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Amir delegates some of his powers to Crown Prince

Some Amiri constitutional rights temporarily assigned to Sheikh Mishal



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday issued an Amiri order delegating “some of his constitutional powers” on a temporary basis to HH the Crown Prince



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the minister of the Amiri Diwan announced. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said “an Amiri order has been issued assigning the Crown Prince some of the Amir’s constitutional powers on a temporary basis”.

UAE: World still needs to invest billions in oil, gas

ABU DHABI: The UAE, one of the world’s top crude exporters, said a recent UN climate summit in Glasgow was a “success” but that the world needs to keep investing billions in oil and gas. Nearly 200 countries at the COP26 summit pledged Saturday to speed up the fight against rising temperatures, after two weeks of negotiations.

But they failed to secure a consensus to keep coal in the ground, and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has warned that “climate catastrophe” is still knocking at the door. The summit “was indeed a success”, said Sultan Al-Jaber, the UAE’s minister of industry and advanced technology. But he forecast that the oil and gas industry would have

to invest “over \$600 billion every year until 2030 just to keep up with the expected demand”.

“While the world has agreed to accelerate the energy transition, it is still heavily reliant on oil and gas,” he told the opening session of the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference. “As economies bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic at the fastest rate in 50 years, demand has out-paced supply.”

Both the United Arab Emirates and neighboring Saudi Arabia, the world’s number one oil exporter, have announced net zero carbon goals, despite plans to ramp up oil production. Net zero refers to emissions created within a country, not by products sold and consumed abroad. The UAE, Saudi Arabia and other major oil producers have defended their plans to continue investing in fossil fuels.

“The future is coming, but it is not here yet,” said Jaber, whose country is set to host COP28. “We must make

progress with pragmatism. If we are to successfully transition to the energy system of tomorrow, we cannot simply unplug from the energy system of today.” Also at the Abu Dhabi conference, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman hit back at critics questioning Riyadh’s net zero ambitions. “I can understand the skepticism, but I also would refer those sceptics to what we’ve agreed to just two days ago,” he said, referring to the COP26 summit.

A visiting delegation of US politicians told AFP on Friday the UAE accepts that oil is not its future despite being one of the world’s top exporters. The UAE’s leaders “recognize that their future is not going to be in oil”, Senator Ben Cardin said at the end of a trip that also included the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow. UAE officials “recognize reality”, delegation member and House of Representatives Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said after talks with Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. — AFP



KUWAIT: (From left) Former opposition MPs Mubarak Al-Waalan, Jamaan Al-Harbash and Salem Al-Namlan are welcomed by supporters after they arrived in Kuwait yesterday after being pardoned by HH the Amir. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



3 opposition figures return from Turkey

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Three former opposition MPs - Jamaan Al-Harbash, Mubarak Al-Waalan and Salem Al-Namlan - returned yesterday from Turkey, where they had been living in exile for the past three and a half years to escape multi-year jail terms passed against them for storming the National Assembly building in 2011. HH the Amir had issued a decree pardoning six former MPs and five activists living in exile. The remaining ex-MPs and activists are due to return to Kuwait in the coming few days.

India opens to tourists after 20 months

NEW DELHI: India yesterday opened to foreign tourists from countries with reciprocal agreements after a 20-month ban because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tour operators said, however, that demand was extremely sluggish due to high ticket prices and remaining restrictions on travelers from Britain, China and elsewhere.

The country famous for the Taj Mahal, desert palaces and tiger reserves barred all foreign tourists in March 2020 as the pandemic intensified. But after a devastating spike in COVID-19 cases earlier this year, the number of known infections has fallen sharply and the government, under pressure from an industry that is an important pillar of the economy, last month announced a loosening.

Tourist visas were issued for fully vaccinated foreigners from countries with reciprocal arrangements arriving on charter flights from Oct 15. This was widened to include other flights yesterday.

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100 schools reopen in Philippines

MANILA: Thousands of children in the Philippines were allowed to return to classrooms yesterday for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, as a pilot reopening of schools got under way. While nearly every country in the world has already partially or fully re-opened their schools to

face-to-face learning, the Philippines has kept them closed since March 2020.

Kindergarten teacher Zyrex Damayo said he was “a bit nervous” as he greeted eight of his students at the Siocon Elementary School in Bogo city in the central island province of Cebu. “I was expecting some of them to cry... (but) it went smoothly and we did not have any problems,” Damayo told AFP. “They were quiet - they’re still a bit shy.”

A hundred public schools out of more than 61,000 have been selected for the two-month trial, which is expected to be expanded in the coming

of the sea. One of the longest rivers in the North African kingdom and a vital lifeline for farmers in the area near the Algerian border, the final few paces of the 500-km waterway are now separated by over-pumping of the water. It’s pretty dramatic.”

“It’s the first time ever that the Moulouya has stopped flowing into the sea,” said Benata, a retired agronomist. “The flow has been weakened by over-pumping of the water. It’s pretty dramatic.”

Continued on Page 2



BOGO, Philippines: Kindergarten students attend a face-to-face class at Siocon Elementary School in this town in Cebu province yesterday. — AFP



SAIDIA, Morocco: Farmers stand together by the Moulouya riverbank in northeastern Morocco on Nov 2, 2021. — AFP

Local

Al-Hamra hosts Diplomatic Women's Committee to journey through 'Tabassar'

Exclusive exhibition offers look at late Amir's life, legacy



KUWAIT: Members of the Diplomatic Women's Committee are seen in a group photo during their visit to Tabassar exhibition at Al-Hamra Shopping Center. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Members of the Diplomatic Women's Committee tour the exhibition.



Diplomatic Women's Committee members listen to an explanation during the visit.

KUWAIT: As part of its continuing tribute to His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's life journey, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company recently welcomed the Diplomatic Women's Committee at Al-Hamra Shopping Center. Women delegates representing over 30 countries toured the retrospective exhibition which highlights His Highness the late Amir's memorable milestones.

In collaboration with prominent local talent, Jassim Al-Nashmi, founder of Manmade Studio, designer, architect and artist, the brand identity and title of the exhibition is called Tabassar or 'Enlighten', which was inspired by the memorable words of the late Sheikh Sabah during one of his notable speeches, in which he reflected on the many blessings bestowed upon Kuwait and shared his gratitude to the Almighty for security, safety, stability, peace, tranquility, well-being and a good life.

The exhibition dated from his childhood in 1929 until his demise in the 2020 (may his soul rest in peace) pays tribute to the late Amir's outstanding contributions as a humanitarian leader, inspirational leadership, his rise as a formidable pillar of the local and global communities, and role as the 'Dean of Arab diplomacy' among other lifetime achievements. The late Amir of Kuwait forged exceptional diplomatic ties, peace and was responsible for giving women the right to vote and run for office in 2005, creating a landmark amendment to the Kuwaiti election law.

The tour was followed by a visit to the award-winning skyscraper which is the tallest building in Kuwait, Al-Hamra Business Tower, to learn more about the iconic sculptural form. Among the VIP guests were Sheikhah Halah Bader Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the committee's Media and Public Relations Officer as well as other committee members who expressed their admiration of the several of the rare photographs and footages as well as of the landmark tower, which stands as a symbol of national pride.

Commenting on the visit, Bibi Al-Hamad, Senior Executive - Communication and Digital Marketing of Al-Hamra Real Estate Company said: "It was an honor to share His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah A- Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's legacy with some of the most distinguished women from across the world, moreover, celebrate the life of a man and leader who pioneered the rights of Kuwaiti women at a challenging time, signifying one of the most important and dynamic movements in Kuwait's history. As one of the first companies to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles in Kuwait, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company continues to support the cause of women through strategic collaborations with global and local likeminded entities." The exhibition will be live until the end of 2021.



Members of the Diplomatic Women's Committee are seen during their visit to the exhibition.

India opens to tourists after...

Continued from Page 1

Visitors from the approved countries can acquire a tourist visa online and need only monitor their health for 14 days after arrival. But those from Britain, the European Union, China, Brazil, South Africa and elsewhere are subject to additional measures including COVID tests on arrival. The

first half a million visas were also free.

Rajeev Mehra, president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators, said that arrivals were expected to reach only around five percent of pre-pandemic levels in the coming months. "We are getting inquiries and we are giving them quotations but when they see expensive airfares, they tell us will try and come later," Mehra told AFP. "If things remain stable globally, we expect a full house during October 2022 season." Goa, a popular tourist destination in southern India, will see its first charter flight from Britain land on Dec 13, the Times of India reported in late October. — AFP

100 schools reopen in...

Continued from Page 1

weeks, education officials said. Many of the schools are located in remote, mountainous or island communities considered to be low risk for virus transmission. "I cannot guarantee that this will be 100 percent successful, but in our assessment, we have high hopes that this pilot will be a success," Education Secretary Leonor Briones said last week.

Students in kindergarten, grades one to three, and senior high school are eligible to take part in the trial. Class sizes are capped and time in the classroom limited, with strict rules on mask wearing, hand washing and social distancing. A "blended learning" program, which involves online classes, printed materials and lessons broadcast on television and social media, will continue.

Schools in the national capital region also have been pushing to resume face-to-face lessons, but so

far they have not received the green light. Oliver Sanchez, principal of Filemon T Lizan Senior High School in Navotas City, said most parents wanted their children back in the classroom. "I think they got tired of teaching their children," Sanchez told AFP.

Nearly 30 percent of the country's 110 million people are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, though the rate is almost 70 percent in the capital Manila. Authorities began rolling out jabs for children as young as 12 this month. The Philippines has recorded more than 2.8 million infections since the start of the pandemic, but the daily case rate has fallen dramatically in recent weeks.

There have been growing calls from the UN's children fund and many teachers for a return to in-person learning amid concerns the prolonged closure was exacerbating an education crisis in the country. Fifteen-year-olds in the Philippines were at or near the bottom in reading, mathematics and science, according to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Most students attend public schools where large class sizes, outdated teaching methods, lack of investment in basic infrastructure such as toilets, and poverty have been blamed for youngsters lagging behind. — AFP

Over-pumping cuts Morocco...

Continued from Page 1

And as the fresh water of the river recedes, salty seawater is creeping up the groundwaters around the riverbed, spelling ruin for farmers as much as 15 km inland.

Outside the village of Karcha, Ahmed Hedaoui farms several parched fields, but this year his melons are pale, yellow and deformed. "Even the wild boar don't want them," said the 46-year-old, wearing a baseball cap against the autumn sun. "This year, I invested almost 300,000 dirhams (around \$34,000) to improve this soil. I installed two pumps to irrigate the melons, but I've got nothing to show for it," he said. "Everything's dead because there's hardly any rain and the river is salty."

Seawater can hold up to 35 gm of salt per liter, while freshwater usually has less than half a gram - but the brackish river water here contains as much as seven grams. That has spelled disaster for wildlife in the area, according to Benata. "The flora and fauna won't get away unscathed," he said. Salt seeping into the soil is an existential threat for Hedaoui's cousin Mustapha, who is struggling to grow artichokes in a nearby field.

Mustapha is a French teacher who turned to farming, but because of water shortages, today he only farms around a third of his 57 hectares. "It's been two months now since this field was irrigated with freshwater," he said. "We don't use the river water because the salt destroys the soil for years."

What was the mouth of the river is now also filling up with rubbish, spoiling one of the richest natural reserves in the area. Hedaoui, like several other farmers AFP interviewed in the area, blamed "bad water management" and an excess of infrastructure, including two pumping stations and three dams along the river. The second pumping station, which started six months ago in the nearby town of Zaio, can in theory irrigate 30,000 hectares of farmland. But for Mustapha, it was "the knockout blow for the farmers of the lower Moulouya".

Abderrahim Zekhnini, 61, has given up on his family's 200-hectare farm. He complains that water pumped from the river is shared unequally, with fruit farmers getting preferential treatment. But Mohamed Bousfou, the regional director of the agriculture ministry, defends the policy, arguing that dead trees take far longer to replace than seasonal crops.

"Orchards are given priority in water distribution over the vegetable crops, because we are seeing an exceptional drought," he said. He also dismissed over-pumping as a reason for the salinification. "Definitely the pumping stations have an impact on the flow of the river, but studies were carried out upstream to avoid any imbalance," he said.

The agriculture ministry forecasts worsening drought across Morocco in coming decades, with precipitation falling 11 percent and average temperatures rising 1.3 degrees Celsius by 2050. That could cause stocks of water for irrigation to reduce by a quarter, it said in a study. But for many of the Moulouya basin's farmers, the crisis is already here. "What gets me the most is seeing my children forced to go and find work elsewhere, on other farms, rather than on our own land," Zekhnini said. — AFP

Local

Kuwait to pursue partnership between public, private sectors: Defense Minister

Legislations passed to facilitate foreign companies' entry into Kuwait

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah said that Kuwait realized the importance of working to activate partnership between the public and private sectors in the implementation of projects, pointing out the government's keenness to update its laws over the years. This was in a speech Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali delivered virtually yesterday at the opening of the first Kuwait Conference on Partnership between the Public and Private Sectors, entitled "Partnership Journey towards Growth and Prosperity," organized by Nouf Expo under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He hopes that the two-day conference would end with recommendations that would contribute to achieving goals and aspirations in building effective partnerships that would support the implementation of Kuwait's 2035 Vision.

Meanwhile, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Dr Rana Al-Fares said in her speech that the conference is vital for Kuwait. Fares, who is also Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Supreme Committee for Partnership Projects

between the Public and Private Sectors, noted that the committee is working to activate the participation of the local and international private sector in financing, implementing and operating development and strategic projects in Kuwait. Kuwait approved many legislations to facilitate the entry of foreign companies into the Kuwaiti market, she explained.

In the meantime, CEO of Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) Thamer Arab said in his speech that the conference reflects the economic and strategic direction and the expansion of the private sector participation. Countries and governments seek to develop health care by investing in strategic partnerships between both sectors, Arab added, noting that the company's first projects in the health sector were through health insurance hospitals to become a health care destination for all workers

in the private sector.

Furthermore, Head of the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consulting Houses Bader Al-Salman said in his speech that the conference constitutes an opportunity to gather specialized global expertise with local production sectors to contribute to the success of future development plans and make Kuwait a suitable investment destination for international and local companies. — KUNA



DHAMAN to provide health care for all private sector workers



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah (top left) speaks during the opening of the first Kuwait Conference on Partnership between the Public and Private Sectors, held virtually yesterday. — KUNA

Prime Minister meets UN Special Envoy to Yemen



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace the visiting United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg, and his accompanying delegation.

The Head of His Highness the Prime Minister Diwan Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel, and the Acting Assistance of Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Organizations Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah attended the meeting. — KUNA

UN official lauds managers of Kuwait's tires recycling plant

KUWAIT: The Resident Representative of the UN Secretary General Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh yesterday heaped praise upon organizers and managers of the used tires' recycling plant in Al-Salmi, where large amounts of used tires were recently moved to. This came in a press release issued by the resident office after a delegation from the office visited the recycling factory in Al-Salmi. Sheikh was quoted by the statement as emphasizing sustainability of recycling the used materials to cut volumes of the discarded

materials; noting that such industry contributes to bolstering the national economy.

Meanwhile, Alaa Hassan, Chairman and CEO at EPSCO Global General Contracting Company, said that it had dawned on her to launch the tires recycling factory in Al-Salmi after seeing the high heaps of used tires in Arhia, occupying a vast land that could be used for building houses. Hassan added that the Kuwaiti government and the Environment Public Authority approved building the factory for EPSCO in the end of 2017. More than one million torn and used tires had been transported from Arhia per month. The recycling plant in Al-Salmi was built on a 20,000 square meter plot of land in 2019. Its capacity amounts to one to three million tires per year (8,300 tires per month). She added that the total amount of used tires in Kuwait per year amounts to 1.5 million. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A delegation from the UN resident's office in Kuwait poses for a group photo during a visit to the used tires' recycling plant in Al-Salmi yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Around 12 suicides per month in Kuwait this year: Report

KUWAIT: The latest suicide cases of citizens and residents raises a red flag, as many of them used various means and methods in ending their lives. Suicides reached 120 cases from January until November 2021; around 12 cases per month, according to official statistics. Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting security sources that a majority of these suicides are committed by Asians, with cases increasing since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

They added security authorities will deport any resident who attempts to commit suicide, after the increase in such attempts, particularly from Jaber Causeway. Police stations have received repeated calls about suicide attempts, mostly by Asians, and firefighters have responded and saved 10 lives since the start of the pandemic.

The National Diwan of Human Rights revealed in a study conducted with seven government entities to find the reasons behind the rising number of suicides by citizens and residents. Chairman of the complaints committee at the Diwan Ali Al-Baghli said "having three suicide cases in one day should catch the attention of the society to act quickly to save more lives". He said Kuwait registered the largest number of suicide cases in its history during 2020.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister attends Abu Dhabi int'l conference

ABU DHABI: Participants in a discussion panel at the opening ceremony of Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC 2021) yesterday stressed on the importance of the OPEC+ role in achieving balance in the market through setting a forecast plan for 2022. Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares headed the Kuwaiti delegation, which included CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Cooperation (KPC) Hashem Hashem and Kuwaiti OPEC governor Mohammad Al-Shatti.

Participants at the start of the gathering pointed out that oil producers increased the output and ensured sufficient supply to the market, thus paving the way for improved living conditions. They said that developing countries need investments to increase their production in oil and gas to improve their economy and standard of life. UAE Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Suhail Almazroui attended the discussion panel alongside OPEC General Secretary Mohammad Barkindo, Omani Minister of

Oil and Gas Mohammad Al-Ramhi and Guinean Minister of Mines Hydrocarbons Gabriel Lima.

