the meeting after several months of preparations. He said: "The Ministry of Higher Education is very proud to hold such meetings in Kuwait, especially since the topic is Post-Pandemic Higher Education. This meeting reflects the education path adopted by Kuwait that stresses the importance of education and its strong impact in making a change".

Adding: "Without a doubt, this meeting is a strong platform for exchanging knowledge and expertise, and will enhance the best practices in education in addition to strengthening strategic partnerships that will produce the next generation of engineers who will be able to make an impact after they graduate."

Subsequently, Prof Isam Zabalawi - President of ACK, welcomed the meeting's guests and expressed his delight in being amongst representatives of such distinguished educational institutions. Prof Zabalawi stressed on ACK's continuous support for the CDIO initiative by adopting the project-based learning (PBL) method to develop CDIO skills and has further renewed the agreement with the Aalborg University of Denmark to further this purpose.

Further noting on ACK's efforts for the initiative, Prof Zabalawi said: "We are proud as ACK to be an active member of the CDIO community; we are in an excellent state to spread the vision and the mission of CDIO in the region. So far, we have made exhibitions explaining different aspects of CDIO for the engineering communities in Oman, Qatar, Jordan, and Lebanon."

Jonathan Gilbert - the Australian Ambassador to Kuwait, also gave an introductory speech. He congratulated ACK for hosting the event, noting that it



KUWAIT: A screenshot from the meeting.

is a testament to the College's impressive growth continued evolution, and ongoing success. highlighted the importance of engineers taking an active role in preparing for the pressing issues facing the world and educating engineers to tackle these issues.

Guest Speaker, Alastair Dawson - Vice-President of Global Development at Central Queensland University Australia, ACK's international partner, delivered his speech in which he noted the need for engineers and educators to adapt and learn new techniques to stay ahead of the curve with the advent of mass technological shifts and the more

all their students, and recognition and support to their academic team."

Dr Mohammed Abdul Niby - Dean of the School of Engineering at ACK, spoke next, elaborating that engineering education needs to continuously evolve to prepare engineers for the growing demands of industry and that shifting away from traditional problem-solving and design skills will allow future engineers to innovate new solutions for an array of social, cultural, environmental and ethical issues.

From her end, Helene Leong - Director of the Department of Educational Development at Singapore Polytechnic and Co-Chair of CDIO Asian Region, thanked all participants and organizers while briefly introducing the CDIO initiative, explaining it as an educational framework adopted by 200 universities around the world for their curricular planning and outcome-based education. Affirming CDIO's goals, Leong said: "CDIO's vision is to be the leading world-wide collaborative network for innovative engineering education, to produce responsible engineers who make a difference in the world through innovation and creative, workable solutions."

Concluding the successful 2021 CDIO Asian Regional meeting, Prof Isam Zabalawi thanked all the participants for their efforts and time in attending; he said: "There is an unquestionable need for us to reflect the outcomes of these presentations and discussions in our teaching and learning environment. By integrating them into the CDIO standards and syllabus to update the initiative and strengthen our institutions' role in serving engineering education and the profession worldwide, ACK will continue to raise awareness for the initiative in the region and hope that other universities will join". Continuing, Prof Isam cited many of the lessons learned through the various keynote speeches and workshops during the meeting, highlighting how their implementation can help further education by producing graduates with the right skills and appropriate attitudes.



For first time in Gulf region

recent difficulties introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following Dawson's speech, Louis Field - Client Manager at Engineers Australia, spoke to point out the important roles that engineers fulfill as the problem solvers of society. Field also stressed on the importance of collaboration between academia and industry to ensure that the civilizations continue to thrive through adversities.

Regarding Engineers Australia's partnership with ACK, Field noted ACK is leading the way in the Middle East with its efforts to advance and improve the engineering profession and cited that the 2021 CDIO Asian Regional Meeting as one example of that. He added: "We are particularly proud of our partnership with the ACK, transcending borders to offer a greater level of professional development to



Expo 2020's evening shows, a charming experience

DUBAI: Dubai Expo 2020 visitors get to experience evening activities full of charming and exquisite sights daily, some of which are airshows featuring planes without pilots that light up the sky with artistic formations. Visitors also get to enjoy colorful parades, filling the expo with joy and adding to the glamorous ambiance. — KUNA





France's bishops kneel in penance of Church abuse

High-profile breakthrough cases trigger vaccine misinformation

Page 6

Page 7

Organic farmers find fertile ground

Demand surges in North Africa and beyond

TUNIS: Proudly displaying her freshly picked pomegranates, Tunisian farmer Sarah Shili says going organic is "the future of farming"—and as demand surges in North Africa and beyond, the sector is blooming. Shili runs Domaine Elixir Bio, a 94-hectare farm near Tunis that produces organic-certified vegetable, fruit and cereal crops in a way she said "respects nature".

The farm's revenues have surged thanks to strong demand and the growth of online sales, multiplying five times in as many years to hit 100,000 euros in 2020. That is despite the higher price of organic products in a middle-income country where many people's wallets have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and years of economic crisis. Indeed, with export demand also on the rise, Shili says the main challenges are on the supply side. "We lack water, like all farmers, and to get organic seeds and plants we have to do everything ourselves," she told AFP.

Despite the challenges, the sector has surged in Tunisia since the turn of the millennium. In 2001, just 16,000 hectares were dedicated to organic farming—a figure that has multiplied 20-fold over two decades. The number of producers and venders has grown at a similar pace to some 8,000, said Samia Maamer, in charge of organic products at the agriculture ministry. Maamer said the sector has helped diversify the country's economy and now makes up 13 percent of food exports.

'Tunisia's favorable climate'

Out of 250 categories of organic products grown in Tunisia, around 60 are exported—mainly olive oil but also

dates, aromatic and medicinal plants as well as some vegetables and fruit. Despite its small size, Tunisia ranks 30th in the world and first in Africa in terms of area certified for organic farming. Maamer said that apart from its chronic water shortages, "the climate in Tunisia is very favorable" to the trade. She added that only five percent of the country's two million hectares of olive groves had been treated with pesticides, meaning the remainder could potentially win organic certification. "It's a sector with ongoing and growing international demand," said Maamer.

And due to the coronavirus pandemic, people began increasingly looking for organic products "because... they don't contain (artificial) chemicals", she added. While there is strong demand in the US and Europe for bio products, they are also gaining attention among 25-30 year-old Tunisians "who are well-informed" about their benefits, she added. As the market grows, Tunisia hopes that by 2030 the sector will contribute to help develop tourism, renewables and handicrafts, she said.

Morocco, Algeria trail behind

Bio farming is also on the rise in Morocco, where the area of farmland certified for organic production has more than doubled since 2011 to reach over 10,300 hectares. However, "that's far behind the potential of a farming country like Morocco," said Reda Tahiri, who heads a union for organic farmers. The majority of the country's olive, citrus and almond groves are in the southern area around Marrakech and near the



OUDHNA, Tunisia: Farmers harvest olives at an organic grove in Oudhna, near Tunisia's capital Tunis. — AFP

capital Rabat in the north-west. But given the country's 300,000 hectares of aromatic and medicinal plants and the iconic argan tree, there is potential for going organic. Moroccan authorities are trying to develop the sector with the Green Morocco Plan, which helps farmers cover the costs of getting certified.

For exports to the European Union to be labeled as organic, they must be inspected once a year by an EU-licensed certification agency. Tahiri said certification for export to European or North

American markets can cost up to 1,000 euros (\$1,115) per hectare annually. "So the total cost of production is higher than in conventional agriculture, but without the producer getting any guarantees of higher prices for the products," he said. As well as state help on these costs, Tahiri says that for the organics market to develop, "we need to raise awareness among consumers and ensure better profit margins for producers".

Morocco's agriculture ministry said it has prioritized organic agriculture and is

hoping to reach 100,000 hectares of certified farmland by 2030, with 900,000 tons of produce per year—two-thirds of it for export. By comparison, Algeria is trailing. The semi-official economics and development think tank CREAD said that in 2013 just 1,200 hectares were being farmed organically. Although there are no recent statistics, in the past few years some shops have been offering customers organic vegetable boxes delivered straight from small producers. — AFP



How's it going, Neighbour?

Want to pass by after work?



By your side

Your new IKEA in the city
Now open
The Assima Mall, Kuwait City

International

High-profile breakthrough cases trigger vaccine misinformation

A fully vaccinated public figure catches COVID-19

News in brief

'Death threats to MP'

LONDON: Irish police said Saturday they had arrested a man on suspicion of making threats, with national media reporting he was suspected of threatening to kill a British MP. The arrest came after Conservative MP David Amess was stabbed to death last month, prompting concerns over the level of threat faced by politicians and calls for better security. The Garda, Ireland's police service, said in a statement that they arrested a 41-year-old man in Cork in southwestern Ireland on Saturday morning "on suspicion of making threats against a person from outside this jurisdiction". Irish police said officers seized a number of electronic devices while searching the residential property. RTE national broadcaster reported that "it is understood that the person targeted by the alleged threat is a Westminster MP". — AFP

Russia hit by record cases

MOSCOW: Russia has reported a record number of daily coronavirus cases as the country reaches the end of a nationwide paid holiday introduced to curb the spread of infections. Saturday's official tally registered 41,335 new cases in the past 24 hours, the highest number for new infections since the beginning of the pandemic. The country also reported 1,188 coronavirus deaths during the same period. President Vladimir Putin last month ordered a paid holiday from October 30 to November 7 in a bid to stem soaring infections and deaths exacerbated by a slow vaccination drive. A host of regions also introduced additional virus measures with the capital Moscow - the epicenter of Russia's outbreak - closing all non-essential services over the non-working period. — AFP

Mexico highway accident

MEXICO CITY: At least 19 people were killed and three injured Saturday in an accident on the highway that connects Mexico City with the central city of Puebla, authorities said. The crash occurred at midday when a cargo truck crashed into several vehicles at a toll booth on the highway. Some of the vehicles caught fire after the impact. "When crossing the toll booth, the truck dragged six vehicles, causing the death of 19 people and 3 injured. Among the deceased is the driver," the federal highway authority, CAPUFE, said in a statement. Those injured had been transferred to hospital, the statement said. CAPUFE also said it was working to remove the vehicles involved in the accident. That section of the highway had been closed to traffic. — AFP

21 scientists snub medals

BRASILIA: Twenty-one scientists awarded one of Brazil's highest honors, the National Order of Scientific Merit, rejected their medals Saturday after President Jair Bolsonaro withdrew two colleagues whose work apparently discomfited his government from the list of honorees. The far-right president named 25 people Wednesday to receive the honor, which Brazil created in 1992 to recognize the most important contributions to science and technology. However, two days later, he withdrew the names of two prominent scientists from the list. One was Dr Marcus Lacerda, who published one of the first studies finding the drug chloroquine is ineffective against COVID-19 - rebutting Bolsonaro's pet strategy for fighting the pandemic. — AFP

Lagos death toll hits 42

LAGOS: The death toll in a high-rise collapse in Nigeria's Lagos has risen to 42 while the number of survivors increased to 15, state authorities have announced. The cause of Monday's disaster is still unknown but building collapses are common in Africa's most populous country, where millions live in dilapidated properties and construction standards are routinely ignored. "We have a total of 42 bodies that have been recovered," Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said late on Saturday. The 21-storey building under construction in the upscale Ikoyi district crumbled on Monday afternoon, trapping dozens of people working on the site. As of Friday, the authorities had said that nine people had survived - some were rescued alive, others on the ground floor managed to escape unharmed. Over the weekend, the number of survivors increased to 15 after six additional people who escaped the collapse were identified. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The problem is persistent: a fully vaccinated public figure catches COVID-19, and social media sites are soon flooded with claims that this proves the shots do not work. From White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, US Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and American comedian Chris Rock testing positive to former secretary of state Colin Powell dying of COVID-19 complications, prominent cases have triggered a deluge of inaccurate information online.

So-called breakthrough cases are expected and do not mean the vaccines are ineffective, US health authorities say. But claims that the shots are failing can erode trust and slow uptake efforts, which remain crucial as younger children become eligible for the shots. "Any time there is a breakthrough case, people who feel very concerned about the efficacy of vaccines see it as yet another reason to reinforce the doubt that's already in their mind," said Andy Carvin, managing editor at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, describing the problem as a "weaponization of doubt."

Psaki announced on Sunday that she had COVID-19, crediting the vaccine for the mildness of her illness. But she was described as "living proof that the vaccine is ineffective" by a Twitter user with more than 12,000 followers - one of a number of people who made such claims on social media. Similar allegations followed the Powell fam-

ily's October announcement that the retired four-star general died from complications caused by COVID-19, even though he had a type of cancer that experts say undermines the efficacy of the shots. Positive tests for Kavanaugh and Rock this year also gave rise to accusations that the shots are not effective.

Not 'a magic forcefield'

Addressing the issue of misinformation stemming from breakthrough cases is increasingly important, because as more people get vaccinated, more cases - including severe ones - will occur in the vaccinated population, said Devon Greyson, public health researcher at The University of British Columbia. "Vaccination is an amazing technology, but it isn't a magic forcefield," Greyson said.

Yotam Ophir, health and science misinformation expert at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, said that health communicators need to better set public expectations about the realities of the vaccines, both in terms of their benefits and their limits. The other issue is that "humans have a tendency to pay a lot of attention to vivid cases. We don't really know how to think in numbers and statistics, we usually think in stories and good narratives," he said. What is not covered by the news is "all the people who got vaccinated and stayed healthy," Ophir said.

Nina Jankowicz, a disinformation specialist at the



Social media sites flooded with claims

Glitches hit Nigeria southeast election

ANAMBRA: Technical problems hit a governorship election in Nigeria's southeastern state of Anambra on Saturday during a vote seen as a test of the electoral system less than 18 months before presidential polls. More than 30,000 police were dispatched to secure Anambra after a string of attacks in the southeast blamed on separatists from the Indigenous People of Biafra or IPOB who agitate for an independent state for the ethnic Igbo people.

The vote went ahead peacefully, but some polling stations in the capital Awka and outside in rural areas reported problems with the face and fingerprint recognition technology meant to better secure the ballot. The Independent National Electoral Commission or INEC said in a statement it had extended voting initially by a few hours and until yesterday or

beyond in some cases to make sure eligible voters could cast their ballot.