The convention, held after UN's Climate Change Conference (COP-26) that discussed means of protecting the environment, is due to proceed until November 18. ADIPEC 2021 is sponsored by the President of UAE Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, represented by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. Officials from several countries are partaking in the event. Egypt will be hosting COP-27 and the UAE will host COP-28. The regional countries' planned hosting of the international conferences depict the role of the Middle East in investing in renewable energy, securing the energy and environment worldwide.

The OPEC+ alliance decided during a ministerial meeting, on November 4, to maintain current oil production and increase the output gradually. Oil ministers of OPEC and non-OPEC oil-producing countries had agreed on hiking the oil production by some 400,000 barrels per day until December.

The conference focuses on new market dynamics, future fuel, future energy companies and transformational technologies. There are 51 national and international oil companies and 26 booths from 167 countries taking part in the event. The conference also includes the 11th edition of the ADIPEC awards, which will be hosted today with the participation of over 700 projects from more than 50 countries. — KUNA



ABU DHABI: Kuwaiti Minister of Oil Dr Mohammad Al-Fares (third from left) speaks during the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference. — KUNA

GCC military command an achievement by members: Secretary General

RIYADH: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf yesterday affirmed that activation of the joint GCC military command is one of the common achievements attained by the member states. Hajraf made the statement during a meeting with Commander of the Joint GCC Military Command Colonel General Eid Awad Al-Shalawi, held at the GCC Secretariat General headquarters, the Official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said yesterday. Hajraf commended efforts of the senior officers at the command, established with a gracious blessing on part of their royalty and highnesses, the top GCC leaders. It has been set up for sake of attaining security, stability and independence of the GCC member states, Hajraf said further.

Meanwhile, the GCC and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have inked a memo of the executive program: complementary to a memo signed by the two sides in 2008. The GCC Secretariat General said in a statement yesterday that the inked memo stipulated activation of technical-level meetings for addressing issues such as combating terrorism, human rights and common efforts.

The Secretary General quoted Hajraf as affirming significance of the relations and cooperation between the two sides and the need for boosting this coordination. It added that Hajraf and OIC Secretary General Dr Yousef Al-Othaimeen discussed issues of joint concern during a meeting and the need for enhancing cooperation between the two sides.

The GCC, established in the early 1980s in the shadow of a major war between Iran and Iraq, groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. It was established to achieve closer cooperation among the regional countries at various levels. — KUNA



RIYADH: GCC Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf and OIC Secretary General Dr Yousef Al-Othaimeen are seen following their meeting in Riyadh yesterday. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
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ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netKuwait TV marks
60th anniversary

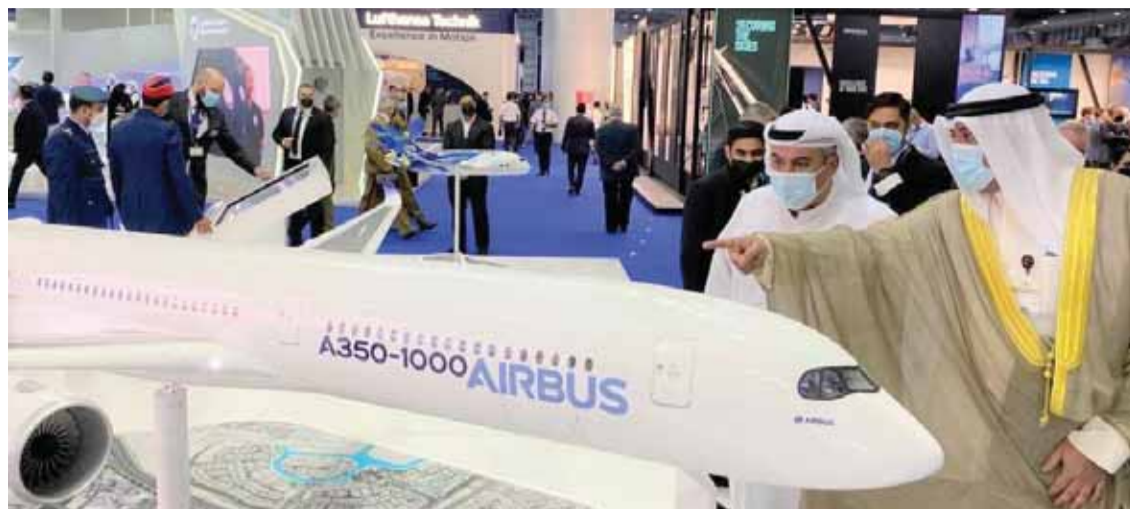
KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed yesterday that Kuwait TV, over its long history which spanned for 60 years, constituted an important mark in the Arab media. In a statement to the press, Mutairi applauded the strenuous efforts of the current and former employees who developed the broadcasting television to eight channels which are the first, second (English), third (Sports), Sports Plus, Ithra, Al-Arabi, Al-Qurain and Stay at Home channels. He pointed out that Kuwait TV has a great role in promoting the values of citizenship and national unity and authentic moral values of the Islamic religion and Kuwaiti traditions, in addition to spreading the concepts of culture, literature and fine art among its viewers. Mutairi stated that the television effectively contributed to raising society's awareness of the coronavirus crisis, as it was a link between the state government and people. He called for developing television screens with the highest technologies and quality to achieve digital transformation, including a special application to display Kuwait TV works anywhere. — KUNA



Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi

Kuwait aviation authority showcases
new airport projects at Dubai Airshow

DUBAI: Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has eminently displayed current and future projects of Kuwait International Airport at the 17th edition of Dubai Airshow 2021, which kicked off on Sunday. DGCA President Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, accompanied by Saad Al-Otaibi, the deputy director general for planning and projects affairs, visited yesterday the Kuwaiti pavilion where they were greeted by Information Ministry Undersecretary Munira Al-Huwaidi and the director of the Kuwaiti section Dr Badr Al-Enezi. Otaibi said in remarks to the press that the Kuwaiti participation in the fair is aimed at displaying key development ventures particularly for overhauling the infrastructure and the air aviation. One of the projects underway is Terminal 2, which is forecast to accommodate 25 million passengers a year, he said, adding that another one is the third runway being built to cope with mounting air operations, in addition to the construction of a new observation towers, to be equipped with state-art devices. In line with the state's approach to boost partnership between the public and private sectors, the civil aviation has proposed several projects; namely the international



DUBAI: DGCA President Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah is seen while touring the Dubai Airshow 2021. — KUNA

al navigation operator, the international operator for passengers at the new Terminal 2 and the international operator for Kuwait City. Moreover,

there are other suggested projects to upgrade ground services, security services, fueling and maintenance. — KUNA

stc Masters
concludes first season
with success,
announces champions

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the winners and successful conclusion of the first season of stc Masters, an eSports competition consisting of four games held over 16 tournaments and a final championship finale. stc Masters, hosted by stc, witnessed the participation of 1,381 gamers, of which 4 emerged victorious in the game titles held under the competition.

As part of its digital transformation strategy, the Marketing team, led by Abdulaziz Daweesh, General Manager of Marketing at stc, launched the competition in collaboration with Zawaya. The aim of the initiative was to support pro eSport gamers in Kuwait through a competitive platform that allows them to showcase their skills. The first season of the competition witnessed a great turnout, which reflects the increasing demand for eSports competitions in the local market.

The stc Master's grand finale was live streamed



KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Daweesh, stc General Manager of Marketing (left), with one of the winners.

on 15 and 16 of October, where 176 finalists battled for the four winning titles. The announced winners of stc Masters season 1 included Yousef Nasser Murad - Call of Duty Warzone champion, Mohammad Youssef Al Fadhli - FIFA 21 champion, Faisal Saoud - Fortnite champion, and Javid Im Ali - PUBG Mobile champion. stc congratulated the winners on their exceptional gaming performance and presented them with their portion of the large \$50,000 prize pool, which was distributed to winners throughout the season.

The first season of stc Masters started in June and ran till mid-October with various tournaments

arranged throughout each month. The gaming competition falls in line with stc's commitment to enable digital transformation in Kuwait across various fields and industries, while introducing new innovative concepts that enrich the lives of customers and the local community. Following the end of the first season, stc Masters will launch a longer and more extensive new season that will maintain the same caliber and consistency of challenging local gamers to prove they are the best in the country.

stc released a statement congratulating the first season winners and thanking the award-winning eSports event management company, Zawaya Gaming, on the successful collaboration of this initiative. The company expressed that this year's gaming competition witnessed great participation from avid gamers in Kuwait, reflecting stc's vision of elevating the local eSports scene in the rapidly growing industry. stc will continue to leverage its partnerships and resources to deliver an unrivaled experience to gamers, positioning stc Masters as the preferred eSports hub in Kuwait.

More information on the upcoming seasons will be displayed on masters.stc.com.kw, the stc Masters page on stc's website providing updates and news on the gaming competition. For more details, customers can follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystc application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center on 102 for around-the-clock assistance.

Violence against
women violates
Islam: Kuwaiti official

CAIRO: Assistant minister for human rights affairs at Kuwait's Foreign Ministry Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi said yesterday that violence against women violates moral principles and infringes upon teachings of Islam. This came in his inaugural speech when chairing the meeting of the 'open membership working group'; a group formed by the Arab League's permanent committee on human rights and designated for reviewing Arab declarations opposing all forms of violence against women and girls.

Mutairi hoped a unanimously agreed upon formula would be reached, because violence against women is a central issue in relation to human rights. He also expressed appreciation for all member states for their support of women within their communities, and stated that the meeting reflects a deeply rooted interest in morals boosting rights, freedom and tolerance, as they are key components in modern societies. Mutairi mentioned that the

State of Kuwait proposed issuing an Arab declaration against domestic violence, during last human rights committee session, held in August.

Head of Social Sector in League of Arab States, Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, voiced appreciation to member states for institutional and legislative efforts made to empower women. Abu Ghazaleh added in a similar speech that this comes within positive privilege proposed by Islamic and other Abrahamic religions, as well as regional and international resolutions. She clarified that a proposed project is to be discussed in three days, within the framework of the working group, adding that the meeting represents a moral commitment to raising awareness in regards to the impact of violence against women, on their psyche and their position within family and community.

Abu Ghazaleh articulated that that meeting is considered a stepping-stone in developing joint Arab work and accomplishing sustained development goals. She also added that amongst Arab efforts is an initiative proposed by a coalition of women MPs in Arab countries to combat violence against Arab women in 2016. The initiative revolves around the Arab declaration opposing all violence against girls and women, and subsequent developments in this regard. — KUNA



CAIRO: The open membership working group's meeting in session. — KUNA

Kuwait records
two weeks without
COVID-19 deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait has not registered any deaths related to COVID-19 in the past two weeks. The health ministry yesterday announced zero deaths registered in the past 24 hours, making it two weeks since the last time the ministry reported a coronavirus-related death on November 1. The death toll remains at 2,462, while total cases increased to 413,034 as the ministry announced 26 new cases yesterday. As many as 18 recoveries were registered in the same period, raising the total number to 410,295, the Ministry's Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. The number of patients receiving treat-

ment at ICUs was three as of yesterday, while there were 277 active cases and 12 others at hospitals, he noted. Medical swabs conducted over the same period reached 20,616 increasing the total tests to 5,082,627 he noted. — KUNA



Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad

KFH renews
partnership with KU's
College of Business
Administration

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has renewed its strategic partnership with the College of Business Administration - Kuwait University in continuation of its support to the college activities and events. The partnership renewal stands as an affirmation of the leading role which KFH plays in extending care to the students, youth, and their activities in various fields.

The partnership renewal was signed at the College of Business Administration premises in presence of KFH Group Chief Human Resources Officer Zeyad Alomar, Group DGM - Public Relations and Media Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, Acting Dean of the College of Business Administration and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Dr Mohammed Zainal.

During the strategic partnership signing ceremony, the Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Zeyad Alomar, emphasized KFH's keenness to enhance partnership with academic institutions as part of its care and support to the students, educational process, and national talents, thus expressing his pleasure to renew partnership with the college of business administration.

Alomar praised the role of the college of business administration in qualifying national talents and encouraging them to work in the private sector. He emphasized the significance of the continuation of this partnership to enhance and develop communication channels between the college and KFH through various initiatives, thus achieving an added value for both parties.

He added that the partnership contributes to the enhancement of KFH efforts in attracting topper college graduates to work at KFH by participating in job exhibitions and qualifying graduates' talents through field work. Also, it enhances KFH's role in organizing workshops and lectures for the college students and participating in research seminars and courses.

Alomar described the relation between KFH and

the college of business administration as a strategic relationship. He added that one of the aspects of cooperation is represented in KFH initiative to support the IELTS tests preparation program to train and qualify 300 Kuwaiti students to pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests in cooperation with the college of business administration - Center of Excellence and the international institution for teaching English language.

Alomar added that KFH has achieved several accomplishments in the field of students support in cooperation with government and private educational institutions. He emphasized that KFH shall continue its commitment in this respect and provide the best always to support the occupational qualification and development efforts of students and youth.

Meanwhile, the Group DGM - Public Relations and Media - Yousef Al-Ruwaieh indicated that as part of the partnership renewal process KFH fostered basic activities at the college of business administration during the year including support of graduation projects, hosting the graduation ceremony organized by the college of business administration, support of the management and marketing club which has a strategic relationship with KFH, and other students' events, and activities.

Al-Ruwaieh indicated that a KFH team was present in the college since the beginning of the new scholastic year to welcome students and serve coffee to them in cooperation with minor Kuwaiti projects. The bank is keen on supporting mini and medium enterprises.

He added that KFH is always a pioneer in students and youth support and one of the biggest subsidizers of students and youth in the private sector through several contributions. He emphasized that KFH's strategy focuses on youth and education as part of social responsibility and sustainability standards to support their various initiatives which add a value to the society.

The Acting Dean of the College of Business Administration and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Dr Mohammed Zainal expressed his appreciation to KFH's initiatives and continuous support to the development of the university students' capabilities and talents and praised KFH's outstanding role in supporting the educational system and fostering the students' events and activities.

Singapore death row man's family pleads for his life

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MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (left) sprays paint over the word 'vice' as senator Christopher 'Bong' Go amended his candidacy to run for president in the 2022 elections before the November 15 deadline at the Commission on Election in Manila. — AFP

Philippines' Duterte to run for Senate

Duterte's daughter Sara to contest for vice president

MANILA: Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday filed to contest the Senate elections next year, seeking a way to remain in politics while facing an international probe into his deadly drug war. Duterte, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second six-year term, submitted his candidacy at the Commission on Elections office, minutes before a deadline to join the race. A lawyer submitted the paperwork on behalf of the president, according to documents seen by AFP, quelling speculation he would run for vice president - the same post his daughter, Sara, is contesting.

Duterte, 76, had previously said he would run for the country's second-highest office, before changing his mind and announcing plans last month to retire from politics - which was met with deep scepticism among analysts. Duterte made a similar declaration in September 2015, saying he "will retire from public life for good", only to announce a presidential bid two

months later. University of the Philippines political science professor Jean Franco said Duterte was running for the Senate because he was "scared of the lawsuits and the ICC".

International Criminal Court judges authorised a full-blown investigation into Duterte's anti-narcotics campaign in September, saying it resembled an illegitimate and systematic attack on civilians. Rights groups estimate the drug war has killed tens of thousands of people. As a senator, Duterte would be shielded from arrest for crimes carrying a jail sentence of "not more than six years" while the Congress was in session, Franco said, citing the country's Constitution.



President seeks a way to remain in politics

She added Duterte also wanted to "have bargaining power in the next administration". Carlos Conde, Human Rights Watch senior researcher for the Philippines, told AFP Duterte was "clearly scared" and "wants to cover all the bases" to ensure he would be protected from prosecution. "Even with his daughter running for vice president and his trusted aide Bong Go running for president - those are apparently not assurance enough that he can attain his objective after his term ends," Conde said.

Sara Duterte had been widely expected to seek the presidency in a bid to succeed her father, and poten-

tially protect him from criminal charges in the Philippines and from the ICC investigators. But on Saturday she filed for the vice presidential race and that appeared unchanged by 5:00 pm deadline. Her tilt for the second-highest office was immediately endorsed by the party of presidential front runner Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the former dictator, to be his running mate in the poll.

Sara's decision to run for vice president leaves Marco Jr in a strong position in the presidential race. The elder Duterte has been an ally of the Marcos family. Twelve Senate seats will be up for grabs on May 9 when the election is due to be held. Duterte is not the first president in the Philippines to seek to stay in politics, said Mark Thompson, director of the Southeast Asia Research Centre at the City University of Hong Kong. "Given the one-term limit (as president) it's an opportunity to be in the national spotlight," he added. — AFP

Four held over Liverpool's taxi 'terrorist' blast

LIVERPOOL: Police in northwest England yesterday said they were treating a deadly blast outside a hospital in Liverpool as a "terrorist incident" involving a homemade bomb that was reportedly foiled by a quick-thinking taxi driver. Russ Jackson, in charge of counter-terrorism policing in the region, said the motivation for Sunday's blast in a taxi was unclear.

But he said the improvised explosive device, which ignited in the cab, turning it into a fireball, was "built by the passenger" who died. The explosion outside the Liverpool Women's Hospital came just minutes before a Remembrance Sunday service at nearby Liverpool Cathedral. That has prompted speculation the event was the intended target. Jackson told a news conference: "We cannot at this time draw any connection with this but it is a line of inquiry, which we are pursuing."

"Although the motivation for this incident is yet to be understood, given all the circumstances, it has been declared a terrorist incident." Three men aged 21, 26 and 29 were arrested under the Terrorism Act soon after the explosion in the nearby Kensington area of the city and were taken for questioning. A fourth man, aged 20, was detained earlier yesterday, Jackson said, adding that "significant items" had been found at a second address in Sefton Park, near Kensington.

The blast and fireball sent thick smoke into the air just seconds before Britain fell silent in tribute to its

war dead and military veterans at 1100 GMT. There was immediate praise for the taxi driver, who reportedly locked the passenger - a man - inside the cab after growing suspicious about his intentions.

The passenger had wanted to go to the annual service at Liverpool's Anglican cathedral, according to UK media quoting investigators and friends of the cabbie. But road closures forced the taxi to detour and they ended up at the nearby hospital, where the bomb went off just after the driver had escaped, the Daily Mail reported. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said moments before the news conference that it would be premature to comment in detail about the incident, with the investigation ongoing.

"But it does look as though the taxi driver in question did behave with incredible presence of mind and bravery," he told reporters in London. Liverpool Mayor Joanne Anderson said: "The taxi driver, in his heroic efforts, has managed to divert what could have been an absolutely awful disaster at the hospital. "We knew that the taxi driver had stood out and locked the doors, we knew that early on," she told BBC radio, while also warning against further speculation.

Jackson gave few details but said the taxi driver picked up the passenger from the Kensington area and was asked to be taken to the hospital. "As the taxi approached the drop-off point at the hospital, an explosion occurred from within the car. This quickly engulfed it in flames," he added. "Remarkably, the taxi driver escaped from the cab. He's been treated for his injuries that he sustained and he's now been released from hospital."

2,000 at cathedral

Some 2,000 people attended the religious service of remembrance, one of the biggest outside London, according to the Liverpool Echo newspaper. The



LIVERPOOL: Police forensics officers work outside the Women's Hospital in Liverpool yesterday - the scene of yesterday's taxi explosion. — AFP

event concluded with a military parade on the closed roads outside the cathedral. Senior Conservative politician Oliver Dowden said the driver's actions contrasted with "the cowardice of terrorist attacks".

"Clearly we'll have to see exactly what happened there," the ruling party's co-chairman told Sky News, stressing reports of the driver's response had to be confirmed. "But if that is the

case, that's another example of true bravery and courage," Dowden said. The scene at the hospital remained cordoned off yesterday, as did the streets around the two properties under investigation, where forensics officers in white suits were seen. The domestic intelligence service MI5 is also assisting in the investigation, according to The Guardian newspaper and BBC. — AFP

Air pollution still killing 307,000 per year in Europe

Air pollution causes 7 million deaths annually across the globe

COPENHAGEN: Premature deaths caused by fine particle air pollution have fallen 10 percent annually across Europe, but the invisible killer still accounts for 307,000 premature deaths a year, the European Environment Agency said yesterday. If the latest air quality guidelines from the World Health Organization were followed by EU members, the latest number of fatalities recorded in 2019 could be cut in half, according to an EEA report.

Deaths linked to fine particular matter - with a diameter below 2.5 micrometers or PM2.5 - were estimated at 346,000 for 2018. The clear reduction in deaths for the following year were put down partly to favorable weather but above all to a progressive improvement in air quality across the continent, the European Union's air pollution data centre said.

In the early 1990s, fine particles, which penetrate deeply into the lungs, led to nearly a million premature deaths in the 27 EU member nations,

according to the report. That figure had been more than halved to 450,000 by 2005. In 2019, fine particulate matter caused 53,800 premature deaths in Germany, 49,900 in Italy, 29,800 in



Invisible killer accounts for premature deaths

France and 23,300 in Spain. Poland saw 39,300 deaths, the highest figure per head of population. The EEA also registers premature deaths linked to two other leading pollutants, but says it does not

count them in its overall toll to avoid doubling up.

Deaths caused by nitrogen dioxide - mainly from car, trucks and thermal power stations - fell by a quarter to 40,000 between 2018 and 2019. Fatalities linked to ground-level ozone in 2019 also dropped 13 percent to 16,800 dead. Air pollution remains the biggest environmental threat to human health in Europe, the agency said. Heart disease and strokes cause most premature deaths blamed on air pollution, followed by lung ailments including cancer. In children, atmospheric pollution can harm lung development, cause respiratory infections and aggravate asthma.

7 million global death toll

Even if the situation is improving, the EEA warned in September that most EU countries were still above the recommended pollution limits, be they European guidelines or more ambitious WHO targets. According to the UN health body, air pollution causes seven million premature

deaths annually across the globe - on the same levels as smoking and poor diet.

In September, the alarming statistics led the WHO to tighten its recommended limits on major air pollutants for the first time since 2005. "Investing in cleaner heating, mobility, agriculture and industry improves health, productivity and quality of life for all Europeans, and particularly the most vulnerable," said EEA director Hans Bruyninck.

The EU wants to slash premature deaths due to fine air pollution by at least 55 percent in 2030 compared to 2005. If air pollution continues to fall at the current rate, the agency estimates the target will be reached by 2032. However an ageing and increasingly urbanized population could make that more difficult. "An older population is more sensitive to air pollution and a higher rate of urbanization typically means that more people are exposed to PM 2.5 concentrations, which tend to be higher in cities," said the report. — AFP



BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's President Alberto Fernandez (center-left) and Buenos Aires province Governor Axel Kicillof (center-right) speak to each other next to legislators Maximó Kirchner (right), son of Vice-President Cristina Fernandez, and Sergio Massa, after the mid-term parliamentary elections in Buenos Aires. — AFP

Argentina's government loses Congress majority

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's center-left President Alberto Fernandez called for dialogue with the opposition after Sunday's midterm parliamentary elections, with projections showing his governing coalition has lost control of Congress. Ahead of the election, there was widespread discontent over the state of the economy, which has been in recession since 2018 and was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having already been in the minority in the Chamber of Deputies - the lower house - Fernandez's Frente de Todos (Everyone's Front) coalition looked set to drop from 41 to 35 seats in the 72-member Senate, based on projections with over 90 percent of votes counted. "If the numbers are confirmed, effectively we've lost the quorum in the Senate," a government source told AFP.

This would be the first time since Argentina's return to democracy in 1983 that Peronism - a leftist movement based on former president Juan Peron that now covers a broad spectrum of political leanings - would not have a majority in the Senate. Fernandez will now likely be forced to make concessions to the opposition during the last two years of his mandate in order to pass laws or make key appointments, including to the judiciary.

"We need to prioritize national agreements if we want to resolve the challenges we face," said Fernandez, adding that he would approach opposi-

tion groups to try to find common ground. "An opposition that is responsible and open to dialogue is a patriotic opposition." Nearly half the seats in the Chamber of Deputies were up for grabs, as well as a third of Senate seats, in Sunday's vote. Interior Minister Wado de Pedro said turnout in the compulsory election was between 71 and 72 percent.

'Difficulty ahead'

Fernandez had been on the defensive since the Frente suffered a bruising defeat in September's primaries, picking up just 33 percent of the vote compared with 37 percent for the main opposition group Juntos por el Cambio (Together for Change), led by Fernandez's predecessor Mauricio Macri. "These next two years are going to be difficult," Macri said Sunday, while assuring voters that his coalition would "act with great responsibility."

Fernandez "will have to negotiate law by law," said Raul Aragon, political scientist at the National University of La Matanza. He predicted the opposition would be open to talks though. "It won't serve them to not engage in dialogue, and appear anti-democratic" before the presidential elections in 2023, Aragon said.

Since the primaries, the government had been in damage limitation mode, announcing last month a deal with the private sector to freeze prices on more than 1,500 basic goods following street protests demanding greater food subsidies. It has also increased the minimum wage and family allowances. The government's supporters have been forced to keep a low profile during the long pandemic lockdowns. But pro-government trade unions and social organizations recently announced they would march in support of Fernandez on Wednesday, regardless of the election results. —AFP

US braced for verdicts from high-profile trials

WASHINGTON: The United States is bracing for the outcome of two high-profile trials featuring a volatile mix of guns, self-defense claims and racial tensions. One of the cases is being tried in the town of Brunswick in Georgia, a southern state with a segregationist past. Three white men are on trial for shooting and killing Ahmaud Arbery, a Black jogger, on February 23, 2020 after chasing him through their neighborhood in pickup trucks.

Gregory McMichael, his son Travis and their neighbor William Bryan say they were attempting to make a "citizen's arrest" of a man they suspected of being a burglar. Arbery's family and supporters have called it a modern day lynching. The other case is taking place 1,000 miles away, in the Wisconsin town of Kenosha.

The town near the Great Lakes was rocked in August 2020 by protests and rioting after police shot and severely wounded a Black man. During a third night of unrest, Kyle Rittenhouse, a 17-year-old with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, joined groups of other armed men to patrol the streets and protect, as they put it, businesses from arsonists and looters. Rittenhouse ended up shooting two men dead and wounding another. Charged with homicide, the young man is claiming self-defense.

While the details of the cases differ, both involve what has become an "American norm" of "civilians toting around firearms to protect their neighborhoods," said Caroline Light, a professor at Harvard University who has written a book called "Stand Your Ground: A History of America's Love Affair With Lethal Self-Defense." "It has taken hold in the hearts and minds of Americans that armed self-defense is a right and a duty of so-called good citizens," Light said.

This notion is "at the very root of the nation," from the arrival of the first European settlers, Light said, and a right to self-defense has been codified in the laws of a number of states under pressure from the gun lobby. "But it disproportionately puts the right of weaponized violence, the rights of armed violence, into the hands of white, predominantly men," Light said. "And people of color, especially Black men, are in the crosshairs of violence," she said, "because there is this idea that you protect your neighborhood against threats, and that the threat is seen as Black."

'Black Lives Matter'

A video of Arbery's shooting added fuel to the Black Lives Matter protests which erupted following the May 2020 death of George Floyd, a 46-



NEW YORK: Emily Ebersol prepares a station for the families of victims of gun violence who are gathering at 'Where Do We Go From Here' to drop of memorabilia for the Gun Violence Memorial Project in the Jamaica neighborhood of the Queens borough in New York City. — AFP

year-old Black man killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. "A Black man should be able to go for a jog without fearing for his life," President Joe Biden tweeted on the anniversary of Arbery's death. Rittenhouse has also become an icon though on the conservative right, among those who condemned the protests against racial injustice and police brutality as being the work of Antifa or "anarchists."

In this politically- and racially-charged context, the prosecutors in the two cases have been walking on eggshells. Thomas Binger, the prosecutor in the Rittenhouse case, stressed to the jury that he was not questioning one's right to legitimate self-defense. Linda Dunikoski, the prosecutor in the Arbery case, has not outright accused the McMichaels and Bryan of racism in pursuing the Black man but said they were operating on the basis of "assumptions."

It took nearly three months for the McMichaels and Bryan to be arrested and they were charged only after a video of the shooting of Arbery was leaked online and sparked outrage. Rittenhouse left the scene the night of the shooting and later turned himself in to police. There is only a single Black juror hearing the Arbery murder case and the judge in the trial of Rittenhouse has refused to allow prosecutors to describe the men he shot as "victims."

Closing arguments in the Rittenhouse trial are scheduled to begin and many court observers expect he could be acquitted in line with the strict self-defense laws in the state of Wisconsin. "There will be widespread frustration and outrage," Light said of a possible acquittal. "I think we can expect to see a lot of protests." In Georgia, regardless of the verdict, the McMichaels and Bryan will face federal hate crimes charges next year. — AFP

Surprise election win could end Bulgaria's political deadlock

SOFIA: Hopes were rising in Bulgaria yesterday that a government can finally be formed, after the third general election in a year produced a surprise winner. With over 75 percent of the ballots counted from Sunday's elections, the centrist We Continue the Change (PP) formation, founded in September by two Harvard-educated former entrepreneurs, was set for a surprise win with over 25 percent of the votes.

"I hope that they will be reasonable enough to form a government... These are the third elections in a year which is too much already," graphic designer Lyuba Yanchuleva, 67, told AFP while walking her dog in Sofia yesterday morning. A series of scandals about misuse of taxpayers money relegated the conservative GERB party of three-time premier Boyko Borisov to second place with some 22 percent.

Elections in April and July had failed to produce a government, deepening voter apathy and pushing voter turnout to a historical low of under 40 percent, as the fourth and most violent wave of the coron-



SOFIA: Bulgaria's incumbent President Rumen Radev (right) and Vice President Iliana Iotova (left) talk to the press after the end of the elections in Sofia. —AFP

avirus raged in the EU's least vaccinated country. Analysts were however more hopeful for a coalition this time, despite a very fractured legislature in which seven parties gained seats. "This time we will have a government coalition of four parties," Alpha Research analyst Boryana Dimitrova commented Monday.

Disillusioned voters were not so certain. "Yes, the new yuppies are very likeable but who are they going to work with?"

72-year-old pensioner Petar Blagoev shrugged yesterday. PP's co-leader Kiril Petkov, 41, who said he's ready to become a premier, pledged to hold talks on clear priorities with the right-wing Democratic Bulgaria, with 6 percent, and the anti-establishment ITN party of showman Slavi Trifonov, with close to 10 percent. They will also definitely need some backing from the Socialists, who won close to 10 percent, analysts said. —AFP

E-scooters forced to slow down in busy Paris areas

PARIS: Rented electric scooters are being forced to slow down to just above walking speed in many areas of Paris under new rules coming into force yesterday, scooter rental operators said. In 700 areas in the French capital, including around key tourist attractions such as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre museum, rental scooter speed is now capped at 10 kilometers per hour.

Scooters run by rental companies Dott, Tier and Lime, tracked in real time by geo-location, will automatically be slowed down to half their normal top speed once they enter the designated areas. The main criteria for picking the zones was the strong presence of pedestrians, the operators said in a joint statement. This included parks, gardens, streets near schools, squares in front of public buildings and of places of worship, pedestrian streets and busy shopping areas.

The death in June of a 32-year-old

Italian woman hit by a scooter in a pedestrian area prompted demands for tighter regulation for the vehicles. City hall threatened the three private operators that it would renew their licences only if they made progress towards speed limits, and also got users to park the scooters in designated areas instead of dumping them on streets and pavements at the end of the rental period.

Yesterday David Belliard, Paris deputy mayor in charge of transport, told AFP that the new restrictions were "a first step, but nowhere near enough". More slow-speed zones were needed, he said, including in areas where pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders share spaces such as on the hugely popular banks of the Saint-Martin canal and of the river Seine, long stretches of which are car-free.

Every Paris district would supply a list of desired slow zones over the coming weeks, which would be passed on to the operators. The three operators have meanwhile made progress towards addressing the often anarchical parking of scooters. They now require users to take a picture proving that they dropped off the scooter in the right place, and have also created a joint 12-person task force to pick up scooters left randomly in the street. —AFP

International

Islamabad bids to quell rise in Pakistani Taleban attacks

Hardliner Islamist group ramps up attacks

PESHAWAR: Since the Taleban's takeover of Afghanistan, Pakistan's offshoot of the hardline Islamist group has ramped up attacks on its side of the border, leaving Islamabad scrambling to reach a peace deal. Active in the remote tribal areas of Pakistan, experts say the militant group has been emboldened by the Taleban's successful ousting of world superpower the United States from Afghanistan. Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan (TTP) - a separate movement which shares a common history with the Afghan Taleban - plunged the country into a period of horrific violence after forming in 2007.

Also made up mostly of ethnic Pashtuns, it carried out hundreds of suicide bomb attacks and kidnappings across the country, seizing control of border regions and imposing a radical version of Islamic law in territory where it held sway. It was a TTP gunman who opened fire on schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai in her native Swat Valley, before she won the Nobel Peace Prize. The group was also linked to the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.



Authorities scrambling to reach a peace deal

But it wasn't until a gun massacre of nearly 150 children at a Peshawar school in 2014 that the military finally crushed the movement and forced its fighters to retreat into Afghanistan. Now, nearly a decade later and with the Afghanistan Taleban back in control in Kabul, Pakistan is trying to quell a TTP comeback. "The (fighters) feel more comfortable after the fall of Kabul to the Taleban, they can now move freely in Afghanistan," a TTP fighter told AFP on condition of anonymity. "They have no fear of US drone strikes. And they can meet and communicate easily."

Attacking security forces

The TTP claimed 32 attacks in August, 37 in September and 24 in October - the highest monthly totals for at least five years, according to their own published data.



MAMOUZAI, Pakistan: Pakistan's Taleban commander Latif Mehsud (center), a close aide to the former chief of the Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan (TTP), Hakimullah Mehsud, sits on an armed vehicle in Mamouzai area of the Orakzai Agency, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. — AFP

lished data. Across all of 2020, when the United States first pledged to start withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, it claimed 149 assaults - three times more than in 2019. The renewed confidence became apparent in October when the group's leader Noor Wali Mehsud came out of hiding and was photographed shaking hands with residents and speaking in public - something unimaginable just a few months ago.

More than a dozen Islamist factions have since July 2020 rallied under his leadership. In an attempt to improve the TTP's image and distinguish them from the Islamic State's extremism, Mehsud has largely taken the group in a new direction - sparing civilians and ordering attacks only on security and law enforcement officials. Recent attacks have been far less deadly than the mass casualty bombings that once terrorized the country.

'A second chance'

For Islamabad, part of the strategy to keep the threat of the TTP at bay is by accommodating them. Past midway in his first term, Prime Minister Khan is keen to shore up support from Pakistan's conservative base, and

rapprochement with groups such as the TTP will appeal to rural voters even while angering the military. Khan announced in October that the government was in talks with the TTP for the first time since 2014, facilitated by Afghanistan's new leaders.

Both sides have announced a truce until at least December 9, while they hammer out an agreement. "Those people who want to come back and respect our law and constitution, we would like to give them a second chance," said Fawad Chaudhry, Pakistan's information minister. Neither side has openly divulged details about the negotiating points. The release of about 100 TTP fighters was a key demand for the militants to agree to a ceasefire, a source from the group told AFP.