"The Commission is currently investigating the reason the accreditation devices... have worked perfectly in some polling stations and not in others," a statement said on INEC's Facebook page. "In some of the cases, it would seem that this resulted from software glitches." INEC said in cases where the problem was sustained, then voting would continue or at another time determined by the commission.

At three polling stations visited by AFP south of Awka on Saturday morning, voters were either unable to cast their vote because of a failure of the accreditation technology or voting was slowed significantly, according to domestic observers. Early election results were not due until today. Elections in Africa's most populous state are often marred by fraud claims and violence, and analysts saw Anambra's ballot and voter turnout as one barometer of confidence in INEC's readiness for the ballot to replace President Muhammadu Buhari in 2023.

The election developed into a tight race between Charles Chukwuma Soludo, with local powerhouse party All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA),

Italy mobsters get decades in jail in major mafia trial

ROME: Italy struck an early blow Saturday against the country's powerful 'Ndrangheta organized crime group, convicting 70 mobsters and others in a first, crucial test of the largest mafia trial in more than three decades. Judge Claudio Paris read out verdicts and sentences against 91 defendants in the massive courtroom in the Calabrian city of Lamezia Terme. While 355 people have yet to be judged in proceedings that are expected to last two years or longer, those judged Saturday had opted for a speedy trial. That procedure, which took place behind closed doors, allowed them to have a third of their sentence shaved off if they were convicted.

Since January, a specially adapted courtroom has hosted the "maxi trial" of hundreds of suspects affiliated with the 'Ndrangheta, the country's richest and most powerful mafia group. Famed anti-mafia prosecutor Nicola Gratteri -

whose efforts to defeat the 'Ndrangheta have caused him to live under police escort for more than 30 years - said the sentencing had gone "very well". "Out of 91 defendants, there were 70 presumed innocent who were convicted," Gratteri told Italian news agency AdnKronos, adding that those acquitted had been minor players.

Some of the group's most dangerous members received the maximum 20-year sentence requested by prosecutors. They included Domenico Macri of the group's military wing; Pasquale Gallone, the right-hand man of alleged mob boss Luigi Mancuso, whose trial is still pending; and Gregorio Niglia, whose role included procuring weapons and extortion. About a third of the group received sentences of a decade or more, while 21 individuals were acquitted, seven at the request of prosecutors, Gratteri said.

The 'Ndrangheta, which is

Changing guard at Buckingham Palace: Camilla steps up

LONDON: A gradual changing of the guard is happening at the head of Britain's royal family, as Queen Elizabeth II steps back from public engagements due to her advanced age and health. The 95-year-old monarch's eldest son and heir, Charles, Prince of Wales, has been shouldering more of the burden of official duties for several years, including overseas. But his wife, Camilla, is increasingly stepping into the fray, both online during coronavirus pandemic restrictions in the past year and now in

person, after curbs were lifted.

Joining the couple at the royal vanguard are Charles' eldest son from his first marriage to Princess Diana, William, and his wife, Kate. As a result, they have earned a greater share of the media coverage that would previously have gone to the monarch, who has been advised to rest by doctors. Their presence at events - from the world premiere of the latest James Bond film to meeting world leaders at the G7 and UN climate summits - is a clear sign of change to come. Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine, told AFP their visibility "will accelerate within the fullness of time". "But a lot of people are now familiar with Camilla and are getting to know her," he added.

Camilla, 74, also known as the Duchess of Cornwall, will become consort when Charles, 72, takes the throne. William, 39, will move up the line



WASHINGTON: White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki arrives for the daily press briefing in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House in Washington, DC. White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said that she has tested positive for COVID-19. — AFP

Wilson Center, said false claims following Powell's death were "especially disappointing," because a lack of nuance in the media allowed misinformation to bloom. "A lot of the coverage that I saw, even from some of the most trusted news outlets in our country... didn't include information about Secretary Powell's cancer status," she said. Carvin said the necessity of context in news coverage is at odds with the breakneck speed and need for brevity in the current media environment. — AFP



ISUOFIA, Nigeria: An electoral official accredits a woman to vote at a polling station during the Anambra State governorship election at Uga, Aguata district in southeast Nigeria. — AFP

and the candidates from Buhari's ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party and the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Security fears were heightened when IPOB had called for a sit-in protest over the election period to demand the release of its arrested

leader. But IPOB on Thursday cancelled its protest and urged people to go out and vote. "People came out and voted and it was peaceful," said agricultural consultant Venentius Oneyekuba who voted in an Awka district. "There were some network problems but later it stabilized." — AFP



LAMEZIA: A Carabinieri police officer wearing a face mask stands guard as a general view shows a special courtroom on the opening day of the 'Rinascita-Scott' maxi-trial in which more than 350 alleged members of Calabria's 'Ndrangheta mafia group and their associates go on trial in Lamezia Terme, Calabria. — AFP

entrenched in Italy's poorest region of Calabria in the toe of the peninsula's boot, has surpassed Sicily's Cosa Nostra in power and wealth. The group controls the bulk of cocaine flowing into Europe. The biggest fish in the prosecution's case have opted for the

more lengthy trial, namely Mancuso "The Uncle", 67, considered the leader of the 'Ndrangheta families who dominated the Vibo Valentia province of Calabria, and ex-senator and lawyer Giancarlo Pittelli, 68, accused of being Mancuso's white-collar fixer. — AFP

of succession to heir apparent. Only a few years ago, a different "Fab Four" were seen as the future of Britain's most famous family: William and Kate along with his younger brother Harry and his wife Meghan. But plans changed dramatically last year when Harry and Meghan moved to the United States, from where they have criticized the family and even accused it of racism.

The rise of Camilla - once a hate-figure for being "the other woman" in Charles and Diana's marriage - has been remarkable. "Her position has certainly evolved and there's been a huge and very long process of rehabilitation since... she was described as this rottweiler at the time of Diana," royal historian Anna Whitelock told the Daily Express. Camilla, like other royals, was forced into a more public role by the coronavirus pandemic, when the world moved online. — AFP

International

Residents, activists cry foul over stinking garbage in Tunisia's Sfax

Mountains of uncollected garbage litter the streets

SFAX: Residents and activists in Tunisia's industrial hub of Sfax are warning of an "environmental catastrophe" as mountains of uncollected garbage litter the streets of the Mediterranean port city. "The situation is catastrophic," Mohamed Boujalabane, a resident of Sfax, Tunisia's second city with a population of over one million said. "We can't have a normal life any more, there's garbage everywhere and we're afraid for the health of our children and families," he said, a mask covering his face. For the past 40 days, the trash has piled up in the streets, attracting clouds of flies, even around hospitals and schools.



SFAX, Tunisia: Photo shows a view of sacks and boxes of garbage piling up along the side of a street in the centre of the coastal city of Sfax, about 270 kilometers southeast of Tunisia's capital. — AFP



'Environmental catastrophe'

And the stench is unbearable. "We've complained to the municipality but so far they've done nothing!" Rabeh Abid, a butcher, said angrily. Hamdi Chebaane, a waste management expert and environmental activist with Tunisie Verte, said the garbage woes started after authorities closed the province's main landfill at Aguerieb in late September. Since then, he said, "the municipality has refused to collect the rubbish unless the government" finds a solution. As a result, the region faces "an environmental catastrophe", warned Chebaane.

'Toxic waste'

Local media reports said the landfill was closed

following protests by residents who charged that "toxic waste" was also being dumped at the site, where only household rubbish is allowed. Environment Minister Leila Chikhaoui travelled to Sfax in October to discuss the crisis with city officials. She proposed the toxic waste be moved to a temporary landfill away from urban and residential areas in Sfax. But local residents rejected any such temporary solution. Tunisia, which is home to 12 million people, has repeatedly struggled with waste management problems.

Around 2.5 million tons of waste is collected annually, international experts say, and the majority is dumped in landfills without being treated, recycled or incinerated. According to a recent World Bank report,

just 61 percent of waste in the capital Tunis is collected and most ends up in open-air landfills. Authorities have tried since Tunisia's 2011 revolution to try to crack down on illegal waste dumps but they have limited means to enforce rules.

Divisions among cabinet ministries have also sparked rows between the government and local officials, especially over who should collect toxic waste from places such as hospitals. In 2020, the North African nation was hit by a scandal involving hundreds of containers of waste shipped from Italy. They were declared to be carrying plastic for industrial recycling — but were instead filled with mixed, putrid household waste, which is barred from import under Tunisian law. — AFP



OUIJDA, Morocco: Moroccans gather along the border with Algeria in the region of Oujda. Algeria has accused its arch-rival Morocco of killing three Algerians on a desert highway, as tensions escalate between the neighbors over the contested Western Sahara. — AFP

Morocco king says Western Sahara 'not negotiable'

RABAT: Morocco's King Mohamed VI said Saturday that Western Sahara is "not negotiable", as tensions flared with Algeria over the disputed territory. "Today as in the past, Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara will never be up for negotiation," the king said in a televised speech. Morocco sees the former Spanish colony as its own sovereign territory while Algeria backs Western Sahara's Polisario Front independence movement in the conflict. "If we engage in negotiations, it is essentially in order to reach a peaceful solution to this artificial regional conflict," the king said.

On Wednesday, Algeria accused Morocco of killing three Algerian civilians on a desert highway through a Polisario-held area of the territory in a strike on their trucks. Morocco has not officially commented on the accusation, but an informed source from the kingdom said "it has never targeted and will never target Algerian citizens, regardless of the circumstances and the provocations". "If Algeria wants war, Morocco doesn't," said the source, who requested anonymity.

The Western Sahara, 80 percent of which is con-

trolled by Morocco, boasts extensive phosphate reserves and rich Atlantic fishing grounds. Algeria has long hosted and supported the Polisario Front, which seeks full independence for the territory and has demanded a UN-supervised self-determination referendum as provided for in a 1991 ceasefire deal. In November, the Polisario declared the truce "null and void" after Moroccan forces broke up a blockade of a highway into Mauritania, that the independence movement said was built in violation of the ceasefire.

'Hostile actions'

The Polisario has since launched multiple attacks on Moroccan forces, killing six Moroccan soldiers, according to an informed Moroccan source. Tensions between Morocco and Algeria further escalated in August, when the latter broke off diplomatic ties with Rabat citing "hostile actions" — charges denied by Morocco.

In December last year, Morocco normalized diplomatic ties with Israel as part of the so-called US-backed Abraham Accords while the administration of president Donald Trump recognized the kingdom's sovereignty over Western Sahara. Last Sunday, Algeria ordered state energy firm Sonatrach to stop using a pipeline that traverses Morocco for gas exportations to Spain. To stake Morocco's claim, the current king's father, Hassan II, sent 350,000 civilian volunteers on the iconic Green March into the territory in 1975. Saturday's speech by the king marked its 46th anniversary. — AFP

Why is Western Sahara conflict heating up?

TUNIS: The long-frozen Western Sahara conflict pitting Morocco against the Polisario Front independence movement has flared in recent months, worsening already tense relations between the kingdom and its Polisario-backing neighbor, Algeria. The killing of three Algerians on a highway through the territory, in what Algiers says was a Moroccan strike, has raised fears of escalation. So what is at stake, and what are the risks?

How do things stand?

A former Spanish colony with extensive phosphate reserves and rich Atlantic fishing grounds, the Western Sahara is seen by Morocco as its own sovereign territory. To stake Morocco's claim, the current king's father, Hassan II, sent 350,000 civilian volunteers on the iconic Green March into the territory in 1975 - 46 years ago this Saturday. Shortly afterwards, Spain withdrew, leaving Morocco and fellow claimant Mauritania to fight it out with the Polisario Front, which proclaimed a Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, with support from Algeria, a state with strong anti-colonial roots.

A 15-year war ensued during which Mauritania sued for peace but Morocco gradually overran 80 percent of the territory before a UN-monitored ceasefire took effect in 1991. The ceasefire deal envisaged a UN-supervised self-determination referendum for the territory with all options on the table but Morocco has since rejected any vote that includes independence as an option, offering only limited autonomy instead.

In December last year, Morocco normalized diplomatic relations with Israel and as a quid pro quo, the US administration of Donald Trump recognized the kingdom's sovereignty over Western Sahara. That came just weeks after the Polisario declared the 1991 ceasefire null and void, after Moroccan forces entered no man's land to break a blockade by Sahrawi activists of a highway linking Moroccan-controlled territory with Mauritania. The Polisario says that both the highway and the military incursion violated the decades-old truce. "We are facing a pattern of escalation," said Dalia Ghanem, a resident scholar and Algeria specialist at the Carnegie Middle East Center. — AFP



LOURDES: Catholic Church bishops kneel as a sign of penance during a ceremony at the sanctuary of Lourdes towards victims of pedocriminality in Lourdes, south-western France. — AFP

France's bishops kneel in penance of Church abuse

LOURDES, France: Senior members of France's Catholic hierarchy knelt in a show of penance at the shrine of Lourdes Saturday, a day after bishops accepted the church's responsibility for decades of child abuse. But some of the victims of the abuse - and lay members supporting them - said they were still waiting for details of compensation and of a comprehensive reform of the church. In Lourdes, a place of pilgrimage for Christians worldwide, some 120 archbishops, bishops and laymen gathered at the unveiling of a photo showing a sculpture representing the head of a weeping child.

At the request of the victims, the clerics did not wear their religious clothing for the ceremony. The wall featuring the photograph will serve as a "place of memory" for the victims. The photo itself was taken by one of the victims of abuse, and the suffering he had endured was detailed in a passage read out by another survivor. At Saturday's ceremony, Hugues de Woillemont, spokesman for the Bishops' Conference of France, said: "We want to mark this place of Lourdes for a first visual testimony that commemorates so much violence, drama and attacks."