The fighters are also appealing to be able to come out of hiding and return to the tribal areas. But without the support of elders - hundreds of whom have been killed over the years - any deal risks being meaningless. "It will be difficult for them to return without laying down arms because they have enemies there, they have killed people," Baadshah, a tribal elder, told AFP in Peshawar. —AFP

Women to sue Qatar over invasive airport searches

SYDNEY: A group of women subjected to invasive gynaecological searches at Doha airport will sue Qatari authorities, seeking redress for an ordeal that sparked global condemnation, their lawyer said yesterday. Women on 10 Qatar Airways flights from Doha, including 13 Australians, were subjected to the examinations late last year as authorities searched for the mother of a newborn found abandoned in an airport bathroom. The incident caused outrage, and fuelled concerns about Qatar's treatment of women as the Gulf state prepares to receive thousands of foreign visitors for the 2022 football World Cup.

Damian Sturzaker, from Sydney-based firm Marque Lawyers, said seven affected passengers now plan legal action to "send a message to Qatari authorities that you can't treat women... in this manner". "The group of women have suffered enormous distress on the evening concerned, now just over a year ago, and they continue to suffer distress and ill effects and trauma as a result of what occurred," he told AFP.

Sturzaker said the women were seeking a formal apology, compensation, and protection for future passengers transiting through the airport. Qatar is an ultra-conservative Muslim monarchy, where sex and childbirth outside of marriage are punishable by jail. Ahead of the World Cup, the country has struggled to reassure critics that its promises on women's rights, labor relations and democracy are credible. Facing potentially devastating commercial and reputational damage after the incident, Qatar vowed to guarantee the future "safety and security" of passengers.

The country's prime minister also issued an apology, while an airport police officer who oversaw the searches was reportedly convicted. But Sturzaker said the women had not been made aware of any improvements to airport procedures and their attempts to seek mediation had been unsuccessful. They now wanted to highlight their case ahead of the FIFA tournament, to ensure other travelers were well-informed before visiting Qatar, he added. —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Activists holding placards attend a candlelight vigil against the impending execution of Nagaenthran K Dharmalingam, sentenced to death for trafficking heroin into Singapore, outside the Singaporean embassy in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

insists the death penalty is an effective deterrent against crime, has shown little sign of heeding calls for clemency.

The home affairs ministry said earlier this month that psychiatrists had stated during previous court proceedings that Nagaenthran was not intellectually disabled. Legal rulings also concluded that he "clearly understood the nature of his acts", which were aimed at paying off debts, it said in a statement. A written appeal from Malaysia's Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob was also brushed off, with his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong responding that Nagaenthran had been given "full due process under the law". Sarmila - one of Nagaenthran's three siblings - recalled the shock when her family received a letter from Singapore authorities on October 26 informing them her brother would be hanged on November 10. Preparations for the Hindu festival of Diwali were halted so the family could figure out how his mother, who works as a cleaner, and other relatives could travel to Singapore to see him before the execution.

Naganenthran's eldest sister, Sarmila struggles to accept her brother is a convicted drug smuggler and still has fond memories of playing childhood games with him. He was a "lovable person. He was very caring", she said. During more than a decade behind bars, Nagaenthran developed a passion for arts and crafts, making cards for his family back home to mark occasions such as Mother's Day. —AFP



NEW DELHI: Commuters make their way along a street amid heavy smoggy conditions in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

quality regime," the Delhi government said. It conceded, however, that industry was the biggest contributor in the city's air pollution followed by transport and dust emanating from roads and construction sites.

It said the farm fires were contributing only four percent to the city's PM 2.5 - the most harmful particulate matter that is responsible for chronic lung and heart diseases. Last week, PM 2.5 levels in the city touched 500, more than 30 times maximum safe limits according to the World Health Organization. Yesterday, PM 2.5 levels

eased after winds dispersed the pollutants and hovered at around 160, according to the government's System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research.

Delhi's chief minister on Saturday announced a week-long closure of all government offices as well as schools, while also banning construction activity until November 20. A 2020 report by Swiss organization IQAir found that 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities were in India, with Delhi ranked the most polluted capital globally. —AFP

News in brief

Gun attacks leave 11 dead

SILAO: At least 11 people, including two children, died in two armed attacks in the Mexican state of Guanajuato, authorities said Sunday in the country's latest spasm of violence. Gunmen opened fire on a group of people in a house in the municipality of Silao, killing three men, two women and a child, the state public prosecutor said. Local media said the attack happened during a child's party on Saturday. Later that night in the municipality of Apaseo el Grande, armed men killed five members of the same family, including a 14-year-old girl, while an eight-month old baby was wounded in the arm. The central state of Guanajuato has become one of the most violent in Mexico due to an ongoing battle between the Santa Rosa de Lima and Jalisco New Generation drug cartels. The gangs are fighting over control of the lucrative drug trafficking and stolen fuel markets. — AFP

Radical anti-vaccine activists

ROME: Italian police yesterday raided anti-vaccine activists alleged to have used an online chat to call for violence, including "hangings" and "shootings," against people supporting COVID-19 restrictions. The "Basta Dittatura" (Enough of the Dictatorship) chat on the Telegram app had tens of thousands of members and was used to organize demonstrations against Italy's so-called "Green Pass", police in the northern city of Turin said. The pass is proof the bearer has been vaccinated, has undergone a recent negative test or has had COVID-19, and is obligatory to access all workplaces, as well as social venues such as cinemas. The searches, across 16 cities, targeted 17 of the most radical activists on the chat, which was "characterized by a persistent incitement to hatred and to the commission of serious crimes", police said. — AFP

Knife attack at Fukushima

FUKUSHIMA: A man attacked an elderly woman with a knife in front of Fukushima station in northeast Japan yesterday, police and local media said, the latest in a string of recent assaults on and around the country's train network. The attacker has been taken into custody, regional police said, with local media reporting he had been caught by bystanders. A woman in her 80s was hospitalized after the assault, national broadcaster NHK reported. Television station TV-U Fukushima said the victim sustained an injury in her abdomen but was able to speak. "A man with a knife attacked (another person) in front of Fukushima Station today. Patrol cars rushed to the scene. The man has been taken into custody," Fukushima Prefecture Police tweeted. Police officials declined to comment further. — AFP

Colombia monitoring Hezbollah

BOGOTA: Colombia said it is monitoring the activities there of the pro-Iranian group Hezbollah, accusing it of having conducted criminal activities. "Two months ago we had to deal with a situation where we had to organize an operation to capture and expel two criminals commissioned by Hezbollah with the intention of committing a criminal act in Colombia," Defense Minister Diego Molano said in an interview with the daily El Tiempo. He provided no details of the government operation. But the newspaper, citing sources in Colombia's military intelligence services, said the Lebanese Shiite movement was spying on American and Israeli businessmen in Colombia. Colombia has a sizable Lebanese community. Hezbollah has been reported to have a presence in Venezuela and other Latin American countries. — AFP

Jihadists kill four soldiers

BAMAKO: Four Malian soldiers were killed by suspected jihadists Sunday and several others wounded in an attack northeast of the capital Bamako, near the border with Mauritania, the army said on social media. The soldiers, on post at Guire, in the Nara region, fought off an attack by "an armed terrorist group" said a statement from the army, using a term generally used to refer to jihadists. Four soldiers were killed and another 14 wounded, while six of the attackers were also killed, they added. Mali has been struggling to contain an Islamist insurgency which first broke out in the north of the country in 2012 before spreading to the centre and neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger. Thousands of people have been killed and hundreds of thousands have fled their homes, while the economic impact on one of the world's poorest countries has been devastating. — AFP

Singapore death row man's family pleads for his life

TANJUNG RAMBUTAN: The sister of a Malaysian man facing imminent execution despite concerns he is mentally disabled has pleaded with Singapore to give him a "second chance". Nagaenthran K Dharmalingam, sentenced to death in 2010 for trafficking a small amount of heroin into Singapore, was originally set to be hanged last week after losing a series of appeals. The execution in the city-state, which has some of the world's toughest drugs laws, was postponed after the 33-year-old contracted the coronavirus, but campaigners fear the delay will be short.

His family are not giving up, however, with his sister Sarmila Dharmalingam urging the city-state to "give him a second chance". "We hope the Singapore government will spare his life," the 35-year-old told AFP in an interview Sunday from the family home in Tanjung Rambutan, in the northern Malaysian state of Perak. "He is suffering from an intellectual disability."

Nagaenthran's case has sparked a storm of criticism, with the European Union and United Nations rights experts speaking out against it, and a clemency petition getting around 85,000 signatures. A last-ditch court challenge is being mounted and while chances of success look slim, Sarmila and her family are holding out hope. "All our family members are holding prayers for his life to be spared," said the housewife, who is ethnic Indian and a member of the Hindu minority in mostly Muslim Malaysia. "I believe in miracles... With God's grace, a miracle will happen."

Last-ditch challenge

Nagaenthran was arrested aged 21 as he tried to enter Singapore from neighboring Malaysia with a bundle of heroin weighing about 43 grams - equivalent to about three tablespoons - strapped to his thigh. Campaigners say he has an IQ of just 69, a level recognized as an intellectual disability, was coerced into transporting the drugs, and was struggling with an alcohol problem at the time. But Singapore, which

Delhi resists call for 'pollution lockdown'

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government pushed back yesterday against a call by India's top court to declare a "pollution lockdown", as children stayed away from school for a week because of dangerous smog levels. Air quality in Delhi - among the world's most polluted cities - regularly plummets to the "severe" category in winter with levels of harmful particulates at dangerous levels. On Saturday, the Supreme Court suggested imposing for the first time a "pollution lockdown", effectively confining the megacity's 20 million people to their homes. In a submission to the court yesterday, the city government said that such a step would only be "meaningful" if states surrounding Delhi are also included.

One of the contributors to the smog that hangs over the city in winter is smoke from farmers burning their crop residue in neighboring states. Delhi is also ringed by several satellite cities like Noida and Ghaziabad that are home to millions of people. "Given Delhi's compact size, a lockdown would have limited impact on the air

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021

Business

Boursa Kuwait holds virtual roadshow, highlights investment opportunities

20 asset management firms conduct over 110 meetings with 12 listed companies

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait organized a virtual roadshow in collaboration with Goldman Sachs, a leading multinational investment bank and financial services company on 10 November 2021. During the event, twelve companies listed on the Kuwaiti stock exchange, including Boursa Kuwait, conducted over 110 individual meetings with 20 of the world's leading investment banks and asset management firms.

The meetings provided international investors with the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and prospects of investing in Kuwait and offered deeper insights into the financial performance and business strategies of the publicly traded companies. Representing Boursa Kuwait during the roadshow was Naim Azad Din, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Financial Officer and Noura Al-Abdulkareem, Boursa Kuwait's Head of Markets Sector.

Commenting on the roadshow, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Financial Officer Naim Azad Din said: "Boursa Kuwait is committed to making every opportunity and challenge count. We continue to rely on a sound strategy and a strong, resilient foundation to not only get through testing times, but to record outstanding results."



Roadshow held in collaboration with Goldman Sachs

He added: Boursa Kuwait has reached several milestones that have had a tremendous impact on its growth and objectives, which is reflected in our third quarter financial results where we announced net profits of KD 11.7 million for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021."

Boursa Kuwait's Head of Markets Sector Noura Al-Abdulkareem also commented on the roadshow, reinforcing the importance of the company's strategy which continues to evolve with the company's vision and the needs of its diverse stakeholder community, taking into account the rapidly shifting technological and economic landscape.

She added: "Hosting Roadshows and Corporate Days come as part of Boursa Kuwait's ongoing commitment to developing and sustaining a strong and efficient financial market thriving on liquidity and transparency. We continuously work towards advancing our position by focusing on our four key objectives to create an attractive issuer base, increase depth and breadth of products, upgrade our infrastructure and business environment to international standards, and broaden our investor base."

Boursa Kuwait's series of Roadshows and Corporate Days showcases some of the standout



Noura Al-Abdulkareem



Naim Azad Din

listed companies and the investment opportunities that reside in the Kuwaiti capital market. Putting these companies in touch with some of the world's leading investment firms and financial institutions, the events aim to highlight these companies' financial health and business strategies and outlooks helping investors gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and opportunities of investing in Kuwaiti companies. Since its inception, Boursa Kuwait has worked diligently to create a credible exchange built on efficiency and transparency, creating a liquid capital market, a progressive exchange platform and developing a comprehensive set of reforms and enhancements that has allowed it to compete on an international level. Over the past five years, the company has rolled out numerous market reforms and new initiatives as part of its comprehensive multi-phase market development (MID) plans.

US trade officials visit Japan, agree to start tariff talks

TOKYO: Japanese and US officials held top-level trade talks in Tokyo yesterday after Washington said it was ready to discuss reducing steel and aluminum tariffs imposed under former president Donald Trump. US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo have made the Japanese capital the first stop on their separate trips to several countries in Asia.

Raimondo held talks with Japan's Trade Minister Koichi Hagiuda, with the pair stressing the importance of cooperation between the world's top and third-largest economies. "The relationship between the United States and Japan is critically important... for shared economic values and that's why this is my first step in the region," Raimondo said in brief comments.

She called for cooperation in a range of fields, including semiconductors and supply chains, as chip shortages and production issues hamper the developed world's pandemic economic recovery.

Raimondo did not refer to discussions about steel and aluminum tariffs, but a senior official from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) confirmed both sides "agreed to start talks". Washington said Friday it was ready to discuss reducing the tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum that were imposed by the Trump administration in 2018 on several economies, including the European Union and Japan. "(The) details will come later," said Hiroyuki Hatada, senior METI official in charge of US trade. "If tariffs are lifted, that will be a perfect solution for Japan."

The deal made with the EU does not go that far, instead allowing limited quantities of European steel and aluminum products to be imported by the United States without tariffs. Japan and the United States are among the world's top steel producers, ranked behind China, the EU and India, according to data from the World Steel Association. In a joint statement, Raimondo and Hagiuda said they had agreed to establish a commercial and industrial partnership to work on areas including supply chains for semiconductors, 5G telecommunications and other key industries.

They also pledged to address "market-distorting measures to counter unfair trade practices", in a likely reference to China, which Washington has accused of threatening the US steel and aluminum industries. —AFP

Game over for Fortnite in China as developer pulls plug

BEIJING: Epic Games pulled the plug on its Chinese version of Fortnite yesterday, with its three-year effort to penetrate the world's biggest gaming market derailed by Communist Party crackdowns against online addiction and the broader tech sector. Epic had announced two weeks ago that it would shut down the Chinese version of the game on November 15, noting that "Fortnite China's Beta test has reached an end" and that servers would be closed.

Chinese players said they could no longer access the game yesterday, posting goodbyes on social media platform Weibo. A discussion board on the game had been viewed 470 million times. "It's a pity," a user who gave only her surname Ding told AFP.

"I don't understand why it ended so quickly." Another player surnamed Zheng, 24, told AFP he would "first cry for a little" over the game he had played for more than two years while at university.

The move ends a long-running test of Fortnite created for China, where

content is policed for excessive violence. The action-packed shooter and world-building game is one of the most popular in the world, boasting more than 350 million users.

Its Chinese test version was released in 2018, but "Fortnite" never received the government's green light to be formally launched and monetized as approvals for new games slowed. The Chinese government has pressed a broad crackdown on the wider technology sector over the past year, citing concerns that tech giants were getting too big and powerful. Saying children were spending too much time playing online games, regulators also targeted the huge gaming sector with new age and playing-time restrictions, while approval of new titles has slowed.

'Politically harmful'

In September, hundreds of Chinese video game makers including Tencent vowed to better police their products for "politically harmful" content and



LOS ANGELES: The opening screen of Epic Games' Fortnite reflected onto the Apple logo of the back of an iMac computer in Los Angeles. — AFP

enforce curbs on underage players, as they looked to fall into line with government demands. Neither Epic nor Chinese gaming and messaging giant Tencent—which owns a stake in the game developer—offered an immediate response to an AFP request for comment.

Beijing's drive to tighten its control over the economy and enterprises has hit a number of industries, with tech firms taking the brunt. Epic's move

follows Microsoft's announcement in October that it would close a version for China of its career-oriented social network LinkedIn, and Yahoo's decision earlier this month to also pull out of the country.

Both cited increasing hurdles to doing business in China. Foreign tech companies have long walked a tightrope in China, forced to comply with strict local laws and government censorship of content. —AFP

'Down' but not 'out': Growth needs fuel India's coal addiction

DHANBAD, India: Even as its capital was blanketed by toxic smog, India led the charge to weaken anti-coal pledges at the COP26 summit, with experts saying it is prioritizing its economic growth over the planet's future. The world's third-largest emitter teamed up with China to water down language on fossil fuels at the Glasgow conference, forcing a compromise: a climate deal that bound countries to "phase down" but not "phase out" coal use.

India's resistance to more ambitious curbs on dirty energy is driven by its need for cheap fuel to power a booming economy and lift hundreds of millions of its citizens out of entrenched poverty. "We have a huge population which has still not reached a basic minimum standard of living," Samrat Sengupta, a climate change expert with the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment, told AFP.

Coal consumption has nearly doubled in the last decade-only China burns more-and the fuel still powers 70 percent of India's electricity grid. The government has dragged its feet on tougher regulations for coal plants and just last year announced a series of commercial mining auctions to boost domestic production. Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed to weaning his country off coal, but told Glasgow delegates India would only aim to be carbon-neutral by 2070 — a decade after China and 20 years after the world's other big emitters.

But without decisive action sooner, experts warn India's emissions will soar in coming years and scuttle worldwide efforts to rein in global warming.

Stiff target to meet

The effects of India's fossil fuel addiction are already keenly felt, with a shroud of thick grey haze enveloping New Delhi each winter. Coal plant emissions and vehicle exhaust fumes combine with smoke from farm fires to choke the megacity's 20 million residents.

On the same day that COP26 delegates were finalizing the global climate accord, Delhi shut its schools for a week to keep children inside. Smog is blamed for more than a million deaths in India annually, and a recent University of Chicago study found that air pollution was likely to reduce life expectancy by more than nine years for four in every 10 Indians.

Modi's government aims to mitigate the problem by scaling up renewables, pledging to make solar power as big a share of the energy mix as coal by the end of the decade.

But India lacks the high-tech capacity to meet demand for solar panels and relies heavily on expensive components from abroad. It has tried to spur domestic manufacturing of solar tech by hiking import duties, raising the cost of renewable energy.

The 2030 solar goal "is a huge and a very stiff target to meet", said Sengupta of the Centre for Science and Environment. "It requires a lot of cheap finance and technologies to be made available."

India has long argued that historical polluters such as the United States and Europe are obligated to provide the technical expertise and funding for climate mitigation. Its environment minister told COP26 delegates on Saturday that developing countries were "entitled to the responsible use of



DHANBAD: In this picture taken on October 14, 2021, trucks loaded with coal travel down a road at the Jharia coalfield in Dhanbad in India's Jharkhand state. — AFP

fossil fuels".

Bhupender Yadav said nations with little historical responsibility for climate change should not be held to the same standards as the world's biggest per-capita emitters. "In such a situation, how can anyone expect developing countries to make promises of phasing out coal and fossil fuel subsidies?" he asked.

The weakened COP26 commitment was adopted with deep reluctance by other nations, which were

anxious to get the deal over the line after two weeks of marathon negotiations.

Other developing nations—including Pacific island countries facing the existential threat of rising sea levels as a result of global warming—bristled at the suggestion that India's last-minute intervention was done on their behalf. Fiji's attorney general Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum expressed "not just our astonishment, but immense disappointment in the manner in which this has been introduced". —AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait's household credit picks up, but business credit growth muted

Private sector deposits down 2.8% y/y

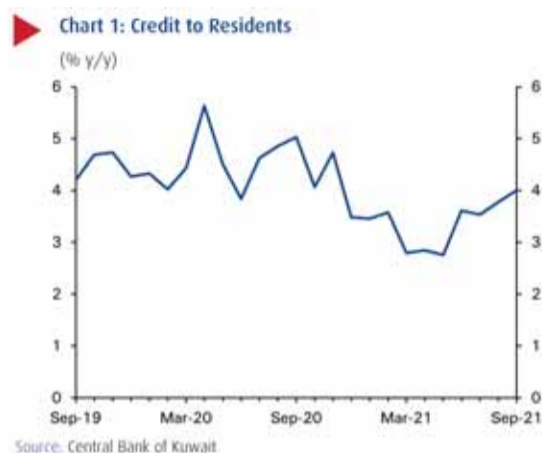
KUWAIT: Domestic credit growth picked up to 2.1 percent q/q in 3Q2021 with the y/y increase at 4 percent through September. For the fifth consecutive quarter, household lending was the main growth driver, while business lending has been slow to recover from the pandemic-related slowdown. Business credit was flat in 3Q2021 with the y/y increase at only 0.3 percent through September. While the pandemic-induced shock continues to put pressure on the growth in business credit, we think that relatively high repayments/write-offs are also a likely factor for the weak business credit trends over the past year.

Nevertheless, the various sectors showed wide differences with the trade and construction sectors continuing to be the weakest, falling by 13 percent and 11 percent y/y, respectively. In contrast, credit growth in the oil/gas (+14 percent y/y) and industry (+11 percent) sectors was very robust. Credit to real estate, by far the largest component of business credit with a 43 percent share, continued to gradually inch up with the y/y increase at 2.3 percent through September.

Household credit accelerated to register the fastest quarterly growth since the third quarter of last year, with the y/y increase at 11.2 percent through September. This strong expansion was driven by housing loans as well as personal consumption loans with both growing at around 11 percent y/y. The six-month deferral of household credit installments for Kuwaiti borrowers (which is set to expire in Q4), the ongoing robust demand/high valuations in the residential real estate sector, and the continued solid consumer spending are some of the key factors behind this multi-year record expansion in household lending.

Overall credit growth in 3Q2021 got a boost from a solid expansion in lending to non-bank financial institutions, which soared by a multi-year high of nearly 10 percent q/q, and from credit for securities purchase, which increased by the second-highest quarterly rate in the past two years. Going into 2022, credit growth will likely be supported by the further normalization of economic activities given the major pickup in vaccination rates and the ongoing easing of pandemic-related restrictions. Business credit should be supported by a likely improvement in project awards and by the pent-up demand for capital spending (CAPEX) given muted CAPEX by corporates since the outbreak of the pandemic. As for household credit, growth will likely start to trend down to pre-pandemic levels following the Q4 expiry of the six-month deferral of household credit installments of Kuwaiti borrowers.

On the other hand, passage of the mortgage



law in one form or another (which is expected) will be a game changer, providing significant growth potential for the banks given the very strong demand for housing loans. Finally, in an effort to continue supporting the economic recovery, the Central Bank of Kuwait will only gradually unwind the easing of some of its liquidity and capitalization regulations that took effect in April last year due to the onset of the pandemic. Almost all prudential regulations shall get back to their pre-pandemic levels effective January 2023.

Private-sector deposits

Domestic deposits inched up by 0.8 percent q/q, fully driven by government deposits, with the y/y expansion still very much muted (-3.3 percent

Highlights:

- Domestic credit growth strengthened to 2.1% q/q in 3Q2021, with the y/y increase at 4% through September.
- Business credit was flat in Q3 and y/y growth remains muted (0.3%) as the recovery from the pandemic shock is proving to be slow.
- Household credit increased at the fastest quarterly rate in a year, with the y/y increase at 11.2% through September.
- Private-sector deposit growth continued to be muted, while government deposits rebounded in Q3 following a steep drop in 1H2021.
- Going into 2022, credit growth should be supported by the normalization of business activities and higher capital spending by corporates
- Absence of loan deferral schemes will soften household credit growth but the mortgage law passage will be a game changer.



KUWAIT: A citizen checks the forex rates at a currency exchange shop in Kuwait City in this file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

through September). Private-sector deposits are down 2.8 percent y/y, while government deposits have dropped by 5.5 percent probably related to the liquidity constraints that the government has been facing. However, following two quarters of steep decreases, government deposits showed improving trends, rebounding by 7.3 percent q/q likely driven by surging oil prices.

Looking at the breakdown of KD private sector deposits, the trend that has been at play since the

outbreak of the pandemic (which is current and saving (CASA) deposits expanding much faster than time deposits for six consecutive quarters) reached a stand-still in 3Q2021 as CASA edged down slightly while time deposits inched up by 1 percent. Nevertheless, from a y/y perspective, CASA is still up 5.6 percent, while time deposits are down 10 percent. The steep fall in interest rates last year (banks shedding expensive institutional deposits to defend margins and depositors facing lower opportunity cost from keeping funds in CASA deposits) and the deferral of credit instalments have been two key drivers for the changing composition of private sector deposits.

The lack of growth in domestic deposits over the past year led to an increase in the sector's domestic loans-to-deposits ratio, which reached 93.5 percent in September from around 87 percent one year ago, reflecting the slightly tighter liquidity situation.

Policy interest rates on hold

The CBK's discount rate has remained at 1.5 percent since March 2020 and will likely stay at that level in the short term given that the US Federal Reserve is unlikely to hike its policy rate in the first half of 2022. However, interest rates (weighted average as calculated by the CBK) on KD-denominated deposits seem to have bottomed out and actually have started to very gradually trend higher in the past few months. Kuwaiti banks' results confirm this trend as all witnessed a q/q increase in the cost of funds in 3Q2021.

Thamer Arab: DHAMAN first healthcare PPP body in Middle East

KUWAIT: The first Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Conference (PPPKW) was launched under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah with the sponsorship and participation of Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN), where DHAMAN CEO Thamer Arab delivered a keynote speech in which he expressed gratitude to the sponsor of the conference His Highness the Prime Minister, as well as his representative the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, noting the importance of the event, which reflects the strategic economic direction of the State of Kuwait to expand the scope of private sector participation, as it is the most important pillar of the economic system, and considered as one of the main directions for facing challenges and implementing the vision of New Kuwait 2035.

Thamer Arab added that countries and governments are seeking various ways to develop healthcare for their communities, and many of them tend to invest in strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors for this goal. In Kuwait, we find that the number of residents is large compared to the number of citizens, which prompted the State of Kuwait to adopt advanced healthcare systems through public-private partnerships to reduce the financial burdens on the state budget, improve the operation of healthcare services and facilities, as well as expand access to high-quality healthcare.



Thamer Arab

Therefore, Kuwait launched the first pioneering and ambitious partnership in the health sector through the Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) to become the new healthcare destination for all residents working in the private sector and their families, as well as an

optional destination for citizens.

Thamer Arab noted that the establishment of DHAMAN is based on an Amiri directive and a resolution of the Council of Ministers to be one of the strategic projects and the most important element of the healthcare pillar in the vision of New Kuwait 2035 in the development plan to provide high-quality healthcare and develop the infrastructure of the health sector to benefit Kuwaiti citizens and nearly 2 million of residents working in the private sector and their families, which will lead to direct results in reducing the operational and financial burdens on government health facilities, as the numbers prove the need to reduce the state budget to maximize economic benefits, as well as stimulate projects and development programs to reach the Amir's vision for New Kuwait 2035.

DHAMAN works to enhance the financial sustainability of the country through two directions, with the first is to reduce the financial and administrative burdens on the state represented in capital expenditures and costs directed to the health sector, which doubles at large rates annually, while the second direction is to achieve rewarding investment returns for shareholders, including the public sector and Kuwaiti citizens.

Thamer Arab highlighted the achievements of DHAMAN that despite the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company has taken tangible steps in establishing its integrated healthcare sys-

tem, which includes a network of primary healthcare centers and hospitals, where three healthcare centers were opened in Hawally, Farwaniya and Dhajeej, and it is currently completing two additional centers in Jahra and Fahaheel, which gives it more presence in various areas.

The company has also completed more than 50 percent of the construction and readiness for its hospitals in Ahmadi and Jahra with a total capacity of 600 beds and many important medical specialties with all related facilities. The upcoming two hospitals and two centers will be completed during 2022, giving more momentum and capabilities to the Company, stressing that the expected full operation of DHAMAN facilities will contribute to the development of the healthcare system in Kuwait, stimulate an effective environment for the application of quality programs in health services, and provide the opportunity to focus on prevention, community health and enhance public awareness, which lead to improving the level of service provided to citizens and residents alike.

Thamer Arab affirmed that DHAMAN represents a major foundation for the plans to develop the health sector in Kuwait, especially the size of its investments amount to approximately KD 180 million, which is aimed at developing the sector's infrastructure with the application of sustainability principles, quality enhancement, prevention and community health programs, which affect increasing of healthcare indicators for the State of Kuwait on international level, with this and more in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH), which has contributed and is still contributing greatly to the State of Kuwait.

In conclusion, Thamer Arab expressed gratitude and appreciation to the sponsor of the conference, all participants, and the event's organizer Nouf Expo, wishing that all partnership projects achieve their goals by contributing to the development and progress of Kuwait to implement Healthcare ... for New Kuwait.

but foreign spectators and almost all domestic fans were barred.

Analysts said that the slowdown was likely short-lived as Japan's vaccination program has picked up speed, with the government lifting virus restrictions in October. "For the fourth quarter, if the virus cases are kept low, consumption will probably bounce back strongly," said Takashi Miwa, economist at Nomura Securities.

He warned though that "some companies say the impact on production from the supply issues may continue until December." New Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has vowed to shore up economic growth after a series of hits from the virus. He is expected to announce an economic stimulus package worth hundreds of billions of dollars this week and his government has pledged to provide vaccine booster shots as early as next month. — AFP



HAIAN, China: Employees work on solar photovoltaic modules at a factory in Haian in China's eastern Jiangsu province yesterday. —AFP

China's factory output, retail sales see surprise jump in Oct

BEIJING: China's economy showed signs of stabilizing in October, according to data yesterday, with retail sales and factory output beating expectations as a power supply crisis appeared to ease.

The recovery in the world's second biggest economy has been losing steam for much of the year after a swift bounceback from harsh lockdowns to contain COVID-19, with officials earlier citing an "unstable and uneven" economic rebound. Power outages in recent months caused by emission reduction targets, the surging price of coal, and supply shortages also had impacted some factory production.

But industrial production grew 3.5 percent on-year last month, up from September, said the National Bureau of Statistics, as China worked to boost coal production and ease the energy shortage. A survey of economists by Bloomberg News tipped a 3.0 percent expansion.

However, NBS spokesman Fu Linghui cautioned yesterday that the "international environment remains complex and severe" with many uncertainties, adding that China needs to "work harder to maintain economic stability and recovery". "While electricity shortages and production cuts hampered output in early October, we don't think they are a significant problem anymore," said Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics yesterday. He added that this follows "a range of policy measures to boost coal production and lower coal prices".

But economic momentum remained weak in October, he said, "with the real estate downturn weighing on industry and a new wave of COVID outbreaks dampening household consumption". —AFP

COVID hit Japan economy harder than expected in Q3

TOKYO: Japan's economy shrank far more than expected in the three months to September, as a surge in virus cases hit spending and supply chain issues hampered business, data showed yesterday. The world's third largest economy shrank 0.8 percent quarter-on-quarter, much worse than the 0.2 percent economists had forecast.

The contraction was driven in part by a 1.2 percent dip in household consumption that tracked the imposition of a virus state of emergency over the summer, when Japan saw its worst-ever COVID

surge. Also weighing heavily was a drop in non-residential investment, which plunged 3.8 percent on a chip shortage and supply chain issues that weighed on factory output.

Exports, another key factor driving Japan's economy, were also down, with vehicle exports stalling over a shortage of semiconductor components, though imports of goods and services also dropped, making net trade a slight positive overall for GDP growth. The data, issued by the Cabinet Office, revised the figure for the second quarter to June to 0.4 percent growth.

Virus cases surged in Japan over the summer, after a slow start to the country's vaccination campaign, and the government imposed a virus state of emergency that limited restaurant and bar opening hours and alcohol sales. The Olympics went ahead during the period, despite calls for its cancellation,

Business

North African climate change threatens farming in Tunisia

Farmers left high and dry by increasingly long and intense droughts

SIDI SALEM, Tunisia: Tunisian olive farmer Ali Fileli looked out over his parched fields and crushed a lump of dry, dusty earth in his hand. "I can't do anything with my land because of the lack of water," he said. Fileli is just one of many farmers who have been left high and dry by increasingly long and intense droughts across North Africa.



KAIROUAN, Tunisia: A farmer holds a handful of soil parched because of drought in Tunisia's east-central area of Kairouan.

"When I started farming with my father, there was always rain, or we'd dig a well and there would be water," said the 54-year-old, who farms around 22 hectares (54 acres) of land near the northern city of Kairouan. "But these last 10 years there has always been a lack of water. Every year the water table drops three to four meters (10-13 feet)."

Fileli showed AFP his sprawling orchard of olive trees. With the olive harvest approaching, some bore small, shriveled fruits, but the rest were dead. He said that over the past decade, around half of his 1,000 olive trees have died due to drought. The country's water crisis is clearly visible at the Sidi Salem reservoir, which supplies water to almost three million Tunisians, including the capital Tunis.

Years of drought have left its water level critically low, an ominous sign for the region's future. The sur-

face of the lake lies 15 meters (50 feet) below a high-water mark left by floods in 2018.

Engineer Cherif Guesmi says that he has seen "terrifying climate change" during a decade working at the dam. "The situation today is really critical," he said. "There's hardly been any rain since a 2018 flood, and we're still using that water today."

As Tunisia sweltered in record temperatures topping 48 degrees Centigrade (118 Fahrenheit) in August, the reservoir lost 200,000 cubic meters per day from evaporation alone, he said. Despite heavy rain in late October, little fell in the dam's catchment area and the reservoir remains at just 17 percent of capacity, according to official figures this week.

Tunisia's neighbors face similar challenges. The North African nations of Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia are among the 30 most water-stressed countries in the world, according to the World Resources Institute. Experts warn this could drive social change that is likely to upset the region's tenuous sociopolitical balances.

'No future here'

Fileli has also had to delay plans to sow winter wheat or barley in his fields. He lists the knock-on effects: smaller crops mean farmers fall deeper into debt and hire fewer seasonal workers, adding to an 18 percent unemployment rate which has pushed many to leave the country.

"My son is saying, 'Dad, should I go and find work in Tunis or somewhere else? If things stay like this I have no future here.' The problems facing Tunisia are felt across the region. "The water table across North Africa is dropping due to a combination of over-pumping and lack of precipitation," said Aaron Wolf, a professor of geography at Oregon State University.

He cited Libya's massive Man Made River, a huge system built under the late dictator Moamer Kadhafi, to pump "fossil water" from finite aquifers in the southern desert to the country's coastal cities.

In Algeria—the scene of huge forest fires in August—



TESTOUR, Tunisia: A view of the Medjerda river flowing through the Sidi Salem dam in the northern Tunisian area of Testour, in the Beja province. —AFP photos

valuable drinking water is regularly used for irrigation and industry. And in Morocco, drought has "strongly affected agricultural production", according to the economy ministry. Rabat's Agriculture Minister Mohammed Sadiki has told parliament that rainfall is down 84 percent from last year.

Need to adapt

Wolf said the implications of drought go far beyond the countryside, causing migration within and across national borders. "It's in all parties' interests to solve rural water problems," he said. "Drought drives all the things that lead to political instability: rural people migrating to the city, where there is no support for them, exacerbating political tensions."