Just a day earlier, following a vote at their annual conference, France's bishops finally formally accepted that the Catholic church bore an "institutional responsibility" in the many thousands of child abuse cases. The abuse, stretching back to the 1950s and affecting at least 216,000 minors, was detailed in an independent report released a month ago, which spoke of the "veil of silence" cast over the scandal. The conference also acknowledged that the church had allowed the abuses to become "systemic", said Eric de Moulins-Beaufort,

president of the France's Conference of Bishops of France (CEF). One victim of abuse, Veronique Garnier, said she had been moved by the ceremony. Garnier, who has worked closely with the CEF, said it was important that justice be done for the victims. But Father Jean-Marie Delbos, who as a child was a victim of abuse, angrily dismissed the ceremony. "The repentance, it's a sham," the 75-year-old priest said of the ceremony. Speaking to journalists he called for the priest who had abused him to be punished and defrocked. — AFP

News in brief

Iran sentences pair to death

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Court has upheld death sentences for adultery against a 27-year-old and his 33-year-old lover after the man's father-in-law denied them clemency, a reformist newspaper reported Saturday. The man's wife, who presented police with video evidence of her husband's infidelity early this year, had asked the courts to spare the pair the death penalty, the Shargh daily said. But her father demanded that the death sentence be imposed and the court found in his favor, the paper added. Iranian law provides that if a victim's family forgives the accused in a capital crime, the convict can be either pardoned or given a jail sentence. Under the interpretation of Islamic sharia law in force since Iran's 1979 revolution, adultery is punishable by stoning. But Tehran changed the law in 2013 to allow judges to order an alternative method of execution, usually hanging. — AFP

150 Houthis rebels killed

RIYADH: The Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen said Saturday it has killed more than 150 more Houthi rebels in the past 24 hours in raids around the northern pro-government bastion of Marib. The coalition, which backs Yemen's internationally recognized government, has reported near-daily strikes over the past month against the Iran-backed Houthis, each time claiming high losses. The rebels, who have for months waged an offensive against Marib, rarely comment on losses. AFP cannot independently verify the Saudi tolls that total more than 2,000 dead in air strikes since October. "Fourteen military vehicles were destroyed and more than 157 terrorist elements eliminated" in the latest raids, the coalition said in a statement carried by the Saudi state news agency SPA. — AFP

Six dead in mine blast

ALMATY: Six workers died and two more were in "critical condition" yesterday after a methane explosion at an ArcelorMittal mine in Kazakhstan, the company and the emergencies ministry said. A sudden blast took place yesterday morning at the Abaiskaya coal mine operated by ArcelorMittal Temirtau, a Kazakh unit of the steel giant in the Central Asian country's industrial Karaganda region. Sixty four workers were in the mine at the time of the accident, and 56 were able to get out. "Six people died (and) two were injured," the emergencies ministry said in a statement. ArcelorMittal said the accident had taken place due to an "outburst" of gas and coal. The company said the two injured workers were in "critical condition." A government commission headed by Emergencies Minister Yury Ilyin was dispatched to the scene. — AFP

US orders diplomats out

ADDIS ABABA: The US said it had ordered all of its non-essential diplomats and their families to leave Ethiopia, as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed urged people to make sacrifices to fend off rebels threatening to advance on the capital. Nine rebel groups said on Friday they would join forces in an alliance built around the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been locked in a year-long war that has killed thousands and pushed many more into famine-like conditions. Abiy, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, sent troops into Tigray in November last year to topple the TPLF, accusing them of attacking military bases. The US State Department said it had "ordered the departure of non-emergency US government employees and their family members" on Friday, and it was also urging all other US nationals to leave. — AFP

Sudan protesters block streets

KHARTOUM: Sudanese anti-coup demonstrators built street barricades in and around the capital overnight Saturday following calls for civil disobedience to protest last month's military coup. Activists were seen working in darkness to pile up bricks and large slabs to block streets in Khartoum and neighboring cities, according to witnesses and AFP correspondents. Their preparation followed calls for civil disobedience made by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella of unions which were instrumental in the 2018-2019 protests which ousted the longtime autocratic president Omar Al-Bashir. The SPA circulated its appeals via text messages to bypass internet outages since October 25, the day of the putsch. "The Sudanese people have rejected the military coup," the SPA said on Twitter, vowing "no negotiation, no partnership, no legitimacy". — AFP

Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Battle the algorithms: China's delivery riders on the edge

Authorities launch crackdown on firms to 'ensure basic labor protections'

BEIJING: Handing over a piping hot meal at exactly the time promised, Chinese food delivery driver Zhuang Zhenhua triumphantly tapped his job as complete through the Meituan app—and was immediately fined half of his earnings. A glitch meant it inaccurately registered him as being late and he incurred an automatic penalty—one of many ways, he said, delivery firms exploit millions of workers even as the sector booms.

Authorities have launched a crackdown demanding firms including Meituan and Alibaba's Ele.me ensure basic labor protections such as proper compensation, insurance, as well as tackling algorithms that effectively encourage dangerous driving.

But more than a dozen drivers told AFP there has been little change on the ground. Often the only way to complete orders on time is to "go really fast... speed past red lights, drive on the wrong side of the road," Zhuang said. "At the beginning, (the app allocated) 40 to 50 minutes to complete an order-now for an order within a distance of two kilometers, with the same distance and time as before, we are given 30 minutes," he explained. The coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdowns sent demand for meal delivery services soaring: the sector is now worth 664 billion yuan (\$100 billion), according to a report from the China Hospitality Association.

The nation's competitive app-based services have expanded into nearly every aspect of modern life, with digital-savvy consumers used to instantaneous service and fast delivery due to a ready flow of cheap labor. But after years of unrestricted growth, China's Big Tech is coming under fire from Beijing with Tencent, Didi and Meituan all targeted over anti-monopoly rules.

Earlier this year, Alibaba was fined a record \$2.8 billion after an investigation found it had abused its dominant market position.

Airlines gear up for travel surge as US reopens

NEW YORK: Airline reservations to the United States took off immediately after the White House announced the country would reopen to all vaccinated international voyagers starting next week, compelling a welcome-if challenging-industry pivot. The long-awaited US move to welcome back international travelers—which takes effect Monday—follows 18 months of restrictions for 33 countries during the worst of the coronavirus pandemic that separated families, impeded business travel and frustrated tourists. Big carriers including Air France, United Airlines and Singapore Airlines are scrambling to meet the sudden surge in demand, adding flights, swapping in bigger planes for smaller ones and redoubling efforts to hire and retain staff.

Just after the White House announcement, British Airways saw a 900 percent jump in searches for flights and holiday packages to key US destinations compared with the week before.

The day after the announcement, American Airlines garnered a 66 percent jump in flight reservations to Britain, 40 percent to Europe and 74 percent to Brazil. Competition for seats on November 8 itself was especially intense, as Evelyne and Jean-Michel Desobeau discovered when they booked a trip using frequent flyer miles.

The couple, anxious to see their daughter and son-in-law, had reserved a flight from France to New York for November 2, based on a guess of

Startups eye post-pandemic 'tele-health' revolution

LISBON: From mental health apps to a helmet that can shock a patient's brain remotely, startups at this year's Web Summit are betting on a major shift towards "tele-medicine" as the world emerges from the pandemic.

Using technology to treat patients virtually was a major theme at one of the world's largest tech conferences, which returned to Lisbon this week after COVID-19 forced it to move online in 2020. "These days, most people use their phones for a lot of everyday needs—why shouldn't healthcare be part of this?" said Johannes Schildt, whose company Kry lets patients book on-screen medical appointments. "The pandemic has accelerated adoption of these new technologies," Schildt told AFP.

Sweden-based Kry, which operates in five European countries, is far from the only app designed

Lives at risk

There is mounting public concern over the amount of data handled by popular apps, including food delivery platforms, and Chinese authorities have directed the cyberspace watchdog to look at how algorithms are used by tech conglomerates. Shortened delivery times have also caused more accidents in recent years, amid promises of swift service. Globally, the sector is facing scrutiny over its treatment of predominantly freelance workers, who endure low pay, few employee rights, and are often hired through agencies to avoid providing benefits.

China's gig economy now accounts for almost one quarter of its workforce — 200 million people are in "flexible employment", according to government figures. The plight of food delivery and truck drivers caught public attention after little compensation was offered to the family of one courier who died delivering meals for Ele.me in Beijing, and a second set himself on fire in a dispute with the firm over pay.

Despite being hailed as an essential service, particularly at the height of the pandemic, drivers earn just 7,700 yuan a month on average. Zhuang said many feel they are putting their lives at risk because of algorithms used by apps to determine the route and travel time allowed before drivers incur a "late delivery" penalty. Another rider, who gave his surname as Liu, told AFP that the allocated delivery time included the period it took for the food to be prepared, something beyond his control but that could impact his pay.

"If there are delays, riders take the blame," the 40-year-old said, adding that the system made it hard to reject orders from slow merchants. "It's useless to complain," said rider Chen Mingqiang, 50.

'Nobody wants to pay'

Meituan, which has more than 628 million users,



BEIJING: Food delivery drivers for online shopping platform Meituan standing in formation before starting their work along a street in Beijing. — AFP

said it calculates the time needed for a journey in four ways and allocates the longest from those options and includes a buffer. In a written statement, the firm insisted such decisions were made "considering rider safety as the first priority, and also to satisfy consumers' needs" and that drivers could contest unfair fines.

Last month, after China's cyberspace regulator outlined plans for tighter controls on tech companies, Meituan said it would optimize its "algorithm strategy" and roll out greater allowances to help couriers avoid dangerous work conditions. Kendra Schaefer, at Beijing-based consultancy Trivium, said a lack of transparency on how platforms were cod-

ed to determine driver requirements and compensation was a serious issue.

"An algorithm is intended to maximize efficiency, unfortunately as we're finding as society modernizes, algorithms maximize efficiency at the expense of humans," she said. "Everybody wants drivers to get treated better but nobody wants to pay for it." The sector relies heavily on migrant workers—who are often low-skilled and have come to cities from rural provinces in the hope of making money.

For many, there are few employment alternatives. Zhuang conceded: "If I had the choice, I definitely wouldn't work as a delivery driver. It's a dangerous job, with high risk." — AFP



LOS ANGELES: A view of the airline ticket counters at the Los Angeles Airport. — AFP

when the travel ban would be lifted. But when the date was officially set at November 8, the couple discovered that flying that day would have meant using three times as many miles as the original trip. In the end, they will arrive on November 9, using a more moderate amount of miles.

More seats, bigger planes

At Air France, traffic has been gradually returning and "won't change overnight on November 8," said a spokesperson for the carrier. The French airline has for months flown jets with empty seats. But with demand rising, it recently increased the number of daily flights between New York and Paris from three to five. For its Houston-Paris trip, Air France is shifting out the Airbus 330 in favor of the Boeing 777, which has more seats. The carrier expects its

to do away with the need to physically visit a doctor.

And not all of these startups focus on physical health. US-based Calmerry is among a growing number of e-counseling companies that offer video sessions with mental health therapists. Most public healthcare systems offer limited access to such services, or none at all. With subscriptions starting at \$42 per week, Calmerry's co-founder Oksana Tolmachova said a key goal was to make therapy more affordable.

Confiding in robots

Other apps are taking a different approach to tackle the explosion in depression and anxiety seen worldwide during the pandemic. Mental health chatbot Woebot also invites users to discuss their problems, but the replies come from artificial intelligence rather than a human therapist. While some may be unnerved by the idea of pouring one's heart out to a piece of software, studies suggest that confiding in a virtual human could encourage people to open up.

Woebot's founder Alison Darcy, a clinical research psychologist, said the chatbot avoided the "baggage and social constructs" that come with human interactions—worrying that the other person will judge you, for instance. And given the dearth of trained therapists compared with the number of people who need help with their mental health, Darcy argued that AI is a valid tool for approaching the problem. "We need to

capacity in terms of US travel to reach 90 percent of its pre-COVID 19 level in March 2022, up from 65 percent in October.

Airlines are planning for a modest pullback in January and February after a strong holiday season, but anticipate strong demand in the spring that will intensify in the summer, traditionally the busiest season. At United Airlines, traffic to Latin America has fully returned to its level from 2019, but the rest of international travel remains at only about 63 percent.

The US carrier is betting big on a vibrant return to international travel, introducing five new destinations in the spring including in Spain and Norway, adding flights for popular destinations such as Rome and Dublin and reviving service to Frankfurt, Nice and other cities. — AFP



LISBON: Attendees take part in the Web Summit in Lisbon in this November 3 file photo. — AFP

be throwing everything at helping people get well," she said.

Darcy does not believe chatbots should replace human therapists outright, and AI has been shown to have its limits when it comes to healthcare. The UK's MHRA health regulator expressed concern in March over the symptom-checking software used by telehealth company Babylon, after reports that it failed to recognise some cases of serious conditions. — AFP

Soaring prices fuel anti-ECB sentiment across Germany

FRANKFURT: As inflation soars to its highest level in three decades in Germany, Simon and Lena Wendland, parents of newborn twins, say that their lives have become more uncertain. Their power supplier has just announced it is doubling its electricity prices, while property prices are looking "rather scary".

"We don't know where this is going to lead us," Simon Wendland told AFP. From energy and food, to paper and rent, prices have been marching mercilessly higher both in Germany and across Europe.

Latest data put inflation in Europe's biggest economy at five percent year-on-year, a level not seen in the last 30 years. Bild, the country's biggest-selling newspaper, blames the European Central Bank for failing to rein in prices and even adding to the problem with its cheap money policy.

The Frankfurt-based ECB has argued that its record-low interest rates and 1.85-trillion-euro (\$2.15-trillion) pandemic emergency bond-buying program are necessary to prop up an economy ravaged by the coronavirus crisis. In Germany, however, savers believe the ECB's zero-interest-rate policy is eating away at the value of their assets.

Bild recently branded ECB chief Christine Lagarde as "Madame Inflation", saying she "wears Chanel clothes" but "mocks the fate of pensioners, employees and savers", even if the central bank president has herself expressed concern about the rising price of basic foodstuffs in supermarkets.

Skepticism

With its ultra-loose monetary policy of recent years, the ECB has long been a bugbear for Germany's savers. Bild had nicknamed Lagarde's predecessor Mario Draghi "Draghila", comparing him to a vampire "sucking our accounts to the last drop". After the devastation wrought by the inflationary crises of the 1920s and 1970s, Germans have an ingrained fear of inflation, said ING economist Carsten Brzeski. Lagarde's repeated assertion that recent price surges are transitional is met with disbelief in Europe's most populous country.

"According to Madame Lagarde, we will have overcome all that by the middle of next year, but that's just what she says," said Marlott Kroeber, a 72-year-old former teacher. German bankers, too, have voiced skepticism about Lagarde's assessment. "There are more and more indications that this price surge is not temporary and we will have to live with it beyond this year," said Commerzbank chief Manfred Knof. — AFP

Business

NBK invites shareholders to EGM to increase authorized capital

Capital increase will allow the bank to distribute bonus shares in the future

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) called its shareholders to an extraordinary general assembly meeting to be held on Thursday, November 25, to approve the increase of the bank's authorized capital to KD 1 billion, as well as making amendments to its memorandum and articles of association.

The bank seeks to increase the authorized capital from the current KD 750 million to KD 1 billion, subject to the approval of the Assembly, to accommodate any potential distribution of bonus shares that may be approved by the general assembly in the future. By increasing its authorized capital, NBK aims to ensure its ability to distribute bonus shares that may be approved by the general assembly in the future. However, the bank is not planning to increase the issued and paid-up capital through a rights issue in the near term.

Over the past years, NBK's General Assembly has regularly approved the distribution of 5 percent bonus shares (in addition to cash dividends), which, if continues in the future, will lead to increasing the issued and paid-up capital to exceed KD 750 million, necessitat-

ing increasing the authorized capital to higher levels. Currently the difference between the issued and paid-up capital, and the authorized capital limiting the issuing of bonus shares that may be approved by the general assembly in the future. It is worth mentioning that NBK Group maintains robust capital adequacy ratio at 18.1 percent by end of September 2021, comfortably in excess of regulatory requirements.

NBK enjoys a solid financial position as reflected in strong capitalization levels, high asset quality metrics and a stable funding base. In addition, the bank has been consistently awarded one of the highest credit ratings among all banks in the region from all international credit rating agencies. This is supported by the bank's leading position for over 69 years at the level of Kuwait and the whole region, and a team with banking experiences that make it among the best in the region, led by an executive management that managed over the years to set successful banking strategies and closely monitor their implementation, which contributed to establish the bank's leading regional and international position.



NBK headquarters

Dr Husayn Shahrur appointed CEO of Ahli Capital

KUWAIT: Ahli Capital Investment Company (Ahli Capital) announced the appointment of Dr Husayn Shahrur as the company's Chief Executive Officer. Dr Shahrur with his extensive experience in the financial sector will be able to take Ahli Capital to the next level and cement its position as one of the leading investment companies in Kuwait.

Commenting on this appointment, George Richani, the Group CEO of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, said: "The appointment of Dr Shahrur is a testament to the commitment of the ABK Group to empower Ahli Capital to provide its clients with the best-in-class wealth management solutions and other financial services. Dr Shahrur's broad international and regional experience will no doubt be of great value to Ahli Capital and ABK Group at large."

Fawzy Al-Thunayan, Ahli Capital's Chairman, said: "This unique appointment is a big win for Ahli Capital, as I am certain that Dr Shahrur will help further

advance the Company's offerings to help meet clients' needs in an ever-changing world. The recent global crisis reinforced an important lesson: wealth managers have a key role in helping investors construct investment portfolios that are well positioned for black swan events."



Dr Husayn Shahrur

Prior to joining Ahli Capital, Dr Shahrur spent the last 12 years with NBK Capital, where his last position was Managing Director within the Asset Management Group. At NBK Capital, Dr Shahrur helped transform the business he led from one which offered one single asset class to one which offers clients investment solutions spanning regional equities, regional fixed-income, global multi-asset exposures and global sukuk. Dr Shahrur holds a PhD in Finance from Georgia State University and a BBA and an MBA from the American University of Beirut.

Ahli Capital Investment Company is a leading investment company in the MENA region, founded in 2006, and is a fully owned subsidiary of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait.

Climate crisis could give nuke energy a second wind

GLASGOW: For more than two decades, promoters and purveyors of nuclear energy felt shunned at UN climate change conferences. At the COP26 summit underway in Glasgow, however, they have been welcomed with open arms, the UN's top nuclear regulator told AFP.

The spectre of Chernobyl and Fukushima, along with the enduring problem of nuclear waste, kept energy generated by splitting atoms on the sidelines, even if that energy was virtually carbon free.

But as the climate crisis deepens and the need to transition away from fossil fuels becomes urgent, attitudes may be shifting. "Nuclear energy is part of the solution to global warming, there's no way around it," said Rafael Mariano Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in an interview.

It already accounts for a quarter of "clean"-that is, carbon-free-energy worldwide, and Grossi said this COP is the first where it has "had a seat at the table".

"The winds are changing"

To have even a 50/50 chance of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels-the threshold for dangerous tipping points that could trigger runaway warming-global greenhouse emissions must be slashed by almost half within a decade, scientists say. But things are still moving in the wrong direction: a report on Thursday said emissions in 2021 are approaching record levels. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has warned they could hit new heights by 2023.

That is helping refocus attention on nuclear. "At the 2015 COP in Paris, nuclear wasn't welcome," said Callum Thomas, head of a recruitment firm for the nuclear industry, who was spotted at COP26 sporting a T-shirt saying "Let's Talk Nuclear".

"There was a belief it was not needed. Now many countries are looking at the feasibility, especially with the rise in gas prices."

From the time he took the IAEA's helm nearly two years ago, Grossi, an Argentine diplomat, has been a tireless advocate for the industry. At his first COP in Madrid he "went in spite of the general assumption that nuclear would not be welcome".

On the contrary in Glasgow, where nearly 200 countries are still trying to put flesh on the bone of the 2015 Paris Agreement, he said "nuclear is not only welcome, but is generating a lot of interest".—AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 04 NOVEMBER 2021

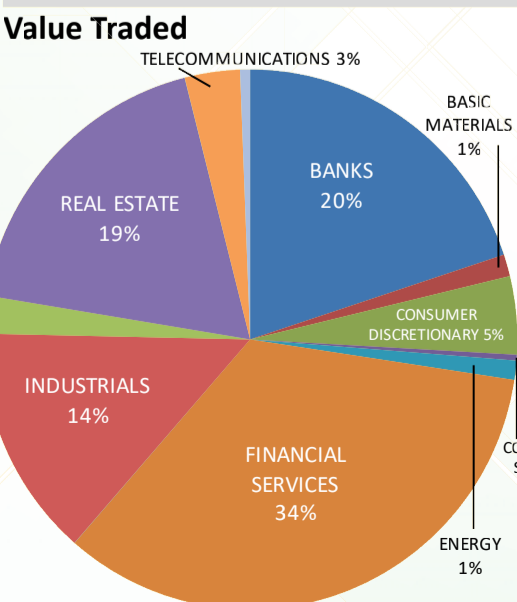
(965) 22 675 140
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.
alsafatinvest.com
research@alsafatinvest.com
alsafatinvestment
al-safat-investment-company

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	31,444	7,755.68	1.0%	0.8%	28.2%	568,417,389	202,596,693	27,131	27.9	2.3	74.5%
Main Market	10,747	6,148.14	2.7%	2.8%	35.1%	3,091,308,891	273,551,092	85,546	20.2	1.7	25.5%
All Share	42,192	7,201.93	1.4%	1.3%	29.9%	3,659,726,280	476,147,785	112,677	26.5	2.2	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	24,087	1,632.36	0.9%	0.8%	29.3%	251,116,538	94,835,402	10,321	30.3	2.3	56.61%
BASIC MATERIALS	996	1,116.25	1.5%	1.5%	24.2%	10,939,666	6,241,644	1,337	27.3	1.7	2.34%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	698	1,362.10	7.3%	7.8%	82.5%	101,236,561	22,266,073	5,942	9.7	5.6	1.64%
CONSUMER STAPLES	235	769.90	-0.7%	-0.8%	-5.9%	3,909,889	1,649,413	396	15.6	1.6	0.55%
ENERGY	308	1,479.09	1.3%	1.4%	15.8%	144,825,805	5,480,900	3,046	15.1	1.5	0.72%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,168	1,481.98	3.7%	3.0%	59.4%	1,423,762,972	161,890,333	37,485	11.2	1.9	9.80%
HEALTH CARE	394	794.85	0.0%	0.0%	-3.8%	150,003	75,841	60	27.7	5.3	0.93%
INDUSTRIALS	4,341	1,224.61	1.2%	1.8%	37.4%	280,864,070	66,305,062	15,017	28.1	1.8	10.20%
INSURANCE	639	1,535.01	3.8%	3.9%	32.8%	99,991,839	10,784,601	4,348	11.3	1.3	1.50%
REAL ESTATE	3,030	1,409.03	2.9%	2.9%	47.9%	1,016,736,992	87,826,710	29,108	28.4	1.4	7.12%
TECHNOLOGY	10	756.60	-6.3%	-1.9%	50.5%	410,905	44,446	29	-	0.9	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,374	1,100.16	0.1%	-0.3%	-0.2%	313,782,924	15,871,303	4,924	21.2	1.4	7.93%
UTILITIES	266	636.84	3.0%	2.5%	-12.6%	11,998,116	2,876,057	664	20.9	5.1	0.63%

Top Gainers						Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
WETHAQ	72.2	80.5	86,060,858	7,029,286	3,367	KHOT	93	-17.0	118,216	11,622	21
KGL	90.1	60.3	41,411,830	3,257,804	1,669	LAND	105	-15.3	14,565,887	1,716,001	696
FTI	78.9	46.1	1,480,831	104,035	190	REMAL	18.6	-14.3	23,879,199	456,327	890
TAHSSILAT	42	41.4	12,354,129	472,783	604	HCC	140	-13.0	181	25,498	42
GFH	100.9	29.9	557,511,564	49,495,236	9,906	EDU	709	-11.9	979,286	716,417	256

Top Volume						Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	100.9	29.9	557,511,564	49,495,236	9,906	GFH	100.9	29.86	557,511,564	49,495,236	9,906
AAN	18.8	6.2	292,433,433	5,415,526	2,848	AUB	294	0.34	72,019,278	21,038,044	899
MAZAYA	85.5	8.0	153,146,437	12,734,589	3,419	KFH	843	1.32	23,952,689	20,184,809	2,788
GPI	30	10.7	121,742,170	3,586,055	1,922	AGLTY	1010	1.00	19,190,745	19,235,831	2,067
INVESTORS	16.4	5.1	107,246,609	1,747,167	1,188	NIND	280	2.19	58,144,604	16,205,900	1,407



Market Summary:

- On daily average trading, Premier market volume and value increased slightly from the previous week with less than 2%. Main market volume and value increased 30% and 33%, respectively.
- All indexes yet again closed at a new all-time high record due to Q3 positive announcements and strong momentum.
- Technically, the All-Share index registered a new all-time high-level closing at 7201 creating support levels at 7187, 7155, and 7105. Staying above 7200 will lead to 7500. Premier index registered a new all-time high-level closing at 7755 creating support levels at 7730, 7688, and 7607. Staying above 7750 will lead to 7908. The Main index registered a new all-time high-level closing at 6148 creating a support level at 6140, 6095, and 6023. Staying above 6150 will lead to 6250.

Business

KIPCO announces a net profit of KD 16.5m for first 9 months of 2021

Our core businesses are reporting positive results: Vice Chairman

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has announced a net profit of KD 16.5 million (\$54.7 million) for the first nine months of 2021, an increase of 43 per cent compared to KD 11.5 million (\$38.1 million) reported for the same period of 2020, after restatement.

For the third quarter (the three months ended September 30, 2021), the company recorded a net profit of KD 13.3 million (\$44.1 million) compared to KD 2.3 million (\$7.6 million) reported for the same period in 2020. The company also reported a 9 per cent increase in its total operating profit during the first nine months of 2021, at KD 94.2 million (\$312.2 million), from KD 86.3 million (\$286.1 million) reported for the same period in 2020.

KIPCO's consolidated assets for the first nine months of the year stood at KD 10.1 billion (\$33.5 billion), compared to KD 10.4 billion (\$34.5 billion) reported at year-end 2020.

Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "At our 2021 Shafaiyah Investors' Forum, we said we would remain guarded in our approach as the pandemic continued to unfold. While world economies will continue to be challenged as they return to pre-COVID levels, we believe that the worst is behind us. As the business environment shows some recovery, our core businesses, namely the financial services, continue to report positive numbers this quarter."



Faisal Al-Ayyar

KFH exhibits its digital services on KFHTalk platform

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House has exhibited its main digital services and their efficiency, simplicity and compatibility with the customers' needs and requirements on KFHTalk which it launched recently.

In a KFHTalk episode, presented by Assist. Manager - Public Relations, Mohammed Al-Awadhi who hosted the Assist. Manager - E-Banking services, Mohammed Al-Khamees, lights were shed on a variety of distinguished Digital services offered by KFH to its customers round the clock. The services include online personal finance request, online account opening without the need to visit branch and with e-signature through Kuwait mobile ID App, local and international money transfer, investment deposits, opening gold account, buy and sell gold, cheque book request, ATM card instant printing through QR Code, cheque deposit, follow up financing invoices, investment plans open and view, account balances and deposits fol-

low up, instant transfer service to Kuwait Turk using RippleNet, digital wallet service through smart phones and watches providing the latest smart digital payment methods according to the highest security calibers in cooperation with Samsung, Fitbit, Garmin and many other e-banking services.

Services included also XTM machines and KFH Go branches which have reached 10 branches spread in various areas in Kuwait including Kuwait International Airport. KFH Go branches enable customers to benefit from the diversified banking services package including: Instant cheque printing, instant credit cards printing without a pre-request, receipt of gold biscuits (10 g), opening (gold, saving, Al-Rabeh and electronic) accounts, buy and sell gold, cash withdrawal without card through mobile using QR code, civil ID or mobile No., Print IBAN certificate, request Financing deals "Murabaha",



Mohammed Al-Awadhi hosts Mohammed Al-Khamees on KFHTalk

request credit and prepaid cards, update customer information and mobile number, activate banking cards, open deposits and accounts and many other financing and banking services.

The number of e-banking transactions executed by KFH customers through KFHonline or mobile Apps exceeded 113 million transactions during a 9 months period January -

September 2021 with an increase by 26 percent compared to the same period last year.

KFH continues its digital transformation strategy to enhance its leading position in the Islamic financial services industry worldwide and fulfill the requirements of all customer categories namely youth according to the highest calibers of quality, speed, and security.

Gulf Bank launches new AJYAL Tech program for technology enthusiasts

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is launching its new AJYAL Tech program, a comprehensive coding and digital technology learning journey for Kuwaiti youth who have a passion for technology. The bank is currently accepting applications both from within the bank and beyond, and is encouraging all those who have majored in technology fields or who are passionate about technology to apply.