Gulf Bank hosts data expert at data and analytics program

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank hosted a training session for its employees led by Dr Thomas Redman, a world-renowned expert in data quality and data analytics who is also known world-wide as the "Data Doc." The training session was held as part of Gulf Bank's recently launched Data Ambassadors program, which will train 142 employees across various departments in key data quality and analytics. The new program aims to upskill and empower employees to use advanced data science in order to enhance the Bank's offerings and services.

The data expert led a Data Quality training session, working closely with Gulf Bank's Data Ambassadors to build knowledge and expertise around data quality concepts. Dr. Redman also held a session with Gulf Bank's Data & Analytics Team to discuss how Gulf Bank can initiate successful data strategies by focusing on data quality, building organizational capabilities, and putting data to work in innovative ways. It is worth noting that the data ambassadors' curriculum was developed completely in-house by Gulf Bank's Data and Analytics office, and is the first stand-alone Data & Analytics program in the country. The new curriculum, which was developed primarily by Kuwaiti talent, has also been endorsed by Dr Redman, whose books and articles have been featured in respected periodicals including MIT Sloan and Harvard Business Review.

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 a remarkable undertaking by the Bank to train employees both quickly and efficiently in key concepts including data quality, data concepts and Tableau training. As part of the new program, 1 out of 10 employees in each team will be trained on how to use data and analytics tools.

Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj emphasized the value and uniqueness of the Bank's new Data Ambassadors program, saying: "Our people are the secret behind Gulf Bank's excellence in the banking industry. With Gulf Bank spearheading multiple digitization efforts in the local banking sector, our employees are gaining valuable training and development opportunities and access to world-renowned expertise. The launch of our Data Ambassadors program marks the first standalone data and analytics program in Kuwait, and we are so proud to be able to give our employees the chance to partake in it."

Gulf Bank's Chief Data Officer (CDO), Mai Al-Owaish, also commented: "Gulf Bank's digital transformation is well underway, and we believe that the best way to enhance digital transformation is to focus first

Hamadi Habaieb, head of water planning at Tunisia's environment ministry, said a combination of less rainfall and a growing population would mean that by 2050, the country would have "far less" water available per person. "Tunisia needs to adapt," he said.

But he insisted that "farming has a future in Tunisia, although we will need to move towards very specific crops... that can deal with a lack of water and to climate change".

For Fileli, any solution may come too late to save his business—and the farming career of his son, aged 20. "I'm thinking of giving up, going to the capital, somewhere else," said Fileli. "As long as there's no water, no rain, why stay here? At least my children could find another future." — AFP

and foremost on our data, our people, and our culture. By prioritizing a transformation across all these levels, we believe we will be able to not only better understand our customers, but also facilitate more creative ways to meet their needs and better serve our stakeholders."

Dr Thomas Redman, the "Data Doc," also added, "I am so excited for colleagues at Gulf Bank, who are embarking on a new, data-driven adventure that will empower everything they aim to do. Now more than ever, organizations must recognize the fundamental importance of data and data quality. I am excited to witness a palpable digital transformation at the employee level at Gulf Bank, and I am excited to witness the successes that Gulf Bank's Data Ambassadors will achieve both within the Bank and beyond."



Gulf Bank plans to hold its Data Ambassadors program annually as part of its commitment to upskill new employees and enhance existing talent. The Bank also plans to launch a bank-wide Data Literacy program to upskill Gulf Bank employees on an ongoing basis, and enable departments to create automated data flows and use state-of-the-art tools and technologies to advance projects. Notably, Gulf Bank's Chief Data Officer (CDO), Mai Al-Owaish, is also the first female CDO in Kuwait and a board member of the world-renowned Digital Analytics Association (DAA).

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 employee'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. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with the different relevant parties to achieve it.



DUBAI: A female visitor in a red business costume walks towards a Dassault Falcon business jet aircraft on the tarmac at the 2021 Dubai Airshow. — AFP

Outlook starting to brighten for aviation, says Airbus CEO

DUBAI: The global aviation sector has begun to emerge from the COVID pandemic, its worst-ever crisis, and the "outlook is starting to brighten", Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury told journalists yesterday.

A large order of 255 of Airbus' single-aisle A321 planes announced Sunday at the Dubai Airshow "completely justifies" a shift to ramping up manufacturing, the CEO said, predicting production of long-haul planes could pick up by the second half of the decade. Yesterday, US Air Lease signed a letter of intent for 111 Airbus aircraft, the manufacturer said. Faury spoke to journalists, including AFP, on the sidelines of the Dubai Airshow. The following is a summarized and translated version of his comments in French:



Guillaume Faury

Has the airline sector recovered?

"The crisis was very brutal, lasting 15 months at its worst stage. We are in the process of emerging, we can see aerial traffic recovering, the reopening of travel lines, the planes travelling here to Dubai were full or nearly full. "The United States has largely resumed, Europe is also resuming. Asia will probably take a little longer, but globally the figures point to a recovery in the global economy and air traffic.

"When we say we are on the way out of the crisis, it is because we are coming back from the low point, we are progressively climbing back up. "Airbus began the gradual recovery some months ago on short and medium-haul aircraft, the A320 family, but not on long-haul aircraft. "We continue to believe that we can return to 2019-level air traffic at some point between 2023 and

2025 — regionally likely in 2023 and internationally in 2025. "We are much more optimistic because the outlook is starting to brighten. "We can see from yesterday's order that the airlines are also starting to look to the horizon and prepare for a post-crisis situation."

Is the order for 255 A321 a sign?

"We quickly understood in 2020 that airlines and charter companies did not want to make decisions during the crisis that would have had too great of an impact on their future growth and their ability to remain key players.

"At the start of 2021, I said that I was not expecting big orders in 2021 and they would come in 2022. "There are exceptions that prove the rule. We are in discussion with several players that are positioning themselves more quickly than others. "We are in a recovery scenario that is not very different from what we had imagined. "This confirms that the value of access to aircraft production is very important for the big players in aviation."

Will the order reassure other manufacturers?

"It completely justifies the ramp-ups we are anticipating. "We are in the process of determining whether a ramp-up in the production to 70 and 75 will go on," he said referring to the number of new A320 and A321 aircraft per month in the summer of 2025.

"For the entire supply chain, it is a difficult moment, but (the ramp-ups) are clearly an opportunity. "We think that for the second half of the decade, it is quite probable that what is happening with medium-haul aircraft will happen with long-haul aircraft because there will have seen five or six years of very weak deliveries. "Many planes have been placed in long-term storage, some of which will be retired, which will create a deficit of new, high performance, fuel-efficient planes. "Therefore, it is likely that there will be a strong ramp-up of long-haul aircraft at some point during the second half of the decade." —AFP

CBK bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KD 240 million for six months with a rate of return at 1.250%.



Dr Thomas Redman with Gulf Bank employees



English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran speaks on stage during the MTV Europe Music Awards at the Laszlo Papp Budapest Sports Arena in Budapest, Hungary.



English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran performs on stage. — AFP photos

ED SHEERAN, BTS WIN BIG AT MTV EUROPE MUSIC AWARDS

The chart-topping K-pop stars won four gongs at the ceremony in Hungary, including Best Pop, Best K-Pop, Biggest Group and Biggest Fans. Ed Sheeran also enjoyed a triumphant night at the Laszlo Papp Budapest Sports Arena, where he won the Best Artist and Best Song accolades. The 30-year-old pop star was given the Best Song gong for his hit single 'Bad Habits', which features on his recently-released album '-'. Other big-name winners included Nicki Minaj, who was named the winner of the Best Hip Hop accolade. David Guetta won the Best Electronic crown at the awards ceremony in the Hungarian capital, while Yungblud was named the Best Alternative artist. Rap star Saweetie hosted the show, which marked the first in-person EMAs since 2019. The 28-year-old rapper - who changed outfits through-



out the night and performed on stage - also claimed the Best New prize. In her acceptance speech, the 'My Type' hit-maker said: "Thank you to my team who

have been working non-stop 24 hours, seven days a week. We work non-stop, really. And it's been paying off. "I am so grateful to my fans, who have been supporting me. Y'all been riding with me since I've been rapping in my car." The rapper also thanked her family and friends for the support she's received from them.

Saweetie said: "Thank you for the unconditional support while I chase my dreams. Trust me y'all, this is only the beginning. "Hungary, I love you. Thank you for the support." Meanwhile, Olivia Rodrigo - who released her debut album, 'Sour', in May - won the Best Push award, while Maluma was named the Best Latin artist. However, Justin Bieber - who had as many as eight nominations - didn't win any awards on the night.

MTV Europe Music Awards winners:

- Best Artist:** Ed Sheeran
- Best Pop:** BTS
- Best Song:** Ed Sheeran, 'Bad Habits'
- Best Video:** Lil Nas X, 'Montero (Call Me By Your Name)'
- Best Collaboration:** Doja Cat ft. SZA, 'Kiss Me More'
- Best New:** Saweetie
- Best Electronic:** David Guetta
- Best Rock:** Maneskin
- Best Alternative:** Yungblud
- Best Latin:**

- Maluma
- Best Hip Hop:** Nicki Minaj
- Best K-Pop:** BTS
- Best Group:** BTS
- Best Push:** Olivia Rodrigo
- Biggest Fans:** BTS
- Video for Good:** Billie Eilish, 'Your Power'
- MTV EMA Generation Change Award:** Amir Ashour, Matthew Blaise, Sage Dolan-Sandrino, Erika Hilton, Viktoria Radvanyi — Bang Showbiz



Italian rock band Maneskin celebrate on stage.



US rapper Saweetie celebrates on stage during the MTV Europe Music Awards.



English singer Yungblud speaks on stage.



US rapper Saweetie performs on stage.



Colombian singer Maluma celebrates on stage.



Viktoria Radvanyi receives the award on stage.

France's **Theis** wins top prize at Thessaloniki film festival

"Softie" by French director Samuel Theis took the top prize at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival on Sunday. Theis, 43, won the Golden Alexander and 10,000 euros (\$11,450) for the gay coming-of-age story of an intelligent 10-year-old named Johnny (Aliona Reinert) set in eastern France. Reinert won the best actor prize at the 62nd edition of the festival in Greece's second city. Theis co-directed "Party Girl" with compatriots Claire Burger and Marie Amachoukeli, a film about and starring his mother Angelique Litzburger, which won Cannes' Camera d'Or prize in 2014. The festival's Special Jury Award, or Silver Alexander, went to Costa Rican-

Swedish director, Natalie Alvarez Mesen, for her feature film "Clara Sola". Nearly two years into the COVID pandemic that forced many film industry events to go online, the Thessaloniki Film Festival combined in-person events with online ones. Greece has seen a surge in cases and deaths, especially in the north, with authorities reporting 80 deaths on Sunday. — AFP



'Eternals' again tops N America box office, beating a big dog

Proving even Marvel superheroes can't always defy gravity, "Eternals" dropped sharply in North American theaters over the weekend but managed to edge out a family-friendly newcomer about a big dog, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. It said "Eternals," distributed by Disney, took in an estimated \$27.5 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period, down from \$71 million the preceding weekend. That was one of the larger second-weekend drops in Marvel's history, according to Variety. Directed by Oscar-winner Chloe Zhao, "Eternals" stars Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Richard Madden and Gemma Chan in the story of an immortal race of aliens who emerge from hiding to save

the Earth. In second place was new Paramount release "Clifford the Big Red Dog," at \$16.4 million. The adaptation of the children's book series by Norman Bridwell follows the adventures of young Emily Elizabeth and her astoundingly large red dog as they tromp through New York City. Family films like "Clifford" and those appealing to older audiences have generally performed weakly in the Covid era, said industry analyst David A. Gross. He said Hollywood's overall recovery remains tenuous, with the US box office since early September down about 35 percent from the 2019 period. In third place this weekend, down one spot, was Warner Bros sci-fi thriller "Dune," at \$5.5 million. Based on the classic Frank Herbert opus, the story of

survival on a frightening desert planet stars Timothee Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson and Oscar Isaac. Fourth place went to United Artist's James Bond film "No Time to Die," with Daniel Craig in his final appearance as the suave British spy. It took in \$4.6 million in North America, and is approaching \$525 million internationally. And in fifth was Sony superhero film "Venom: Let There Be Carnage," starring Tom Hardy and Michelle Williams, at \$4 million. Rounding out the top 10 were: "Ron's Gone Wrong" (\$2.2 million), "The French Dispatch" (\$1.8 million), "Belfast" (\$1.8 million), "Spencer" (\$1.5 million), "Antlers" (\$1.2 million) — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Will Smith plays Venus and Serena's 'lion' in Oscar-tipped 'King Richard'

“King Richard” plots the improbable rise of Serena and Venus Williams, from training on crumbling, gang-riddled Compton tennis courts to becoming all-time sporting greats. The movie could soon cap another unlikely journey, with former “Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” star Will Smith heavily tipped to win his first Oscar for best actor, as their larger-than-life father, coach and manager. Smith “fell in love with Richard Williams” two decades ago, after watching him leap to 14-year-old daughter Venus’s defense in an interview with an overly insistent journalist.

“The look of Venus’s face... the image burned in my heart,” he told an online press conference. “Because that’s how I wanted my daughter to look when I showed up.” “I knew I wanted to show a father protecting a daughter like that to the world,” said Smith, who signed on to star and produce in the Warner Bros film. The film, which had its Los Angeles premiere Sunday during AFI Fest, focusses on how the Williams’ unusual and tight-knit family in an impoverished and mainly Black neighborhood of the same city shaped their future success. Richard Williams, a self-taught coach, famously

wrote a 78-page plan to make Venus and Serena the top players in the world before they were even born, having learnt about the lucrative prize money on offer.

Venus-whose seven Grand Slam titles would later be eclipsed by Serena’s 23 — occupies more of the screen time, having paved the way for her younger sister with early wins at junior tournaments. “I love that Venus opened doors, and her sister just ran through,” Saniyya Sidney, who plays Venus, told AFP. “She’s so humble, she doesn’t even look at the status, or who’s bigger... being given this opportunity to show the world exactly what Venus did, is so, so important.” Growing up seeing “girls that look like me are in a sport that is predominantly a white sport... means so much to me,” said Sidney.

‘Revolutionaries’

The film follows Richard’s efforts to find his daughters a professional coach at snooty Californian tennis clubs, and how he was initially met with rejection, ridicule and racism. The Williams family would later boycott the prestigious Indian Wells tennis tournament in California for 14 years, after booing that Richard slammed as racist, and which Serena later likened



(From left) Jada Pinkett Smith, Will Smith, Willow Smith and Jaden Smith attend the AFI Fest premiere of “King Richard” at TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

to a “genteel lynch mob.” Serena, whose fiery temper has left her at loggerheads with officials on occasions, was banned from wearing a “Black Panther”-inspired black catsuit at the French Open in 2018.

“Every time they come on the court, they are these walking revolutionaries,”

Aunjanue Ellis, who plays their mother and fellow coach Oracene, told AFP. “The tennis industry is still to this day trying to police how creative they are, trying to police their genius, and they haven’t been able to do that.”

‘Lion’

For Smith—a father of three—watching Richard Williams protect his daughters all those years ago helped to shape his performance. “It was like [Venus] had a lion. And she was so confident and so comfortable that her lion wasn’t going to let anything happen to her,” he recalled. While Venus and Serena, plus two of their half-sisters, are involved with the film, Richard did not participate, and the film’s largely positive portrayal also hints at marital infidelity. Filmmakers initially planned to put Smith in full prosthetics to closely resemble Williams, but eventually relied on the two-time Oscar nominee’s acting to transform audience perceptions.

“He would just slide in to Richard Williams, which has all of that exuberance of Will Smith, but this whole other side of his character—it was startling to see,” said co-star Tony Goldwyn. Smith is the current bookmakers’ favorite to win best actor at February’s Oscars, having missed out for his portrayal of boxer Muhammad Ali in “Ali,” and in “The Pursuit of Happyness.” “King Richard” hits theaters next Friday. — AFP

Rapper defends China satire ‘Fragile’ as views hit 30m

A rapper who penned a viral Mandarin pop song poking fun at Chinese nationalists said yesterday he had no regrets about being blacklisted by Beijing as his track hit more than 30 million views on YouTube. Released last month, ‘Fragile’ by Malaysian rapper Namewee, featuring Australian singer Kimberley Chen, has become a viral sensation across Asia and beyond despite being scrubbed by censors in mainland China. The track masquerades as a saccharine love song but is littered with digs towards “little pinks”—a term for China’s online army of nationalist commenters—as well as Beijing’s authoritarian government.

“I never limit myself or impose self-censorship,” Namewee told reporters in Taipei as he and Chen sipped champagne to toast their track’s 30 million views milestone. “To me, good creations should come from the heart, they should be sincere,” he added. Mandarin-speaking singers, film stars and celebrities rarely court controversy when it comes to China given Beijing’s long track record of punishing those deemed critical of its rule. A misspoken word can quickly lead to an artist being frozen out of the world’s largest Mandarin-speaking market and a career in ruins.

But the willingness of Namewee and Chen to take on taboo subjects has struck a chord as China grows increasingly assertive on the world stage under President Xi Jinping. “The lyrics are clever because they sound like a love (gone bad) song, but in every line there is



Malaysian rapper Wee Meng Chee (left), known by his stage name Namewee, and Taiwan-based Australian singer Kimberley Chen, take part in a press conference together in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

a reference to either the fragile ‘feelings’ of the Chinese government or riffing on Chinese Communist Party rhetoric,” DJ Hatfield, a professor of Musicology at National Taiwan University, told AFP.

‘I don’t feel banned’

Over the last four weeks, Fragile has been a top trending YouTube video in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia as well as making smaller waves among Chinese diaspora fans in places like Australia, Canada and the United States. Within days of the track’s release, Namewee and Chen’s Chinese social media accounts were taken down and their music censored while state media accused the pair of insulting the country. China regularly removes songs deemed to be politically incorrect from domestic music streaming services.