The new program is part of Gulf Bank's strategy for the year 2025, which aims to provide customers with an unprecedented banking experience based on digital transformation. The launch of the new program marks yet another milestone by the bank to train local youth in the latest technology trends and to ensure future employees remain at the forefront of digitization. Gulf Bank has partnered with CODED, the first coding bootcamp in the Middle East, to launch the new program. The first program of its kind in Kuwait, AJYAL Tech is dedicated solely to local tech savvy youth. Eligible applicants will be embarking on an intensive bootcamp-style program to prepare them for future jobs at Gulf Bank.

"With the launch of our newest AJYAL Tech program, we aim to train and develop a select group of

Kuwaiti youth with all the necessary technological tools and soft skills required to not only advance in their personal careers, but to also achieve Gulf Bank's overarching vision of being the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future," said Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj. "One of the key pillars of Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy is our investment in integrated technological solutions, a transformation which will be tangible to all those who are connected with Gulf Bank. We are proud to be setting the bar high for our employees from the very beginning of the hiring process, and look forward to everything that our employees can accomplish with the necessary training and tools required to achieve the excellence our clients expect from Gulf Bank."

With the banking sector heading toward a new era of digitization, Gulf Bank has demonstrated a proven dynamism in responding swiftly to today's demands. The bank's latest digital-driven strategy aims to transform the bank into a full-fledged digital bank that will exceed the aspirations of future generations.

Gulf Bank has a divested interest in cultivating young Kuwaiti talent for the local banking industry and for the future of Kuwait. Since 2014, Gulf



Salma Al-Hajjaj and Hashem Behbehani

Bank's 'AJYAL' initiative has targeted Kuwaiti professionals as part of an intensive training program designed to develop future Kuwaiti leaders. The program aims to help candidates develop key banking skills, cultivating holistic bankers that have shown growth potential on both a personal and professional level. Earlier this year, Gulf Bank's Talent Development Department graduated their seventh cohort (Ajyal 7), and are initiating their eighth (Ajyal 8).

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employ-

ee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. The bank also supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various relevant parties to achieve it.

CBK announces winners of Al-Najma draws

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign yesterday. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ahmed Al-Basman.

The results of the draws were as follows:

1- Al-Najma monthly draw - the prize of KD 20,000 went to the winner Faraj Hamad Al-Shammari.

2- Al-Najma weekly draw - the prize of KD 5,000 went to the winner Mohammad Abdullah Ahmed Boukhamsin.

3- Salary account campaign - the prize of up to KD 1,000 went to the winner Ali Hasan Ali Dashti.

The bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 400 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan for a period of up to 4 years and up to KD 70,000, Kuwaiti pensioner, along with expatriate customers who transfer their debt to the Bank will receive an instant cash gift of 2 percent from their transferred debt up to KD 1,000. The bank stated that Al-Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

NBK Money Markets Report

Hawkish Fed and solid data elevate dollar

KUWAIT: Following a two-day meeting last Wednesday, the US Federal Reserve announced it would begin scaling back its massive \$120bn bond-buying program this month. The decision entails cutting stimulus by \$15 billion a month while leaving interest rates unchanged. The tapering process will end mid-November, and will likely end by June 2022. However, noteworthy was the change in tone regarding inflation, with the Fed providing admission that higher prices may persist. The Fed still maintained a hawkish tone and that is divergent from the BOE and ECB, which both have adopted dovish tones in their recent meetings.

Growing consumer demand alongside supply chain disruptions have resulted in higher prices in many US sectors for longer than previously anticipated by central bankers. On inflation, Powell insisted the Fed still expects recent price rises to be "transitory", while adding that it was "very difficult to predict the persistence of supply constraints or their effects on inflation". Annual inflation was last seen at a 13-year high in September at 5.4 percent, while unemployment fell to 4.8 percent. In September, the central bank lowered its forecast for US growth this year to 5.9 percent, down from 7 percent in June.

The market has pushed its expectations for a rate hike closer, especially after the official announcement

Rates - 07th November, 2021

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1557	1.1514	1.1617	1.1567	1.1375	1.1660	1.1600
GBP	1.3688	1.3424	1.3698	1.3498	1.3305	1.3595	1.3517
JPY	113.93	113.30	114.44	113.39	111.50	115.50	113.21
CHF	0.9163	0.9088	0.9175	0.9121	0.8925	0.9315	0.9100

of the tapering decision by the Fed. Current hike probabilities stand at 68 percent chance of a hike in June 2022 and 93 percent for July. The market has also priced a 100 percent+ for a second hike by December 2022. Nevertheless, the latest decision from the BOE proved markets wrong and we will discuss that in detail later on in our report.

As for the labor market, the highly anticipated jobs report displayed solid additions to the labor force led by the private payrolls adding 604K jobs while the non-farm payrolls added 531K jobs in October. Both figures were higher than the previous reading and the market's expectation as the US prepares for the holiday season. The unemployment rate ticked down to 4.6 percent from 4.8 percent while the participation rate remained steady at 61.6 percent.

Markets react

The dollar gained momentum this week following the unexpected rate hold in the UK by the BOE and the greenback got further support from the solid jobs report later on Friday. The dollar index opened the week at 94.136 and reached a 3-week high of 94.544 following the release of non-farm payrolls.

US manufacturing and services PMIs

In the US, The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said on Monday its index of national factory activity slipped to a reading of 60.8 last month from 61.1 in September. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in manufacturing, which accounts for 12 percent of the US economy. US manufacturing activity slowed in October as a measure of new orders dropped to a 16 month low and factories continued to experience delays with deliveries of raw materials.

The services PMI in the US figure came at 66.7 and exceeded the market's expectations for 61.9. Economic activity in the services sector grew in October for the 17th month in a row. The rate of expansion set a record for the fourth time in 2021

BoE meeting

Financial markets had fully priced in a rate hike by the BOE ahead of the policy meeting help last Thursday. However, the shocking decision to keep benchmark interest rate the same took traders by surprise and caused some chaos on the cable levels. There was a lesson here for all analysts to refrain from over-interpreting remarks from new leaders or

policymakers. Additionally, since policy makers have access to markets all it would have taken to calm markets were few words to signal that they got it wrong to avoid such volatility.

Going back to the meeting itself, policymakers in the BOE voted 7-2 to keep benchmark interest rate at 0.1 percent. The MPC members have prioritized immediate concerns over slowing growth more than the inflation spike, which is expected to hit 5 percent next year. Officials have also pushed back against market pricing a series of hikes to 1 percent next year and noted that such an aggressive approach would leave inflation well below their 2 percent target. The cable opened the week at 1.3688 and traded cautiously ahead of the BOE's policy meeting. The currency fell to a 4-week low of 1.3424 after the surprising decision by BOE's Governor Andrew Bailey to maintain interest rates. On weekly basis, the sterling lost 1.92 percent of its value as the strong jobs report fueled the dollar's bull-run.

RBA meeting

The Reserve Bank of Australia met last week and the central bank scrapped its bond yield target and said that the conditions for a rate hike will take some time to materialize. The RBA also signaled that it is open to hiking earlier than its previous guidance of 2024. The Aussie edged lower following the meeting and fell below the 0.75 level to a low of 0.7486. The Aussie's recent positive performance is attributed to higher oil prices. However, the dollar increased across the board on the back of solid data and fundamentals, which pushed the Aussie to a 3-week low of 0.7360.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30165



KUWAIT: The all-new MDX 2022 unveiled by ACURA Al Mulla at the Avenues Mall



ACURA Al Mulla unveils all-new MDX 2022 at the Avenues Mall

MDX 2022 combines spaciousness and sporty performance in a luxurious style

KUWAIT: Under the slogan of youthful sporty luxurious, ACURA Al Mulla, one of the Al Mulla Group companies and the exclusive agent in Kuwait for ACURA cars, the first Japanese luxury car in the world, launched the all-new 2022 MDX in the presence of the press and media, at the Avenues Mall at the entrance to Prestige.

This all-new car will be available for three days in front of the Avenues visitors to get acquainted with its specifications closely, and discover the features of luxury and power that meet in its smallest details.

The all-new MDX 2022 is the car that combines spaciousness and sporty performance in a luxurious style. It is a three-row SUV that can accommodate the whole family without compromising the driving pleasure. The all-new MDX 2022 gives you multiple driving modes. It is equipped with Agile Handling Assist torque vectoring system with a huge amount of lightweight and very strong stainless steel for higher levels of durability and rigidity along with the integrated dynamic system Dynamics System), which provides the car with the distinctive fifth driving mode, which allows the driver to customize the driving experience to suit his needs at the touch of a button.

In the cockpit, you'll be greeted by a 12.3-inch wide HD central display, True Touchpad Interface and an all-new 12.3-



inch digital speedometer. And for a tighter grip on the vehicle's command center, a 10.5-inch head-up display has been added to make the driver and passengers feel like they're inside a massive cargo ship or warplane.

The interior design of the all-new 2022 MDX is considered one of the best interiors designed by Acura to date. It is a luxurious and modern design with artistic touches such as polished aluminum and natural open-pore wood trim.

Simply press your foot on the gas pedal and lean your back against the luxurious sport seats covered in ultra-modern Milano leather in contrasting colors and patterns.

In addition, the seats are equipped with powered side supports along with four-level adjustable headrests, and a powered footrest as well. To achieve the highest levels of efficiency and performance, the cabin is equipped with ambient light bulbs (Iconic Drive) and a panoram-

ic sunroof, giving the cabin a unique youthful appearance. From the outside, the presence of the car can be described as majestic, as it comes with a distinctive artistic touch and precise lines that reflect the strong and bold appearance of the car, giving it a stunning contrast that captures the hearts and catches the eye. With every corner of the road.

ACURA's interior design is inspired by the NSX model and is equipped with a 10-speed transmission, and at the heart of this is a 3.5-liter i-VTEC V-6 direct-injection, aluminum-alloy engine that produces 290 horsepower. Perhaps this is the reason why the MDX is so fast. The 2022 MDX comes equipped with the latest version of the all-wheel drive traction and handling system (SH-AWD), a

torque vectoring system developed for the racetrack. For added stability during lane changes, All Wheel Drive Superior Control transfers power to the inner rear wheel. The MDX 2022 comes with a new look inside and out. The durable chassis, for example, is made of high-strength steel and is lightweight, and is mounted on a double cross-section made of aluminum and inspired by the suspension system of racing cars, providing the driver with better handling and manoeuvrability.

Al Mulla International Car Trading Company invites luxury and luxury cars enthusiasts to visit ACURA's headquarters at a time when the company affirms its commitment to achieving the highest level of service in line with the advanced technologies of ACURA cars.



KUWAIT: Visitors take a look at the newly launched all-new 2022 MDX at the Avenues Mall

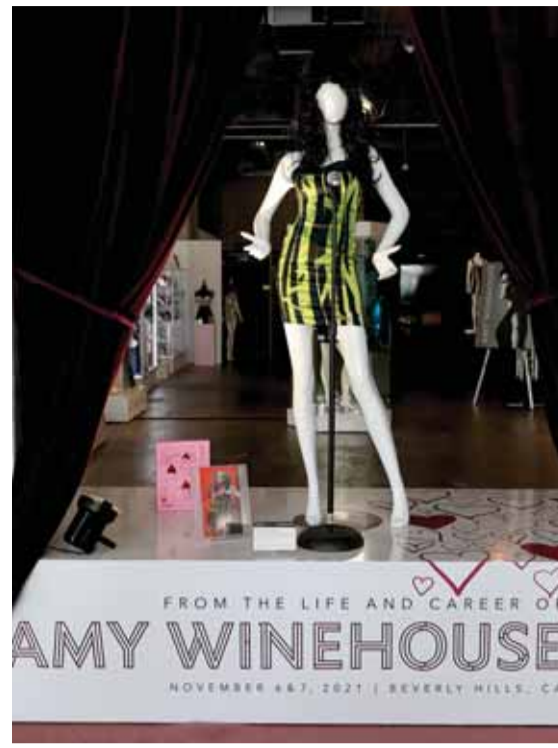


Lifestyle | Features



A collection of Amy Winehouse dresses and her drum set are displayed at Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills, California.

—AFP photos



The dress worn by the late Amy Winehouse during her final performance on display at Julien's Auctions.



The black and white striped mini dress worn by Amy Winehouse in 2007 when she performed "Rehab" on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno is displayed.

Amy Winehouse's last concert dress to go under the hammer



A pair of gold leather boots worn by Amy Winehouse on the cover of her 2003 debut album 'Frank' are displayed.

The dress that singer Amy Winehouse wore for her final performance was auctioned this weekend in California, as part of a trove of memorabilia from the soul diva's life. Winehouse wore the green and black bamboo print at a concert in Belgrade in 2011. A month later, on July 23, she was dead from acute alcohol poisoning. She was 27. Her tragic death was the culmination of a lengthy and often very public struggle with alcohol and drugs.

The dress is the highlight of an 800-item collection of personal effects, ranging from bras and DVDs to books and makeup that are being sold by Winehouse's parents Mitch and Janis. "It took them a long time to actually come to terms and decide to let go," said Martin Nolan of auction house Julien's, which is managing the sale. "Of course, there are fans and museums and collectors all over the world that will want to own some of these items,

care for them, show them at museums, keep her legacy and her memory alive and at the same time raise some money for the foundation," he added. The proceeds will go to the Amy Winehouse Foundation, which supports vulnerable young adults battling addiction.

Multi-Grammy-winning Winehouse, whose seminal and intensely soulful 2006 album "Back to Black," is counted as a modern classic, often spoke of her personal experiences battling alcohol and drug addiction. The short, green and black dress designed by Naomi Parry, is expected to sell for between \$15,000 and \$20,000. "That's very iconic. But all of these dresses represent Amy-fantastic musician, songwriter, but also a fashion icon," said Nolan. Another highlight of the sale is the heart-shaped handbag custom-made for her by Moschino that Winehouse used at the 2007 Brit Awards. The 400-plus-page catalogue put



A black quilted leather purse, that Amy Winehouse was photographed holding leaving home for her husband Blake Fielder-Civil's court appearance, are displayed.

together by Julien's is a walk-through of the singer's influences and career, but also her distinctive retro style that made her a fashion icon. The auction, in Beverly Hill, ran from Saturday to Sunday. — AFP



Petal pink satin ballet slippers worn by Amy Winehouse, who was often photographed performing in or out wearing ballet slippers.



Some of the Amy Winehouse collection of 45-rpm records is displayed.



The custom-made red leather heart-shaped purse Amy Winehouse used at the 2007 Brit Awards is displayed.



A collection of dresses worn during performances by Amy Winehouse is displayed.

Brazil bids shocked goodbye to country star Mendonca

Thousands of people flooded the hometown of late Brazilian country music star Marilia Mendonca

Saturday to pay an emotional tribute to the beloved singer, a day after she was killed in a plane crash at age 26. Mendonca, a Latin Grammy-winning superstar of Brazilian "sertanejo" music, died with four other people Friday when a small plane carrying her to a concert crashed in a rural area in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais.

Her body was flown Saturday to the central city of Goiania, her hometown, where huge crowds of fans flocked to a stadium where a massive public wake was to be held. Fans started lining up at dawn outside the 15,000-capacity arena, where large floral arrangements were

arriving in a steady stream, AFP correspondents said. "We came to say goodbye to our great Marilia Mendonca and thank her for spending these years of her life singing for us and making our hearts soar," student Davi Dyeimes Linares, who traveled 130 kilometers (80 miles) to be the first in line, told news site G1.

Some 100,000 people were expected to attend, said Goias state Governor Ronaldo Caiado. The star and an uncle who worked with her-also killed in the crash-were due to be laid to rest later in a small private ceremony for close friends and family at a local cemetery.

Mendonca's producer and the two pilots were also killed in the crash, which left their twin-engine plane shattered against the rocks near a picturesque waterfall outside the city of Caratinga, where the artist had been scheduled to perform. Mendonca was known for breaking into a country music scene long dominated by men and machismo. She was a leading figure in a burgeoning sub-genre known as "feminejo," or sertanejo music by women.

Nicknamed the "Queen of Suffering," she was known for ballads of heartbreak and long-suffering lovers, but also for singing of empowerment and the need

for women to "overcome"-the title of one of her most famous songs. She had 22 million subscribers on YouTube, 39 million followers on Instagram and more than eight million monthly listeners on Spotify. Her death drew heartfelt tributes from figures ranging from Brazilian music legend Caetano Veloso to football superstar Neymar to President Jair Bolsonaro, who said the country was "in shock." "She was one of the greatest artists of her generation," he wrote on Twitter. —AFP



A military firefighter brigade truck carrying the remains of Brazilian singer Marilia Mendonca leads the funeral cortege to the Cemeterio Parque Memorial, in Goiania, state of Goias, Brazil. — AFP



Relatives and friends mourn next to the coffin of Brazilian singer Marilia Mendonca, during her wake at the Arena Goiania sports center, in Goiania, state of Goias, Brazil.

Lifestyle | Features

ONLINE AFGHAN HUMOR: LAUGHTER AS RESISTANCE AGAINST TALEBAN

When a Taliban militant meets Afghan pop star Ayra Sayeed, he tries to charm her. "If you marry me, I will have a beard and a moustache and tanks. And I will build you a nightclub!" The scene, completely unimaginable in real life with the singer now based in exile after fleeing in the wake of the Taliban's takeover, is part of a satirical YouTube animation series that has captivated Afghans in recent weeks. It shows Sayeed appearing to the militant in his dreams. But then the man, sleeping with his Kalashnikov slung around his shoulder, wakes up to reality to find he is in fact hugging a bearded fellow militant. The militant is then shown in another video proudly showing off how life has changed in Kabul since the Islamist fundamentalists took control in mid-August. He comes upon a woman wearing an Arab-style niqab face veil.



Afghan Hafiz Afzali, 34, sits in front of a computer screen at his home and models 3D characters for his YouTube videos, in Espoo, Finland. — AFP photos



Afghan Hafiz Afzali, 34, sits in front of a computer screen at his home and applies textures to a 3D character for his YouTube videos.



Afghan Hafiz Afzali, 34, poses for a picture near his home in Espoo, Finland.

"Are you a genie, a fairy or a human?" he inquires, reflecting the confusion of locals when faced with such garb, now being promoted by the Taliban. Producing such work could be lethal in Afghanistan under the Taliban, where

many artists are in hiding and even ordinary people have erased potentially compromising material from their phones. The author of the videos is Afghan refugee Hafiz Afzali, 34, who has lived in Finland for the past seven years. He left Afghanistan in 2000 during the first phase of Taliban rule ended by the 2001 US-led invasion.

He ended up in Finland via a long, clandestine route to Europe and puts together his videos on YouTube during the week, while working as a taxi driver at the weekend. "I left Afghanistan at the age of 13, when the Taliban was in power. I remember everything," said Afzali, who came to Finland after living for three years in Iran, one year in Turkey and seven in Greece.

'Empty hearts'

Afzali is a self-taught expert in 3D design and is perfecting his skills at a Helsinki university. This has allowed him to create more than 200 comic

videos that started out by targeting the deposed pro-Western Afghan government, which critics accused of being riddled by corruption. But now his sights are set on the Taliban. "Their guns may be full of bullets but their hearts are empty," he told AFP. Several of his works have enjoyed more than 1.7 million views. "It works very well. People get the message because it's visual," Hafzali said.

"I want to send my message to Taliban leaders and Taliban followers that we are free human beings, we're not going to accept this rule. I think the majority of people don't want to accept this." His attitude is shared by Musa Zafar, a prominent Afghan satirist. Zafar fled the country in 2016 but refuses to disclose where he is living now for security reasons. "Satirists make people laugh, while being informative like media," of which Afghans are "tired" because their usual flow of information is "depressing", he said.

'Narrow-mindedness'

Satire can also make the political figures targeted "think twice" about the way they govern and the measures they take, said Zafar, who posts his work under the name "Imam Musa". One of his jokes recently posted on Afghanistan International, a widely read news site for Afghans, referenced vegetables to poke fun at the Taliban. "A new committee has been formed within the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice to discuss the shape of cucumbers, eggplants and pumpkins" — in case they resemble sexual organs.

For the same reasons, "bakers now have two weeks to produce bread that is neither round nor long," he continued. His post echoed the televised statements of a pro-Taliban cleric who at the end of September advised women "not to put on perfume when they leave their homes", nor to wear shoes with heels or click them on the ground lest they arouse men. "The ignorance and narrow-minded-

ness of the Taliban energizes satirists," said Imam Musa. In contrast to colleagues living in exile abroad, the artist Mergan Punch — a pseudonym — has decided to continue living in Kabul where he works in hiding.

He opened an account on social media where his drawings are published, including an image of a Taliban leaning on a mallet which he has used to kill two doves, the symbol of peace. "They have not changed. They want to put their mullahs in power and make Afghanistan the country of terrorists", he said. Back in the relative safety of Finland, Afzali said he "cannot believe" his country has "gone a century back" with the Taliban's reconquest of Afghanistan. "I know it's really difficult to live under the Taliban. Because I have seen it and I used to live under it. I'm really sorry for those who are there." — AFP



Die-hard Rolling Stones fan Elisabeth Zours poses with an autographed LP album of the legendary British rock band, in Berlin. — AFP

Start me up: Stones superfan jumps as US travel ban ends

Elisabeth Zours saw her first Rolling Stones show in East Berlin in 1990, just after the fall of the Wall, and nothing was ever quite the same again. Since then, barely a year has passed without the German office manager catching the still spry rockers on stage somewhere in the world—that is, until the pandemic and the US travel ban. Now with the United States reopening its borders on Monday to fully-vaccinated foreign visitors after a more than 18-month block on travel from much of the globe, the 51-year-old Zours will be among the first in line.

Like so much else, her life-long Stones marathon came to a screeching halt with the virus outbreak. "The tickets I still had from the (cancelled) 2020 US tour were still good but the travel ban was in place and I didn't know if I would be able to use them," she said. "And then (drummer) Charlie Watts died (in August) — it was all an emotional rollercoaster."

'This could be it'

Zours, who's seen the band in action dozens of times—"in the high double digits", — said superfans like herself worried the tour might never resume given the Stones' advanced age. She had a ticket for the St. Louis show, the first since Watts's death, on September 26 and held out hope that Joe Biden would loosen the rules in time. "I even thought about traveling via a third country to try to get into the States, then decided it was too risky," she said. "I ended up watching it (the Watts tribute) in the middle of the night in bed on a livestream."

Zours was "frustrated" that even months after the EU opened up to US travellers, the door to America was still

shut to Europeans. "It made no sense—especially for those of us who are vaccinated" and while US infection rates were generally far higher than in most EU member states. So when the White House finally heralded the good news on October 15, Zours knew she'd be on the first plane.

"Now I've got tickets for four concerts, starting in Atlanta then Detroit, Austin and Hollywood, Florida," said Zours, who plans a three-week odyssey to catch up with the band. For the last several years, being a massive Stones' fan has been a bit like living on borrowed time, Zours admitted—you never know when your luck will run out. "You're always aware it could be the last tour," she said. "But now that Charlie Watts is dead, this really could be it."

'Broken hearts, sad goodbyes'

Zours's love for the Stones reaches back to her early adolescence. "I fell for a classmate and the Stones were a way to get to know him better," she said. "It was the 80s and I'd force him to record the albums on cassettes for me. Nothing happened with the guy but the Stones are still with me." She's conscious of the fact that all the travelling to indulge her life's passion comes at a price. "The climate summit (in Glasgow) is happening right now and it's an issue that's really important to me," Zours said, noting she tried to offset transatlantic trips with things like eating less meat. Then there are some of the Stones' songs themselves whose macho swagger hasn't held up well over time.

"Brown Sugar", "Under My Thumb"—it's true, some of the lyrics are problematic. But I never saw the band as misogynistic or felt put down by them—they empower me." Just as many families are looking forward to the end of the US travel ban for emotional reunions, Zours said seeing the Stones again in their element will feel like coming home. "Their music is like a good friend—it's helped me through crises since I was 12: broken hearts, sad goodbyes, times when I was down," she said. "Whenever I hear their music I feel good again." — AFP

Founding member of reggae pop giants UB40 Astro dies after illness

Former vocalist and founding member of British reggae group UB40, who rose to fame in the 1980s with hits like "Red Red Wine" and "Can't Help Falling In Love" has died at the age of 64, his band confirmed. Terence Wilson—who went by the stage name Astro, performed with UB40 until 2013, when he formed a breakaway band. "We are absolutely devastated and completely heartbroken to have to tell you that our beloved Astro has today passed away after a very short illness," his current band, UB40 featuring Ali Campbell and Astro, said on Twitter late Saturday.



Terence Wilson

"The world will never be the same without him."

His former band confirmed the news, saying Wilson had died after "a short illness". UB40's pop reggae cover of Neil Diamond's "Red Red Wine" propelled them to fame, with the band going on to sell more than 100 million records. They also held the record-shared with Madness—for most weeks spent in the UK singles chart in the 1980s. Hailing from the British Midlands' city of Birmingham, the group rode a wave of youthful discontent against the economic and political status quo, with their name referring to a form provided to people claiming unemployment benefits.

Drummer Jimmy Brown told the Guardian this year that the group had even been under surveillance by British intelligence. "MI5 were tapping our phones, watching our houses, all sorts," he said. "We weren't planning the revolution, but if the revolution happened, we knew what side we were going to be on." — AFP



People walk over the Bow Bridge before fall foliage in Central Park in New York. — AFP

How climate change is muting America's famous fall foliage

America's northeast is famous for its red, orange and yellow fall foliage but experts say climate change is dulling the colors and delaying peak season, causing concern for the region's multi-billion-dollar "leaf-peeping" tourist industry. Warmer temperatures and heavier rainfall are keeping leaves greener for longer while extreme weather events like heat-waves and storms are stripping trees bare before getting to autumn, according to conservationists.

"Climate change is making it less likely that we're going to get those perfect fall color displays," Andy Finton, a forest ecologist with the Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts, told AFP. Several delicate factors combine for leaves to turn the vibrant colors that adorn picture postcards from New England and see visitors flocking to states like Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire every October.

The right combination of heat and precipitation in the summer followed by sunny days and cooler nights as the days start to shorten are required for chlorophyll to break down, unveiling the yellow and orange carotenoid pigments that turn ash and birch trees a golden hue. But the more complicated process by which leaves produce sugar that creates the red anthocyanin pigments seen in sugar maple and black gum trees is worrying arborists the most.

Hotter days, coupled with warmer nights and overcast skies caused by increased precipitation are slowing down photosynthesis, threatening those deep red colors beloved by "leaf-peepers." "What you're gonna see is more muted colors," said Finton. Leaf-peeping is a slang term in the United States used to describe the recreational activity of traveling to see and photograph autumnal colors.

Numerous tracking websites try to predict where and when peak fall foliage will occur as it makes its way south through

New England, including Massachusetts and Connecticut, and into New York. But ecologists say climate change is pushing the season back, making it harder to predict when the leaves will turn and threatening to shorten the window if it is followed by a quick cold snap.

Stephanie Spera, an environmental scientist at the University of Richmond, is studying the impact of climate change on fall foliage in Acadia National Park in Maine. "What we are seeing is that it is about a full week later than it was in the 1950s," and now arrives around the second week of October, Spera told AFP. Barbara Brummer, a field biologist with the Nature Conservancy's New Jersey office, estimates it was at least two weeks late this year "from what typically might have happened 100 years ago."

Pests and disease

Fall foliage tourism is big business in the northeast. It contributes \$300 million to Vermont's economy alone every year, according to official figures. In autumn, upwards of 500 people visit Polly's Pancake Parlor in New Hampshire every day to marvel at the colors on display in the White Mountains. The restaurant has been recording when leaves change color since the 1970s to keep track of how weather was impacting footfall.

"Fall is a huge part of our business and customers would ask, 'When's the best time to visit?'" owner Kathie Cote told AFP, adding that she was "definitely concerned" about climate change. "Alejandro Bertagnoli, a 31-year-old tourist from Argentina, and his girlfriend visited New York's Central Park in early November and were surprised by how green the leaves still were. "The pictures do seem different from what you usually see. But it's still enjoyable," he told AFP.