In August, the Chinese culture ministry said it would establish a blacklist of banned songs with “illegal content”, such as endangering national security. Namewee and Chen are both currently

based in democratic Taiwan and have brushed off their blacklisting. “When you say I am banned, I don’t feel that way,” Namewee said yesterday. “I feel it’s the people who can’t listen to this song that are being banned.” The 38-year-old rapper has repeatedly been at the center of controversy in Muslim-majority Malaysia. In 2016, he was detained for several days for allegedly insulting Islam over a video partly filmed inside a mosque.

He was arrested again two years later for allegedly insulting Islam with a Lunar New Year video that featured dancers wearing dog masks and performing suggestive moves. Chen, 27, grew up in Australia but moved to Taiwan in 2009 to pursue a pop career. After her Chinese social media accounts were pulled, she responded by singing altered lyrics from Fragile’s chorus celebrating that she still had access to Facebook and Instagram, which-like YouTube—are banned in China. — AFP

A breakdown of ‘Fragile’, the viral pop song poking China

With more than 30 million YouTube views, the song “Fragile” has done something previously unthinkable—become a commercial success while sending up China’s authoritarian leaders. In the Mandopop industry, poking Beijing can end careers. But Malaysian rapper Namewee and Australian singer Kimberley Chen have bucked that trend. Days after their tongue-in-cheek love song dropped last month, Beijing’s censors scrubbed their online presence, ensuring their blacklisting in the world’s largest Mandarin-speaking market.

But across much of Asia and the global Chinese diaspora, the song struck a chord. “It’s an incredibly clever song, the tune is catchy, and the performance is spot on,” DJ Hatfield, an associate professor at the Graduate Institute of Musicology at National Taiwan University in Taipei, told AFP. “As for blacklisting, often censorship is the best advertisement.” Here are five ways the song mocks China.

Little Pink

To the uninitiated, “Fragile” sounds like any other saccharine ballad. But even before the music starts the politics are made clear with a warning: “Please be cautious if you are fragile pink.” The phrase is a reference to “little pinks”—a term for China’s online army of nationalist commenters, who go in to bat against any perceived slight. The music video’s set is awash with pink, including the clothes Namewee and Chen wear as well as a giant panda—a clear refer-

ence to China—dancing in pink camouflage overalls. The catchy chorus meanwhile centers around apologizing to someone who is fragile and cannot take criticism.

NMSL

At one point in the song, Namewee wrestles with the giant panda in an empty pink swimming pool while singing the line “You say NMSL to me when you get angry”. For anyone observing online tussles between China’s nationalists and their latest target, the phrase NMSL is ubiquitous. It stands for “ni ma si le”—or in simple English “your mum is dead”—and is often left in online comments. Last year a flame war erupted between Chinese and Thai netizens over a Thai celebrity’s comments about the coronavirus. Thai internet users started to subvert the phrase, creating a host of viral memes that portrayed China’s nationalists as automatons who instantly type “NMSL” whenever they spot something online they disagree with.

Winnie the Pooh

While the main target of the song is China’s nationalist netizens, President Xi Jinping is not spared. He has long been satirized as looking like the children’s book character Winnie the Pooh—China’s censors often remove online references to the character. Namewee sings how Winnie the Pooh might disappear people who breach China’s internet restrictions, namechecks Xi’s “common prosperity” drive and references forced labor camps for Muslim minorities in Xinjiang province.

At one point Namewee raps how the subject of his song “swallows the apple, cuts off the pineapple.” The first is seen as a reference to Hong Kong’s Apple Daily newspaper, a pro-democracy tabloid that collapsed after its assets were frozen and multiple executives detained under a national security law. — AFP



LOYAC presents fashion show under the theme ‘KhairEveryWhere’

The International Women’s Group (IWG), Kuwait in cooperation with LOYAC (a Kuwaiti non-profit organization working towards the overall development of youth), held a special fashion show on Sunday, Nov 14 at LOYAC’s premises at Al-Qibliya School for Girls, the first school for girls to open in Kuwait. The event presented ‘KhairEveryWhere’, a development and humanitarian project aiming to empower (especially in war-torn countries) Arab women, artisans and youth in the field of design by promoting handicrafts that combine innovation and

professional skills.

Laila Boulous, public relations coordinator, introduced Cristiana Baldocci, wife of the ambassador of Italy to Kuwait and President of IWG 2021-2022. Baldocci welcomed all members and guests and expressed her thanks for their participation in this worthy event. She also extended her gratitude to Sheikha Hanouf Badr

Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, Honorary President of IWG, for her continued support of the group. Baldocci then introduced Fareah Alsaqqaf, LOYAC’s founder, chairperson and managing director, who delivered an informative presentation about LOYAC and the ‘KhairEveryWhere’ project.

A short movie was shown, followed by

an outstanding fashion show which featured a small collection entitled “Outside My Tent”, inspired by women of marginalized societies in Lebanon, by Palestinian designer Safa Bardini and produced by Syrian women. The show continued with a bigger collection entitled “We Will Blossom” by Yemeni designer Nadine Dada. It concluded with a live Hadrami

(South Yemen) folklore show and a special buffet, prepared by the chefs of Crowne Plaza, which was enjoyed by members and guests. This very special event had a massive attendance by IWG members and many prominent members of the local civil society.



Sports

Hamilton hails brilliant Brazil win as probably ‘the best’

Verstappen’s lead cut to 14 points ahead of Qatar Grand Prix

SAO PAULO: If Lewis Hamilton clinches a record eighth world title it will be in no small part due to Sunday’s against-all-odds Brazil win he ranked as “the best weekend I have experienced in probably my whole career”.

On Friday night that looked a fanciful idea, when he was hit with disqualification from pole in Saturday’s sprint after the stewards had detected a minor infringement on his car. Setting off 20th he produced a vintage overtaking masterclass to take fifth, which dropped to 10th in the grand prix grid after a penalty for an engine change.

With championship leader Max Verstappen on the front row alongside Hamilton’s teammate Valtteri Bottas on pole, a win looked improbable. “Coming here 19 points behind, only one point ahead in the teams championship, we really needed a solid, solid result, but then obviously we had all these penalties,” he said.

“Mentally you can just think it’s over, it’s impossible, but then nothing is if you put your mind to it.”

“That’s really why we just cultivated a positive mental attitude and went in fighting, guns blazing,” he added after climbing the podium draped in a Brazilian flag, the Interlagos fans chanting his name. Enjoying faster speed on the straights courtesy of his new engine, the 36-year-old picked off the cars in front of him one by one – only Bottas under orders to swap places proved light work for all the

racecraft knowledge the seven-time world champion has accumulated between his ears.

Verstappen inevitably proved an altogether tougher assignment. He got ahead of his arch-rival at turn four on lap 48, but Verstappen forced him wide to hold his position. The stewards investigated and determined Verstappen had acted within the rules.

Another failed attempt followed before he succeeded on his third, at the start of lap 59. While Hamilton played the diplomatic card when asked about Verstappen’s tactics Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff was livid by that and all the obstacles thrown at his team in Brazil.

“I think we’ve just had many, many punches in the face this weekend with decisions that could have swung either side against us or for us,” he fumed. “It’s just something that I’m just angry about and I will defend my team, my drivers to what comes. I’ve

been always very diplomatic in how I discuss things, but diplomacy has ended today.”

He described the decision to disqualify over a broken part on a rear wing “we couldn’t look at, couldn’t analyze” as “very harsh”. Especially he said when Red Bull repaired a wing three times in parc ferme “without consequence”.

And he said Verstappen escaping a five-second penalty when it was only Hamilton’s quick avoiding action that prevented yet another collision



SAO PAULO: Mercedes’ British driver Lewis Hamilton (center), Red Bull’s Dutch driver Max Verstappen (left) and Mercedes’ Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas celebrate on the podium after obtaining the first, second and third positions respectively, in Brazil’s Formula One Sao Paulo Grand Prix at the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace, or Interlagos racetrack, in Sao Paulo, on Sunday. — AFP

between the pair was “laughable”. He did temper his anger with sympathy for the stewards who he suggested “have a difficult life anyway and they are only there to lose”. His anger will always be tempered by the fact that they fly off to the third

last race in Qatar next Sunday in a far better position that when they arrived in Sao Paulo. Hamilton has reduced Verstappen’s lead from 21 points to 14, and Mercedes lead the constructors championship by 11. — AFP

Axelsen, Momota lead badminton’s return to Asia for season finale

JAKARTA: Top-class tour badminton returns to Asia for the first time in 10 months as men’s world number one Kento Momota heads a strong line-up for three events in Indonesia culminating in the season-ending World Tour Finals.

Olympic gold medalist Viktor Axelsen of Denmark is seeded to meet Japan’s Momota in the final of this week’s Indonesia Masters, which also features Tokyo bronze winner and home favorite Anthony Ginting. But Olympic silver medalist Chen Long will be missing, along with all players from China, for the first of three back-to-back events on the resort island of Bali beginning today.

Ginting said he was grateful to be able to play at home again, even though there will be no spectators allowed inside the strict bubble to which the players will be confined for three weeks to protect them from coronavirus.

“Not only team Indonesia, but all the players have waited to play in front of huge crowds, like we had during previous tournaments in Jakarta,” said Ginting. “But we’re still trying to be grateful that the tournaments could be resumed.” Women’s world number one and Olympic silver medalist Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan is skipping the Indonesia events, while China are not sending any players, meaning Olympic champion Chen Yufei will also be absent.

Top seed in the women’s will be Akane Yamaguchi, the world number three from Japan, who will face a field featuring Olympic bronze medalist PV Sindhu of India and second seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand.

Asian badminton fans have been starved of action for almost two years because of the coronavirus pandemic. The last BWF World Tour events to take place on the continent were held in Thailand in January without spectators, as were the Tokyo Olympics.

Players have been warming up and acclimatizing since last week, but are confined to their Bali hotel and the arena. “They’re not allowed to go out once they’ve arrived at the hotel. We’re providing for their needs here,” Indonesia Badminton Association spokesman Broto Happy told AFP.

The players are staying in a luxury resort with plenty to occupy them, including a private beach. Badminton World Tour events in Indonesia are usually played in the capital, Jakarta, but organizers opted for Bali, which has been badly affected by the loss of visitors during the pandemic.

“By holding the tournaments in Bali, we hope to at least revive its economy, which heavily relies on tourism,” Happy said. The spectator ban has come as a disappointment for many in a country where badminton is hugely popular.

“I’m sad that I can’t watch the games in person, but I understand doing it without spectators is the best setting,” said fan Renata Indra Adiningtyas, 19, who has resigned herself to watching the tournaments on television. The Indonesia Masters ends on Sunday. The Indonesia Open takes place from November 23-28 and the season-ending BWF Tour finals run December 1-5. — AFP

‘I could have won Tokyo Olympics 100m’, says Bolt

DUBAI: Sprint legend Usain Bolt said he could have emerged from retirement to win a fourth straight Olympic 100m title in Tokyo this year, insisting the winning time was within his reach. Bolt, 35, told AFP that it was frustrating to watch the delayed 2020 Games from his home in Jamaica as his male countrymen flopped and Italy’s Lamont Jacobs claimed a shock victory. “I really missed it. I was like, I wish I was there,” he said in an interview at the Dubai offices of his sponsor PepsiCo on Sunday. “Because for me, I live for those moments. So it was hard to watch.”

Bolt dominated sprinting for a generation, winning eight Olympic gold medals and only losing a ninth when his 2008 4x100m relay team-mate Nesta Carter failed a retrospective drugs test. The first Olympic 100m final since the great showman’s departure was a subdued affair, with Jacobs clocking 9.80sec at a Covid-emptied Tokyo National Stadium.

“My coach said something to me at the end of my career. He said, ‘People are not getting faster. I was getting slower.’ I never looked at it that way,” said Bolt. “And it’s the facts because a lot of guys don’t really get faster. Because I have pushed the barrier so far and then I started going backwards time-wise, so for me 9.80 was possible to get done.”

But Bolt, who has dabbled in football and music since retiring, said it was “all about motivation” when he was considering a potential comeback in Tokyo. “For the Olympics, it was gonna be different,” said the father of three. “I always show up ready because I think this is the highest level, but I’ve already done everything in the sport so it was all about motivation.”

‘Lightning Bolt’ loses sparkle

With a rueful shake of the head, Bolt said it was “not looking good” for Jamaica’s men’s sprinters after

Aussies send Ashes warning with T20 triumph

SYDNEY: Australia hailed the nation’s maiden Twenty20 triumph as “the ultimate World Cup heist” yesterday, reveling in the team regaining their “mojo” heading into a blockbuster Ashes series against old enemy England.

Mitchell Marsh’s unbeaten 77 steered Justin Langer’s side to an emphatic eight-wicket defeat of New Zealand in Dubai on Sunday to clinch a title that had long eluded them. Chasing 173 for victory, Australia achieved their target with seven balls to spare on the back of a 92-run second-wicket stand between Marsh and David Warner, who made 53.

It was a sterling performance from a team that went into the tournament beset by poor form, having lost their most recent Twenty20 series 4-1 in Bangladesh in August, minimal game time and dressing-room discontent, with few pundits giving them much hope. “Australia has pulled off the ultimate World Cup heist — written off as no chance, Justin Langer’s men defied the odds to seal their maiden title in devastating fashion,” said the Sydney Daily Telegraph.

Lifting the trophy for the first time was an ominous signal ahead of the five-Test Ashes series, which starts in Brisbane on December 8, something not lost on Australian media. “England beware! Australian cricket has got its mojo back,” screamed The Australian newspaper.

“To say that Australia’s stunning T20 World Cup



DUBAI: Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt arrives for a charity run at the Expo 2020, in the Gulf emirate of Dubai, on November 13, 2021. —AFP

they failed to reach the Tokyo 100m final and were fifth in the 4x100m relay. And he said none of the current athletes looked capable of beating his 100m and 200m world records of 9.58 and 19.19, rarely threatened since he set them in 2009.

“I don’t think I’ve seen anybody in this generation right now which I personally feel will break the records,” he said. “So I think I have a couple more years before somebody will actually break my world records.”

Bolt, instantly recognizable worldwide, said he’d “love” to help World Athletics promote the sport and had approached its leader, Sebastian Coe, about a formal role. But he said he had no designs on the presidency. “No, I don’t want that job. That’s a lot of stress and a lot of work,” he said.



DUBAI: Australia’s Mitchell Marsh (left) celebrates their win with teammates at the end of the ICC men’s Twenty20 World Cup final match between Australia and New Zealand at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai on Sunday. — AFP

win will have no bearing on the Ashes is to underestimate the rousing mental euphoria generated by such a win. After a winter of grumbling and years of so-so results, Australia suddenly feels alive, armed and dangerous again,” it added.

The core of the T20 team will also spearhead Australia’s Ashes campaign, including Warner, Steve Smith, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood. They are due to return to Brisbane imminently on a charter flight with England’s Ashes

He added that he would “definitely” have taken the knee to protest against racism on the Tokyo podium, where it was banned under International Olympic Committee rules. “I understand what it’s about. Racism, we’ve been through it so I understand the necessary aspect of it and what is needed,” he said. But he revealed that after years of striking the ‘Lightning Bolt’, his signature pose was beginning to grate.

“Sometimes it gets a little bit, I wouldn’t say annoying. But I understand that I’ve done it to myself,” he said with a chuckle. “People really enjoy it and it’s for the fans, you know. I mean, it’s a picture that they will treasure forever. So for me, I’m not always happy doing it, but I do it anyways because it’s for them and it makes them happy.” —AFP

players who were also involved in the T20 World Cup, where they lost to New Zealand in the semi-finals. According to English media, fast bowler Mark Wood said it was a journey he “wasn’t looking forward to”, worried that the Australians would “wave the trophy around”.

‘Poking the bear’

While Marsh stole the headlines for his swash-buckling 77, a major factor in Australia’s success in the United Arab Emirates was the return of Warner to his destructive best. He went into the tournament after being sidelined by his Indian Premier League team Sunrisers Hyderabad and with some commentators suggesting he was past his best.

But the gutsy opener responded by plundering 289 runs over seven innings to be named player of the tournament as he warmed up to face England in devastating style. “I can’t believe people wrote him off a couple of weeks ago saying he was done,” skipper Aaron Finch told Australian reporters. “It was like poking the bear.”

While Australia celebrated, New Zealand media lamented the Black Caps falling to a third straight defeat in the final of a limited-overs tournament. But the New Zealand Herald’s Niall Anderson said there could be no complaints, unlike the 2019 one-day World Cup loss to England, which was decided by a boundary countback after scores finished tied after 20 overs and a super over shootout.

“There is nothing controversial to point to and explain the defeat. No obscure rule, no moment where the game could have turned, no reason for New Zealand to feel aggrieved,” he wrote. “Instead, there was a simple fact that all in the Kiwi camp had to acknowledge — Australia were simply better. Much better.” — AFP

Sports

Rodgers wins in return from COVID, Bucs implode in Washington shock

Newton leads Panthers to win over Cardinals; Pats thump Browns

LOS ANGELES: AJ Dillon ran for two touchdowns in the fourth quarter as the Green Bay Packers shut out the Seattle Seahawks 17-0 on Sunday in a game where both clubs welcomed back their starting quarterbacks. Playing in a light snowfall, Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers returned from a tumultuous 10 days and delivered a mediocre performance, but did just enough to get the Packers victory.



Cowboys bounce back to pummel Falcons

The reigning NFL Most Valuable Player missed last week's 13-7 loss to Kansas City after testing positive for COVID-19. He came in for criticism when it emerged he hadn't received the COVID-19 vaccine, despite saying in August he was "immunized."