Warmer, wetter temperatures are also helping invasive pests and disease live longer and spread further, according to Pete Smith, urban forestry program manager at the Arbor Day Foundation. "There's nothing worse for fall color than a dead tree," he told AFP. Extreme weather events are also wreaking havoc. In September, heavy rain and powerful winds brought by Hurricane Ida brought down trees and knocked leaves off branches. — AFP

Sports

Barcelona crisis creates opportunity for Xavi

New coach takes over one of the hardest jobs in football today

MADRID: Xavi Hernandez has been waiting to be Barcelona's coach for six years and preparing for much longer but he could never have imagined it would come like this. After his last game playing for Barcelona in 2015, Xavi stood on the pitch at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin with his left hand on the right ear of the European Cup.

Holding the trophy with him was Andres Iniesta and with their spare hands, they both raised four fingers, one for each of their Champions League triumphs. The Saturday before, Xavi had won the Copa del Rey and the Saturday before that, La Liga, three titles and another treble, the second of his career, complete. He was leaving for Qatar at the end of a season in which his role had been reduced, his relevance questioned, but still on a high, and with Barcelona on top of the world.

Xavi was appointed as coach on Saturday morning with the team ninth in La Liga and facing a fight to make it out of their group in the Champions League. Iniesta is long-gone and Lionel Messi is playing for Paris Saint-Germain. Those that remain from Xavi's era, like Gerard Pique, Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, are past their best.

More players will have to leave and few will arrive as Barcelona continue to work off crippling debts of 1.35 billion euros. The club's 99,000-seater Camp Nou is out of date and increasingly emp-

ty. Against Alaves last week, only 37,278 fans turned up to watch.

Can it get worse? Barcelona could slide further down La Liga but that seems unlikely. They could miss out on the Champions League last 16 and drop into the Europa League - but nobody could blame Xavi for the defeats that made qualification difficult. At some

and pace. He played under Pep Guardiola and was viewed as the embodiment of the famous 'tiki-taka' style.

All of this feeds into the excitement around Xavi, the belief he is not just another elite former player - with history, and reputation and titles - but a self-made coach too, an academic, eager to impose his own formulas now on the game. His ability to rebuild will be tested over a longer period but in the short-term there appears to be some achievable objectives. Xavi arrived with Barcelona ninth, a starting position from which they can quickly improve. They may not be able to challenge for the title this season - Real Madrid are 10 points ahead already - yet they can finish inside the top four, which would be a relief.

They can qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League, a comeback that has already begun with consecutive victories over Dynamo Kiev, and that Xavi could now complete. They can lift the fans by playing more attractive football. Under-performing players like Frenkie de Jong can be revived. Talented youngsters like Ansu Fati, Pedri and Gavi can be molded.

Xavi also has a clean slate, the hindsight to know where former coach Ronald Koeman went wrong. He will know there is a difference between realism and pessimism, that Barcelona's



High hopes on self-made, academic coach

point, for a club whose revenue, stadium capacity, history and players remain among the best in the world, a crisis becomes an opportunity. There is only so far a club like Barcelona can fall.

Never switched off

When Xavi was a player, he never switched off. After training he watched games, not just from La Liga, but the lower Spanish divisions, and not just in Spain, but across Europe and America. On the pitch, his understanding of space and shape made up for his lack of stature



BARCELONA: In this file photo taken on June 8, 2015, Barcelona's midfielder Xavi Hernandez waves as he takes part in the celebrations held for their victory over Juventus, one day after the UEFA Champions League final, at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona. —AFP

problems cannot become excuses.

Koeman found low expectations only lasted so long. Allowances that were made in his first season became sticks to beat him with in his second. Xavi will have to keep moving, adjusting and upgrading, even as financial limitations remain and rivals like Real Madrid recover

er faster from the pandemic and strengthen more dramatically.

The road will be far from straight-forward, with Barcelona's biggest crisis in years making one of the hardest jobs in football harder. But for now there is margin for improvement, which for Xavi is a place to start. —AFP

News in brief

Barca collapse, Real edge Rayo

MADRID: Barcelona threw away a three-goal half-time lead on the day Xavi Hernandez was appointed coach as Celta Vigo scored in the 96th minute to complete a stunning comeback in La Liga on Saturday. Real Madrid then held off Rayo Vallecano's revival to win 2-1 and return to the top of the table, two points clear of Real Sociedad, before the latter faced Osasuna yesterday. Another deflating result for Barca was made worse by another injury for Ansu Fati, who put his team in front and then had to go off with a hamstring problem. Goals from Sergio Busquets and Memphis Depay had Barcelona 3-0 ahead after 34 minutes at Balaidos but Celta stormed back, Iago Aspas scoring twice either side of a Nolito header to seal a 3-3 draw. Madrid were comfortable too when Kroos and Benzema put them two ahead of Rayo Vallecano at half-time. But Madrid grew slack and Rayo capitalized, Bebe hitting the post before Falcao, off the bench, headed in his fifth goal in eight appearances for the club he joined on a free transfer in the summer. —AFP

Bayern Munich tops Bundesliga

BERLIN: Bayern Munich opened a four-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 2-1 home win over Freiburg, who suffered their first defeat in any competition this season. Second-placed Borussia Dortmund later missed the chance to trim Bayern's lead when they lost 2-1 at RB Leipzig. In Munich, Leon Goretzka put Bayern ahead with half an hour gone at the Allianz Arena before Robert Lewandowski hit his 13th Bundesliga goal this season with 15 minutes left. Bayern have scored 100 goals this calendar year, one short of the record for a German club, set when Cologne netted 101 times in 1977. Freiburg, who are third in Germany's top flight, caused a few nervous looks in the Bayern ranks when substitute Janik Haberer finally beat Manuel Neuer in stoppage time. Under Christian Streich, the longest-serving current Bundesliga coach, Freiburg have this season beaten Champions League teams Dortmund and Wolfsburg and held RB Leipzig to a draw. —AFP

Cuadrado gives Juventus win

ROME: Juan Cuadrado struck in added time as Juventus finally broke down 10-man Fiorentina for a 1-0 home victory in Serie A on Saturday. The victory lifted Juventus, who had lost their last two league games, to eighth, behind Fiorentina on goal difference. "These are very important points for the championship, and they are points that could bring back a different mentality," said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri. Juventus struggled to create chances against a solid visiting defense until Nikola Milenkovic was sent off for a second yellow card in the 73rd minute. At that point each team had managed just one shot on target. Within two minutes, Federico Chiesa, who is on loan from Fiorentina, smashed a shot against the bar. Allegri then sent on winger Cuadrado, a former Fiorentina player in place of midfielder Adrien Rabiot. Juve pressed and Alvaro Morata volleyed Cuadrado's cross into the roof of the net but was ruled offside. But as the match moved into added time, Cuadrado collected the ball on the right edge of the box, darted toward the goal-line creating a yard of space and drilled a low shot between goal-keeper Pietro Terracino and the near post. —AFP

Neymar strikes twice as PSG hold on to beat Bordeaux

BORDEAUX: Neymar suggested that speculation about his decline was premature with two sharply taken first-half goals on Saturday as Paris Saint-Germain hung on to win 3-2 at Bordeaux in Ligue 1. The Brazilian had only scored one goal for PSG this season, and that was a penalty in September, but he struck from open play in the 26th and 43rd minutes, both times set up by Kylian Mbappe. "He played a very good game," said PSG manager Mauricio Pochettino. "He scored two goals. It's important for an offensive player to score."

Mbappe also scored as, in the absence of injured Lionel Messi, the two superstars made the difference in a well-balanced game. For his first goal, Neymar collected a floated pass on the left of the penalty box, stepped inside and unleashed a shot between two defenders inside the post. Neymar again cut in for the second, dancing past several defenders before exchanging passes with Mbappe and hitting the return first time, low and



BORDEAUX: Paris Saint-Germain's forwards Neymar (right) and Kylian Mbappe celebrate Neymar's first goal of the match during the French L1 football match against Bordeaux at The Matmut Atlantique Stadium in Bordeaux, south-western France on Saturday. —AFP

again just inside the post.

Speculation had swirled around Neymar's appetite for the game since he said in October that next year's World Cup in Qatar would be his last as he "doesn't have the strength to put up with more football". Mbappe added a third in the 63rd minute after PSG caught Bordeaux's defense high

up the field. With defenders trailing far behind, Georginio Wijnaldum raced through on goal, drew keeper Benoit Costil and side-footed the ball to Mbappe for a tap in.

The brilliance of the two stars seemed to have settled the match, but Bordeaux hit back. Alberth Elis gave the home team late hope when he

scuffed home a 74th-minute goal after PSG gave the ball away trying to play out of their own penalty area.

Two minutes into added time, M'Baye Niang finished off a pacy attack scooping home his first goal for Bordeaux after a sharp exchange with Jimmy Briand in the box. But PSG had barely kicked off again when the whistle sounded. "We made two mistakes, the goals came from those two mistakes," said Pochettino. "We could have killed the game much earlier," he added. "We can't lead 3-0 and let in two goals." PSG moved 10 points clear of second-place Lens, who thrashed Troyes 4-0 on Friday. Earlier, champions Lille continued to struggle to hold a lead in Ligue 1 as they conceded an 83rd-minute goal and drew 1-1 at home against Angers.

A week after they led away to PSG until the 74th minute only to lose, Lille went ahead when Tiago Djalo struck in the 28th minute, slotting home from a free kick by Renato Sanches. But they allowed a late equaliser from Azzedine Ounahi who calmly finished from a far-post cross by Sofiane Boufal. Lille remain in 12th and are 18 points behind PSG. "It's a strange feeling," said Lille coach Jocelyn Gourvennec. "We dropped two points while we had the feeling we were in control of the game but it was not fluid either." —AFP

Tuchel urges Barkley to seize Chelsea chance

LONDON: Thomas Tuchel insists Ross Barkley can make an impact on Chelsea's bid to win the Premier League title after the midfielder came in from the cold in Saturday's 1-1 draw against Burnley. Barkley made his first Premier League start this term as Tuchel tweaked the leaders' line-up at Stamford Bridge.

The 27-year-old got his rare chance because Romelu Lukaku and Timo Werner are injured, while Mason Mount was only fit enough for a substitute's role after a tooth infection. Barkley started in a 'false nine' role in Chelsea's three-man attack and delivered arguably the best performance of his troubled three-year spell with the Blues.

Since signing from Everton in 2018, Barkley has found it impossible to recapture the dynamic displays that made him the darling of Goodison Park. He spent last season in exile on loan at Aston Villa and looked certain to eventually leave Chelsea.

But Tuchel has kept him around this season and in only his second start in all competitions, Barkley finally showed his quality. Linking with the midfield and driving forward dangerously, while displaying his range of passing, Barkley was Chelsea's most influential figure against Burnley. Ironically, Barkley's last contribution before being substituted to a standing ovation was to lift a shot over the bar that would have put Chelsea two goals up after Kai Havertz's first half opener.

Barkley wasn't alone in missing a good chance as Chelsea fluffed a host of opportunities to kill off lowly Burnley before Matej Vydra's 79th minute equalizer. Blues boss Tuchel might have second guessed his decision to take off Barkley, and he was quick to praise the player's contribution.

"He waited a long time and he had a huge impact on our matches when he came on," Tuchel said. "He



LONDON: Chelsea's English midfielder Ross Barkley (right) controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Burnley at Stamford Bridge in London on Saturday. —AFP

deserved the chance to start. We changed the position in the front three today, so he could play as a number 10. He had a good match. Maybe he had the match on his foot with that chance. If you see him in training he would score that. Of course he is angry on himself but he created chances, so nobody minds."

'Very serious'

Barkley has made only eight appearances in all competitions this term and his lack of game-time has left his England career also on hold. If Mount, Lukaku and Werner are available in the coming weeks, there could be less opportunities for Barkley to remind Tuchel of his qualities. But, with Chelsea facing a hectic schedule as they challenge for silverware in four competitions, Tuchel offered a glimmer of hope to the midfielder.

"It depends on himself first of all, if he stays hum-

ble and hard working. I'm happy if he is not completely satisfied," Tuchel said. "He was very serious from the first moment in pre-season, but there is a lot of competition at Chelsea. You need to be ready. If we think you are ready there is a chance to come on the pitch." Tuchel was less forthcoming about his touchline spat with Sean Dyche — an incident provoked by Barkley's collision with Ben Mee. Tuchel reacted to a comment from Dyche by leaping to his feet and angrily gesticulating at the Burnley manager.

Dyche's assistant Steve Stone reportedly told Tuchel and his staff to show more "respect" during the incident. But Tuchel would not be drawn on the row, saying only: "I don't want to talk about it now. Maybe it was fun for you but I will not talk about it." "I learned in my career as a coach not to comment on referees and other coaches. It will catch you out. So I will not comment." —AFP



KUWAIT: A group photo of the winners in the men's and juniors' competitions with the tournament's organizers.



A group photo of the winners in the women's competitions with the tournament's organizers.

Saad grabs skeet gold in Crown Prince tourney as Olympian Rashidi finishes third

Iman Al-Shamma, Hussa Al-Zayed, Mariam Al-Kandari win gold in women's contests

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Olympic bronze medalist Abdullah Al-Rashidi finished third in the men's skeet competition of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shooting tournament which concluded on Saturday. Rashidi, who had won a bronze medal in the same category during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in July, settled with a bronze too in Kuwait's top annual shooting tournament as fellow shooting club teammates Abdelaziz Al-Saad and Saud Al-Kandari grabbed the gold and silver respectively.

A large number of officials and fans attended the concluding ceremony of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shooting tournament, during which the winners were handed their medals and prizes. HH the Crown Prince was represented by Capital Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Duajj Al-Otaibi welcomed the guests. "We are honored to organize the second HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah annual tournament, which was held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex and Kuwait Shooting Sport Club in Jahra," he said. He added that the higher organizing committee, which he chaired, was keen to cooperate with state agencies to prepare the shooting complex for the local season with all safety and health precautions in place.

Otaibi said 300 shooters participated in the tournament, where qualified Kuwaiti referees officiated in all games. He reminded that HH the Crown Prince gave instructions to support Kuwaiti youth in general and Kuwait shooting in particular, adding his support resulted in the signing of a cooperation protocol between KSSC and the National Guard, which contributed to having outstanding shooters from the Guard whose levels were developed at the club.

He said Kuwait shooting was able to make significant achievements, most important of which is being the top in Asia in shotgun, besides winning several champi-

Final results of shooting tournament

- Skeet - men:** Abdelaziz Al-Saad, Saud Al-Kandari, Abdullah Al-Rashidi
- Trap - men:** Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Nasser Al-Miqled, Dhafer Al-Aryani (UAE)
- Trap - special needs:** Faisal Al-Rashidi, Usama Kimshad, Bader Al-Munaifi
- Skeet - women:** Iman Al-Shamma, Afrah Adel, Sheikha Al-Rashidi
- Trap - juniors:** Yousuf Tami, Salah Al-Rashidi, Dhari Al-Mutairi
- Skeet - juniors:** Saud Al-Hamly
- Air pistol 10m - men:** Hamad Saad, Hassan Abdelmajid, Ali Al-Mutairi
- Air rifle 10m - men:** Khalid Mohammad, Ali Farhan, Abdullah Al-Harby
- Rifle 50m 3 positions - men:** Abdullah Al-Harby, Turkey Al-Shimmari, Majid Aboud
- Rapid pistol 25m - men:** Othman Al-Failakawi, Hassan Abdelmajid, Saud Funisan
- Air rifle 10m - women:** Hussa Al-Zayed, Mariam Irzouqi, Reem Al-Bughaili
- Air pistol 10m - women:** Mariam Al-Kandari, Shahah Al-Khaddah, Israa Bahman
- Air rifle 10m - juniors:** Abdullah Abdelhadi, Muath Abdelaziz, Turkey Al-Mutairi
- Air pistol 10m - juniors:** Faisal Munawekh, Bander Al-Ghazi, Fahad Al-Hussaini
- Olympic archery - men:** Abdullah Taha, Faisal Sindi, Abdullah Farraj
- Compound archery - men:** Abdullah Malallah, Ahmad Al-Shatti, Bader Saleh
- Archery - juniors:** Mohammad Al-Taisi, Mohammad Al-Mutairi, Abdelkareem Al-Saeed.

onships as well as the only Olympic medal at the Tokyo 2020 Games by shooter Abdullah Al-Rashidi. He said shooters Rashidi, Abdelrahman Al-Faihan and Talal Al-Rashidi were chosen among the best 10 shooters in the

world. Otaibi concluded his speech by saying that preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympics start from now, and a plan has been set and sent to the Public Authority for Sport.



Preparations for Paris 2024 Olympics start now

Meanwhile, Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, who had participated in last summer's Olympics, won gold in the men's trap competition, after finishing ahead of Nasser Al-Miqled and Dhafer Al-Aryani. In women's competitions, Iman Al-Shamma won gold in skeet, while Hussa Al-Zayed claimed the gold medal in air rifle 10m and Mariam Al-Kandari grabbed the gold medal in the air pistol 10m contest.

Alvarez knocks out Plant to make super middleweight history

LAS VEGAS: Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez made history Saturday, knocking out Caleb Plant in the 11th round to become the first undisputed world super middleweight champion, unifying all four major belts in less than 12 months.

The 31-year-old added the IBF belt to his WBC, WBA and WBO straps in a winner-takes-all showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas to join an exclusive club. Mexico's Alvarez knocked Plant down twice in the 11th; the first time with a stinging left hook, followed up by a thundering right uppercut. Plant got up but the American was still wobbly and in a fog as Alvarez chased him around the ring.

Alvarez pummeled Plant with rights and lefts to drop him for good at 1:05 of the round. The Mexican had seized the WBA and WBC titles by defeating Callum Smith in December 2020. He defended them successfully by overpowering Avni Yildirim in February and then clobbered Billy Joe Saunders six months ago to grab the WBO belt.

Alvarez came into the bout as a heavy favorite to become the first Mexican four-belt champion. With a complete collection of 168-pound titles, he becomes just the sixth fighter since the WBO began sanctioning world title fights in 1988 to hold all four belts from



LAS VEGAS: Canelo Alvarez of Mexico (right) lands a punch on Caleb Plant of the United States (left) during their super-middleweight unification boxing match at MGM Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada on Saturday. — AFP

the separate governing bodies at the same time. Only five other boxers — Oleksandr Usyk (cruiserweight), Bernard Hopkins (middleweight), Jermain Taylor (middleweight), Terence Crawford (super-lightweight) and Josh Taylor (super-lightweight) — have held all four belts. "It hasn't been easy to get to this point," Alvarez said. "With my team I have gone really far. This is for everybody, especially for Mexico. We did it tonight. We

are only six. It keeps me happy and motivated to be one of the six undisputed fighters in the world."

Alvarez improved to 57-1-2 with 39 knockouts in handing Plant the first defeat of his career. Plant is now 21-1 with 12 KOs. Even though Plant was fighting in his home country, he was booed during the introductions as the majority of the Las Vegas crowd was cheering for Alvarez throughout the fight.

Alvarez won just about every round leading up to the 11th but still Plant proved to be an awkward opponent. Alvarez needed a spectacular KO to put a stamp on what up until then had been a mediocre performance. Both fighters used the first round to feel each other out. They stuck to their game plans in the second round with Alvarez landing left hooks to the head and Plant sneaking in a few jabs.

Plant lost all but one round in the first half of the fight but he did a good job of staying out of trouble, slipping punches and weathering the coming storm. By the sixth round Plant's jab had lost some of its snap as his lack of power started to show.

Alvarez was warned for a low blow in the fifth but he also landed one of his best left hooks in the round right on the button that hurt Plant. He grew more confident as he started to realize that Plant couldn't hurt him with his now pawing punches.

In the 10th round, Plant got more careless and his jab completely disappeared. He tried to fight in close but couldn't get through Alvarez's stingy defense. Halfway through the 11th Alvarez caught Plant with a vicious left hook and then followed it up right away with a right uppercut as Plant was going down.

Plant rose but it was clear the end was near. After a brief conversation with the referee the fight continued and Alvarez could smell blood. He went on the attack, charging forward and swarming Plant with a flurry of rights and lefts, finally putting on the finishing touches with a straight right to the head. Alvarez said Plant, 29, wanted to keep going but he told him he should stop. "He wanted to continue. I told him there is no shame. Of course I came out on top," said Alvarez. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Kaifan	24849807
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Shamiya	24848913
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shuwaikh	24814507
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Chest Hospital	24849400	Nuzha	22526804
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Adan Hospital	23940620	Qadsiya	22515088
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		Dasmah
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000		22532265
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
		Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
		Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
		Mirqab	22456536
		Sharq	22465401
		Salmiya	25746401

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075

STAY CONNECTED

• Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**

• Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**

• Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616 / 7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net

CHANGE OF NAME

Old name: Chennareddy Subbareddy S/o Chennareddy Narayana Reddy Passport no. K4765901. Address 5, Dirasavantha Brahmamgarimattam, ys. Kadapa District Pin 516502, Andhra Pradesh India New Name Katterapalle Subbareddy S/o Katterapalle Narayana Reddy (a.d no=930829459042). New Address: Door No 8-3-106 Koti Reddy Nagar Gopavaram (mandal) Badvel Municipality ys. Kadapa District, A.P India Pin Code 516227. I have change name & address. (C 0968) 8-11-2021

Basheer Kannur Abdul S/o Abdul Khader. D.No. 2-103-1, Mainmoona Manzil Ganadabettu House 575007 D.K. I have changed my name as Abdul Basheer. (C 0966)

I CHENNREDDY SUBBA REDDY, S/o. KATTERA PALLE NARAYANA REDDY, R/of D.No. 8-3-106; Koti Reddy Nagar, Badvel (Town), Gopavaram (Ma), YSR KADAPA (Di), A.P, do hereby change my name to KATTERAPALLE SUBBAREDDY (UID: 930829459042), S/o. KATTERAPALLE NARAYANA REDDY. Passport no. K4765901. (C 0967) 3-11-2021



ABU DHABI: Afghanistan's Mohammad Shahzad (center) greets New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson at the end of the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between New Zealand and Afghanistan at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

New Zealand into T20 World Cup semi-finals, India eliminated

ABU DHABI: New Zealand reached the Twenty20 World Cup semi-finals with a comfortable eight-wicket win over Afghanistan yesterday, a result that eliminated star-studded India from the tournament. Chasing a modest 125, skipper Kane Williamson (40) and Devon Conway (36) put on an unbeaten stand of 68 to drive the team home in 18.1 overs in Abu Dhabi.

The Kiwis join Pakistan as the two teams in the semi-finals from Group 2, leaving India's final match against Namibia on Monday a dead rubber. England and Australia have already made the semi-finals from Group 1.

"It was a strong performance," said Williamson. "We know how dangerous this Afghanistan side is. It was good for us to be able to set the tone with the ball, take wickets early and then keep them to below-par total. 150-155 would have been par."

"There's another strong challenge coming up. England are a very strong side," said Williamson. "For us it is important we keep learning and building." Afghanistan skipper Mohammad Nabi

admitted making only 124 was never likely to be enough.

'Not decent total'

"This was not a decent total," said Nabi after his team ended the tournament with two wins and three losses. "Still we tried our best with the ball. We played good cricket in the tournament, and we will take a lot of positives. But we need to correct the mistakes we made with the bat."

Left-arm quick Trent Boult returned figures of 3-17 from his four overs and was ably supported by Tim Southee, who took two wickets, to restrict Afghanistan to 124-8. Najibullah Zadran played a lone hand with his 48-ball 73 to give the Afghanistan total some respectability after they

elected to bat first.

New Zealand's pace bowlers rattled the opposition's top order with quick strikes as Adam Milne sent back Mohammad Shahzad caught behind for four in his first over. Boult got going from the other end to get Hazratullah Zazai out for two and Southee trapped Rahmanullah Gurbaz lbw for six as Afghanistan slipped to 19-3.

Zadran counter-attacked with a handful of boundaries including two off Jimmy Neesham but soon took to defence after losing his partner Gulbadin Naib for 15. Naib dragged a wide delivery from Kiwi leg-spinner Ish Sodhi onto his stumps.

Skipper Mohammad Nabi joined Zadran at the crease as the duo attempted to push the scoring

against the spinners and singled out Mitchell Santner for runs. The left-handed Zadran smashed Santner for two sixes and later got to his 50 in a 33 balls. It was his second fifty in this T20 World Cup and sixth overall.

Southee broke the 59-run partnership, seeing off Nabi for 14. Boult got the key scalp of Zadran with Neesham taking a good diving catch in the deep and the Afghans struggled to get runs in the final overs.

New Zealand remained clinical in their modest chase with Martin Gupthill and Daryl Mitchell mixing their singles and twos with occasional boundaries. Mujeeb Ur Rahman struck with the wicket of Mitchell, caught behind for 17.

Spin king Rashid Khan then sent back Gupthill bowled for 28 to bag his 400th wicket in T20 matches. But Williamson stood firm with Conway who joined his skipper for a smooth partnership that steered the team home. The left-hand Conway smashed four boundaries and the winning runs in his 32-ball knock. — AFP



Kiwis join Pakistan into semis

Drab draw with Everton shows task ahead for Conte

LIVERPOOL: Antonio Conte was given an early indication of the huge challenge that lies ahead if he is to take Tottenham back to the Champions League as Spurs labored to a 0-0 draw at Everton yesterday. A game short on clear-cut chances could easily have ended in Tottenham's sixth defeat in eight league games but for a controversial intervention from VAR to overturn the decision to award Everton a second-half penalty.

Giovanni Lo Celso nearly snatched all three points for Spurs when his shot hit the post late on before Everton had to see out stoppage time a man down following Mason Holgate's straight red card. Conte can point to a first clean sheet in the league since August as the first sign of progress since replacing Nuno Espirito Santo earlier this week. However, their struggle to score goals goes on as Harry Kane has still netted just once in the Premier League this season.

Tottenham climb to ninth, four points adrift of the top four, while Everton are a point worse off in 11th. The sackings of Norwich boss Daniel Farke and Aston Villa



LIVERPOOL: Tottenham Hotspur's Italian head coach Antonio Conte reacts during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Tottenham Hotspur at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

manager Dean Smith over the weekend took the total in the English top-flight to five already this season.

Rafael Benitez is another manager under pressure as a bright start has given way to two points from the last 15 on offer in the league. Benitez's appointment was not warmly welcomed by a large proportion of the Everton support due to his Champions League-winning past at rivals Liverpool. But the Spaniard has been hamstrung by injuries to key players and the presence of Abdoulaye Doucoure and Dominic Calvert-Lewin was badly missed by the home side.

Tottenham had the better of a poor first

45 minutes from both sides. Sergio Reguilon blazed over the best chance from Kane's pinpoint cross. The game suddenly sparked into life on the hour mark when Everton thought they had a penalty after Hugo Lloris dived at the feet of Richarlison and clipped the Brazilian.

However, after a VAR review, referee Chris Kavanagh overturned his original decision on the basis Lloris got enough of a touch on the ball. A replay of the incident shown inside Goodison Park sparked outrage among the Everton fans and they used the sense of injustice to fuel their best spell of the game. — AFP

Aston Villa sack manager Dean Smith

LONDON: Dean Smith has been sacked as manager of Aston Villa after five straight Premier League defeats, the club announced yesterday. Smith guided Villa back to the English top flight in 2019 but has paid the price for their disappointing form this season, with Friday's 1-0 defeat at Southampton proving the last straw for club bosses.

The former European champions were 15th in the Premier League table ahead of Sunday's matches after picking up just 10 points from their opening 11 games. Smith's departure comes the day after bottom club Norwich sacked their manager Daniel Farke.

Villa chief executive Christian Purslow said in a statement on the club's website: "After a good start to last season, this year we have not seen the continuous improvement in results, performances and league position which we have all been looking for. "For this reason

we have decided to make a change now to allow time for a new head coach to make an impact."

Former Brentford manager Smith, 50, took charge of Villa in October 2018 and led them to promotion via the play-offs in his first season. The following campaign he kept them up and they reached the League Cup final, which they lost to Manchester City. They finished 11th last season but lost star player Jack Grealish to City in the transfer window.

The club's statement added: "The board would like to sincerely thank Dean for his many excellent achievements, on and off the pitch, during this time. Everyone knows how much Aston Villa means to Dean and his family. He has represented the club with distinction and dignity."

Grealish tweeted: "No! will ever compare, the real goat (greatest of all time)." Smith is the fifth managerial casualty in the Premier League this season. — AFP