Rodgers was activated from the COVID-19 list on Saturday after a 10-day quarantine and completed 23 of 37 passes for 292 yards with one interception in front of a crowd of 54,300 at Lambeau Field. He received a loud ovation by the Packers fans at the start of the game. "I don't take these things for granted, walking off the field as a winner," Rodgers told reporters. Asked why he didn't seem more excited, he replied, "It's been a long 10 days." Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson also returned Sunday after missing three games after finger surgery — the first missed games of his career. Wilson looked rusty, completing 20 of 40 passes for 161 yards with two interceptions as the battle between the NFC teams turned into a defensive struggle.

Both of Wilson's interceptions took place in the end

zone as the Seahawks were held scoreless for the first time since 2011. Running back Dillon finished with 66 yards on 21 carries, scoring touchdowns with a three-yard run at 10:37 of the fourth and from two yards with just under two minutes remaining.

Washington stun Brady

Elsewhere, Tampa Bay quarterback Tom Brady threw two interceptions in the first quarter as the Super Bowl champion Buccaneers were shocked 29-19 by the Washington Football Team. The Bucs' second straight NFL defeat came in the wake of their bye week and was made more painful by the late-game departure of injured defender Vita Vea.

Superstar signal-caller Brady threw two interceptions, connecting on 23 of 34 passing attempts for 220 yards and two touchdowns. Washington quarterback Taylor Heinicke completed 26 of 32 passing attempts for 256 yards and a TD, his team improving to 3-6 as the Bucs fell to 6-3.

The Buccaneers' bad day included a welter of penalties in the first half, when for just the fifth time since Brady arrived last season they failed to score a touchdown before the break. Washington's 13-point halftime lead was their biggest of the season.

Although Brady rebounded in the second half with scoring passes to Cameron Brate and Mike Evans to cut the deficit to 23-19, Tampa Bay couldn't complete the rally. Heinicke piloted a 19-play drive, the longest in the league this season, that drained the clock and ended in Antonio Gibson's one-yard touchdown plunge with 29 seconds remaining.

Newton's 'high frequency'

In Arizona, Cam Newton ran for a touchdown and threw for a score in his first game back with Carolina as the Panthers stunned the Arizona Cardinals 34-10. Newton signed with Carolina, which had made him the top pick in the 2011 draft, late in the week as a free



GREEN BAY: Aaron Rodgers #12 of the Green Bay Packers hands the ball off to Aaron Jones #33 during the first quarter at Lambeau Field on Sunday in Green Bay, Wisconsin. — AFP

agent. "I'm just floating at an all-time-high frequency," Newton said. "It's almost scary."

The former league MVP Newton made his presence felt on his first play of the game, entering on third down and running for the touchdown to give the Panthers a 7-0 lead. On Carolina's next drive, Newton threw a two-yard touchdown pass to Robby Anderson.

In other games, the New England Patriots thumped Cleveland 45-7, the Browns also seeing quarterback

Baker Mayfield exit in the third quarter with a knee injury after a hit from linebacker Matt Judon.

The Dallas Cowboys also posted a lopsided win, pummeling the Atlanta Falcons 43-3 as they bounced back from a loss to the Denver Broncos last week. In the late game, Patrick Mahomes threw five touchdown passes as the Kansas City Chiefs moved into first place in the AFC West with a 41-14 victory over the Las Vegas Raiders. — AFP

Young shines as Hawks clobber Bucks, Lakers sink Spurs

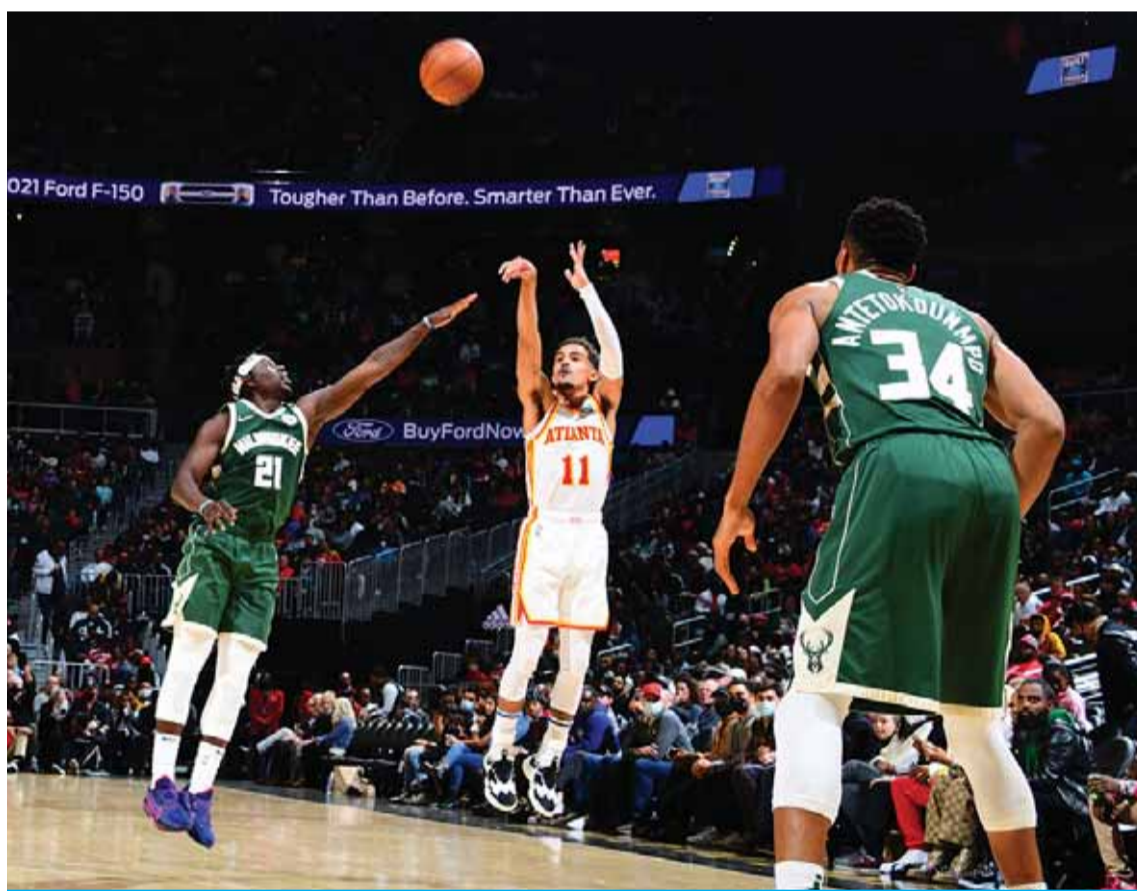
LOS ANGELES: Trae Young finished with 42 points and 10 assists as the Atlanta Hawks snapped a six-game losing skid by routing the reigning NBA champion Milwaukee Bucks 120-100 on Sunday. Young shot 16-of-26 from the floor and made a career-high eight three pointers in his second consecutive game with 30-plus points. "We all know where we want to be at," Young said. "We know we've got to turn it around and get some wins."

John Collins scored 16 of his 19 points in the second half, and Clint Capela added 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Hawks, who improved to 4-1 at home this season. "The guys are learning what it's like when expectations are a little higher," said Hawks coach Nate McMillan.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, who returned from missing Friday's contest with a sprained ankle, scored a team-high 26 points and dished out six assists for the visiting Bucks, who lost their second straight. Jrue Holiday added 19 points and Grayson Allen scored 18 in the loss. Milwaukee played without Brook Lopez (back injury), George Hill (back) and Khris Middleton (COVID-19 protocol).

Elsewhere, Anthony Davis scored 27 of his 34 points in the first half and had 15 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the San Antonio Spurs 114-106. LeBron James missed his sixth straight game for the Lakers with an abdominal strain. Los Angeles is 4-4 this season in games that James hasn't played. "I wanted to come out and dominate the game and do whatever I could to get the team going," Davis said. "That's the type of energy you need from our bench, our star players, our role players."

Talen Horton-Tucker scored 17 points in his season debut for Los Angeles, while Malik Monk scored 16 points and Russell Westbrook posted 14 points and 11 rebounds. Dejounte Murray finished with a triple-dou-



ATLANTA: Trae Young #11 of the Atlanta Hawks shoots a three-point basket during the game against the Milwaukee Bucks on Sunday at State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

ble of 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Spurs, who dropped their second consecutive game. Keldon Johnson scored 24 points, Devin Vassell scored 19 points, Thaddeus Young 17, and Derrick White 10 in the defeat.

Meanwhile, Kevin Durant scored 33 points to lead the Brooklyn Nets to a 120-96 road win over the Oklahoma City Thunder. The Nets have won three consecutive games and eight of their last nine, finishing a season-long six-game road trip 5-1.

A number of Western Conference playoff contenders had their seven-game winning streaks stopped on Sunday. Miles Bridges scored 22 points and LaMelo Ball had 21 as the Charlotte Hornets edged the Golden State 106-102 to halt the Warriors' win streak at seven. The Warriors lost for just the second time in 13 games. In Los Angeles, DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Los Angeles Clippers 100-90, ending the Clippers' winning streak. — AFP

Japanese baseball star Ohtani 'honored' by Babe Ruth comparisons

TOKYO: Japanese sensation Shohei Ohtani said yesterday that he is "honored" to be compared to the legendary Babe Ruth and aspires to go down in baseball folklore. The Los Angeles Angels star has picked up an array of awards over the past month and is now favorite to win the American League's Most Valuable Player Award.

The 27-year-old is following in the footsteps of Ruth by playing as a pitcher and a batter, and has become MLB's biggest star after a breakthrough season. "It's an honor to even be compared to him," Ohtani said at Japan's National Press Club of Ruth, the last player to pitch and hit on a regular basis, 100 years ago. "It's not just his statistics that made him a great player. There aren't so many players who are remembered for so many years and that's something that I as a player must aspire to. I never saw him play live but lots of people know Babe Ruth. I would like to be a player like him."

Ohtani has already won the MLB Players Choice Outstanding Player prize and the Commissioner's Historic Achievement Award. He has been named on a short-list of three for AL MVP, with the winner to be announced Thursday. But Ohtani is already looking beyond that. "I want to be able to win those awards again next year and I want to make the mental switch to look ahead now," Ohtani said. "I appreciate that what I achieved this year is being recognized in this way, but I want to look forward to next year now."

Ohtani hit 46 home runs — just two short of the MLB lead — and won nine games as a pitcher. He also became the first player to appear in the MLB All-Star game as both a hitter and a starting pitcher, and was named among Time magazine's 100 most influential people of 2021. — 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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707	Shaab	22518752
Rawda	22517733	Qibla	22459381
Adaliya	22517144	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Khaldiya	24848075	Mirqab	22456536
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LISBON: Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo reacts during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 qualification group A football match between Portugal and Serbia, at the Luz stadium in Lisbon, on Sunday. — AFP

Serbia, Spain qualify for 2022 World Cup, Portugal stunned

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo's hopes of playing in a record-equaling fifth World Cup hang in the balance after Serbia stunned Portugal 2-1 in Lisbon to qualify for the 2022 World Cup. Spain and Croatia did secure their places in Qatar on Sunday thanks to 1-0 wins over Sweden and Russia respectively.

Ronaldo already holds the record of playing in five European Championships and looked well on course for another milestone as Portugal stormed out of the blocks to open the scoring after just two minutes through Renato Sanches.

However, Serbia bounced back to dominate the remainder of the first half and deservedly levelled when Dusan Tadic's strike squeezed in off the post after Dusan Vlahovic had hit the woodwork. Ronaldo was kept quiet as another chance to score his 800th career goal came and went. Instead it was Aleksandar Mitrovic who grabbed the vital goal as stoppage time approached.

Just over a year ago, Mitrovic was the villain for his country as he was the only player to fail to score in a penalty shootout against Scotland that

saw Serbia miss out on Euro 2020. However, the Fulham striker made amends in dramatic fashion when he steered in Tadic's header at the back post. "It was an amazing game," said Mitrovic. "We were the better team today in every aspect of the game."

Portugal must now navigate two tricky one-off playoff matches in March to maintain their record of qualifying for every major tournament since the 1998 World Cup.

'Huge weight off'

"We must apologize to the Portuguese but my team will be at the World Cup, that's guaranteed," said defiant Portugal coach Fernando Santos. "We will have to prepare well to beat our opponents in March and to get to Qatar. But I always trust my players."

Spain made sure they avoided the playoffs as Alvaro Morata's goal four minutes from time ended Sweden's resistance in Seville. The Swedes' shock 2-0 defeat to Kazakhstan on Thursday had handed Spain pole position in Group B, meaning La Roja just needed a point to qualify.

Coratia beat Russia to qualify

Luis Enrique's men were grateful for that reprieve as for a long time a repeat of the stalemate between the sides when they met in the group stages of Euro 2020 was on the cards. Morata was the fall guy that night for missing a host of chances, but made his mark off the bench with a calm finish after Robin Olsen had turned Dani Olmo's blistering shot onto the bar. "To be honest, it is a huge weight off my shoulders," said Luis Enrique. "I felt much more

pressure in these games when people think it is easy to get a result than in the Euro or the Nations League."

Croatia also needed a late winner as its own goal from Fedor Kudryashov snatched qualification from Russia in a battle in boggy conditions in Split. Finalists at the last World Cup in 2018, Croatia looked bound for the playoffs as they toiled on a waterlogged pitch against a resolute Russian defense.

But Kudryashov's error saw them snatch top spot from the visitors eight minutes from time. "It was a difficult match from the beginning because of the rain. We never gave up, we were patient and I think we won deservedly. We are the best team in this group," said Croatia captain Luka Modric.

Germany had long since booked their place in Qatar, but rounded off their qualifying campaign with a 4-1 thrashing of Armenia as Ilkay Gundogan scored twice. North Macedonia secured the play-off place behind the four-time world champions with a 3-1 win over Iceland. — AFP



ZEIST: Netherlands' National coach Louis van Gaal attends his team's training session from a golf cart yesterday in Zeist, as part of the team's preparation for the World Cup qualifying match against Norway. — AFP

Dutch World Cup woes deepen after Van Gaal hurts hip

THE HAGUE: The Dutch campaign to qualify for next year's World Cup suffered another blow after coach Louis van Gaal fell and injured his hip, Dutch media reported yesterday. Van Gaal, 70, cycled to his hotel after a training session ahead of the team's crucial qualifier against Norway today when the accident happened.

"Van Gaal was parking his bicycle at the hotel when he slipped and landed on his hip," De Telegraaf daily tabloid said. "A visit to the hospital confirmed he did not need surgery," the paper said, but a Royal Dutch Football Federation (KNVB) official told the paper "Louis can't walk and is in a wheelchair."

"He will do everything he can to make today's game," the official said. Van Gaal, sometimes nicknamed the "Iron Tulip" for his no-nonsense approach to coaching, arrived at yesterday's training session in a golf cart. The KNVB could not immediately be reached for comment.

Van Gaal's injury is the latest blow in the Netherlands' quest to get to Qatar. The

team captained by Liverpool central defender Virgil van Dijk squandered a 2-0 lead on Saturday against Montenegro after the hosts equalised with two goals in the last 10 minutes of the game, robbing the Dutch of a guaranteed ticket to Qatar.

The Dutch still head Group G but are just two points ahead of Turkey, who thrashed Gibraltar 6-0 on Sunday. The Orange face Norway in Rotterdam today in the final round of matches while Turkey travel to Montenegro. If the Dutch beat Norway, they will be assured of a place in Qatar and even a draw could see them through, but they could be eliminated if they lose, missing out on a second successive World Cup finals. — AFP

Disputed Ayew penalty takes Ghana to playoffs, DR Congo also qualify

JOHANNESBURG: Captain Andre Ayew converted a controversial penalty in his 100th international appearance on Sunday to take Ghana into the African World Cup qualifying playoffs with a bruising 1-0 victory over South Africa. The former West Ham United midfielder sent rival skipper Ronwen Williams the wrong way from the spot kick in Cape Coast on 33 minutes for the lone goal of the Group G decider.

Ghana were awarded the penalty when the Senegalese referee ruled that Leicester City defender Daniel Amartey had been pushed, but TV replays suggested the home player dived. Ghana and South Africa tied on 13 points and both had plus-four goal differences, but the Black Stars won the section because they scored seven goals, one more than South Africa, over six rounds.

Ethiopia finished third after Abubeker Nasir netted four minutes from time to snatch a 1-1 draw with Zimbabwe in Harare. Kudakwashe Mahachi had put the hosts ahead before half-time with a long-range strike that whistled past goalkeeper Teklemariam Shanko. The Democratic Republic of Congo also progressed to the playoffs after defeating Benin 2-0 in Kinshasa through goals from Dieumerci Mbokani and Ben Malango to win Group J.

Ghana and DR Congo join Egypt, Mali, Morocco and Senegal in the

playoffs, along with four other group winners to be decided today. The contenders are African champions Algeria and Burkina Faso (Group A), Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea and Zambia (Group B), Nigeria and Cape Verde (Group C) and Ivory Coast and Cameroon (Group D).

In Kinshasa, Mbokani converted a 10th-minute penalty in a match the Congolese Leopards had to win to overtake Benin, and a Malango header on 74 minutes sealed maximum points.

Mbokani boosts DR Congo

Kuwait-based Mbokani quit the national team four years ago, but was persuaded by fellow forward Cedric Bakambu to return for the World Cup campaign and has scored four goals. Reaching the final stage on the road to Qatar is a huge boost to DR Congo after failing to qualify for the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon, which has been postponed until January because of COVID-19. Veteran DR Congo coach Hector Cuper is seeking a second straight appearance at the global football showpiece after the Argentine guided Egypt at the 2018 tournament in Russia. Cuper was dismissed when Egypt, handicapped by an injury that limited the game time of star forward Mohamed Salah, lost all three group games. — AFP